

Bible Readings and Commentaries

Book 2 of 6

**Second Half-Year of Triennial Torah Cycle
For Sabbath Service**

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Triennial Torah Cycle from the Ancient Holy Temple

The first Sabbath of the Month Nisan (the month that begins two weeks before Passover), every third year, is the time to start the triennial Torah reading cycle. This is the reading cycle that was used in the Holy Temple, and apparently the one that Yeshua followed. As the readings progress through the three years, the subjects will be seen to correspond to times of festivals and major events.

Each Sabbath's readings are called a seder (order of service). Each seder includes a portion of the *Torah* (meaning Instruction), *Haftara* (meaning Completion of the Torah -- a reading from the Prophets), and a Psalm to be sung. The cycle begins with *Bereshit (In the beginning)* / Genesis 1, and Psalm 1, and a portion of Isaiah on the same subject. A reading of corresponding topic from the Apostolic Writings (NT) is suggested for each Sabbath. The title of a Torah reading is the first significant word(s), which predates today's common system of chapters and verses. The Psalms, used in numerical order, agree in subject with the Torah portions throughout the three years.

These blessings are to accompany the Bible readings:

Before Torah Reading:

*"Blessed are You, Yahweh our God, King of the Universe,
Who chose us from among all peoples by giving us Your Torah.
Blessed are You, Yahweh, giver of the Torah."*

After Torah Reading:

*"Blessed are You, Yahweh our God, King of the Universe,
Who in giving us Yeshua, the Living Torah, has planted everlasting life in our midst.
Blessed are You, Yahweh, giver of the Torah."*

Before Prophets and Apostles:

*"Blessed are You, Yahweh our God, King of the Universe,
Who selected good prophets, delighting in their words which were spoken truthfully.
Blessed are You, Yahweh, Who chose the Torah, Your servant Moses, Your people Israel,
and the prophets of truth and righteousness."*

After Prophets and Apostles:

*"Blessed are You, Yahweh our God, King of the Universe,
Rock of Ages, righteous throughout all generations.
You are the faithful God, promising and then performing, speaking and then fulfilling,
for all Your words are true and righteous.
Faithful are You, Yahweh our God, and faithful are Your words,
for no word of Yours shall remain unfulfilled;
You are a faithful and merciful God and King.
Blessed are You, Yahweh our God, Who are faithful in fulfilling all Your words."*

Each reader who does not personally say the blessings should say "Amen" to the blessings as indicated in the text.

Yitzchaq Barak / Isaac had Blessed

Genesis 27:30 – 28:9 Micah 1:1; 5:7-13 Psalm 23 Romans 10:20 – 11:36

Commentary Y1-26

Tishrei 5, 5762 / Sept 22, 2001

Tishrei 3, 5765 / Sept 18, 2004

Vayhiy ka-asher kilah Yitzchak barak (*It came to pass, when Isaac had blessed*)

Reader 1 Amen*³⁰ Now it came about, as soon as Isaac had finished blessing Jacob, and Jacob had hardly gone out from the presence of Isaac his father, that Esau his brother came in from his hunting.³¹ Then he also made savory food, and brought it to his father; and he said to his father, "Let my father arise and eat of his son's game, that you may bless me." ³² Isaac his father said to him, "Who are you?" And he said, "I am your son, your firstborn, Esau." ³³ Then Isaac trembled violently, and said, "Who was he then that hunted game and brought it to me, so that I ate of all of it before you came, and blessed him? Yes, and he shall be blessed."

Reader 2 Amen*³⁴ When Esau heard the words of his father, he cried out with an exceedingly great and bitter cry, and said to his father, "Bless me, even me also, O my father!" ³⁵ And he said, "Your brother came deceitfully and has taken away your blessing." ³⁶ Then he said, "Is he not rightly named Jacob, for he has supplanted me these two times? He took away my birthright, and behold, now he has taken away my blessing." And he said, "Have you not reserved a blessing for me?"

Reader 1 Amen*³⁷ But Isaac replied to Esau, "Behold, I have made him your master, and all his relatives I have given to him as servants; and with grain and new wine I have sustained him. Now as for you then, what can I do, my son?" ³⁸ Esau said to his father, "Do you have only one blessing, my father? Bless me, even me also, O my father." So Esau lifted his voice and wept. ³⁹ Then Isaac his father answered and said to him, "Behold, away from the fertility of the earth shall be your dwelling, And away from the dew of heaven from above.

Reader 4 Amen*⁴⁰ "By your sword you shall live, And your brother you shall serve; But it shall come about when you become restless, That you will break his yoke from your neck." ⁴¹ So Esau bore a grudge against Jacob because of the blessing with which his father had blessed him; and Esau said to himself, "The days of mourning for my father are near; then I will kill my brother Jacob." ⁴² Now when the words of her elder son Esau were reported to Rebekah, she sent and called her younger son Jacob, and said to him, "Behold your brother Esau is consoling himself concerning you by planning to kill you. ⁴³ "Now therefore, my son, obey my voice, and arise, flee to Haran, to my brother Laban! ⁴⁴ "Stay with him a few days, until your brother's fury subsides, ⁴⁵ until your brother's anger against you subsides and he forgets what you did to him. Then I will send and get you from there. Why should I be bereaved of you both in one day?"

Reader 5 Amen*⁴⁶ Rebekah said to Isaac, "I am tired of living because of the daughters of Heth; if Jacob takes a wife from the daughters of Heth, like these, from the daughters of the land, what good will my life be to me?"

^{28:1} So Isaac called Jacob and blessed him and charged him, and said to him, "You shall not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan. ² "Arise, go to Paddan-aram, to the house of Bethuel your mother's father; and from there take to yourself a wife from the daughters of Laban your mother's brother.

Reader 6 Amen*³ "May God Almighty bless you and make you fruitful and multiply you, that you may become a company of peoples. ⁴ "May He also give you the blessing of Abraham, to you and to your descendants with you, that you may possess the land of your sojournings, which God gave to Abraham." ⁵ Then Isaac sent Jacob away, and he went to Paddan-aram to Laban, son of Bethuel the Aramean, the brother of Rebekah, the mother of Jacob and Esau.

Reader 7 Amen*⁶ Now Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob and sent him away to Paddan-aram to take to himself a wife from there, and that when he blessed him he charged him, saying, "You shall not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan," ⁷ and that Jacob had obeyed his father and his mother and had gone to Paddan-aram. ⁸ So Esau saw that the daughters of Canaan displeased his father Isaac; ⁹ and Esau went to Ishmael, and married, besides the wives that he had, Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael, Abraham's son, the sister of Nebaioth.

Micah 1:1, 5:7-13

Reader 8 Amen*¹ The word of Yahweh which came to Micah of Moresheth in the days of Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, which he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem.

^{5:7} Then the remnant of Jacob will be among many peoples like dew from Yahweh, like showers on vegetation which do not wait for man or delay for the sons of men. ⁸ The remnant of Jacob will be among

the nations, among many peoples like a lion among the beasts of the forest, like a young lion among flocks of sheep, which, if he passes through, tramples down and tears, and there is none to rescue. ⁹ Your hand will be lifted up against your adversaries, and all your enemies will be cut off. ¹⁰ "It will be in that day," declares Yahweh, "that I will cut off your horses from among you and destroy your chariots. ¹¹ I will also cut off the cities of your land and tear down all your fortifications. ¹² I will cut off sorceries from your hand, and you will have fortune-tellers no more. ¹³ I will cut off your carved images and your sacred pillars from among you, so that you will no longer bow down to the work of your hands.

Psalm 23 *(To be sung.) A Psalm of David.*

¹ Yahweh is my shepherd, I shall not want. ² He makes me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside quiet waters. ³ He restores my soul; He guides me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake. ⁴ Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. ⁵ You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You have anointed my head with oil; my cup overflows. ⁶ Surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of Yahweh forever.

Romans 10:20 – 11:36

Reader 9 Amen* ²⁰ And Isaiah is very bold and says, "I was found by those who did not seek me, I became manifest to those who did not ask for me." ²¹ But as for Israel He says, "All the day I have stretched out My hands to a disobedient and obstinate people." ^{11:1} I say then, God has not rejected His people, has He? May it never be! For I too am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. ² God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew.

Reader 10 Amen* Or do you not know what the Scripture says in the passage about Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel? ³ "Lord, they have killed Your prophets, they have torn down Your altars, and I alone am left, and they are seeking my life." ⁴ But what is the divine response to him? "I have kept for Myself seven-thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal." ⁵ In the same way then, there has also come to be at the present time a remnant according to God's gracious choice. ⁶ But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace. ⁷ What then? What Israel is seeking, it has not obtained, but those who were chosen obtained it, and the rest were hardened; ⁸ just as it is written, "God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes to see not and ears to hear not, down to this very day." ⁹ And David says, "Let their table become a snare and a trap, and a stumblingblock and a retribution to them. ¹⁰ "Let their eyes be darkened to see not, and bend their backs forever."

Reader 11 Amen* ¹¹ I say then, they did not stumble so as to fall, did they? May it never be! But by their transgression salvation has come to the Gentiles, to make them jealous. ¹² Now if their transgression is riches for the world and their failure is riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their fulfillment be! ¹³ But I am speaking to you who are Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle of Gentiles, I magnify my ministry, ¹⁴ if somehow I might move to jealousy my fellow countrymen and save some of them. ¹⁵ For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?

Reader 12 Amen* ¹⁶ If the first piece of dough is holy, the lump is also; and if the root is holy, the branches are too. ¹⁷ But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive, were grafted in among them and became partaker with them of the rich root of the olive tree, ¹⁸ do not be arrogant toward the branches; but if you are arrogant, remember that it is not you who supports the root, but the root supports you. ¹⁹ You will say then, "Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in." ²⁰ Quite right, they were broken off for their unbelief, but you stand by your faith. Do not be conceited, but fear; ²¹ for if God did not spare the natural branches, He will not spare you, either.

Reader 13 Amen* ²² Behold then the kindness and severity of God; to those who fell, severity, but to you, God's kindness, if you continue in His kindness; otherwise you also will be cut off. ²³ And they also, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. ²⁴ For if you were cut off from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these who are the natural branches be grafted into their own olive tree? ²⁵ For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery-- so that you will not be wise in your own estimation-- that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in; ²⁶ and so all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, "The deliverer will come from Zion, He will remove ungodliness from Jacob." ²⁷ "This is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins." ²⁸ From the standpoint of the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but from the standpoint of God's choice they are beloved for the sake of the fathers; ²⁹ for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.

Reader 14 Amen* ³⁰ For just as you once were disobedient to God, but now have been shown mercy because of their disobedience, ³¹ so these also now have been disobedient, that because of the mercy shown to you they also may now be shown mercy. ³² For God has shut up all in disobedience so that He may show mercy to all. ³³ Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! ³⁴ For who has known the mind of Yahweh, or who became His counselor? ³⁵ Or who has given to Him that it might be paid back to him again? ³⁶ For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.

Commentary:

Isaac was 123, and Rebecca was 97 years old. Jacob and Esau were 63. Leah and Rachel were just born – when Jacob was 63.

(From the Hebrew text:) Jacob had not finished leaving when Esau entered. Had Esau come any sooner, Jacob would not have received the blessing. Esau proceeded to prepare the meal. He then requested, in a rough manner, that his father rise up and eat; this is contrasted to Jacob's manner – he had asked his father politely to be seated comfortably to eat. Esau requested that Isaac “eat of his son's game” as though he were Isaac's only son. Note the similarities of Roman (Edomite) theology today.

As Isaac realized that he had been deceived, he became overcome with anxiety. Who else would know to do what he had instructed Esau? Who could have found and prepared game faster than skillful Esau could get there? What had God brought upon him? Seeing God's will in what was done, he confirmed, indeed the blessing would rest upon the one who came before. Isaac said, “Your brother came with cleverness” – which has dual meaning: Midrash renders it “wisdom of the Torah,” or it may be rendered “deceit,” (meaning permissible cunning, not malicious deceit).

The Midrash says that Jacob's means of obtaining the blessing caused Esau to “cry out,” and therefore, Jacob's descendants in Shushan (with Mordechai) were caused to “cry out – loudly and bitterly” (Esther 4:1) when they were destined to be slaughtered by Esau's descendants (with Hamaan). The name “Jacob” (Ya'acov – heel) is the same as a word meaning “taking a circuitous route to achieve one's goal.” It is ultimately best to rely upon God's means of fulfilling His purposes!

When Esau asked his father if there was not a blessing left for him, Isaac answered that Jacob had been made a lord over him: if anything could be given Esau, it would ultimately revert to Jacob. Then Isaac said (not stated as giving a blessing) that Esau would dwell in fertile regions of the earth (while Jacob would dwell in Canaan). Also, Esau would be a successful hunter/warrior.

When Esau, in anger, plotted to kill his brother, Rebecca sent Jacob away for a few days, till his wrath subsided; Rebecca never saw her son again. “Edom's . . . anger tore perpetually and he kept his wrath forever” – Amos 1:11.

Rebecca told Isaac that Esau's Hittite wives were so troubling to her, that she wanted Jacob to take a wife from a different land. Thus, Isaac sent Jacob out to the land of Rebecca's birth, to obtain a “pure bride.”

At the “Day of the Atonements,” Messiah's bride must be pure, not idolatrous.

Esau, seeing his parent's displeasure in his Hittite wives, took another wife: an Ishmaelite named Mahalath, meaning illness or disease. Thus, he added more displeasure.

Psalm 23 is the blessing for the pure bride. She is loved and enjoys comfort and full provision forever.

David wrote Psalm 23 when he was fleeing from King Saul, and living in a dry, desolate forest called “*Ya'ar Cherei*” – Forest of Baked Earthenware (1 Samuel 22:6) [*Artscroll Tanach – Tehillim*]. He writes concerning not only himself, but concerning Israel, the Bride of Messiah.

(V.1) The first word is “Yahweh” – the Gracious, Merciful God. Yahweh is the shepherd, providing all her needs, as we also read in Genesis 48:15 (Joseph representing Israel) and Psalm 80:1. Those who are purified will forsake worldly desires, and rejoice in God’s provision for doing His work. Messiah’s betrothed bride will be focused on desires of the world to come. “I shall not lack” is seen as a reference to the world to come – no present condition should turn us away from our goal of eternal reward.

(V.2) As in the wilderness, Yahweh – as a shepherd – provided lush meadows, tranquil waters, and continual leadership, so will be the case in the new world, when Messiah shall dwell with His Bride.

(V.3) For the overcomers, He restores the soul, and leads in paths of righteousness – to the glory of His Name.

(V.4) While David may be thinking immediately of the Wilderness of Zif (1 Samuel 23), where he was looking at death at the hands of Saul, the ultimate picture is of the end of this world – whether that be our individual death or the end of the age – when God in His grace will be with us.

(V.5) In the wilderness, Israel was given food in full view of her tormenters, who predicted starvation. To “saturate with fat” (translated “anointed my head with oil”) may refer to the quail: they were a curse to the lustful, but a blessing to the righteous [*Midrash Shemot Rabba* 25:7]. An overflowing cup refers to generous provision, beyond basic requirement.

(V.6) While Saul was pursuing David, God was working all things together for his good. Though situations in this life may seem as evil upon us, we must remember that . . . this life is just a test, a preparation time; it is all for our eternal good!

Romans 11:26

“All Israel will be saved; just as it is written, “The Deliverer will come from Zion, He will remove ungodliness from Jacob.”

“You shall call His Name Yeshua, for He shall save His people from their sins” – Matthew 1:21. “All Israel (Jacob)” that shall be saved (Romans 11:26) is a reference to people all twelve tribes, meaning not only Judah (Jews); “the world” that God loved (John 3:16) refers to people of all nations, meaning not only the physical descendants of Jacob.

The above statements mean neither that every descendant of Jacob will be saved, nor that every person of the world is loved* by God. Rather, a remnant – chosen and called and faithful – will be saved. “In the same way then (as in Elijah’s day), there has also come to be at the present time a remnant according to election by grace” (v. 5) – a remnant which includes Paul, a Benjaminite (of Jacob, but not Judah). When Yeshua said, “Salvation is of the Jews” (John 4:22), He was explaining that Messiah must be through Judah – which He was.

* “God so loved the world.” The word “world” has several major usages in the Apostolic Writings. In this case it refers to peoples of all the world, in contrast to the people of just one nation. It almost never refers to every person of the world. It often refers to the nations other than Israel.

Examples:

John 1:10 – The world (unbelievers) did not know Him.

John 12:19 – The world (not only Jews) is gone after Him.

Acts 17:6 – These men have upset the world (not Judea only).

James 2:5 – God chose the poor of this world (every poor person?) to be rich in faith.

God never said that He “loves the sinner but hates the sin.” He did say that He “hates all workers of iniquity” – Psalm 5:5, see also Psalm 115:5.

Many descendants of the twelve tribes of Israel fall into unbelief. Many Gentiles are grafted into Messiah. We must be sure that we are not in unbelief. Fallen Israelites can be grafted back in through repentance and faith. We have no basis for pride: God has chosen a remnant from the whole world – by His grace, not

based on any good or evil we would do. When we receive faith, by grace, we turn around with desire to follow Yeshua.

“To Him be the glory forever. Amen.”

Vayeitzei Yaacov / Jacob Departed

Genesis 28:10 – 29:30 Hosea 12:13 Psalm 24 Luke 2:1-39

Commentary Y1-27

Tishrei 12, 5762 / Sept 29, 2001

Tishrei 10, 5765 / Sept 25, 2004

Reader 1 Amen*¹⁰ Then Jacob departed from Beersheba and went toward Haran.¹¹ He came to a certain place and spent the night there, because the sun had set; and he took one of the stones of the place and put it under his head, and lay down in that place.¹² He had a dream, and behold, a ladder was set on the earth with its top reaching to heaven; and behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it.¹³ And behold, Yahweh stood above it and said, "I am Yahweh, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie, I will give it to you and to your descendants."¹⁴ "Your descendants will also be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south; and in you and in your descendants shall all the families of the earth be blessed."¹⁵ "Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you."

Reader 2 Amen*¹⁶ Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, "Surely Yahweh is in this place, and I did not know it."¹⁷ He was afraid and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."¹⁸ So Jacob rose early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put under his head and set it up as a pillar and poured oil on its top.¹⁹ He called the name of that place Bethel; however, previously the name of the city had been Luz.²⁰ Then Jacob made a vow, saying, "If God will be with me and will keep me on this journey that I take, and will give me food to eat and garments to wear,²¹ and I return to my father's house in safety, then Yahweh will be my God."²² "This stone, which I have set up as a pillar, will be God's house, and of all that You give me I will surely give a tenth to You."

Reader 3 Amen*^{9:1} Then Jacob went on his journey, and came to the land of the sons of the east.² He looked, and saw a well in the field, and behold, three flocks of sheep were lying there beside it, for from that well they watered the flocks. Now the stone on the mouth of the well was large.³ When all the flocks were gathered there, they would then roll the stone from the mouth of the well and water the sheep, and put the stone back in its place on the mouth of the well.⁴ Jacob said to them, "My brothers, where are you from?" And they said, "We are from Haran."⁵ He said to them, "Do you know Laban the son of Nahor?" And they said, "We know him."

Reader 4 Amen*⁶ And he said to them, "Is it well with him?" And they said, "It is well, and here is Rachel his daughter coming with the sheep."⁷ He said, "Behold, it is still high day; it is not time for the livestock to be gathered. Water the sheep, and go, pasture them."⁸ But they said, "We cannot, until all the flocks are gathered, and they roll the stone from the mouth of the well; then we water the sheep."⁹ While he was still speaking with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep, for she was a shepherdess.¹⁰ When Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mother's brother, and the sheep of Laban his mother's brother, Jacob went up and rolled the stone from the mouth of the well and watered the flock of Laban his mother's brother.

Reader 5 Amen*¹¹ Then Jacob kissed Rachel, and lifted his voice and wept.¹² Jacob told Rachel that he was a relative of her father and that he was Rebekah's son, and she ran and told her father.¹³ So when Laban heard the news of Jacob his sister's son, he ran to meet him, and embraced him and kissed him and brought him to his house. Then he related to Laban all these things.¹⁴ Laban said to him, "Surely you are my bone and my flesh." And he stayed with him a month.¹⁵ Then Laban said to Jacob, "Because you are my relative, should you therefore serve me for nothing? Tell me, what shall your wages be?"

Reader 6 Amen*¹⁶ Now Laban had two daughters; the name of the older was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel.¹⁷ And Leah's eyes were weak, but Rachel was beautiful of form and face.¹⁸ Now Jacob loved Rachel, so he said, "I will serve you seven years for your younger daughter Rachel."¹⁹ Laban said, "It is better that I give her to you than to give her to another man; stay with me."²⁰ So Jacob served seven years for Rachel and they seemed to him but a few days because of his love for her.²¹ Then Jacob said to Laban, "Give me my wife, for my time is completed, that I may go in to her."

Reader 7 Amen*²² Laban gathered all the men of the place and made a feast.²³ Now in the evening he took his daughter Leah, and brought her to him; and Jacob went in to her.²⁴ Laban also gave his maid Zilpah to his daughter Leah as a maid.²⁵ So it came about in the morning that, behold, it was Leah! And he said to Laban, "What is this you have done to me? Was it not for Rachel that I served with you? Why then have you deceived me?"²⁶ But Laban said, "It is not the practice in our place to marry off the younger before the firstborn."²⁷ "Complete the week of this one, and we will give you the other also for the service which you shall serve with me for another seven years."²⁸ Jacob did so and completed her week, and he gave him his daughter Rachel as his wife.²⁹ Laban also gave his maid Bilhah to his daughter Rachel as her maid.³⁰ So

Jacob went in to Rachel also, and indeed he loved Rachel more than Leah, and he served with Laban for another seven years.

Hosea 12:13

Reader 8 Amen* But by a prophet Yahweh brought Israel from Egypt, and by a prophet he was kept.

Psalm 24 (To be sung.) *A Psalm of David.*

¹ The earth is Yahweh's, and all it contains, the world, and those who dwell in it. ² For He has founded it upon the seas and established it upon the rivers. ³ Who may ascend into the hill of Yahweh? And who may stand in His holy place? ⁴ He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not lifted up his soul to falsehood and has not sworn deceitfully. ⁵ He shall receive a blessing from Yahweh and righteousness from the God of his salvation. ⁶ This is the generation of those who seek Him, who seek Your face-- even Jacob. Selah. ⁷ Lift up your heads, O gates, and be lifted up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in! ⁸ Who is the King of glory? Yahweh strong and mighty, Yahweh mighty in battle. ⁹ Lift up your heads, O gates, and lift them up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in! ¹⁰ Who is this King of glory? Yahweh of hosts, He is the King of glory. Selah.

Luke 2:1-39

Reader 9 Amen* ¹ Now in those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus, that a census be taken of all the inhabited earth. ² This was the first census taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³ And everyone was on his way to register for the census, each to his own city. ⁴ Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, ⁵ in order to register along with Mary, who was betrothed to him, and was with child. ⁶ While they were there, the days were completed for her to give birth. ⁷ And she gave birth to her firstborn son; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

Reader 10 Amen* ⁸ In the same region there were some shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened. ¹⁰ But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; ¹¹ for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Messiah the Lord. ¹² "This will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." ¹³ And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, ¹⁴ "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased." ¹⁵ When the angels had gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds began saying to one another, "Let us go straight to Bethlehem then, and see this thing that has happened which the Lord has made known to us." ¹⁶ So they came in a hurry and found their way to Mary and Joseph, and the baby as He lay in the manger. ¹⁷ When they had seen this, they made known the statement which had been told them about this Child. ¹⁸ And all who heard it wondered at the things which were told them by the shepherds. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured all these things, pondering them in her heart. ²⁰ The shepherds went back, glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen, just as had been told them.

Reader 11 Amen* ²¹ And when eight days had passed, before His circumcision, His name was then called Yeshua, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb. ²² And when the days for their purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him up to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord ²³ (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male that opens the womb shall be called holy to Yahweh"), ²⁴ and to offer a sacrifice according to what was said in the Law of the Lord, "A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons."

Reader 12 Amen* ²⁵ And there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel; and the Holy Spirit was upon him. ²⁶ And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. ²⁷ And he came in the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Yeshua, to carry out for Him the custom of the Law, ²⁸ then he took Him into his arms, and blessed God, and said, ²⁹ "Now Lord, You are releasing Your bond-servant to depart in peace, According to Your word; ³⁰ for my eyes have seen Your salvation, ³¹ which You have prepared in the presence of all peoples, ³² a light of revelation to the gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel." ³³ And His father and mother were amazed at the things which were being said about Him. ³⁴ And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary His mother,

"Behold, this Child is appointed for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and for a sign to be opposed--³⁵ and a sword will pierce even your own soul-- to the end that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed." *Reader 13* Amen*³⁶ And there was a prophetess, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years and had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage,³⁷ and then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple, serving night and day with fastings and prayers.³⁸ At that very moment she came up and began giving thanks to God, and continued to speak of Him to all those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.³⁹ When they had performed everything according to the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own city of Nazareth.

The relationship of this Festival Season with the Temple Torah Cycle:

The Day of Trumpets is for a rehearsal of: hearing the last trump (with the shout of the archangel), the return of Yeshua, and the resurrection of the righteous dead.

Reading #25 for the previous Sabbath includes Genesis 27 - about the Son coming for the blessing, and Psalm 22 - about the crucifixion marks that we will see!

The Day of the Atonements is about purification - Yeshua taking our sins and accounting to us His righteousness.

Reading #26 for the previous Sabbath is about a pure bride (Gen 28:1).

The Feast of Tabernacles is a week of dwelling (eating and sleeping) in a sukkah, and holding a wedding feast - a great feast (of literal food) to which we invite the poor.

Reading #27 for the previous Sabbath is about the wedding feast (Gen 29:22).

The Eighth Day Assembly is about Yeshua dwelling eternally with us.

Reading #28 for the previous Sabbath is about the Groom dwelling with the Bride (Gen 30:20).

Yom haKippurim:

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness" – 1 John 1:9.

It seems that many "Christians" today think that if they ignore their sins, God will forgive them, and they can freely go on in sin. But the Scripture says, "If we confess our sins" – a big if. Then we will be forgiven because God is faithful to perform that conditional promise. And He will cleanse us – that means so that we will overcome, not continue in the sin!

This is not about the redemption that Yeshua made upon a cross, which we receive by faith. It is about cleansing, about being prepared for the marriage. Only those previously redeemed by the Passover may prepare for the marriage to the Lamb at the Feast of Tabernacles.

Commentary:

Time Calculations:

AM 1948: Avraham was born.

[AM stands for *Anno Mundi* – Year of the World, and is intended to represent Adam's age.]

Year of birth: Seth – 130, Enosh – 235, Kenan – 325, Mahalalel – 395, Jared – 460, Enoch – 622, Methuselah – 687, Lamech – 874, Noah – 1056 (Gen 5:3-28);

Shem – 1558 (Shem was 100 years old 2 years after the flood, which occurred when Noah was 600 – Gen 7:6, 11:10);

Arpachshad – 1658, Shelah – 1693, Eber – 1723, Peleg – 1757, Reu – 1787, Serug – 1819, Nahor – 1849, Terah – 1878, and Avraham – 1948 (Gen 11:10-26).

AM 2034: Ishmael was born (Avraham was 86 – Gen 16:16). Ishmael was 14 years older than Isaac.

AM 2048: Isaac was born (Avraham was 100 – Gen 21:5, and Sarah was 90 – Gen 17:17).

AM 2108: Jacob and Esau were born (Isaac was 60 – Gen 25:26, and Ishmael was 74).

AM 2171: Ishmael died (He was 137 – Gen 25:17), after betrothing his daughter Mahalath to Esau (Gen

28:9). Jacob received the blessing and left his father (He was 63: 2171 - 2108 = 63). Rachael and Leah were just born.

Now jump to 2238 and count backwards to 2185.

From 2171 to 2185 = 14 years between leaving home and arriving at Laban's.

[The Talmud teaches that Jacob spent the time studying under Shem and Eber, Priests of the Most High (the priesthood then being the firstborn of the godly line).]

AM 2185: Jacob arrived at Laban's home in Haran.

Jacob worked 7 years for Laban – Gen 29:20.

AM 2192: Jacob married Leah and Rachael: he was 84, they were 21.

Jacob worked 7 more years for Rachael – Gen 29:30.

AM 2199: Joseph was born and Jacob left Laban's home – Gen 30:25.

AM 2229: Joseph, at 30, became Viceroy of Egypt – Gen 41:46.

7 years of plenty, 2 years of famine – Gen 41:47, 45:11.

AM 2238: Jacob was 130 – Gen 47:9 (2108 + 130 = 2238).

(V.10) “Then Jacob departed from Beersheba and went toward Haran.” Beersheba was a place long associated with oaths. We understand that here, that after fourteen years, Jacob resumed his journey (after v.7), to leave the promised land. The sages teach that it took this time for him to learn that God would approve his leaving the promised land: Isaac remained in the land to “possess” it. Jacob left in fulfillment of his mother's instruction to flee the wrath of Esau, and his father's instruction to take a wife not from the land of idolatry.

Jacob left with the barest necessities (v.32:11), and therefore had to tend Laban's flocks for a livelihood. Yeshua was born into this world in a poor state (Luke 2:24), but, like Jacob, will return very rich.

[We have heard the story, how that the stone Jacob laid his head upon (from v.11 of other translations), is the same one that every King and Queen of England has been crowned upon.]

All the prophets (except Moses) received prophecies only in dreams at night, or after a deep sleep had fallen upon them during the day (Rambam).

(V.14) Jacob's offspring being symbolized as “dust of the earth” is taken to mean that, after they as degraded as the dust of the earth (see Isaiah 51:23), they shall “spread out powerfully westward, eastward, northward, and southward”.

(V.16) Jacob clearly understood that his dream was a prophecy from God.

(V.17) The place was a sanctuary for Yahweh's name – a propitious place for prophecy prayer.

(V.20) This is taken as an example: the righteous ask only for necessities, not luxuries. Jacob was saying that, if God would bring him back safely to the Holy Land, then he would be able to serve God fully.

(V.29:1-2) Now, having God's assurance, Jacob went on his way toward Haran. Looking ahead, he saw a well: those who trust Yahweh find renewed strength (Isaiah 40:31).

Those who heard the Last Trump on Yom Teruah are now in the Days of Awe, beholding Yeshua – the well of the water of life

Though Jacob was wearied from his journey, at 77 he was now able to roll away a stone that normally required several shepherds to handle (see v.8 & 10).

(V.9) Laban's 14 year-old daughter Rachael was his shepherdess. Now Jacob would take over that job in order to marry Rachael.

(V.11-20) Jacob kissed Rachael, then wept: Eliezar had come laden with riches to get a bride for Jacob's father, but Jacob came destitute. But, because he was a relative, Laban let him reside there. After a month, Laban offered wages for Jacob's service, and Jacob offered seven years for Rachael.

(V.22) Laban made a great wedding feast. Also, Jacob "fulfilled her week" (v.28).

The Feast of Tabernacles pictures the wedding feast of Yeshua and His Bride, with Yeshua "fulfilling her week".

Psalms 24 is about the Bride who is purified at Yom haKippurim, ready to dwell with Yeshua in His Holy Place.

"Who may ascend into the hill of Yahweh? And who may stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not lifted up his soul to falsehood and has not sworn deceitfully. He shall receive a blessing from Yahweh and righteousness from the God of his salvation. This is the generation of those who seek Him, who seek Your face-- even Jacob. Selah."

The Birth of Yeshua:

(This parallels the picture of the wedding: the birth date is the wedding date.)

(Luke 1:35-36) "And the angel answered and said to (Mary), "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy offspring shall be called the Son of God. "And behold, even your relative Elizabeth has also conceived a son in her old age; and she who was called barren is now in her sixth month."

(Luke 2:7) "And (Mary) gave birth to her first-born son; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn."

(John 1:14) "And the Word became flesh, and tabernacled among us."

The Course of Abiyah is just after Pentecost, following which John the Baptizer was conceived (Luke 1:5). Yeshua was conceived six months later (Luke 1:36), which brings us to Hanukkah – the Feast of Dedication – which we see to represent the dedication of Yeshua, by an angel, at His conception (Luke 1:35). Then, nine months later, we reach Hag Sukkot (Feast of Tabernacles), when Yeshua was born in a sukkah (temporary animal shelter): Mary "laid Him in a manger" (Luke 2:7), "And the Word became flesh, and tabernacled among us" (John 1:14).

If Yeshua were born on the first day of Sukkot, then His circumcision would have been on the "Eighth Day Assembly": that would fit with the ancient idea that circumcision represents the "original state" in Eden, since the Eighth Day Assembly represents the restoration of Eden on earth.

The redemption of Jerusalem (Luke 2:38) follows the antitype of the Feast of Tabernacles: it will occur on the Eighth Day – following the Sabbath Millennium.

Tishrei 17, 5765 / Oct 2, 2004 is the Third Day of Hag Sukkot / Feast of Tabernacles –
the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

Tishrei 22, 5765 / Oct 7, 2004 is Shemini Atzeret / Eighth Day Assembly –
about Messiah dwelling eternally with His Bride.

Tabernacles Day 3 Sabbath

Num 29:20-22

*Reader 1**

Amen. ¹² 'On the fifteenth day of the seventh month you shall have a holy convocation; you shall do no laborious work, and you shall observe a feast to Yahweh for seven days.

²⁰ 'On the third day: (you shall offer) eleven bulls, two rams, fourteen male lambs one year old without defect; ²¹ and their grain offering and their drink offerings for the bulls, for the rams and for the lambs, by their number according to the ordinance; ²² and one male goat for a sin offering, besides the continual burnt offering and its grain offering and its drink offering.

Ex 33:12-34:26

*Reader 2**

Amen. ⁵ Yahweh descended in the cloud and stood there with (Moses) as he called upon the name of Yahweh. ⁶ Then Yahweh passed by in front of him and proclaimed, "Yahweh, Yahweh God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; ⁷ who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished,

Reader 1 Amen* ³¹ Now Yahweh saw that Leah was unloved, and He opened her womb, but Rachel was barren. ³² Leah conceived and bore a son and named him **Reuben**, for she said, "Because Yahweh has seen my affliction; surely now my husband will love me." ³³ Then she conceived again and bore a son and said, "Because Yahweh has heard that I am unloved, He has therefore given me this son also." So she named him **Simeon**. ³⁴ She conceived again and bore a son and said, "Now this time my husband will become attached to me, because I have borne him three sons." Therefore he was named **Levi**. ³⁵ And she conceived again and bore a son and said, "This time I will praise Yahweh." Therefore she named him **Judah**. Then she stopped bearing.

Reader 2 Amen* ^{30:1} Now when Rachel saw that she bore Jacob no children, she became jealous of her sister; and she said to Jacob, "Give me children, or else I die." ² Then Jacob's anger burned against Rachel, and he said, "Am I in the place of God, who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb?" ³ She said, "Here is my maid Bilhah, go in to her that she may bear on my knees, that through her I too may have children."

Reader 3 Amen* ⁴ So she gave him her maid Bilhah as a wife, and Jacob went in to her. ⁵ Bilhah conceived and bore Jacob a son. ⁶ Then Rachel said, "God has vindicated me, and has indeed heard my voice and has given me a son." Therefore she named him **Dan**. ⁷ Rachel's maid Bilhah conceived again and bore Jacob a second son. ⁸ So Rachel said, "With mighty wrestlings I have wrestled with my sister, and I have indeed prevailed." And she named him **Naphtali**.

Reader 4 Amen* ⁹ When Leah saw that she had stopped bearing, she took her maid Zilpah and gave her to Jacob as a wife. ¹⁰ Leah's maid Zilpah bore Jacob a son. ¹¹ Then Leah said, "How fortunate!" So she named him **Gad**. ¹² Leah's maid Zilpah bore Jacob a second son. ¹³ Then Leah said, "Happy am I! For women will call me happy." So she named him **Asher**.

Reader 5 Amen* ¹⁴ Now in the days of wheat harvest Reuben went and found mandrakes in the field, and brought them to his mother Leah. Then Rachel said to Leah, "Please give me some of your son's mandrakes." ¹⁵ But she said to her, "Is it a small matter for you to take my husband? And would you take my son's mandrakes also?" So Rachel said, "Therefore he may lie with you tonight in return for your son's mandrakes."

Reader 6 Amen*¹⁶ When Jacob came in from the field in the evening, then Leah went out to meet him and said, "You must come in to me, for I have surely hired you with my son's mandrakes." So he lay with her that night.¹⁷ God gave heed to Leah, and she conceived and bore Jacob a fifth son.¹⁸ Then Leah said, "God has given me my wages because I gave my maid to my husband." So she named him **Issachar**.
Reader 7 Amen*¹⁹ Leah conceived again and bore a sixth son to Jacob.²⁰ Then Leah said, "God has endowed me with a good gift; **now my husband will dwell with me**, because I have borne him six sons." So she named him **Zebulun**.²¹ Afterward she bore a daughter and named her Dinah.

Isaiah 66:15

Reader 8 Amen*¹⁵ For behold, Yahweh will come in fire and His chariots like the whirlwind, to render His anger with fury, and His rebuke with flames of fire.

[No Psalm]

Revelation 19

Reader 9 Amen*¹ After these things I heard something like a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, "Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God;² because His judgments are true and righteous; for He has judged the great harlot who was corrupting the earth with her immorality, and He has avenged the blood of His bond-servants on her."³ And a second time they said, "Hallelujah! Her smoke rises up forever and ever."⁴ And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who sits on the throne saying, "Amen. Hallelujah!"⁵ And a voice came from the throne, saying, "Give praise to our God, all you His bond-servants, you who fear Him, the small and the great."

Reader 10 Amen*⁶ Then I heard something like the voice of a great multitude and like the sound of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, saying, "Hallelujah! For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns."⁷ "Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for **the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready.**"⁸ It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.⁹ Then he said to me, "Write, **'Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.'**" And he said to me, "These are true words of God."¹⁰ Then I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "Do not do that; I am a fellow servant of yours and your brethren who hold the testimony of Yeshua; worship God. For the testimony of Yeshua is the spirit of prophecy."

Reader 11 Amen*¹¹ And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war.¹² His eyes are a flame of fire, and on His head are many diadems; and He has a name written on Him which no one knows except Himself.¹³ He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God.¹⁴ And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses.¹⁵ From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty.¹⁶ And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, "KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS."¹⁷ Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and he cried out with a loud voice, saying to all the birds which fly in midheaven, "Come, assemble for the great supper of God,¹⁸ so that you may eat the flesh of kings and the flesh of commanders and the flesh of mighty men and the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them and the flesh of all men, both free men and slaves, and small and great."

Reader 12 Amen*¹⁹ And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies assembled to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army.²⁰ And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image; these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone.²¹ And the rest were killed with the sword which came from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse, and all the birds were filled with their flesh.

Commentary:

The Last Great Day (seventh day) of Hag Sukkot (Feast of Tabernacles) represents the Sabbath Millennium – the thousand-year reign of Messiah; it is known as “the climax of the downfall of the power of the
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nations.” It is followed by the “Eighth Day,” representing the restoration, when Yeshua will dwell with us on the renewed earth.

V.30:20 Then Leah said, “God has endowed me with a good gift; **now my husband will dwell with me**, because I have borne him six sons.”

Rev 21:3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and **He shall dwell with them**, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be among them.”

Jacob had twelve sons in seven years:

Leah bore

Reuben in year 1 (near end of year),

Simeon in year 2,

Levi in year 3,

Judah in year 4;

Bilhah (Rachel's maid) bore

Dan in year 4,

Naphtali in year 5;

Zilpah (Leah's maid) bore

Gad in year 5,

Asher in year 6;

Leah bore

Issachar in year 6 (after Reuben brought mandrakes),

Zebulun in year 7 (and also Dinah);

Rachel bore

Joseph in year 7,

Benjamin in year 8, after leaving Haran.

(V.32) Leah bore a son and named him **Re-u-ven** / *Behold, a son!*, for she said, "Because **Yahweh** (mercy) has seen my affliction; surely now my husband will love me." Reuven literally means “see between,” prophetically signifying “see the difference between my son and (Isaac’s first son) Esau.” Esau voluntarily sold his birthright to Jacob, then sought to kill Jacob; Reuven did not give up his birthright to Joseph voluntarily, but did not complain, and tried to save Joseph from the pit.

(V.33) "Because **Yahweh** (Eternal who is Gracious/Merciful) has heard that I am unloved, He has therefore given me this son also." So she named him **Shi-mon**.

(V.34) "Now this time my husband will become attached (an escort) to me, because I have borne him three sons." Therefore he was named **Le-vi**. Levi, a tribe of priests, was destined to *escort* many to their heavenly Father.

(V.35) "This time I will praise **Yahweh** (the Eternal who is Gracious/Merciful)." Therefore she named him **Ye-hu-dah** / *Praiser of Yahweh*.

The names of these children indicate that Jacob became increasingly loving toward Leah with each child: first it could be seen that Leah was unloved, then it could only be heard in the tone of Jacob’s voice that she was unloved, then she only wished to be loved as much as her sister.

30:1 Now when Rachel saw that she bore Jacob no children, she became jealous of her sister; and she said to Jacob, "Give me children, or else I die." 2 **Then Jacob's anger burned against Rachel**, and he said, "Am I in the place of **Elohim** (Creator who Judges), who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb?" 3 And she said, "Here is my maid Bilhah, go in to her, that she may bear on my knees, that through her I too may have children."

5 And Bilhah conceived and bore Jacob a son. 6 Then Rachel said, "**Elohim** has vindicated me, and has indeed heard my voice and has given me a son." Therefore she named him **Dan** / *Judge*.

7 and bore Jacob a second son. 8 So Rachel said, "With mighty wrestlings I have wrestled with my sister, and I have indeed prevailed." And she named him **Naphtali** / *Wrestlings*.

10 And Leah's maid Zilpah bore Jacob a son. 11 Then Leah said, "How fortunate!" So she named him **Gad** / *Fortune*.

12 And a second son. 13 Then Leah said, "Happy am I! For women will call me happy." So she named him **Asher** / *Happiness*.

*Amen** 14 Now in the days of wheat harvest Reuben went and found mandrakes in the field, and brought them to his mother Leah. Then Rachel said to Leah, "Please give me some of your son's mandrakes." 15 But she said to her, "Is it a small matter for you to take my husband? And would you take my son's mandrakes also?" So Rachel said, "Therefore he may lie with you tonight in return for your son's mandrakes." 16 When Jacob came in from the field in the evening, then Leah went out to meet him and said, "You must come in to me, for I have surely hired you with my son's mandrakes." So he lay with her that night.

17 And God gave heed to Leah, and she conceived and bore Jacob a fifth son. 18 Then Leah said, "God has given me my wages, because I gave my maid to my husband." So she named him **Yissachar** / *Recompense*. Yissachar has two s's, representing Leah's words, "sachor sechar-ticha," rewards for giving her handmaid to her husband, and for hiring out of the *dudaim* (mandrakes). Because of the *dudaim* incident, Yissachar was conceived: he clung to the Torah more than any other tribe, making a fragrant aroma ascend up to God – as "dudaim give forth a fragrance" (SS 7:14) [From Zohar].

19 And Leah conceived again and bore a sixth son to Jacob. 20 Then Leah said, "God has endowed me with a good gift; **now my husband will dwell with me**, because I have borne him six sons." So she named him **Zebulun** / *Honor*.

The names of the tribes prophetically tell the story of Israel: **Reuven** – "I have seen (raoh raiti) the affliction of My people (Ex 3:7); **Shimon** – "God heard (sh'ma) their groaning" (Ex 2:24); **Levi** – "Many nations shall join themselves (lava) to Yahweh" (Zech 2:15); **Yehuda** – "In that day you shall say, 'Yahweh, I will praise (yadah) You' " (Isa 12:1); **Dan** – Upon the nation which they shall serve will I execute judgment" (dan) (Gen 13:14); **Naphtali** – "Sweetness drips (nataph) from your lips" (SS 4:11); **Gad** – recalls manna, like coriander (gad) seed (Num 11:7); **Asher** – recalls redemption, "All the nations shall call you fortunate (ashar) (Mal 3:12); (Note: three names are omitted in the midrashic explanation.) **Yoseph** – "Yahweh shall set His hand again (yasaph) a second time to recover the remnants of His people" (Isa 11:11).

Here is the story: God **saw** the affliction of His people under Egyptian bondage. He **heard** their groaning. Many nations **joined** themselves to Yahweh. In that day they said, "Yahweh, I will **praise** You." Upon Egypt God executed **judgment**. He fed Israel with bread from heaven, like coriander **seed**. He redeemed His **fortunate** people, and will **again**, in the future, recover a remnant of His people.

We are in the midst of the Feast of Tabernacles, which represents different futures for two groups of people.

Unbelievers – idolaters – will experience the wrath of God upon this earth – the beginning of the last war. Seventy bullocks, offered over the seven days, represent the seventy nations of this world which will become one kingdom under Messiah. Isaiah 66:15: "For behold, Yahweh will come in fire and His chariots like the whirlwind, to render His anger with fury, and His rebuke with flames of fire." This will be ultimately fulfilled in the battle that begins just before, and ends just after, the Great Last Day, the Sabbath Millennium. We see some details in Revelation 19:15-16: *And from His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may smite the nations; and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."*

Believers – partakers of the Abrahamic Covenant – will experience the greatest time of rejoicing that this world has ever seen: the Marriage Feast of the Lamb. As Leah said (Genesis 30:20), "Now my husband will dwell with me. As we read in Revelation 19:7-9, "The marriage of the Lamb has come, and His Bride has made herself ready. . . Blesses are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb."

Reader 1 Amen.* ²² Then God remembered Rachel, and God gave heed to her and opened her womb. ²³ So she conceived and bore a son and said, "God has taken away my reproach." ²⁴ She named him Joseph, saying, "May Yahweh give me another son."

Reader 2 Amen.* ²⁵ Now it came about when Rachel had borne Joseph, that Jacob said to Laban, "Send me away, that I may go to my own place and to my own country. ²⁶ "Give me my wives and my children for whom I have served you, and let me depart; for you yourself know my service which I have rendered you."

²⁷ But Laban said to him, "If now it pleases you, stay with me; I have divined that Yahweh has blessed me on your account." ²⁸ He continued, "Name me your wages, and I will give it."

Reader 3 Amen.* ²⁹ But he said to him, "You yourself know how I have served you and how your cattle have fared with me. ³⁰ "For you had little before I came and it has increased to a multitude, and Yahweh has blessed you wherever I turned. But now, when shall I provide for my own household also?" ³¹ So he said, "What shall I give you?" And Jacob said, "You shall not give me anything. If you will do this one thing for me, I will again pasture and keep your flock:

Reader 4 Amen.* ³² let me pass through your entire flock today, removing from there every speckled and spotted sheep and every black one among the lambs and the spotted and speckled among the goats; and such shall be my wages. ³³ "So my honesty will answer for me later, when you come concerning my wages. Every one that is not speckled and spotted among the goats and black among the lambs, if found with me, will be considered stolen." ³⁴ Laban said, "Good, let it be according to your word." ³⁵ So he removed on that day the striped and spotted male goats and all the speckled and spotted female goats, every one with white in it, and all the black ones among the sheep, and gave them into the care of his sons. ³⁶ And he put a distance of three days' journey between himself and Jacob, and Jacob fed the rest of Laban's flocks.

Reader 5 Amen.* ³⁷ Then Jacob took fresh rods of poplar and almond and plane trees, and peeled white stripes in them, exposing the white which was in the rods. ³⁸ He set the rods which he had peeled in front of the flocks in the gutters, even in the watering troughs, where the flocks came to drink; and they mated when they came to drink. ³⁹ So the flocks mated by the rods, and the flocks brought forth striped, speckled, and spotted.

Reader 6 Amen.* ⁴⁰ Jacob separated the lambs, and made the flocks face toward the striped and all the black in the flock of Laban; and he put his own herds apart, and did not put them with Laban's flock. ⁴¹ Moreover, whenever the stronger of the flock were mating, Jacob would place the rods in the sight of the flock in the gutters, so that they might mate by the rods; ⁴² but when the flock was feeble, he did not put them in; so the feebler were Laban's and the stronger Jacob's.

Reader 7 Amen.* ⁴³ So the man became exceedingly prosperous, and had large flocks and female and male servants and camels and donkeys.

^{31:1} Now Jacob heard the words of Laban's sons, saying, "Jacob has taken away all that was our father's, and from what belonged to our father he has made all this wealth." ² Jacob saw the attitude of Laban, and behold, it was not friendly toward him as formerly.

1 Samuel 1:11

Reader 8 Amen.* ¹¹ And Hannah made a vow and said, "O Yahweh of hosts, if You will indeed look on the affliction of Your maidservant and remember me, and not forget Your maidservant, but will give Your maidservant a son, then I will give him to Yahweh all the days of his life, and a razor shall never come on his head."

Psalm 25 (To be sung.) A Psalm of David.

To You, O Yahweh, I lift up my soul. ² O my God, in You I trust, do not let me be ashamed; do not let my enemies exult over me. ³ Indeed, none of those who wait for You will be ashamed; those who deal treacherously without cause will be ashamed. ⁴ Make me know Your ways, O Yahweh; teach me Your paths. ⁵ Lead me in Your truth and teach me, for You are the God of my salvation; for You I wait all the day. ⁶ Remember, O Yahweh, Your compassion and Your lovingkindnesses, for they have been from of old. ⁷ Do not remember the sins of my youth or my transgressions; according to Your lovingkindness remember me, for Your goodness' sake, O Yahweh. ⁸ Good and upright is Yahweh; therefore He instructs sinners in the way. ⁹ He leads the humble in justice, and He teaches the humble His way. ¹⁰ All the paths of

Yahweh are lovingkindness and truth to those who keep His covenant and His testimonies. ¹¹ For Your name's sake, O Yahweh, pardon my iniquity, for it is great. ¹² Who is the man who fears Yahweh? He will instruct him in the way he should choose. ¹³ His soul will abide in prosperity, and his descendants will inherit the land. ¹⁴ The secret of Yahweh is for those who fear Him, and He will make them know His covenant. ¹⁵ My eyes are continually toward Yahweh, for He will pluck my feet out of the net. ¹⁶ Turn to me and be gracious to me, for I am lonely and afflicted. ¹⁷ The troubles of my heart are enlarged; bring me out of my distresses. ¹⁸ Look upon my affliction and my trouble, And forgive all my sins. ¹⁹ Look upon my enemies, for they are many, and they hate me with violent hatred. ²⁰ Guard my soul and deliver me; do not let me be ashamed, for I take refuge in You. ²¹ Let integrity and uprightness preserve me, for I wait for You. ²² Redeem Israel, O God, out of all his troubles.

Acts 13:16-41

Reader 9 Amen.* ¹⁶ Paul stood up, and motioning with his hand said, "Men of Israel, and you who fear God, listen: ¹⁷ **The God of this people Israel chose our fathers** and made the people great during their stay in the land of Egypt, and with an uplifted arm He led them out from it. ¹⁸ "For a period of about forty years He put up with them in the wilderness. ¹⁹ "When He had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, He distributed their land as an inheritance-- all of which took about four hundred and fifty years. ²⁰ "After these things He gave them judges until Samuel the prophet. ²¹ "Then they asked for a king, and God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years.

Reader 10 Amen.* ²² "After He had removed him, He raised up David to be their king, concerning whom He also testified and said, 'I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My heart, who will do all My will.' ²³ "From the descendants of this man, according to promise, God has brought to Israel a Savior, Yeshua, ²⁴ after John had proclaimed before His coming a baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. ²⁵ "And while John was completing his course, he kept saying, 'What do you suppose that I am? I am not He. But behold, one is coming after me the sandals of whose feet I am not worthy to untie.'

Reader 11 Amen.* ²⁶ **Brethren, sons of Abraham's family, and those among you who fear God, to us the message of this salvation has been sent.** ²⁷ "For those who live in Jerusalem, and their rulers, recognizing neither Him nor the utterances of the prophets which are read every Sabbath, fulfilled these by condemning Him. ²⁸ "And though they found no ground for putting Him to death, they asked Pilate that He be executed. ²⁹ "When they had carried out all that was written concerning Him, they took Him down from the cross and laid Him in a tomb. ³⁰ "But God raised Him from the dead; ³¹ and for many days He appeared to those who came up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, the very ones who are now His witnesses to the people.

Reader 12 Amen.* ³² "And we preach to you the good news of the promise made to the fathers, ³³ that God has fulfilled this promise to our children in that He raised up Yeshua, as it is also written in the second Psalm, You are My Son; today I have begotten You.' ³⁴ "As for the fact that He raised Him up from the dead, no longer to return to decay, He has spoken in this way: 'I will give You the holy and sure blessings of David.' ³⁵ "Therefore He also says in another Psalm, You will not allow Your Holy One to undergo decay.' ³⁶ "For David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep, and was laid among his fathers and underwent decay; ³⁷ but He whom God raised did not undergo decay.

Reader 13 Amen.* ³⁸ "Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through Him forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, ³⁹ and through Him everyone who believes is freed from all things, from which you could not be freed through the Law of Moses. ⁴⁰ "Therefore take heed, so that the thing spoken of in the Prophets may not come upon you: ⁴¹ Behold, you scoffers, and marvel, and perish; for I am accomplishing a work in your days, a work which you will never believe, though someone should describe it to you."

Commentary:

(V.23) *Rachel* conceived and bore a son and said, "Elohim (the Creator who Judges) has taken away my reproach." 24 And she named him **Yoseph (Increase)**, saying, "May Yahweh (the Eternal who is Gracious) give me another son" – the Messiah (*Yelamdeinu P20*). The name of her second immediate son foreshadowed her distant son, Messiah – Binyamin means "Son of my right hand," or, as his mother called him, Benoni, meaning "Son of sorrow." Yeshua is the Son of God, who sits at His right hand, and a "Man of sorrows, acquainted with grief."

Sons of Yaacov (Jacob):

Year by Leah - Zilpah Rachel - Bilhah

1	Reuven		
2	Shimon		
3	Levi		
4	Yehudah*		Dan
5		Gad	Naphtali
6	Issachar	Asher	
7	Zevulun	Yoseph*	
		(Binyamin)	

* Progenitors of the Messiah – Praiser-of-Yahweh (ancestor of David) and Increase: hence we get "Messiah ben David" and "Messiah ben Yoseph."

(V.25-26) Now it came about when Rachel had borne Yoseph, that Jacob said to Laban, "Send me away, that I may go to my own place and to my own country. "Give me my wives and my children for whom I have served you, and let me depart; for you yourself know my service which I have rendered you."

Jacob prophetically saw Yoseph as Esau's conqueror; therefore he could safely return home (*Midrash*).

(V.27) But Laban said to him, "If now it pleases you, stay with me; I have divined (by occult practices) that Yahweh has blessed me on your account."

Laban selfishly desired to keep Jacob. Upon seeing that flattery would not suffice, Laban asked what price Jacob would require. Jacob responded (paraphrased): "What you have, as a result of my work, is all rightfully yours, in payment for your daughters. Now, in order to provide for my own family, I will continue to work for you, for only those animals (sheep and goats) that are unnaturally colored (small dark dots or wide dark patches) – what God will miraculously provide." Laban readily accepts the generous terms. Taking no chances, Laban removes his flocks that very day – taking more than he was entitled to, and putting them in the care of his sons: Jacob was left with the only poorest of Laban's flock in his care.

[Remember Avraham: in their separation agreement, he let Lot choose first – and Lot chose the fertile land of Sodom and Gomorrah.]

But Jacob had been shown in a dream (v.31:12) that spotted rams would mate with the flock, for his blessing. His timely use of tree "rods" was apparently a way to incite the desired stronger animals to mate with spotted ones.

(V.43) So the man became exceedingly prosperous, and had large flocks and female and male servants and camels and donkeys.

31:1 Now Jacob heard the words of Laban's sons, saying, "Jacob has taken away all that was our father's, and from what belonged to our father he has made all this wealth." 2 And Jacob saw the attitude of Laban, and behold, it was not friendly toward him as formerly.

Insert comments on Haftarah and Psalm

Acts 13:26 **“Brethren, sons of Abraham's family, and those among you who fear God, to us the word of this salvation is sent out.** 38 Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through *Yeshua* forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, 39 and through Him everyone who believes is freed from all things, from which you could not be freed through the Law of Moses. 40 Take heed therefore, so that the thing spoken of in the Prophets may not come upon you: 41 ‘Behold, you scoffers, and marvel, and perish; for I am accomplishing a work in your days, a work which you will never believe, though someone should describe it to you.’ ”

Interestingly, John the baptizer (Acts 13:25) was a Levite. Paul, the speaker here, is a Binyaminite. *Yeshua*, of whom they both speak, is a Yehudaite (Jew); all are descendants of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaacov.

Rachel desired to be a progenitor of Messiah, as did Eve and Sarah.

Those who trust in worldly gain may marvel at the work of God, but they will not believe, even if it is explained to them. Ultimately, they shall perish.

The faith that is of God produces results, as we see in Jacob’s dealings with Laban; a faith that is without results, is not faith at all – “Show me your faith without works (like, how?); I will show you my faith by my works;” “Faith without works is dead.”

Through faith in *Yeshua*, we may be freed from all penalty for sin, and ultimately from sin itself. The Law of Moses shows us the Savior, but the Law is not our salvation. Animal offerings always were, always are, and always will be a prophetic or memorial picture of *Yeshua*; they never did atone for sin (Heb. 10:11), but always “proclaim forgiveness of sins” (Acts 13:38) through *Yeshua*.

Psalm 25

This Psalm is the first Psalm to be arranged *alphabetically* by the first Hebrew letter of each verse.

In the previous Psalm (24), David said that the man who may enter God’s Holy Place is one who has not lifted up his soul to falsehood. Now (v.1) David says that he lifts up his soul to Yahweh. The idea is offering his life to God, to glorify God’s Holy Name.

(V.2) David then says that he has put all of his trust in Yahweh: if he is shamed by God’s lack of response, then the faith of others would be shaken, and God’s faithless enemies would be triumphant – let it not be!

(V.4-5) Here is where we need to follow David: he says, “*Make me know Your ways, O Yahweh; teach me Your paths. Lead me in Your truth and teach me, for You are the God of my salvation.*” The *orach* is a narrow path for the individual that branches off of the *derek* – the main public thoroughfare. Firstly, as believers, we need to know God’s path. We must study His Word, and be taught its meaning. We must learn obedience through his leadings and trials. If He has begun the work of faith in us, then He will work in us to the end to perfect His salvation (Philippians 1:6).

(V.6-7) David asks to be treated as a growing son, being trained from small steps to an able walk. And he asks for forgiveness of sins and rebelliousness of younger years, before he learned better – that God may not remember. Because God is the source of forgiveness and righteousness, it is for His Name’s sake that this is requested.

(V.10) For those who keep His covenant, all of God’s paths are seen as kindness and truth, even when they have affliction and correction. But, for willful transgressors, God’s paths are not seen, and there is stumbling (Hosea 14:10).

(V.22) In the end, David asks that all of God’s people be delivered from distress. We may pray daily for God to remember – to bring all of us to His perfect fullness and deliver us from the distress of growing pains.

Reader 1 Amen.* ³ **Then Yahweh said to Jacob, "Return to the land of your fathers and to your relatives, and I will be with you."** ⁴ So Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah to his flock in the field, ⁵ and said to them, "I see your father's attitude, that it is not friendly toward me as formerly, but the God of my father has been with me. ⁶ "You know that I have served your father with all my strength. ⁷ "Yet your father has cheated me and changed my wages ten times; however, God did not allow him to hurt me. ⁸ "If he spoke thus, 'The speckled shall be your wages,' then all the flock brought forth speckled; and if he spoke thus, 'The striped shall be your wages,' then all the flock brought forth striped. ⁹ "Thus God has taken away your father's livestock and given them to me. ¹⁰ "And it came about at the time when the flock were mating that I lifted up my eyes and saw in a dream, and behold, the male goats which were mating were striped, speckled, and mottled. ¹¹ "Then the angel of God said to me in the dream, 'Jacob,' and I said, 'Here I am.' ¹² "He said, 'Lift up now your eyes and see that all the male goats which are mating are striped, speckled, and mottled; for I have seen all that Laban has been doing to you. ¹³ 'I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed a pillar, where you made a vow to Me; now arise, leave this land, and return to the land of your birth.'"

Reader 2 Amen.* ¹⁴ Rachel and Leah said to him, "Do we still have any portion or inheritance in our father's house? ¹⁵ "Are we not reckoned by him as foreigners? For he has sold us, and has also entirely consumed our purchase price. ¹⁶ "Surely all the wealth which God has taken away from our father belongs to us and our children; now then, do whatever God has said to you." ¹⁷ Then Jacob arose and put his children and his wives upon camels; ¹⁸ and he drove away all his livestock and all his property which he had gathered, his acquired livestock which he had gathered in Paddan-aram, to go to the land of Canaan to his father Isaac. ¹⁹ When Laban had gone to shear his flock, then Rachel stole the household idols that were her father's. ²⁰ And Jacob deceived Laban the Aramean by not telling him that he was fleeing. ²¹ So he fled with all that he had; and he arose and crossed the Euphrates River, and set his face toward the hill country of Gilead.

Reader 3 Amen.* ²² When it was told Laban on the third day that Jacob had fled, ²³ then he took his kinsmen with him and pursued him a distance of seven days' journey, and he overtook him in the hill country of Gilead. ²⁴ God came to Laban the Aramean in a dream of the night and said to him, "Be careful that you do not speak to Jacob either good or bad." ²⁵ Laban caught up with Jacob. Now Jacob had pitched his tent in the hill country, and Laban with his kinsmen camped in the hill country of Gilead. ²⁶ Then Laban said to Jacob, "What have you done by deceiving me and carrying away my daughters like captives of the sword? ²⁷ "Why did you flee secretly and deceive me, and did not tell me so that I might have sent you away with joy and with songs, with timbrel and with lyre; ²⁸ and did not allow me to kiss my sons and my daughters? Now you have done foolishly. ²⁹ "It is in my power to do you harm, but the God of your father spoke to me last night, saying, 'Be careful not to speak either good or bad to Jacob.'

Reader 4 Amen.* ³⁰ "Now you have indeed gone away because you longed greatly for your father's house; but why did you steal my gods?" ³¹ Then Jacob replied to Laban, "Because I was afraid, for I thought that you would take your daughters from me by force. ³² "The one with whom you find your gods shall not live; in the presence of our kinsmen point out what is yours among my belongings and take it for yourself." For Jacob did not know that Rachel had stolen them. ³³ So Laban went into Jacob's tent and into Leah's tent and into the tent of the two maids, but he did not find them. Then he went out of Leah's tent and entered Rachel's tent. ³⁴ Now Rachel had taken the household idols and put them in the camel's saddle, and she sat on them. And Laban felt through all the tent but did not find them. ³⁵ She said to her father, "Let not my lord be angry that I cannot rise before you, for the manner of women is upon me." So he searched but did not find the household idols.

Reader 5 Amen.* ³⁶ Then Jacob became angry and contended with Laban; and Jacob said to Laban, "What is my transgression? What is my sin that you have hotly pursued me? ³⁷ "Though you have felt through all my goods, what have you found of all your household goods? Set it here before my kinsmen and your kinsmen, that they may decide between us two. ³⁸ "These twenty years I have been with you; your ewes and your female goats have not miscarried, nor have I eaten the rams of your flocks. ³⁹ "That which was torn of beasts I did not bring to you; I bore the loss of it myself. You required it of my hand whether stolen by day or stolen by night. ⁴⁰ "Thus I was: by day the heat consumed me and the frost by night, and my sleep fled from my eyes. ⁴¹ "These twenty years I have been in your house; I served you fourteen years for your two

daughters and six years for your flock, and you changed my wages ten times. ⁴² "If the God of my father, the God of Abraham, and the fear of Isaac, had not been for me, surely now you would have sent me away empty-handed. God has seen my affliction and the toil of my hands, so He rendered judgment last night." *Reader 6* Amen.* ⁴³ Then Laban replied to Jacob, "The daughters are my daughters, and the children are my children, and the flocks are my flocks, and all that you see is mine. But what can I do this day to these my daughters or to their children whom they have borne?" ⁴⁴ "So now come, let us make a covenant, you and I, and let it be a witness between you and me." ⁴⁵ Then Jacob took a stone and set it up as a pillar. ⁴⁶ Jacob said to his kinsmen, "Gather stones." So they took stones and made a heap, and they ate there by the heap. ⁴⁷ Now Laban called it Jegar-sahadutha, but Jacob called it Galeed. ⁴⁸ Laban said, "This heap is a witness between you and me this day." Therefore it was named Galeed, ⁴⁹ and Mizpah, for he said, "May Yahweh watch between you and me when we are absent one from the other." ⁵⁰ "If you mistreat my daughters, or if you take wives besides my daughters, although no man is with us, see, God is witness between you and me." ⁵¹ Laban said to Jacob, "Behold this heap and behold the pillar which I have set between you and me." ⁵² "This heap is a witness, and the pillar is a witness, that I will not pass by this heap to you for harm, and you will not pass by this heap and this pillar to me, for harm." ⁵³ "The God of Abraham and the God of Nahor, the God of their father, judge between us." So Jacob swore by the fear of his father Isaac.

Reader 7 Amen.* ⁵⁴ Then Jacob offered a sacrifice on the mountain, and called his kinsmen to the meal; and they ate the meal and spent the night on the mountain. ⁵⁵ Early in the morning Laban arose, and kissed his sons and his daughters and blessed them. Then Laban departed and returned to his place.

^{32:1} Now as Jacob went on his way, the angels of God met him. ² Jacob said when he saw them, "This is God's camp." So he named that place Mahanaim.

Jeremiah 30:10-16

Reader 8 Amen.* ¹⁰ 'Fear not, O Jacob My servant,' declares Yahweh, 'and do not be dismayed, O Israel; for behold, I will save you from afar and your offspring from the land of their captivity. And Jacob will return and will be quiet and at ease, and no one will make him afraid.' ¹¹ 'For I am with you,' declares Yahweh, 'to save you; for I will destroy completely all the nations where I have scattered you, only I will not destroy you completely. But I will chasten you justly and will by no means leave you unpunished.' ¹² "For thus says Yahweh, 'Your wound is incurable and your injury is serious.' ¹³ 'There is no one to plead your cause; no healing for your sore, no recovery for you.' ¹⁴ 'All your lovers have forgotten you, they do not seek you; for I have wounded you with the wound of an enemy, with the punishment of a cruel one, because your iniquity is great and your sins are numerous.' ¹⁵ 'Why do you cry out over your injury? Your pain is incurable. Because your iniquity is great and your sins are numerous, I have done these things to you.' ¹⁶ 'Therefore all who devour you will be devoured; and all your adversaries, every one of them, will go into captivity; and those who plunder you will be for plunder, and all who prey upon you I will give for prey.'

Micah 6:3-7:20

Reader 9 Amen.* ³ "My people, what have I done to you, and how have I wearied you? Answer Me. ⁴ "Indeed, I brought you up from the land of Egypt and ransomed you from the house of slavery, and I sent before you Moses, Aaron and Miriam. ⁵ "My people, remember now what Balak king of Moab counseled and what Balaam son of Beor answered him, and from Shittim to Gilgal, so that you might know the righteous acts of Yahweh." ⁶ With what shall I come to Yahweh and bow myself before the God on high? Shall I come to Him with burnt offerings, with yearling calves? ⁷ Does Yahweh take delight in thousands of rams, in ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I present my firstborn for my rebellious acts, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?

Reader 10 Amen.* ⁸ He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does Yahweh require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? ⁹ The voice of Yahweh will call to the city-- and it is sound wisdom to fear Your name: "Hear, O tribe. Who has appointed its time? ¹⁰ "Is there yet a man in the wicked house, along with treasures of wickedness and a short measure that is cursed? ¹¹ "Can I justify wicked scales and a bag of deceptive weights? ¹² "For the rich men of the city are full of violence, her residents speak lies, and their tongue is deceitful in their mouth. ¹³ "So also I will make you sick, striking you down, desolating you because of your sins. ¹⁴ "You will eat, but you will not be satisfied, and your vileness will be in your midst. You will try to remove for safekeeping, but you will not preserve anything, and what you do preserve I will give to the sword. ¹⁵ "You will sow but you will not reap. You

will tread the olive but will not anoint yourself with oil; and the grapes, but you will not drink wine. ¹⁶ "The statutes of Omri and all the works of the house of Ahab are observed; and in their devices you walk. Therefore I will give you up for destruction and your inhabitants for derision, and you will bear the reproach of My people."

Reader 11 Amen.* ¹ Woe is me! For I am like the fruit pickers, like the grape gatherers. There is not a cluster of grapes to eat, or a first-ripe fig which I crave. ² The godly person has perished from the land, and there is no upright person among men. All of them lie in wait for bloodshed; each of them hunts the other with a net. ³ Concerning evil, both hands do it well. The prince asks, also the judge, for a bribe, and a great man speaks the desire of his soul; so they weave it together. ⁴ The best of them is like a briar, the most upright like a thorn hedge. The day when you post your watchmen, your punishment will come. Then their confusion will occur. ⁵ Do not trust in a neighbor; do not have confidence in a friend. From her who lies in your bosom guard your lips. ⁶ For son treats father contemptuously, daughter rises up against her mother, daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; a man's enemies are the men of his own household.

Reader 12 Amen.* ⁷ But as for me, I will watch expectantly for Yahweh; I will wait for the God of my salvation. My God will hear me. ⁸ Do not rejoice over me, O my enemy. Though I fall I will rise; though I dwell in darkness, Yahweh is a light for me. ⁹ I will bear the indignation of Yahweh because I have sinned against Him, until He pleads my case and executes justice for me. He will bring me out to the light, and I will see His righteousness. ¹⁰ Then my enemy will see, and shame will cover her who said to me, "Where is Yahweh your God?" My eyes will look on her; at that time she will be trampled down like mire of the streets. ¹¹ It will be a day for building your walls. On that day will your boundary be extended. ¹² It will be a day when they will come to you from Assyria and the cities of Egypt, from Egypt even to the Euphrates, even from sea to sea and mountain to mountain. ¹³ And the earth will become desolate because of her inhabitants, on account of the fruit of their deeds.

Reader 13 Amen.* ¹⁴ Shepherd Your people with Your scepter, the flock of Your possession which dwells by itself in the woodland, in the midst of a fruitful field. Let them feed in Bashan and Gilead as in the days of old. ¹⁵ "As in the days when you came out from the land of Egypt, I will show you miracles." ¹⁶ Nations will see and be ashamed of all their might. They will put their hand on their mouth, their ears will be deaf. ¹⁷ They will lick the dust like a serpent, like reptiles of the earth. They will come trembling out of their fortresses; to Yahweh our God they will come in dread and they will be afraid before You. ¹⁸ Who is a God like You, who pardons iniquity and passes over the rebellious act of the remnant of His possession? He does not retain His anger forever, because He delights in unchanging love. ¹⁹ He will again have compassion on us; He will tread our iniquities under foot. Yes, You will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea. ²⁰ You will give truth to Jacob and unchanging love to Abraham, which You swore to our forefathers from the days of old.

Psalm 26 *(To be sung.) A Psalm of David.*

Vindicate me, O Yahweh, for I have walked in my integrity, and I have trusted in Yahweh without wavering. ² Examine me, O Yahweh, and try me; test my mind and my heart. ³ For Your lovingkindness is before my eyes, and I have walked in Your truth. ⁴ I do not sit with deceitful men, nor will I go with pretenders. ⁵ I hate the assembly of evildoers, and I will not sit with the wicked. ⁶ I shall wash my hands in innocence, and I will go about Your altar, O Yahweh, ⁷ that I may proclaim with the voice of thanksgiving and declare all Your wonders. ⁸ O Yahweh, I love the habitation of Your house and the place where Your glory dwells. ⁹ Do not take my soul away along with sinners, nor my life with men of bloodshed, ¹⁰ in whose hands is a wicked scheme, and whose right hand is full of bribes. ¹¹ But as for me, I shall walk in my integrity; redeem me, and be gracious to me. ¹² My foot stands on a level place; in the congregations I shall bless Yahweh.

James 4:1-12

Reader 14 Amen.* ¹ What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members? ² You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. And you are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask. ³ You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures. ⁴ You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. ⁵ Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose: "He jealously desires the Spirit which He has made to dwell in us"? ⁶ But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, "God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble." ⁷ Submit

therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. 8 Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. 9 Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy to gloom. 10 Humble yourselves in the presence of Yahweh, and He will exalt you. 11 Do not speak against one another, brethren. He who speaks against a brother, or judges his brother, speaks against the law, and judges the law; but if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law, but a judge of it. 12 There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the One who is able to save and to destroy; but who are you who judge your neighbor?

Commentary:

(V.3) *Yahweh said to Jacob, "Return (Shuv) to the land of your fathers and to your relatives, and I will be with you."* Yahweh, the Eternal Gracious One promised protection in the Land – safety from Esau, and provision for his appointed life's service.

Returning to Eretz Israel signifies a return to fulfill God's Kingdom purpose.

Shuv – return, is the root word of teshuva – repentance, which means "return to God"; we are all commanded to return to our creator, whose ways we have left. God has promised us protection and answered prayer, only if we are walking in His place – acting "in His name" (as an ambassador). This does not mean everyone should be missionary (in the common sense of the word). A father or mother is acting in God's name when raising children for the Kingdom of Heaven, in contrast to raising them for their worldly gain and pleasure. An employee is working in God's name when he or she is faithfully laboring for that which God supplies so that he or she can serve God.

As SABBATH was God's goal in six days of creation, so worship on Sabbath is to be our goal in working the other six days, a day to look forward to; this applies to both weekly Sabbaths and our final rest. Sabbath should give us part of the spiritual strength we need for the week, but is not just a day to rest toward better performance of worldly cares.

Isaiah 6:9-10 And He said, "Go, and tell this people: 'Keep on listening, but do not perceive; keep on looking, but do not understand.' Render the hearts of this people insensitive, their ears dull, and their eyes dim, lest they see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts, and **return** and be healed."

(Yeshua) Matthew 13:15 For the heart of this people has become dull, and with their ears they scarcely hear, and they have closed their eyes lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart and **return**, and I should heal them.'

(Paul) Acts 28:26 (Isaiah) saying, 'Go to this people and say, "You will keep on hearing, but will not understand; And you will keep on seeing, but will not perceive; 27 For the heart of this people has become dull, And with their ears they scarcely hear, And they have closed their eyes; Lest they should see with their eyes, And hear with their ears, And understand with their heart and **return**, And I should heal them.'" 28 "Let it be known to you therefore, that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will also listen."

Acts 3:19 "Repent therefore and **return**, that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the *Lord;

Romans 1:25 They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever.

Gen 32:9 And Jacob said, "O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, O Yahweh, who didst say to me, '**Return** to your country and to your relatives, and I will prosper you,' 10 I am unworthy of all the lovingkindness and of all the faithfulness which Thou hast shown to Thy servant; for with my staff only I crossed this Jordan, and now I have become two companies. 11 "Deliver me, I pray, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau; for I fear him, lest he come and attack me, the mothers with the

children. 12 "For Thou didst say, 'I will surely prosper you, and make your descendants as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.'"

Jacob's manner of leaving Paddan Aram with great wealth was prophetic of his descendants' leaving Egypt with their earned wealth.

(V.4) So Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah to his flock in the field. Before leaving, Jacob called them to a private place and explained the situation to them. (V.14-16) And Rachel and Leah answered and said to him, "Do we still have any portion or inheritance in our father's house? "Are we not reckoned by him as foreigners? For he has sold us, and has also entirely consumed our purchase price. "Surely all the wealth which God has taken away from our father belongs to us and our children; now then, do whatever God has said to you." Presumably, they dealt with the handmaids and the children.

Laban: a type of the world – not fair (just).

Laban dealt unjustly with Jacob, changing his wages ten times. But each time he tried to reduce Jacob's share of the herd, God caused the remaining portion to thrive more.

Laban dealt unjustly with his own daughters. They said that he reckoned them as foreigners: rather than giving them a dowry, he had sold them (for fourteen years' labor), and had also entirely consumed their purchase price.

(V.17-18) Then Jacob arose and put his children and his wives upon camels; and he drove away all his livestock and all his property which he had gathered, his acquired livestock which he had gathered in Paddan-aram, to go to the land of Canaan to his father Isaac. (V.20) Jacob deceived "Laban the Cheat (Aramean)" by fleeing without notice. He crossed the Euphrates River and rested the seventh day in the fertile pastures of Gilead.

Laban, who had been three days away from home shearing sheep, caught up to Jacob, with intent to kill him (See Deuteronomy 26:5). But God came Laban in a dream, telling him to speak to Jacob of neither good nor evil: God wanted Jacob to leave, so Laban was neither allowed to entice Jacob back with rewards, nor to threaten him to force him back. He did, however, accuse Jacob of leading his daughters away captives of the sword – meaning like prisoners of war. Note Laban's cruelty: he told his grandsons that it was in his power to do them all harm!

Rachel took idols from her father's house. Recent archaeological finds have shed interesting light on the significance: these idols represented title to property. The reason that Laban chased after Jacob, was that the deed to his property was at stake. This would fit with Rachel's statement about all her father's wealth belonging to them. It might help explain the severity of Jacob's offer: "The one with whom you find your gods shall not live."

Laban's attitude is typical of the world: "The daughters are my daughters, and the children are my children, and the flocks are my flocks, and all that you see is mine," also inferring that Jacob had taken them by fraud.

Since Laban was untrustworthy, and therefore trusted no one else, he proposed a permanent, tangible, recognizable symbol – a monument, as an open witness to all that neither would harm the other. Laban called it Yegar-sahadusa (Aramaic), but Jacob called it Galeed (Hebrew) – both meaning "The Mound is a Witness." "Mitzpah" means watchtower – "May Yahweh watch between you and me when we are absent one from the other."

(V.32:1-2) Now as Jacob went on his way, the angels of God met him. And Jacob said when he saw them, "This is God's camp" – an assurance of peace and safety, in contrast to the fear of encountering Esau's camp. So he named that place Mahanaim – "A pair of camps."

Vayishlah / Then He Sent

Genesis 32:3 – 33:17 Obadiah 1:1 Psalm 27 James 1:1-12
(32:4 in Hebrew Bibles)

Commentary Y1-31

Heshvan 10, 5762 / Oct 27, 2001
Heshvan 8, 5765 / Oct 23, 2004

Reader 1 Amen.* ³ Then Jacob sent messengers before him to his brother Esau in the land of Seir, the country of Edom. ⁴ He also commanded them saying, "Thus you shall say to my lord Esau: 'Thus says your servant Jacob, 'I have sojourned with Laban, and stayed until now; ⁵ I have oxen and donkeys and flocks and male and female servants; and I have sent to tell my lord, that I may find favor in your sight.'"⁶ The messengers returned to Jacob, saying, "We came to your brother Esau, and furthermore he is coming to meet you, and four hundred men are with him."⁷ Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed; and he divided the people who were with him, and the flocks and the herds and the camels, into two companies;⁸ for he said, "If Esau comes to the one company and attacks it, then the company which is left will escape."
Reader 2 Amen.* ⁹ Jacob said, "O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, O Yahweh, who said to me, 'Return to your country and to your relatives, and I will prosper you,'¹⁰ I am unworthy of all the lovingkindness and of all the faithfulness which You have shown to Your servant; for with my staff only I crossed this Jordan, and now I have become two companies."¹¹ "Deliver me, I pray, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau; for I fear him, that he will come and attack me and the mothers with the children."¹² "For You said, 'I will surely prosper you and make your descendants as the sand of the sea, which is too great to be numbered.'"¹³ So he spent the night there. Then he selected from what he had with him a present for his brother Esau:¹⁴ two hundred female goats and twenty male goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams,¹⁵ thirty milking camels and their colts, forty cows and ten bulls, twenty female donkeys and ten male donkeys.

Reader 3 Amen.* ¹⁶ He delivered them into the hand of his servants, every drove by itself, and said to his servants, "Pass on before me, and put a space between droves."¹⁷ He commanded the one in front, saying, "When my brother Esau meets you and asks you, saying, 'To whom do you belong, and where are you going, and to whom do these animals in front of you belong?'"¹⁸ then you shall say, 'These belong to your servant Jacob; it is a present sent to my lord Esau. And behold, he also is behind us.'"¹⁹ Then he commanded also the second and the third, and all those who followed the droves, saying, "After this manner you shall speak to Esau when you find him;²⁰ and you shall say, 'Behold, your servant Jacob also is behind us.'" For he said, "I will appease him with the present that goes before me. Then afterward I will see his face; perhaps he will accept me."²¹ So the present passed on before him, while he himself spent that night in the camp.

Reader 4 Amen.* ²² Now he arose that same night and took his two wives and his two maids and his eleven children, and crossed the ford of the Jabbok.²³ He took them and sent them across the stream. And he sent across whatever he had.²⁴ Then Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him until daybreak.²⁵ When he saw that he had not prevailed against him, he touched the socket of his thigh; so the socket of Jacob's thigh was dislocated while he wrestled with him.²⁶ Then he said, "Let me go, for the dawn is breaking." But he said, "I will not let you go unless you bless me."²⁷ So he said to him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Jacob."²⁸ He said, "Your name shall no longer be Jacob, but Israel; for you have striven with God and with men and have prevailed."

Reader 5 Amen.* ²⁹ Then Jacob asked him and said, "Please tell me your name." But he said, "Why is it that you ask my name?" And he blessed him there.³⁰ So Jacob named the place Peniel, for he said, "I have seen God face to face, yet my life has been preserved."³¹ Now the sun rose upon him just as he crossed over Penuel, and he was limping on his thigh.³² Therefore, to this day the sons of Israel do not eat the sinew of the hip which is on the socket of the thigh, because he touched the socket of Jacob's thigh in the sinew of the hip.

Reader 6 Amen.* ^{33:1} Then Jacob lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, Esau was coming, and four hundred men with him. So he divided the children among Leah and Rachel and the two maids.² He put the maids and their children in front, and Leah and her children next, and Rachel and Joseph last.³ But he himself passed on ahead of them and bowed down to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother.⁴ Then Esau ran to meet him and embraced him, and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept.⁵ He lifted his eyes and saw the women and the children, and said, "Who are these with you?" So he said, "The children whom God has graciously given your servant."⁶ Then the maids came near with their children, and they bowed down.⁷ Leah likewise came near with her children, and they bowed down; and afterward Joseph came near with Rachel, and they bowed down.⁸ And he said, "What do you mean by all this company which I have met?" And he said, "To find favor in the sight of my lord."⁹ But Esau said, "I

have plenty, my brother; let what you have be your own." ¹⁰ Jacob said, "No, please, if now I have found favor in your sight, then take my present from my hand, for I see your face as one sees the face of God, and you have received me favorably. ¹¹ "Please take my gift which has been brought to you, because God has dealt graciously with me and because I have plenty." Thus he urged him and he took it. *Reader 7* Amen.* ¹² Then Esau said, "Let us take our journey and go, and I will go before you." ¹³ But he said to him, "My lord knows that the children are frail and that the flocks and herds which are nursing are a care to me. And if they are driven hard one day, all the flocks will die. ¹⁴ "Please let my lord pass on before his servant, and I will proceed at my leisure, according to the pace of the cattle that are before me and according to the pace of the children, until I come to my lord at Seir." ¹⁵ Esau said, "Please let me leave with you some of the people who are with me." But he said, "What need is there? Let me find favor in the sight of my lord." ¹⁶ So Esau returned that day on his way to Seir. ¹⁷ Jacob journeyed to Sukkot, and built for himself a house and made booths for his livestock; therefore the place is named Sukkot.

Obadiah 1:1

Reader 8 Amen.* ¹ The vision of Obadiah. Thus says Yahweh God concerning Edom – We have heard a report from Yahweh, and an envoy has been sent among the nations saying, "Arise and let us go against her for battle."

Psalm 27 (To be sung.) A Psalm of David.

¹ Yahweh is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? Yahweh is the defense of my life; whom shall I dread? ² When evildoers came upon me to devour my flesh, my adversaries and my enemies, they stumbled and fell. ³ Though a host encamp against me, my heart will not fear; though war arise against me, in spite of this I shall be confident. ⁴ One thing I have asked from Yahweh, that I shall seek: that I may dwell in the house of Yahweh all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of Yahweh and to meditate in His temple. ⁵ For in the day of trouble He will conceal me in His tabernacle; in the secret place of His tent He will hide me; He will lift me up on a rock. ⁶ And now my head will be lifted up above my enemies around me, and I will offer in His tent sacrifices with shouts of joy; I will sing, yes, I will sing praises to Yahweh. ⁷ Hear, O Yahweh, when I cry with my voice, and be gracious to me and answer me. ⁸ When You said, "Seek My face," my heart said to You, "Your face, O Yahweh, I shall seek." ⁹ Do not hide Your face from me, do not turn Your servant away in anger; You have been my help; do not abandon me nor forsake me, O God of my salvation! ¹⁰ For my father and my mother have forsaken me, but Yahweh will take me up. ¹¹ Teach me Your way, O Yahweh, and lead me in a level path Because of my foes. ¹² Do not deliver me over to the desire of my adversaries, for false witnesses have risen against me, and such as breathe out violence. ¹³ I would have despaired unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of Yahweh in the land of the living. ¹⁴ Wait for Yahweh; be strong and let your heart take courage; yes, wait for Yahweh.

James 1:1-12

Reader 9 Amen.* ¹ James, a bond-servant of God and of the Lord Yeshua the Messiah, to the twelve tribes who are dispersed abroad: Greetings. ² Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, ³ knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. ⁴ And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

Reader 10 Amen.* ⁵ But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. ⁶ But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. ⁷ For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, ⁸ being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

Reader 11 Amen.* ⁹ But the brother of humble circumstances is to glory in his high position; ¹⁰ and the rich man is to glory in his humiliation, because like flowering grass he will pass away. ¹¹ For the sun rises with a scorching wind and withers the grass; and its flower falls off and the beauty of its appearance is destroyed; so too the rich man in the midst of his pursuits will fade away. ¹² Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.

Commentary:

In ancient Hebrew teaching, we have a great messianic interpretation of this passage:

" . . . this is the chapter of Israel's subjugation to Edom. Jacob's behavior in the face of a mortal threat from the stronger Esau is to guide our conduct in similar circumstances, and his salvation is our assurance that

God will save Israel from destruction by Esau's powerful offspring until the eventual complete redemption by Messiah." (*Ramban / Artscroll Tanach*)

Edom is Esau: Edomites are his descendents (Genesis 25:30, 36:43). The ancient land of Edom roughly coincides with the present day Jordan. The Edomites refused passage to Israel in the Exodus.

Edomites are Arabs; they are not *Pelishtim* (Philistines / Palestinians), and present-day so-called "Palestinians" are Arabs, not Philistines. In the sixth century BC, the Babylonians conquered Edom, and many fled to southern Israel, where they were called Idumeans. Babylon eventually conquered Israel also.

Rome later conquered the land of Edom, and in the first century AD was seen in Judaism as the world power that God's kingdom would imminently replace.

Paul says, "These things were written for our admonition" (*1 Corinthians 10:11*) – "to guide our conduct in similar circumstances."

Today, every day's news headlines deal with Edom's attempt to destroy Israel: the so-called "Palestinians," the Taliban, Iraq, Syria, etc. The U.S. and others keep trying to "make peace" by yielding to Edom.

Koenig's International News · <http://watch.org/> · October 24, 2001

The three largest insurance claims in United States history all have direct connection to American involvement in the Middle East peace talks when Israel was pressured to give up God's covenant land in exchange for peace.

On the front page of the Business Section in today's Washington Post was "Putting a Price on 'What If's'," a story which contained the dollar amounts, along with accompanying photos, of these insurance events.

These three largest insurance claims are listed here. In parentheses, I have noted the connection to the ongoing Middle East "peace process" in which the issue of land for peace was a key factor.

- Hurricane Andrew: \$19.6 billion. (This event happened on August 23, 1992, the day the Madrid Peace Conference re-convened in Washington to discuss the Israeli-Palestinian crisis.)
- Northridge Earthquake: \$16.2 billion. (This event happened on January 16, 1994, as President Clinton and Syria's President Hafez el-Assad called for Israel to give up the Golan Heights to Syria at a public meeting in Geneva. As the ancients have understood for thousands of years, God will preserve His elect until the final redemption by Messiah.
- Terrorist Attacks at the World Trade Center and Pentagon: \$30-\$50 billion. (The September 11 event happened at the moment that the Bush Administration was putting the final touches on a Middle East initiative, which included recognition of a Palestinian State, endorsement of the Mitchell Plan, and position statements about Palestinian refugees and the status of Jerusalem. This initiative was to be shared with the Saudi Ambassador to the United Nations on Sept. 13, with a formal presentation to the U.N. General Assembly by Secretary of State Colin Powell on September 23.)

Putting this information into perspective, the three largest events in U.S. insurance history all took place on the same day or at the same moment (in the case of the WTC/Pentagon terror events) that Israel was being pushed by the United States to give up God's covenant land.

The odds against these events happening at the same time are astronomical. These are not mere coincidences. _____

Obadiah said, “*Thus says Yahweh Elohim concerning Edom – ‘We have heard a report from Yahweh, and an envoy has been sent among the nations saying, ‘Arise and let us go against her for battle.’*” ’ ”

* * * * *

Note: (Definition) God’s Kingdom (or the Kingdom of Heaven) is the total arena of His subjects over which He is Lord – His people.

Jacob called Esau “My Lord” eight times. Esau consequently produced eight kings before Jacob produced one. [*Gen 36:31-39 And these are the kings that reigned in the land of Edom, before there reigned any king over the children of Israel: Bela, Jobab, Husham, Hadad, Samlah, Saul, Baalhanan, and Hadar.*]

It will cost us – to consider the enemy’s power more significant than God’s. David said, “Yahweh is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? Yahweh is the defense of my life; whom shall I dread? (Psalm 27:1)

Note that there is a difference between trusting in God’s power to defend us from spiritual and physical enemies of our service toward Him, and tempting God by doing foolish dangerous things with the expectation that He will protect us from harm. We should trust God for protection when we decide to follow His commandments in this perverse world; we should not drive a car where we cannot see if the way is clear, thinking that God will protect us.

Jacob acknowledged his unworthiness, and prayed to Yahweh for the fulfillment of His promise (V.9-12).

We should pray for the things that are for building God’s Kingdom (that is the essence of praying in Yeshua’s name, as “ambassadors for Christ”). And if we lack wisdom, we should “ask God, who gives to all men generously” (James 1:5). We have great promises for a peaceful, prosperous future: we should be praying for grace and wisdom to walk in a path pleasing to God, and should be cognizant of the prize which we are working towards.

Jacob made preparations for a possible battle.

We should take earthly actions toward building and protecting God’s Kingdom. And when we are attacked, we should “consider it joy . . . knowing that the testing of our faith produces endurance” (James 1:2-3). “*Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life, which Yahweh has promised to those who love Him* (James 1:12). We need the girding of truth – not dogma, the breastplate of righteousness over the heart, our feet shod with the gospel of peace-with-God, the shield of faith to protect against enemy attacks, the helmet of salvation from sin, and the sword of the Spirit – which is the Word of God, not our feelings (Ephesians 6:14-17).

We need to understand, as the ancients have understood for thousands of years, that God will preserve His elect until the final redemption by Messiah. This applies both collectively, and individually.

Our salvation depends upon Yeshua’s work – if we are “of the faith.” But our individual condition here, and our reward eternally, depend upon our walk. Paul said, “*I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah*” (1 Thess 5:23).

Thus Yeshua said, “*Whoever then breaks one of the least of these commandments, and so teaches others, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.*” We are to grow in understanding and faithfulness, and instruct and encourage others to do the same.

Our goal should be to build the Kingdom of God: our destiny is a renewed earth wherein dwells righteousness!

Reader 1 Amen.* ¹⁸ Now Jacob came safely to the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, when he came from Paddan-aram, and camped before the city. ¹⁹ He bought the piece of land where he had pitched his tent from the hand of the sons of Hamor, Shechem's father, for one hundred pieces of money. ²⁰ Then he erected there an altar and called it El-Elohe-Israel.

Reader 2 Amen.* ^{34:1} Now Dinah the daughter of Leah, whom she had borne to Jacob, went out to visit the daughters of the land. ² When Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, the prince of the land, saw her, he took her and lay with her by force. ³ He was deeply attracted to Dinah the daughter of Jacob, and he loved the girl and spoke tenderly to her. ⁴ So Shechem spoke to his father Hamor, saying, "Get me this young girl for a wife." ⁵ Now Jacob heard that he had defiled Dinah his daughter; but his sons were with his livestock in the field, so Jacob kept silent until they came in. ⁶ Then Hamor the father of Shechem went out to Jacob to speak with him.

Reader 3 Amen.* ⁷ Now the sons of Jacob came in from the field when they heard it; and the men were grieved, and they were very angry because he had done a disgraceful thing in Israel by lying with Jacob's daughter, for such a thing ought not to be done. ⁸ But Hamor spoke with them, saying, "The soul of my son Shechem longs for your daughter; please give her to him in marriage. ⁹ "Intermarry with us; give your daughters to us and take our daughters for yourselves. ¹⁰ "Thus you shall live with us, and the land shall be open before you; live and trade in it and acquire property in it." ¹¹ Shechem also said to her father and to her brothers, "If I find favor in your sight, then I will give whatever you say to me. ¹² "Ask me ever so much bridal payment and gift, and I will give according as you say to me; but give me the girl in marriage."

Reader 4 Amen.* ¹³ But Jacob's sons answered Shechem and his father Hamor with deceit, because he had defiled Dinah their sister. ¹⁴ They said to them, "We cannot do this thing, to give our sister to one who is uncircumcised, for that would be a disgrace to us. ¹⁵ "Only on this condition will we consent to you: if you will become like us, in that every male of you be circumcised, ¹⁶ then we will give our daughters to you, and we will take your daughters for ourselves, and we will live with you and become one people. ¹⁷ "But if you will not listen to us to be circumcised, then we will take our daughter and go."

Reader 5 Amen.* ¹⁸ Now their words seemed reasonable to Hamor and Shechem, Hamor's son. ¹⁹ The young man did not delay to do the thing, because he was delighted with Jacob's daughter. Now he was more respected than all the household of his father. ²⁰ So Hamor and his son Shechem came to the gate of their city and spoke to the men of their city, saying, ²¹ "These men are friendly with us; therefore let them live in the land and trade in it, for behold, the land is large enough for them. Let us take their daughters in marriage, and give our daughters to them. ²² "Only on this condition will the men consent to us to live with us, to become one people: that every male among us be circumcised as they are circumcised. ²³ "Will not their livestock and their property and all their animals be ours? Only let us consent to them, and they will live with us." ²⁴ All who went out of the gate of his city listened to Hamor and to his son Shechem, and every male was circumcised, all who went out of the gate of his city.

Reader 6 Amen.* ²⁵ Now it came about on the third day, when they were in pain, that two of Jacob's sons, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brothers, each took his sword and came upon the city unawares, and killed every male. ²⁶ They killed Hamor and his son Shechem with the edge of the sword, and took Dinah from Shechem's house, and went forth. ²⁷ Jacob's sons came upon the slain and looted the city, because they had defiled their sister. ²⁸ They took their flocks and their herds and their donkeys, and that which was in the city and that which was in the field; ²⁹ and they captured and looted all their wealth and all their little ones and their wives, even all that was in the houses. ³⁰ Then Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, "You have brought trouble on me by making me odious among the inhabitants of the land, among the Canaanites and the Perizzites; and my men being few in number, they will gather together against me and attack me and I will be destroyed, I and my household." ³¹ But they said, "Should he treat our sister as a harlot?"

Reader 7 Amen.* ^{35:1} Then God said to Jacob, "Arise, go up to Bethel and live there, and make an altar there to God, who appeared to you when you fled from your brother Esau." ² So Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, "Put away the foreign gods which are among you, and purify yourselves and change your garments; ³ and let us arise and go up to Bethel, and I will make an altar there to God, who answered me in the day of my distress and has been with me wherever I have gone." ⁴ So they gave to Jacob all the foreign gods which they had and the rings which were in their ears, and Jacob hid them under the oak which was near Shechem. ⁵ As they journeyed, there was a great terror upon the cities which were

around them, and they did not pursue the sons of Jacob. ⁶ So Jacob came to Luz (that is, Bethel), which is in the land of Canaan, he and all the people who were with him. ⁷ He built an altar there, and called the place El-bethel, because there God had revealed Himself to him when he fled from his brother. ⁸ Now Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, died, and she was buried below Bethel under the oak; it was named Allon-bacuth.

Nahum 1:12 – 2:5

Reader 8 Amen.* ¹² Thus says Yahweh, "Though they are at full strength and likewise many, even so, they will be cut off and pass away. Though I have afflicted you, I will afflict you no longer. ¹³ "So now, I will break his yoke bar from upon you, and I will tear off your shackles." ¹⁴ Yahweh has issued a command concerning you: "Your name will no longer be perpetuated. I will cut off idol and image from the house of your gods. I will prepare your grave, for you are contemptible." ¹⁵ Behold, on the mountains the feet of him who brings good news, who announces peace! Celebrate your feasts, O Judah; pay your vows. For never again will the wicked one pass through you; he is cut off completely.

Reader 9 Amen.* ^{2:1} The one who scatters has come up against you. Man the fortress, watch the road; strengthen your back, summon all your strength. ² For Yahweh will restore the splendor of Jacob like the splendor of Israel, even though devastators have devastated them and destroyed their vine branches. ³ The shields of his mighty men are colored red, the warriors are dressed in scarlet, the chariots are enveloped in flashing steel when he is prepared to march, and the cypress spears are brandished. ⁴ The chariots race madly in the streets, they rush wildly in the squares, their appearance is like torches, they dash to and fro like lightning flashes. ⁵ He remembers his nobles; they stumble in their march, they hurry to her wall, and the mantelet is set up.

[KJV 3b the chariots shall be with flaming torches in the day of his preparation, and the fir trees shall be terribly shaken. 4 The chariots shall rage in the streets, they shall justle one against another in the broad ways: they shall seem like torches, they shall run like the lightnings.]

Psalms 28 (To be sung.) A Psalm of David.

¹ To You, O Yahweh, I call; my rock, do not be deaf to me, for if You are silent to me, I will become like those who go down to the pit. ² Hear the voice of my supplications when I cry to You for help, when I lift up my hands toward Your holy sanctuary. ³ Do not drag me away with the wicked And with those who work iniquity, Who speak peace with their neighbors, While evil is in their hearts. ⁴ **Requite them according to their work and according to the evil of their practices; Requite them according to the deeds of their hands; Repay them their recompense.** ⁵ **Because they do not regard the works of Yahweh Nor the deeds of His hands, He will tear them down and not build them up.** ⁶ Blessed be Yahweh, Because He has heard the voice of my supplication. ⁷ Yahweh is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in Him, and I am helped; therefore my heart exults, and with my song I shall thank Him. ⁸ Yahweh is their strength, and He is a saving defense to His anointed. ⁹ Save Your people and bless Your inheritance; be their shepherd also, and carry them forever.

Revelation 22:8-21

Reader 10 Amen.* ⁸ I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed me these things. ⁹ But he said to me, "Do not do that. I am a fellow servant of yours and of your brethren the prophets and of those who heed the words of this book. Worship God." ¹⁰ And he said to me, "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near. ¹¹ "Let the one who does wrong, still do wrong; and the one who is filthy, still be filthy; and let the one who is righteous, still practice righteousness; and the one who is holy, still keep himself holy." ¹² "Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done. ¹³ "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end." ¹⁴ Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city. ¹⁵ Outside are the dogs and the sorcerers and the immoral persons and the murderers and the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices lying.

Reader 11 Amen.* ¹⁶ "I, Yeshua, have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star." ¹⁷ The Spirit and the bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost. ¹⁸ I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues which are written in this book; ¹⁹ and if anyone takes

away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book.²⁰ He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming quickly." Amen. Come, Lord Yeshua.²¹ The grace of the Lord Yeshua be with all. Amen.

Commentary:

(V.18) Then Jacob arrived safely – meaning whole or perfect – in the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan – the Promised Land.

As spiritual descendants of Jacob, this portrays the Promised Land that awaits our arrival – in wholeness and perfection, though Laban the cruel will set out to kill us along the way.

As long as Jacob stayed in Sukkot (the temporary dwelling of this world), he lived in fear, sending gifts to appease Esau. But upon arriving in the Promised Land, he was safe and whole and perfect. His father Isaac (whom we saw earlier representing Yeshua – being bound to wood for sacrifice) was present in the land, and Esau could not do harm in His presence.

(V.19) Jacob purchased the property on which he camped (100 kesitahs is approx. 4 shekels, or it could be 100 sheep from an Aramaic word). Later, this would be the first part of the Promised Land to be conquered (v.34:28), almost 300 years before Israel inhabited all the land. "How shall we sing Yahweh's praise on foreign soil?" – Psalm 137:4.

(V.20) Then he erected an altar, and using his new name, there called upon "El-Elohe-Yisra-el – which could translate "The Master Above is Master of the master below." However, this did not fulfill Jacob's 22-year-old vow to build an altar at Bethel.

Some commentators say that Jacob was punished for his haughty remark (calling himself "the master below") by the following incident concerning his daughter Dinah. In any case, the incident about Dinah caused him to flee, and finally fulfill his vow at Bethel.

(V.34:1) Jacob's daughter, Dinah, is referred to as "the daughter of Leah," because she neglected modesty (see v.30:16) to go into the town of Shechem, to "look over the daughters of the land." So the proverb, "Like mother like daughter."

(V.2) Shechem (the son of Hamor the serpentine), the prince of the land, saw her, took her, and lay with her by force. Hamor was an Amorite (v.48:22); the term "hivi," commonly translated "Hivite," is Aramaic for snake (serpentine). "He who breaks down the fence will be bitten by a snake" – Ecclesiastes 10:8: Dinah broke down the fence of propriety and was bitten by the son-of-a-snake Prince Shechem.

Simeon and Levi, the second and third sons of Jacob by Leah, would be teenagers, five and four years older than their full sister Dinah.

The Midrash relates that everyone who passed through Shechem was asked to be circumcised. "Why?" asked one of the peasants. "So that Shechem may marry Jacob's daughter," they answered. "Shechem is getting married and the peasant has to get circumcised!" This became a proverb for situations where one person suffers for another's decision.

On the third day, when all were circumcised and in pain, Simeon and Levi slew all the men of Shechem, and took Dinah from Shechem's house. The other brothers joined and pillaged the city. Jacob, who represented "truth," complained about the deception his son's had perpetrated (even when deceiving his father, Jacob had made a "technically true" statement); he now feared the wrath of the surrounding nations. The sons argued that their act was just judgment.

(V35:1) Elohim said to Jacob, "Arise, go up to Bethel, and live there; and make an altar there to El, who appeared to you when you fled from your brother Esau." So Jacob caused all his household to get rid of

false gods, go through a mikvah, and leave for Bethel. There he fulfilled his vow, and made an altar, and called upon El-Beth-El – Elohim in the House of God.

In the Haftarah, Nahum tells us Yahweh's word concerning Ninevah, that though many strong rise against Israel, they will be "cut off" and pass away. Though Yahweh (the Eternal who is gracious) has afflicted His people, it was for their profit. Idols will be "cut off" from the House of Elohim.

Then, Yahweh says, pay your vows! Celebrate the Feasts! The wicked are "completely cut off."

In the Psalm that we sang, David's prayer for justice sounds applicable to Shechem: "*Do not drag me away with the wicked and with those who work iniquity; who speak peace with their neighbors, while evil is in their hearts. Requite them according to their work and according to the evil of their practices; requite them according to the deeds of their hands; repay them their recompense. Because they do not regard the works of Yahweh nor the deeds of His hands, He will tear them down and not build them up.*" We have spoken before, how that David's pleas for justice are for the building/purification of God's Kingdom, not from selfish motivation.

In the Apostolic Reading, John says that the time is near: let the wicked fulfill their wickedness, but let the righteous continue walking in God's instruction and let the holy continue being set apart for God's work. The Spirit and the bride say, "Come." Let the one who hears say, "Come." Let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost.

Do we hunger and thirst for righteousness – for understanding God's way? Do we long for a dwelling in the Holy City, wherein dwells righteousness, not just to get away from hardship and pain here? The water of eternal life is not just a fire extinguisher; it's the path to righteousness and holiness, symbolized by going through the waters of the mikveh.

(Genesis 33:18) Then Jacob arrived safely – meaning whole or perfect – in the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan – the Promised Land. As spiritual descendants of Jacob, this portrays the Promised Land that awaits our arrival – in wholeness and perfection, though "Laban the cruel" will set out to kill us along the way.

(Nahum 1:14-15) Yahweh says of the cruel one, "*I will prepare your grave, for you are contemptible.*" Behold, on the mountains the feet of him who brings good news, who announces peace! (Psalm 28:9) David says, "*Save Your people, and bless Your inheritance; be their shepherd also, and carry them forever.*"

(Revelation 28:14) "*Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city.*"

As long as Jacob stayed in Sukkot (the temporary dwelling of this world), he lived in fear, sending gifts to appease Esau. But upon arriving in the Promised Land, he was safe and whole and perfect. His father Isaac (whom we saw earlier representing Yeshua – being bound to wood for sacrifice) was present in the land, and Esau could not do harm in His presence.

Prayer:

We teach the *Shemoneh Esrei*, the Disciples Prayer of Matthew 6, as a pattern for prayer – as a learning tool. We say blessings before and after Scripture readings and meals.

Now, for those who are beginning in this way, and may not yet understand as much as they would wish, I would like to offer some suggestions:

Begin every day by asking God for His guidance to walk in His paths. Read a portion of scripture to start your day's thoughts on God.

Before eating, practice to learn regularly to acknowledge God as your provider of everything needed to serve Him.

At the end of each day, thank Him for all of His provisions, remembering as many blessings as you can think of. These may include salvation, God's Word, health, safety, prosperity, friends, weather, beauty, housing, clothing, job, etc. Reading a portion of Scripture will help guide your thoughts as you sleep.

Vayrah Elohim / Then Elohim Appeared

Genesis 35:9 – 36:43 Isaiah 43:1-7 Psalm 29 Matthew 5:1-12

Commentary Y1-33

Heshvan 24, 5762 / Nov 10, 2001

Heshvan 22, 5765 / Nov 6, 2004

Reader 1 Amen.* ⁹ Then God appeared to Jacob again when he came from Paddan-aram, and He blessed him. ¹⁰ God said to him, "Your name is Jacob; You shall no longer be called Jacob, But Israel shall be your name." Thus He called him Israel. ¹¹ God also said to him, "I am God Almighty; Be fruitful and multiply; A nation and a company of nations shall come from you, And kings shall come forth from you. ¹² "The land which I gave to Abraham and Isaac, I will give it to you, And I will give the land to your descendants after you." ¹³ Then God went up from him in the place where He had spoken with him. ¹⁴ Jacob set up a pillar in the place where He had spoken with him, a pillar of stone, and he poured out a drink offering on it; he also poured oil on it. ¹⁵ So Jacob named the place where God had spoken with him, Bethel.

Reader 2 Amen.* ¹⁶ Then they journeyed from Bethel; and when there was still some distance to go to Ephrath, Rachel began to give birth and she suffered severe labor. ¹⁷ When she was in severe labor the midwife said to her, "Do not fear, for now you have another son." ¹⁸ It came about as her soul was departing (for she died), that she named him Ben-oni; but his father called him Benjamin. ¹⁹ So Rachel died and was buried on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem). ²⁰ Jacob set up a pillar over her grave; that is the pillar of Rachel's grave to this day.

Reader 3 Amen.* ²¹ Then Israel journeyed on and pitched his tent beyond the tower of Eder. ²² It came about while Israel was dwelling in that land, that Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father's concubine, and Israel heard of it. Now there were twelve sons of Jacob-- ²³ the sons of Leah: Reuben, Jacob's firstborn, then Simeon and Levi and Judah and Issachar and Zebulun; ²⁴ the sons of Rachel: Joseph and Benjamin; ²⁵ and the sons of Bilhah, Rachel's maid: Dan and Naphtali; ²⁶ and the sons of Zilpah, Leah's maid: Gad and Asher. These are the sons of Jacob who were born to him in Paddan-aram. ²⁷ Jacob came to his father Isaac at Mamre of Kiriath-arba (that is, Hebron), where Abraham and Isaac had sojourned. ²⁸ Now the days of Isaac were one hundred and eighty years. ²⁹ Isaac breathed his last and died and was gathered to his people, an old man of ripe age; and his sons Esau and Jacob buried him.

Reader 4 Amen.* ³⁰ Now these are the records of the generations of Esau (that is, Edom). ¹ Esau took his wives from the daughters of Canaan: Adah the daughter of Elon the Hittite, and Oholibamah the daughter of Anah and the granddaughter of Zibeon the Hivite; ² also Basemath, Ishmael's daughter, the sister of Nebaioth. ³ Adah bore Eliphaz to Esau, and Basemath bore Reuel, ⁴ and Oholibamah bore Jeush and Jalam and Korah. These are the sons of Esau who were born to him in the land of Canaan. ⁵ Then Esau took his wives and his sons and his daughters and all his household, and his livestock and all his cattle and all his goods which he had acquired in the land of Canaan, and went to another land away from his brother Jacob. ⁶ For their property had become too great for them to live together, and the land where they sojourned could not sustain them because of their livestock. ⁷ So Esau lived in the hill country of Seir; Esau is Edom. ⁸ These then are the records of the generations of Esau the father of the Edomites in the hill country of Seir.

Reader 5 Amen.* ⁹ These are the names of Esau's sons: Eliphaz the son of Esau's wife Adah, Reuel the son of Esau's wife Basemath. ¹⁰ The sons of Eliphaz were Teman, Omar, Zepho and Gatam and Kenaz. ¹¹ Timna was a concubine of Esau's son Eliphaz and she bore Amalek to Eliphaz. These are the sons of Esau's wife Adah. ¹² These are the sons of Reuel: Nahath and Zerah, Shammah and Mizzah. These were the sons of Esau's wife Basemath. ¹³ These were the sons of Esau's wife Oholibamah, the daughter of Anah and the granddaughter of Zibeon: she bore to Esau, Jeush and Jalam and Korah. ¹⁴ These are the chiefs of the sons of Esau. The sons of Eliphaz, the firstborn of Esau, are chief Teman, chief Omar, chief Zepho, chief Kenaz, ¹⁵ chief Korah, chief Gatam, chief Amalek. These are the chiefs descended from Eliphaz in the land of Edom; these are the sons of Adah. ¹⁶ These are the sons of Reuel, Esau's son: chief Nahath, chief Zerah, chief Shammah, chief Mizzah. These are the chiefs descended from Reuel in the land of Edom; these are the sons of Esau's wife Basemath. ¹⁷ These are the sons of Esau's wife Oholibamah: chief Jeush, chief Jalam, chief Korah. These are the chiefs descended from Esau's wife Oholibamah, the daughter of Anah. ¹⁸ These are the sons of Esau (that is, Edom), and these are their chiefs.

Reader 6 Amen.* ¹⁹ These are the sons of Seir the Horite, the inhabitants of the land: Lotan and Shobal and Zibeon and Anah, ²⁰ and Dishon and Ezer and Dishan. These are the chiefs descended from the Horites, the sons of Seir in the land of Edom. ²¹ The sons of Lotan were Hori and Hemam; and Lotan's sister was Timna. ²² These are the sons of Shobal: Alvan and Manahath and Ebal, Shepho and Onam. ²³ These are the sons of Zibeon: Aiah and Anah-- he is the Anah who found the hot springs in the wilderness when he was pasturing the donkeys of his father Zibeon. ²⁴ These are the children of Anah: Dishon, and Oholibamah, the

daughter of Anah.²⁶ These are the sons of Dishon: Hemdan and Eshban and Ithran and Cheran.²⁷ These are the sons of Ezer: Bilhan and Zaavan and Akan.²⁸ These are the sons of Dishan: Uz and Aran.²⁹ These are the chiefs descended from the Horites: chief Lotan, chief Shobal, chief Zibeon, chief Anah,³⁰ chief Dishon, chief Ezer, chief Dishan. These are the chiefs descended from the Horites, according to their various chiefs in the land of Seir.

Reader 7 Amen.*³¹ Now these are the kings who reigned in the land of Edom before any king reigned over the sons of Israel.³² Bela the son of Beor reigned in Edom, and the name of his city was Dinhabah.³³ Then Bela died, and Jobab the son of Zerah of Bozrah became king in his place.³⁴ Then Jobab died, and Husham of the land of the Temanites became king in his place.³⁵ Then Husham died, and Hadad the son of Bedad, who defeated Midian in the field of Moab, became king in his place; and the name of his city was Avith.³⁶ Then Hadad died, and Samlah of Masrekah became king in his place.³⁷ Then Samlah died, and Shaul of Rehoboth on the Euphrates River became king in his place.³⁸ Then Shaul died, and Baal-hanan the son of Achbor became king in his place.³⁹ Then Baal-hanan the son of Achbor died, and Hadar became king in his place; and the name of his city was Pau; and his wife's name was Mehetabel, the daughter of Matred, daughter of Mezahab.⁴⁰ Now these are the names of the chiefs descended from Esau, according to their families and their localities, by their names: chief Timna, chief Alvah, chief Jetheth,⁴¹ chief Oholibamah, chief Elah, chief Pinon,⁴² chief Kenaz, chief Teman, chief Mibzar,⁴³ chief Magdiel, chief Iram. These are the chiefs of Edom (that is, Esau, the father of the Edomites), according to their habitations in the land of their possession.

Isaiah 43:1-7

Reader 8 Amen.*¹ But now, thus says Yahweh, your Creator, O Jacob, and He who formed you, O Israel, "Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name; you are Mine!"² "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they will not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be scorched, nor will the flame burn you."³ "For I am Yahweh your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior; I have given Egypt as your ransom, Cush and Seba in your place."⁴ "Since you are precious in My sight, since you are honored and I love you, I will give other men in your place and other peoples in exchange for your life."⁵ "Do not fear, for I am with you; I will bring your offspring from the east, and gather you from the west."⁶ "I will say to the north, 'Give them up!' And to the south, 'Do not hold them back.' Bring My sons from afar and My daughters from the ends of the earth,"⁷ "Everyone who is called by My name, and whom I have created for My glory, whom I have formed, even whom I have made."

Psalm 29 A Psalm of David.

¹ Ascribe to Yahweh, O sons of the mighty, ascribe to Yahweh glory and strength.² Ascribe to Yahweh the glory due to His name; worship Yahweh in holy array.³ The voice of Yahweh is upon the waters; the God of glory thunders, Yahweh is over many waters.⁴ The voice of Yahweh is powerful, the voice of Yahweh is majestic.⁵ The voice of Yahweh breaks the cedars; yes, Yahweh breaks in pieces the cedars of Lebanon.⁶ He makes Lebanon skip like a calf, and Sirion like a young wild ox.⁷ The voice of Yahweh hews out flames of fire.⁸ The voice of Yahweh shakes the wilderness; Yahweh shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.⁹ The voice of Yahweh makes the deer to calve and strips the forests bare; and in His Temple everything says, "Glory!"¹⁰ Yahweh sat as King at the flood; yes, Yahweh sits as King forever.¹¹ Yahweh will give strength to His people; Yahweh will bless His people with peace.

Matthew 5:1-12

¹ When Yeshua saw the crowds, He went up on the mountain; and after He sat down, His disciples came to Him.² He opened His mouth and began to teach them, saying,³ "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."⁴ "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted."⁵ "Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth."⁶ "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied."⁷ "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy."⁸ "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."⁹ "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God."¹⁰ "Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."¹¹ "Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me."¹² "Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

Commentary:

El (Elohim) is God who judges His creation.

(V.9-10) *Then Elohim appeared to Jacob again when he came from Paddan-aram, and He blessed him. And Elohim said to him, "Your name is Jacob; you shall no longer be continually called Jacob (Supplanter), but Yisrael (Prince/Chief) shall be your name." Thus He called him Israel.* Though “the lord of Esau” – the angel with which Jacob wrestled – previously indicated the name change, that was not his mission: he was only saying what he knew God would do. (This is based on one of the Talmudic interpretations of Genesis 32:28, that indicates the angel is an evil one.)

The name Jacob would henceforth be used when referring to physical or mundane matters, and the name Israel would be used in spiritual matters. God commanded that Avram should be called Avraham (v.17:5), thus there is a commandment against using his former name, and we may see in the Epistles that the Apostles complied (Romans 4:18, Hebrews 7:1, and 1 Peter 3:6 are among many examples); but Ya’acov (Jacob) could be called by either name.

(V.11-12) *Elohim also said to him, "I am El-Shadday (Creator-Judge Almighty); be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall come from you, and kings shall come forth from you. And the land which I gave to Abraham and Isaac, I will give it to you, and I will give the land to your descendants after you."* This is the blessing Yahweh gave to Avram when He changed his name to Avraham (v.17:1), and it was previously confirmed by Isaac to Jacob (v.28:3).

“Be fruitful and multiply,” previously stated to Adam, is seen as a creative Word, a command, and a blessing. The original statement to Adam is the creative cause of sexual desire (v.1:28). Denial of the command* can be a capital offense (v.38:9). The ultimate blessing can be the fulfillment of the purpose of our existence – building the Kingdom of God, a kingdom of priests. Also, as for Jacob, it means Israel would not require foreigners for her kings.

*The many deviant sexual behaviors that cannot result in procreation, are denials of this command; however, the command is not to be taken as condemning of normal marital relations that cannot produce offspring because of age or infertility (1 Corinthians 7:36).

The land promise is yet to be completely fulfilled – that is, Israel never obtained the full area promised, but will when the Covenant is renewed (Jeremiah 31:31-40). Verse 12 can be translated, “In the end of days I will give your offspring the entire earth.”

(V.13-15) *Then “Elohim ascended from upon him” in the place where He had spoken with him.* This is reminiscent of the experience of Yeshua in Matthew 3:16-17, when the Spirit descended upon Him, and God spoke from the heavens. *And Jacob set up a pillar in the place where He had spoken with him, a pillar of stone, and he poured out a libation (wine) on it; he also poured (olive) oil on it. So Jacob named the place where Elohim had spoken with him, Beit-El (House of the Creator-Judge).* Jacob finally fulfilled his vow.

(V.16-19) *Then they journeyed from Bethel; and when there was still some distance to go to Ephrath, Rachel began to give birth and she suffered severe labor. And it came about when she was in severe labor that the midwife said to her, "Do not fear, for now you have another son." And it came about as her soul was departing (for she died), that she named him Ben-oni (Son of my sorrow); but his father called him Bin-Yamin (Son of my right hand).* Note that, in the wilderness arrangement of the tribes, Benjamin is on the right (south).

(V.20) *So Rachel died and was buried on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem). And Jacob set up a pillar over her grave; that is the pillar of Rachel's grave to this day.* Jacob had said that whoever stole Laban’s gods – the deeds to his land (see commentary Y1-30) – would not live. Rachael was allowed to live until she gave birth to Benjamin – the twelfth tribe. At thirty-six years of age (by Talmudic count), she died upon entering the Holy Land. There is also a teaching that the Holy Land could not accept Jacob dwelling there with two wives.

(V.27-29) Jacob and his father Isaac were reunited after thirty-six years (by Talmudic count): Jacob had left with nothing, and returned with a large family and as a very rich man, but without his most beloved wife.

Isaiah 43:1 – The haftarah clearly relates to this portion: *“But now, thus says Yahweh, your Creator, O Jacob, and He who formed you, O Israel, ‘Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name; you are Mine!’ ”*

Psalms 29 – The Psalmist relates: *(v.1-2) Ascribe to Yahweh, O sons of the mighty, ascribe to Yahweh glory and strength. Ascribe to Yahweh the glory due to His name; worship Yahweh in holy array.* Jacob finally fulfilled his vow, to glorify Yahweh at the altar.

(V.9) *The voice of Yahweh makes the deer to calve, and strips the forests bare, and in His temple everything says, “Glory!”* His Word made Rachel give birth. Jacob’s altar was called Bethel – the House of God: it was a forerunner of the Holy Temple, where everything says, “Glory!”

(V.11) *Yahweh will give strength to His people; Yahweh will bless His people with peace.* This is part of the Covenant to Abraham, Isaac, and now Jacob. This is part of the Covenant that will be renewed – often called the “New Covenant” – and it will apply to us! This is the subject of Matthew 5!

Matthew 5 – Yeshua says, *“Blessed are those . . .”*, as He details parts of the Abrahamic Covenant. For we as gentiles were once without Messiah, and had no part in the Covenant (Ephesians 2:12), but now, as believers, we are made fellow-citizens (Ephesians 2:19), and the promises are ours!

We are heirs through faith in the redemptive work of God’s Passover Lamb – Yeshua. Then our future riches are based upon our spiritual growth here: those who hunger for righteousness now, will be satisfied then (v.6); those who learn to display God’s mercy now, will find it for themselves then (v.7). Those whose spiritual life grows more now, will have more then (Matthew 25:29).

In that future world, we will build houses, plant gardens, and raise livestock. But everything will be in perfection and at peace.

We may find some more detail of our future life throughout the Prophets:

Isaiah 2: ² *Now it will come about that in the last days the mountain (Zion) of the House of Yahweh will be established as the chief of the mountains, and will be raised above the hills; and all the nations will stream to it. ³ And many peoples will come and say, “Come, let us go up to the mountain of Yahweh, to the house of the God of Jacob; that He may teach us concerning His ways and that we may walk in His paths.” For the law will go forth from Zion, and the word of Yahweh from Jerusalem. ⁴ And He will judge between the nations, and will render (halachic) decisions for many peoples; and they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, and never again will they learn war.*

Isaiah 56: ¹ *Thus says Yahweh, “Preserve justice and do righteousness, for My salvation is about to come And My righteousness to be revealed. ² How blessed is the man who does this, and the son of man who takes hold of it; who keeps from profaning the Sabbath, and keeps his hand from doing any evil.” ³ Let not the gentile who has joined himself to Yahweh say, “Yahweh will surely separate me from His people.” . . . ⁴ For thus says Yahweh, “. . . ⁶ . . . the gentiles who join themselves to Yahweh, to minister to Him, and to love the name of Yahweh, to be His servants, every one who keeps from profaning the Sabbath and holds fast My covenant; ⁷ even those I will bring to My holy mountain and make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be acceptable on My altar; for My house will be called a house of prayer for all the peoples.”*

Jeremiah 32: ³⁷ "Behold, I will gather them out of all the lands to which I have driven them in My anger, in My wrath and in great indignation; and I will bring them back to this place (Israel) and make them dwell in safety. ³⁸ They shall be My people, and I will be their God; ³⁹ and I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear Me always, for their own good and for the good of their children after them. ⁴⁰ I will make an everlasting covenant with them that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; and I will put the fear of Me in their hearts so that they will not turn away from Me. ⁴¹ I will rejoice over them to do them good and will faithfully plant them in this land with all My heart and with all My soul. ⁴² For thus says Yahweh, 'Just as I brought all this great disaster on this people, so I am going to bring on them all the good that I am promising them. ⁴³ Fields will be bought in this land of which you say, "It is a desolation, without man or beast; it is given into the hand of the Chaldeans." ⁴⁴ Men will buy fields for money, sign and seal deeds, and call in witnesses in the land of Benjamin, in the environs of Jerusalem, in the cities of Judah, in the cities of the hill country, in the cities of the lowland and in the cities of the Negev; for I will restore their fortunes,' declares Yahweh."

Zephaniah 3: ⁹ "For then I will give to the peoples purified lips, that all of them may call on the name of Yahweh, to serve Him shoulder to shoulder. ¹⁰ From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia My worshipers, My dispersed ones, will bring My offerings. ¹¹ In that day you will feel no shame because of all your deeds by which you have rebelled against Me; for then I will remove from your midst your proud, exulting ones, and you will never again be haughty on My holy mountain. ¹² But I will leave among you a humble and lowly people, and they will take refuge in the name of Yahweh. ¹³ The remnant of Israel will do no wrong and tell no lies, nor will a deceitful tongue be found in their mouths; for they will feed and lie down with no one to make them tremble."

Ezekiel 11: ¹⁸ "When they come there, they will remove all its detestable things and all its abominations from it. ¹⁹ And I will give them one heart, and put a new spirit within them. And I will take the heart of stone out of their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, ²⁰ that they may walk in My statutes and keep My ordinances and do them. Then they will be My people, and I shall be their God. ²¹ But as for those whose hearts go after their detestable things and abominations, I will bring their conduct down on their heads," declares the Lord Yahweh.

Jeremiah 33: ¹⁵ "In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch of David to spring forth; and He shall execute justice and righteousness on the earth. ¹⁶ In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will dwell in safety; and this is the name by which she will be called: Yahweh Is Our Righteousness.' ¹⁷ For thus says Yahweh, 'David shall never lack a man to sit on the throne of the house of Israel; ¹⁸ and the Levitical priests shall never lack a man before Me to offer burnt offerings, to burn grain offerings and to prepare sacrifices continually.'"

Daniel 7: ¹³ "I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, and He came up to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him. ¹⁴ And to Him was given dominion, glory and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations and men of every language might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away; and His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed.

Reader 1 Amen.* ¹ Now Jacob lived in the land where his father had sojourned, in the land of Canaan. ² These are the records of the generations of Jacob. Joseph, when seventeen years of age, was pasturing the flock with his brothers while he was still a youth, along with the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives. And Joseph brought back a bad report about them to their father. ³ Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his sons, because he was the son of his old age; and he made him a varicolored tunic. ⁴ His brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers; and so they hated him and could not speak to him on friendly terms.

Reader 2 Amen.* ⁵ Then Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him even more. ⁶ He said to them, "Please listen to this dream which I have had; ⁷ for behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and lo, my sheaf rose up and also stood erect; and behold, your sheaves gathered around and bowed down to my sheaf." ⁸ Then his brothers said to him, "Are you actually going to reign over us? Or are you really going to rule over us?" So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words.

Reader 3 Amen.* ⁹ Now he had still another dream, and related it to his brothers, and said, "Lo, I have had still another dream; and behold, the sun and the moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me." ¹⁰ He related it to his father and to his brothers; and his father rebuked him and said to him, "What is this dream that you have had? Shall I and your mother and your brothers actually come to bow ourselves down before you to the ground?" ¹¹ His brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the saying in mind.

Reader 4 Amen.* ¹² Then his brothers went to pasture their father's flock in Shechem. ¹³ Israel said to Joseph, "Are not your brothers pasturing the flock in Shechem? Come, and I will send you to them." And he said to him, "I will go." ¹⁴ Then he said to him, "Go now and see about the welfare of your brothers and the welfare of the flock, and bring word back to me." So he sent him from the valley of Hebron, and he came to Shechem. ¹⁵ A man found him, and behold, he was wandering in the field; and the man asked him, "What are you looking for?" ¹⁶ He said, "I am looking for my brothers; please tell me where they are pasturing the flock." ¹⁷ Then the man said, "They have moved from here; for I heard them say, 'Let us go to Dothan.'" So Joseph went after his brothers and found them at Dothan.

Reader 5 Amen.* ¹⁸ When they saw him from a distance and before he came close to them, they plotted against him to put him to death. ¹⁹ They said to one another, "Here comes this dreamer! ²⁰ "Now then, come and let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits; and we will say, 'A wild beast devoured him.' Then let us see what will become of his dreams!" ²¹ But Reuben heard this and rescued him out of their hands and said, "Let us not take his life." ²² Reuben further said to them, "Shed no blood. Throw him into this pit that is in the wilderness, but do not lay hands on him"-- that he might rescue him out of their hands, to restore him to his father.

Reader 6 Amen.* ²³ So it came about, when Joseph reached his brothers, that they stripped Joseph of his tunic, the varicolored tunic that was on him; ²⁴ and they took him and threw him into the pit. Now the pit was empty, without any water in it. ²⁵ Then they sat down to eat a meal. And as they raised their eyes and looked, behold, a caravan of Ishmaelites was coming from Gilead, with their camels bearing aromatic gum and balm and myrrh, on their way to bring them down to Egypt. ²⁶ Judah said to his brothers, "What profit is it for us to kill our brother and cover up his blood? ²⁷ "Come and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites and not lay our hands on him, for he is our brother, our own flesh." And his brothers listened to him. ²⁸ Then some Midianite traders passed by, so they pulled him up and lifted Joseph out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver. Thus they brought Joseph into Egypt.

Reader 7 Amen.* ²⁹ Now Reuben returned to the pit, and behold, Joseph was not in the pit; so he tore his garments. ³⁰ He returned to his brothers and said, "The boy is not there; as for me, where am I to go?" ³¹ So they took Joseph's tunic, and slaughtered a male goat and dipped the tunic in the blood; ³² and they sent the varicolored tunic and brought it to their father and said, "We found this; please examine it to see whether it is your son's tunic or not." ³³ Then he examined it and said, "It is my son's tunic. A wild beast has devoured him; Joseph has surely been torn to pieces!" ³⁴ So Jacob tore his clothes, and put sackcloth on his loins and mourned for his son many days. ³⁵ Then all his sons and all his daughters arose to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted. And he said, "Surely I will go down to Sheol in mourning for my son." So his father wept for him. ³⁶ Meanwhile, the Midianites sold him in Egypt to Potiphar, Pharaoh's officer, the captain of the bodyguard.

Jeremiah 38:8

Reader 8 Amen.* ⁷ But Ebed-melech the Ethiopian, a eunuch, while he was in the king's palace, heard that they had put Jeremiah into the cistern. Now the king was sitting in the Gate of Benjamin; ⁸ and Ebed-melech went out from the king's palace and spoke to the king, saying, ⁹ "My lord the king, these men have acted wickedly in all that they have done to Jeremiah the prophet whom they have cast into the cistern; and he will die right where he is because of the famine, for there is no more bread in the city." ¹⁰ Then the king commanded Ebed-melech the Ethiopian, saying, "Take thirty men from here under your authority and bring up Jeremiah the prophet from the cistern before he dies."

Psalm 30 *A Psalm; a Song at the Dedication of the House. A Psalm of David.*

¹ I will extol You, O Yahweh, for You have lifted me up, and have not let my enemies rejoice over me. ² O Yahweh my God, I cried to You for help, and You healed me. ³ O Yahweh, You have brought up my soul from Sheol; You have kept me alive, that I would not go down to the pit. ⁴ Sing praise to Yahweh, you His godly ones, and give thanks to His holy name. ⁵ For His anger is but for a moment, His favor is for a lifetime; weeping may last for the night, but a shout of joy comes in the morning. ⁶ Now as for me, I said in my prosperity, "I will never be moved." ⁷ O Yahweh, by Your favor You have made my mountain to stand strong; You hid Your face, I was dismayed. ⁸ To You, O Yahweh, I called, and to the Lord I made supplication: ⁹ "What profit is there in my blood, if I go down to the pit? Will the dust praise You? Will it declare Your faithfulness?" ¹⁰ "Hear, O Yahweh, and be gracious to me; O Yahweh, be my helper." ¹¹ You have turned for me my mourning into dancing; You have loosed my sackcloth and girded me with gladness, ¹² that my soul may sing praise to You and not be silent. O Yahweh my God, I will give thanks to You forever.

John 19:1 – 20:10

Reader 9 Amen.* ¹ Pilate then took Yeshua and scourged Him. ² And the soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on His head, and put a purple robe on Him; ³ and they began to come up to Him and say, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and to give Him slaps in the face. ⁴ Pilate came out again and said to them, "Behold, I am bringing Him out to you so that you may know that I find no guilt in Him." ⁵ Yeshua then came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, "Behold, the Man!" ⁶ So when the chief priests and the officers saw Him, they cried out saying, "Crucify, crucify!" Pilate said to them, "Take Him yourselves and crucify Him, for I find no guilt in Him." ⁷ The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and by that law He ought to die because He made Himself out to be the Son of God."

Reader 10 Amen.* ⁸ Therefore when Pilate heard this statement, he was even more afraid; ⁹ and he entered into the Praetorium again and said to Yeshua, "Where are You from?" But Yeshua gave him no answer. ¹⁰ So Pilate said to Him, "You do not speak to me? Do You not know that I have authority to release You, and I have authority to crucify You?" ¹¹ Yeshua answered, "You would have no authority over Me, unless it had been given you from above; for this reason he who delivered Me to you has the greater sin." ¹² As a result of this Pilate made efforts to release Him, but the Jews cried out saying, "If you release this Man, you are no friend of Caesar; everyone who makes himself out to be a king opposes Caesar." ¹³ Therefore when Pilate heard these words, he brought Yeshua out, and sat down on the judgment seat at a place called The Pavement, but in Hebrew, Gabbatha.

Reader 11 Amen.* ¹⁴ Now it was the day of preparation for the Passover; it was about the sixth hour. And he said to the Jews, "Behold, your King!" ¹⁵ So they cried out, "Away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him!" Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar." ¹⁶ So he then handed Him over to them to be crucified. ¹⁷ They took Yeshua, therefore, and He went out, bearing His own cross, to the place called the Place of a Skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha. ¹⁸ There they crucified Him, and with Him two other men, one on either side, and Yeshua in between.

Reader 12 Amen.* ¹⁹ Pilate also wrote an inscription and put it on the cross. It was written, "YESHUA THE NAZARENE, THE KING OF THE JEWS." ²⁰ Therefore many of the Jews read this inscription, for the place where Yeshua was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, Latin and in Greek. ²¹ So the chief priests of the Jews were saying to Pilate, "Do not write, 'The King of the Jews'; but that He said, 'I am King of the Jews.'" ²² Pilate answered, "What I have written I have written." ²³ Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Yeshua, took His outer garments and made four parts, a part to every soldier and also the tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece. ²⁴ So they said to one another, "Let us not

tear it, but cast lots for it, to decide whose it shall be"; this was to fulfill the Scripture: "THEY DIVIDED MY OUTER GARMENTS AMONG THEM, AND FOR MY CLOTHING THEY CAST LOTS."²⁵

Therefore the soldiers did these things.

Reader 13 Amen.* But standing by the cross of Yeshua were His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.²⁶ When Yeshua then saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing nearby, He said to His mother, "Woman, behold, your son!"²⁷ Then He said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!" From that hour the disciple took her into his own household.²⁸ After this, Yeshua, knowing that all things had already been accomplished, to fulfill the Scripture, said, "I am thirsty."²⁹ A jar full of sour wine was standing there; so they put a sponge full of the sour wine upon a branch of hyssop and brought it up to His mouth.³⁰ Therefore when Yeshua had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And He bowed His head and gave up His spirit.

Reader 14 Amen.*³¹ Then the Jews, because it was the day of preparation, so that the bodies would not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.³² So the soldiers came, and broke the legs of the first man and of the other who was crucified with Him;³³ but coming to Yeshua, when they saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs.³⁴ But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out.³⁵ And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you also may believe.³⁶ For these things came to pass to fulfill the Scripture, "NOT A BONE OF HIM SHALL BE BROKEN."³⁷ And again another Scripture says, "THEY SHALL LOOK ON HIM WHOM THEY PIERCED."

Reader 15 Amen.*³⁸ After these things Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Yeshua, but a secret one for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Yeshua; and Pilate granted permission. So he came and took away His body.³⁹ Nicodemus, who had first come to Him by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds weight.⁴⁰ So they took the body of Yeshua and bound it in linen wrappings with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews.⁴¹ Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid.⁴² Therefore because of the Jewish day of preparation, since the tomb was nearby, they laid Yeshua there.

Reader 16 Amen.*^{20:1} Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came early to the tomb, while it was still dark, and saw the stone already taken away from the tomb.² So she ran and came to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Yeshua loved, and said to them, "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him."³ So Peter and the other disciple went forth, and they were going to the tomb.⁴ The two were running together; and the other disciple ran ahead faster than Peter and came to the tomb first;⁵ and stooping and looking in, he saw the linen wrappings lying there; but he did not go in.⁶ And so Simon Peter also came, following him, and entered the tomb; and he saw the linen wrappings lying there,⁷ and the face-cloth which had been on His head, not lying with the linen wrappings, but rolled up in a place by itself.⁸ So the other disciple who had first come to the tomb then also entered, and he saw and believed.⁹ For as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead.¹⁰ So the disciples went away again to their own homes.

Commentary:

In chapter 36 we saw a brief story of Esau. Esau's descendants intermarried with Ishmael's descendants. Esau produced twelve princes before Jacob produced one; these princes dwelt as masters in the land of their (eternal) possession (v.43).

Now we will see an expansive chronicle of Jacob and his descendants.

We start this chapter with Grandfather Isaac at 168, father Jacob at 108, and Joseph at 17 years old. Leah died around this time.

(V.1) *Jacob settled in The Land where his father had sojourned.* The Midrash relates: "HaSatan says, 'Are the righteous not satisfied with what is stored up for them in the world to come, that they expect to live at ease in This World too?' " This world is for us to grow to maturity in Yeshua; the wicked have their good here.

Jacob is only 108 years old here, having two living wives and thirteen children. He should want to settle down?? But a situation concerning his son Joseph, and a famine, would keep him unsettled.

(V.2) *“These are the records of the generations of Jacob: Joseph . . .”* Though Jacob has ten older sons and one younger, only seventeen-year-old Joseph is mentioned.

Why would Jacob so favor one son? Why would Joseph flaunt his dreams? Why would the brothers become so jealous as to try to kill him?

Jacob worked for Laban only for the sake of marrying Rachel, who finally bore him Joseph: Joseph could be considered Jacob’s intended firstborn. Twenty-three (*Midrash*) major things that happened to Jacob also happened to Joseph: they were both hated, they both had a brother/brothers who tried to kill them, etc.

(V.3) *“Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his sons, because he was the son of his old age”* – a reference to wisdom: Joseph was the foremost scholar among his brothers (*Onkelos*); he was within a year of age of his next brother.

Jacob/Israel wanted to “see Joseph’s face” before he died: that is recorded repeatedly. Only by seeing his face could Jacob perceive his soul – whether Joseph was of character to carry on his father’s purpose in life.

Only Joseph would be granted the status of two tribes – Ephraim and Manessah.

Jacob gave Joseph a fine wool garment as would be suitable for members of a royal family (See 2 Samuel 13:18). Such were long-sleeved garments that reached the feet, worn by those who were not expected to perform manual labor.

Abraham symbolized charity, Jacob’s attribute was truth (splendor), and Joseph’s was *brit shalom* / the covenant of peace.

Abraham’s character of charity was tried, ultimately in the order to sacrifice his only son. Herein we see the type of our Heavenly Father, in charity offering His only Son.

Joseph’s character of peace was tried: his brothers could not even speak to him peaceably (v.4). He would provide for his brothers, even after they sought to kill him. And herein we see the type of Yeshua, providing for those who sought to kill Him.

(V.10) Joseph related his second dream to his father and brothers. His father said to him, *“What is this dream that you have had? Shall I and your mother and your brothers actually come to bow ourselves down before you to the ground?”* A reason for the question may be found by reading this verse backwards (in Hebrew): for Rachel (his mother) was dead! (*Write out explanation.*)

Israel’s kingship belonged to Judah, and the priesthood to Levi. If Joseph tried to usurp either position, he would be liable to death penalty. The brothers, rationalizing their jealousy, sat as a court to condemn him to death. After putting Joseph in a pit, they comfortably sat down to eat (v.25).

The older brothers conspired to do away with Joseph (though Reuben, the eldest, who would have had to take responsibility before his father, sought to thwart the plan). Even upon seeing Joseph ruling Egypt, they did not repent of their judgment, only their actions in selling him.

But, Joseph was to rule them in Egypt, not in Israel. Yeshua, as Messiah ben Yoseph (son of Joseph), is our suffering servant (Isaiah 53:11) who provides for us here; Yeshua, as Messiah ben David (David ben Yehudah – son of Judah), will reign as King over the Promised Land.

Joseph, speaking to his brothers in Pharaoh’s court, referred to Jacob as “my father, not “our father.” Yeshua did likewise (Matthew 7:21).

Joseph related prophetic dreams to an unwilling audience of his brothers. How will we feel when Yeshua is revealed to us, if we were unwilling to heed His prophetic words?

Can you imagine those who regularly attended synagogue, hearing this Torah, Haftarah and Psalm on one Sabbath, then seeing Yeshua’s ordeal? We are in a position to see it more fully: how shall we respond?

God showed His great charity toward us in providing salvation for us – when we hated Him. God gives each of us provision for our assigned task: how do we fulfill our promising obligation to a rewarding God; how much do consume it upon our own selfish desires?

Here we may build and buy houses in which to dwell for a short time; but we all are building eternal houses (1 Cor 3:12). What kind of house do we want for eternity? Are we building with lasting materials? How much will be lost to fire? Can we be satisfied with storing up for ourselves in the world to come, or must we expect to live at ease in This World too?

Reader 1 Amen.* ¹ And it came about at that time, that Judah departed from his brothers and visited a certain Adullamite, whose name was Hirah. ² Judah saw there a daughter of a certain Canaanite whose name was Shua; and he took her and went in to her. ³ So she conceived and bore a son and he named him Er. ⁴ Then she conceived again and bore a son and named him Onan. ⁵ She bore still another son and named him Shelah; and it was at Chezib that she bore him.

Reader 2 Amen.* ⁶ Now Judah took a wife for Er his firstborn, and her name was Tamar. ⁷ But Er, Judah's firstborn, was evil in the sight of Yahweh, so Yahweh took his life. ⁸ Then Judah said to Onan, "Go in to your brother's wife, and perform your duty as a brother-in-law to her, and raise up offspring for your brother." ⁹ Onan knew that the offspring would not be his; so when he went in to his brother's wife, he wasted his seed on the ground in order not to give offspring to his brother. ¹⁰ But what he did was displeasing in the sight of Yahweh; so He took his life also. ¹¹ Then Judah said to his daughter-in-law Tamar, "Remain a widow in your father's house until my son Shelah grows up"; for he thought, "I am afraid that he too may die like his brothers." So Tamar went and lived in her father's house.

Reader 3 Amen.* ¹² Now after a considerable time Shua's daughter, the wife of Judah, died; and when the time of mourning was ended, Judah went up to his sheepshearers at Timnah, he and his friend Hirah the Adullamite. ¹³ It was told to Tamar, "Behold, your father-in-law is going up to Timnah to shear his sheep." ¹⁴ So she removed her widow's garments and covered herself with a veil, and wrapped herself, and sat in the gateway of Enaim, which is on the road to Timnah; for she saw that Shelah had grown up, and she had not been given to him as a wife.

Reader 4 Amen.* ¹⁵ When Judah saw her, he thought she was a harlot, for she had covered her face. ¹⁶ So he turned aside to her by the road, and said, "Here now, let me come in to you"; for he did not know that she was his daughter-in-law. And she said, "What will you give me, that you may come in to me?" ¹⁷ He said, therefore, "I will send you a young goat from the flock." She said, moreover, "Will you give a pledge until you send it?" ¹⁸ He said, "What pledge shall I give you?" And she said, "Your seal and your cord, and your staff that is in your hand." So he gave them to her and went in to her, and she conceived by him. ¹⁹ Then she arose and departed, and removed her veil and put on her widow's garments.

Reader 5 Amen.* ²⁰ When Judah sent the young goat by his friend the Adullamite, to receive the pledge from the woman's hand, he did not find her. ²¹ He asked the men of her place, saying, "Where is the temple prostitute who was by the road at Enaim?" But they said, "There has been no temple prostitute here." ²² So he returned to Judah, and said, "I did not find her; and furthermore, the men of the place said, 'There has been no temple prostitute here.'" ²³ Then Judah said, "Let her keep them, otherwise we will become a laughingstock. After all, I sent this young goat, but you did not find her."

Reader 6 Amen.* ²⁴ Now it was about three months later that Judah was informed, "Your daughter-in-law Tamar has played the harlot, and behold, she is also with child by harlotry." Then Judah said, "Bring her out and let her be burned!" ²⁵ It was while she was being brought out that she sent to her father-in-law, saying, "I am with child by the man to whom these things belong." And she said, "Please examine and see, whose signet ring and cords and staff are these?" ²⁶ Judah recognized them, and said, "She is more righteous than I, inasmuch as I did not give her to my son Shelah." And he did not have relations with her again.

Reader 7 Amen.* ²⁷ It came about at the time she was giving birth, that behold, there were twins in her womb. ²⁸ Moreover, it took place while she was giving birth, one put out a hand, and the midwife took and tied a scarlet thread on his hand, saying, "This one came out first." ²⁹ But it came about as he drew back his hand, that behold, his brother came out. Then she said, "What a breach you have made for yourself!" So he was named Perez. ³⁰ Afterward his brother came out who had the scarlet thread on his hand; and he was named Zerah.

Isaiah 37:31-37

Reader 8 Amen.* ³¹ "The surviving remnant of the house of Judah will again take root downward and bear fruit upward. ³² "For out of Jerusalem will go forth a remnant and out of Mount Zion survivors. The zeal of Yahweh of hosts will perform this." ³³ "Therefore, thus says Yahweh concerning the king of Assyria, 'He will not come to this city or shoot an arrow there; and he will not come before it with a shield, or throw up a siege ramp against it. ³⁴ 'By the way that he came, by the same he will return, and he will not come to this

city,' declares Yahweh. ³⁵ 'For I will defend this city to save it for My own sake and for My servant David's sake.'" ³⁶ Then the angel of Yahweh went out and struck 185,000 in the camp of the Assyrians; and when men arose early in the morning, behold, all of these were dead. ³⁷ So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed and returned home and lived at Nineveh.

Psalm 31 *(To be sung.) For the choir director. A Psalm of David.*

¹ In You, O Yahweh, I have taken refuge; let me never be ashamed; in Your righteousness deliver me. ² Incline Your ear to me, rescue me quickly; be to me a rock of strength, a stronghold to save me. ³ For You are my rock and my fortress; for Your name's sake You will lead me and guide me. ⁴ You will pull me out of the net which they have secretly laid for me, for You are my strength. ⁵ Into Your hand I commit my spirit; You have ransomed me, O Yahweh, God of truth. ⁶ I hate those who regard vain idols, but I trust in Yahweh. ⁷ I will rejoice and be glad in Your lovingkindness, because You have seen my affliction; You have known the troubles of my soul, ⁸ and You have not given me over into the hand of the enemy; You have set my feet in a large place. ⁹ Be gracious to me, O Yahweh, for I am in distress; my eye is wasted away from grief, my soul and my body also. ¹⁰ For my life is spent with sorrow and my years with sighing; my strength has failed because of my iniquity, and my body has wasted away. ¹¹ Because of all my adversaries, I have become a reproach, especially to my neighbors, and an object of dread to my acquaintances; those who see me in the street flee from me. ¹² I am forgotten as a dead man, out of mind; I am like a broken vessel. ¹³ For I have heard the slander of many, terror is on every side; while they took counsel together against me, they schemed to take away my life. ¹⁴ But as for me, I trust in You, O Yahweh, I say, "You are my God." ¹⁵ My times are in Your hand; deliver me from the hand of my enemies and from those who persecute me. ¹⁶ Make Your face to shine upon Your servant; save me in Your lovingkindness. ¹⁷ Let me not be put to shame, O Yahweh, for I call upon You; let the wicked be put to shame, let them be silent in Sheol. ¹⁸ Let the lying lips be mute, which speak arrogantly against the righteous with pride and contempt. ¹⁹ How great is Your goodness, which You have stored up for those who fear You, which You have wrought for those who take refuge in You, before the sons of men! ²⁰ You hide them in the secret place of Your presence from the conspiracies of man; You keep them secretly in a shelter from the strife of tongues. ²¹ Blessed be Yahweh, for He has made marvelous His lovingkindness to me in a besieged city. ²² As for me, I said in my alarm, "I am cut off from before Your eyes"; nevertheless You heard the voice of my supplications when I cried to You. ²³ O love Yahweh, all you His godly ones! Yahweh preserves the faithful and fully recompenses the proud doer. ²⁴ Be strong and let your heart take courage, all you who hope in Yahweh.

Romans 9:22-29

Reader 9 Amen.* ²² What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction? ²³ And He did so to make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory, ²⁴ even us, whom He also called, not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles. ²⁵ As He says also in Hosea, "I will call those who were not My people, 'My people,' And her who was not beloved, 'beloved.'" ²⁶ And it shall be that in the place where it was said to them, 'you are not My people,' There they shall be called sons of the living God." ²⁷ Isaiah cries out concerning Israel, "Though the number of the sons of Israel be as the sand of the sea, it is the remnant that will be saved; ²⁸ for the Lord will execute His word upon the earth, thoroughly and quickly." ²⁹ And just as Isaiah foretold, "Except the Lord of Hosts had left to us a posterity, we would have become as Sodom, and would have resembled Gomorrah."

Commentary:

Today's subject of God's sovereignty is not well accepted doctrine. Many of Yeshua's followers left Him over it. It is not so much hard to understand, as it is hard for ego-centric man to believe.

"(Yeshua) was saying, 'For this reason I have said to you, that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted him from the Father.' As a result of this many of His disciples withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore" – John 6:65-66.

Before we "leave" over it, we should take a hard look at what God says about it, and not look for excuses. We should look for the total Biblical picture, and not ignore some passages while trying to interpret others

as “contradictory”. [While much discussion and question is anticipated, time constraints will only allow touching on this subject here.]

God is sovereign, and He rules through various means. He rules over all of His creation. In every blessing, we start with: “*Blessed are You, Yahweh our God, King of the Universe*” – acknowledging that He is ruler of all creation. God is neither sovereign only over some things, nor only when He chooses to overrule someone else. He has His way with kings and commoners, and no one can thwart His purposes. We “worms” do not even have the standing to question what He does!

“I am Yahweh, and there is none else. I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I Yahweh do all these things” – Isaiah 45:6-7.

“The king’s heart is like channels of water in the hand of Yahweh; He turns it wherever He wishes” – Proverbs 21:1.

“The mind of a man plans his way, but Yahweh directs his steps” – Proverbs 16:9.

“(The Most High) does according to His will in the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of earth; and no one can ward off His hand or say to Him, ‘What have You done?’” – Daniel 4:35.

Job said that Yahweh was the first cause of disastrous weather, destruction by enemies, and disabling disease. Job did not thus lie, nor misunderstand God.

After Satan brought all of these calamities to Job, we read: “*‘Yahweh gave, and Yahweh has taken away; blessed be the name Yahweh’. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly*” – Job 1:21-22.

Think about the terms *predestination* and *free will*:

Predestination means predetermination of one’s destiny. It is an unpopular Biblical term. God has predetermined our destinies. That is unpopular Biblical doctrine.

“Whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified” – Romans 8:30. [Foreknowledge, in the previous verse, refers to a relationship before creation; it does not refer to God choosing on the basis of foreseen action by man.]

“He predestined us to adoption as sons through Messiah Yeshua to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will . . . we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will” – Ephesians 1:5, 11.

The idea that man’s will is free is never mentioned by a Biblical writer. The term “*free will*” is never found in the Bible (excepting where some translations call variable offerings “free will offerings” – these are required offerings, but amounts are not specified). A common great misunderstanding here seems to come from people hearing “Man does not have a will”, when we are really saying “Man has a will that is not free”. Man’s will is determined by many factors – seen and unseen; genetic, environmental, and spiritual; but ultimately, God is the first cause of all.

Responsibility is not predicated upon free will. That is, we are responsible for our actions, in spite of God’s sovereignty. This seems to be the major stumbling block.

God chooses whomsoever He wills, for His own purposes: He does not choose according to man’s works, neither actual nor foreseen. Man does not choose to believe because of his heritage, nor because of his own “free will”, nor because of persuasion by someone else.

Yeshua said, *“You did not choose Me, but I chose you”* – John 15:16.

“But as many as received Him, to them He had given the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God” – John 1:12-13.

Man is proud, and wants to be in the place of God – in control. Man wants to make God in his own image, and put God under his rules.

A common response is, “We are not robots”. The Bible does not speak about robots, pro or con. This is a catch word for excusing faithlessness.

God says that He hates sinners – *“all workers of iniquity”* (Psalm 5:5). But do we understand that God creates that which He hates? He creates vessels of dishonor, for the purpose of destroying them. He created Satan for the purpose of his being a destroyer.

Paul said (even anticipating the reaction) *“So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires. You will say to me then, ‘Why does He still find fault? For who resists His will?’ On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, ‘Why did you make me like this,’ will it? Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for common use? What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction? And He did so to make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory”* – Romans 9:18-23.

Yahweh said, *“I have created the waster to destroy”* – Isaiah 54:16.

Yeshua came to Israel, offering salvation. But many could not respond.

Yeshua said, *“Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling”* – Matthew 23:37.

“Yeshua knew from the beginning who they were that would believe not, and who should betray him” – John 6:64.

“But you do not believe because you are not of My sheep. My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand” – John 10:26-29.

“For this reason they could not believe, because Isaiah said again ‘He has blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; so that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them’ ” – John 12:39-40.

Now, we are to hate sin; we are required to repent and overcome sin. We should care that sinners face punishment. Nevertheless, in our future glorified state, we will see the punishment of the wicked, and still be at total peace.

“Sin crouches at the door, and desires to overcome you, but you must overcome it” – Genesis 4:7.

“Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand” – Matthew 3:2, 4:17. Repentance means turning from sin to God.

“Brethren, my heart’s desire and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation” – Romans 10:1. Salvation is from sin (Matthew 1:21).

Moses (Exodus 32:32) and Paul (Romans 9:3) cared enough that they would have offered their own lives as a ransom for other sinners, but only Yeshua could and did so (John 10:15).

“You will only look on with your eyes and see the recompense of the wicked” – Psalm 91:8.

From our perspective, we are responsible to repent and believe. From God’s perspective, He has made the determinations from before the foundation of the world. So, why are we told this? So that we will recognize Him as sovereign, and be humble and thankful.

➤ See slide, “Priesthood of the Firstborn.”

The commandments were taught from Adam, through the priesthood of the firstborn: Seth, Enosh, Kenan, Mahalalel, Jared, Hanokh, Methuselah, Lamech, Noah (#10), Shem, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Adam’s lifespan overlapped Methuselah’s by 243 years, Methuselah’s overlapped Shem’s by 98 years, and Shem’s overlapped Jacob’s by 50 years! Shem’s lifespan completely covered Abraham’s. There were few required transmissions of the original commandments, and those were available through multiple concurrent witnesses.

Herein we see in action positive commandment number 216 of the 613, before being given to Moses (Deu 25:5): a deceased man’s brother shall raise up children for his deceased brother by the deceased’s wife. Judah took a wife, Tamar, for his firstborn son, Er; because Er was evil, God killed him. Judah then gave Tamar to his second son, Onan; because Onan practiced abnormal sex, to avoid raising up children for his deceased brother, God killed him. Judah then feared to give Tamar to his third son, Shelah: this initiated the sins between Judah and Tamar.

(V.26) We also see acknowledgment of violating negative commandment number 343 of the 613, (Leviticus 18:15) a man shall not have relations with his daughter-in-law.

(V.1) “And it came about at that time, that Judah went down from his brothers.” This always implies going down spiritually, as well as geographically.

Judah had three sons by an unnamed Canaanite (the daughter of Shua), then twin sons by his daughter-in-law, Tamar: David, and thus Yeshua, came through one of the twins.

Genesis 46:12 “And the sons of Judah; Er, and Onan, and Shelah, and Pharez, and Zerah: but Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan.”

Genesis 49:8 “Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise: thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies; thy father’s children shall bow down before thee.”

Numbers 1:5-7 “These then are the names of the men who shall stand with you: of Reuben, Elizur the son of Shedeur; of Simeon, Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai; of Judah, Nahshon the son of Amminadab.”

Matthew 1:3-16 “And to Judah were born Perez and Zerah by Tamar; and to Perez was born Hezron; and to Hezron, Ram; and to Ram was born Amminadab; and to Amminadab, Nahshon; and to Nahshon, Salmon; and to Salmon was born Boaz by Rahab; and to Boaz was born Obed by Ruth; and to Obed, Jesse; and to Jesse was born David the king. And to David was born Solomon by her who had been the wife of Uriah; and to Solomon was born Rehoboam; and to Rehoboam, Abijah; and to Abijah, Asa; and to Asa was born Jehoshaphat; and to Jehoshaphat, Joram; and to Joram, Uzziah; and to Uzziah was born

Jotham; and to Jotham, Ahaz; and to Ahaz, Hezekiah; and to Hezekiah was born Manasseh; and to Manasseh, Amon; and to Amon, Josiah; and to Josiah were born Jeconiah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon. And after the deportation to Babylon, to Jeconiah was born Shealtiel; and to Shealtiel, Zerubbabel; and to Zerubbabel was born Abihud; and to Abihud, Eliakim; and to Eliakim, Azor; and to Azor was born Zadok; and to Zadok, Achim; and to Achim, Eliud; and to Eliud was born Eleazar; and to Eleazar, Matthan; and to Matthan, Jacob; and to Jacob was born Joseph the husband of Mary, by whom was born Yeshua, who is called The Messiah.”

“What if God, willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, (Reprobation – 2 Thess 2:11-12) endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction? And He did so in order that (Election – v.8:33) He might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory, even us, whom He also called, not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles.

As He says also in Hosea, ‘I will call those who were (lo ami) not My people, (ami atah) “My people,” And her who was (lo racham) not beloved, (racham) “beloved.” And it shall be that in the place where it was said to them, “you are (lo ami) not My people,” There they shall be called (benei El-chai) sons of the living God.’

And Isaiah cries out concerning Israel, ‘Though the number of the sons of Israel be as the sand of the sea, it is the remnant that will be saved; for the Lord will execute His word upon the earth, thoroughly and quickly.’ And just as Isaiah foretold, ‘Except the Lord of Hosts had left to us a posterity, we would have become as Sodom, and would have resembled Gomorrah.’” – Romans 9:23-29.

So we can clearly see, it was not because of the merits of Judah that he was given high position by God: it was altogether by the election of Grace – Judah’s sin is atoned for by Yeshua, and he will one day be finally redeemed, completely whole. Concerning Judah and Israel, Jeremiah 31:34 reads, *“for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.”*

And salvation is not only for the physical descendants of Abraham: there will be a remnant of Israel, and people of all nations. *“For thus says Yahweh, ‘Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob, and shout among the chiefs of the nations; proclaim, give praise, and say, “O Yahweh, save Thy people, the remnant of Israel!”’” – Jeremiah 31:7. “And I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed” – Genesis 12:3.*

VaYoseph/ Now Joseph

Genesis 39:1-30 Isaiah 52:3-9 Psalm 32 Acts 7:9-37

Commentary Y1-36

Kislev 16, 5762 / Dec 1, 2001

Kislev 14, 5765 / Nov 27, 2004

Reader 1 Amen.* ¹ Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt; and Potiphar, an Egyptian officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the bodyguard, bought him from the Ishmaelites, who had taken him down there. ² Yahweh was with Joseph, so he became a successful man. And he was in the house of his master, the Egyptian. ³ Now his master saw that Yahweh was with him and how Yahweh caused all that he did to prosper in his hand.

Reader 2 Amen.* ⁴ So Joseph found favor in his sight and became his personal servant; and he made him overseer over his house, and all that he owned he put in his charge. ⁵ It came about that from the time he made him overseer in his house and over all that he owned, Yahweh blessed the Egyptian's house on account of Joseph; thus Yahweh's blessing was upon all that he owned, in the house and in the field. ⁶ So he left everything he owned in Joseph's charge; and with him there he did not concern himself with anything except the food which he ate.

Reader 3 Amen.* Now Joseph was handsome in form and appearance. ⁷ It came about after these events that his master's wife looked with desire at Joseph, and she said, "Lie with me." ⁸ But he refused and said to his master's wife, "Behold, with me here, my master does not concern himself with anything in the house, and he has put all that he owns in my charge. ⁹ "There is no one greater in this house than I, and he has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How then could I do this great evil and sin against God?"

Reader 4 Amen.* ¹⁰ As she spoke to Joseph day after day, he did not listen to her to lie beside her or be with her. ¹¹ Now it happened one day that he went into the house to do his work, and none of the men of the household was there inside. ¹² She caught him by his garment, saying, "Lie with me!" And he left his garment in her hand and fled, and went outside.

Reader 5 Amen.* ¹³ When she saw that he had left his garment in her hand and had fled outside, ¹⁴ she called to the men of her household and said to them, "See, he has brought in a Hebrew to us to make sport of us; he came in to me to lie with me, and I screamed. ¹⁵ "When he heard that I raised my voice and screamed, he left his garment beside me and fled and went outside."

Reader 6 Amen.* ¹⁶ So she left his garment beside her until his master came home. ¹⁷ Then she spoke to him with these words, "The Hebrew slave, whom you brought to us, came in to me to make sport of me; ¹⁸ and as I raised my voice and screamed, he left his garment beside me and fled outside." ¹⁹ Now when his master heard the words of his wife, which she spoke to him, saying, "This is what your slave did to me," his anger burned.

Reader 7 Amen.* ²⁰ So Joseph's master took him and put him into the jail, the place where the king's prisoners were confined; and he was there in the jail. ²¹ But Yahweh was with Joseph and extended kindness to him, and gave him favor in the sight of the chief jailer. ²² The chief jailer committed to Joseph's charge all the prisoners who were in the jail; so that whatever was done there, he was responsible for it. ²³ The chief jailer did not supervise anything under Joseph's charge because Yahweh was with him; and whatever he did, Yahweh made to prosper.

Isaiah 52:3-9

Reader 8 Amen.* ³ For thus says Yahweh, "You were sold for nothing and you will be redeemed without money." ⁴ For thus says the Lord Yahweh, "My people went down at the first into Egypt to reside there; then the Assyrian oppressed them without cause. ⁵ Now therefore, what do I have here," declares Yahweh, "seeing that My people have been taken away without cause?" Again Yahweh declares, "Those who rule over them howl, and My name is continually blasphemed all day long. ⁶ Therefore My people shall know My name; therefore in that day I am the one who is speaking, 'Here I am.'" ⁷ How lovely on the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who announces peace and brings good news of happiness, who announces salvation, and says to Zion, "Your God reigns!" ⁸ Listen! Your watchmen lift up their voices, they shout joyfully together; for they will see with their own eyes when Yahweh restores Zion. ⁹ Break forth, shout joyfully together, you waste places of Jerusalem; for Yahweh has comforted His people, He has redeemed Jerusalem.

Psalm 32 *(To be sung.) A Psalm of David. A Maskil (contemplative poem).*

¹ How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered! ² How blessed is the man to whom Yahweh does not impute iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit! ³ When I kept silent about my sin, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long. ⁴ For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; my vitality was drained away as with the fever heat of summer. Selah. ⁵ I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I did not hide; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to Yahweh"; and You forgave the guilt of my sin. Selah. ⁶ Therefore, let everyone who is godly pray to You in a time when You may be found; surely in a flood of great waters they will not reach him. ⁷ You are my hiding place; You preserve me from trouble; You surround me with songs of deliverance. Selah. ⁸ I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you should go; I will counsel you with My eye upon you. ⁹ Do not be as the horse or as the mule which have no understanding, whose trappings include bit and bridle to hold them in check, otherwise they will not come near to you. ¹⁰ Many are the sorrows of the wicked, but he who trusts in Yahweh, lovingkindness shall surround him ¹¹ Be glad in Yahweh and rejoice, you righteous ones; and shout for joy, all you who are upright in heart.

Acts 7:9-37

Reader 9 Amen.* ⁹ "The patriarchs became jealous of Joseph and sold him into Egypt. Yet God was with him, ¹⁰ and rescued him from all his afflictions, and granted him favor and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and he made him governor over Egypt and all his household. ¹¹ "Now a famine came over all Egypt and Canaan, and great affliction with it, and our fathers could find no food. ¹² "But when Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, he sent our fathers there the first time. ¹³ "On the second visit Joseph made himself known to his brothers, and Joseph's family was disclosed to Pharaoh. ¹⁴ "Then Joseph sent word and invited Jacob his father and all his relatives to come to him, seventy-five persons in all.

Reader 10 Amen.* ¹⁵ "And Jacob went down to Egypt and there he and our fathers died. ¹⁶ "From there they were removed to Shechem and laid in the tomb which Abraham had purchased for a sum of money from the sons of Hamor in Shechem. ¹⁷ "But as the time of the promise was approaching which God had assured to Abraham, the people increased and multiplied in Egypt, ¹⁸ until there arose another king over Egypt who knew nothing about Joseph. ¹⁹ "It was he who took shrewd advantage of our race and mistreated our fathers so that they would expose their infants and they would not survive.

Reader 11 Amen.* ²⁰ "It was at this time that Moses was born; and he was lovely in the sight of God, and he was nurtured three months in his father's home. ²¹ "And after he had been set outside, Pharaoh's daughter took him away and nurtured him as her own son. ²² "Moses was educated in all the learning of the Egyptians, and he was a man of power in words and deeds. ²³ "But when he was approaching the age of forty, it entered his mind to visit his brethren, the sons of Israel. ²⁴ "And when he saw one of them being treated unjustly, he defended him and took vengeance for the oppressed by striking down the Egyptian. ²⁵ "And he supposed that his brethren understood that God was granting them deliverance through him, but they did not understand. ²⁶ "On the following day he appeared to them as they were fighting together, and he tried to reconcile them in peace, saying, 'Men, you are brethren, why do you injure one another?' ²⁷ "But the one who was injuring his neighbor pushed him away, saying, 'Who made you a ruler and judge over us?' ²⁸ You do not mean to kill me as you killed the Egyptian yesterday, do you?"

Reader 12 Amen.* ²⁹ "At this remark, Moses fled and became an alien in the land of Midian, where he became the father of two sons. ³⁰ "After forty years had passed, an angel appeared to him in the wilderness of Mount Sinai, in the flame of a burning thorn bush. ³¹ "When Moses saw it, he marveled at the sight; and as he approached to look more closely, there came the voice of the Lord: ³² I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob.' Moses shook with fear and would not venture to look. ³³ "but Yahweh said to him, 'Take off the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground. ³⁴ I have certainly seen the oppression of My People in Egypt and have heard their groans, and I have come down to rescue them; come now, and I will send you to Egypt.'

Reader 13 Amen.* ³⁵ "This Moses whom they disowned, saying, 'Who made you a ruler and a judge?' is the one whom God sent to be both a ruler and a deliverer with the help of the angel who appeared to him in the thorn bush. ³⁶ "This man led them out, performing wonders and signs in the land of Egypt and in the Red Sea and in the wilderness for forty years. ³⁷ "This is the Moses who said to the sons of Israel, 'God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brethren.'

Commentary:

Consider how Joseph prefigured Yeshua:

Joseph led in spirituality; he was sold for telling what God ordained – that his brethren would bow to him; he was accused of sin that he did not commit; he was the provider of food for the world; he was ultimately placed in the position of highest authority, and his brethren bowed before him in awe.

Joseph was acknowledged by his father, Jacob/Israel, as the one of the twelve brethren who learned and observed and taught the way of God as it had been passed down from Adam. This was the significance of the special garment. It was the reason he was hated. Sinners hate the light.

Joseph told his prophetic parable-dreams to his brethren. They hated him all the more for this, and sought to kill him: how dare young Joseph make himself a king over them?

John 10:32-33 – Yeshua answered them, "I showed you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you stoning Me?" The Jews answered Him, "For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy; and because You, being a man, make Yourself out to be God."

Potiphar's wife tempted Joseph, but he stood fast with God.

Matthew 4:8-10 – Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world, and their glory; and he said to Him, "All these things will I give You, if You fall down and worship me." Then Yeshua said to him, "Begone, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only.' "

Then she falsely accused him, and he was bound in prison: but even there, he ruled!

Matthew 26:59-61 – Now the chief priests and the whole Council kept trying to obtain false testimony against Jesus, in order that they might put Him to death; and they did not find any, even though many false witnesses came forward. But later on two came forward, and said, "This man stated, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and to rebuild it in three days.' "

Acts 2:24-28 – it was impossible for Him (Yeshua) to be held in its (death's) power. "For David says of Him, 'I was always beholding the Lord in my presence; for He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken. Therefore my heart was glad and my tongue exulted; moreover my flesh also will abide in hope; because Thou wilt not abandon my soul to Hades, nor allow Thy Holy One to undergo decay. Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; Thou wilt make me full of gladness with Thy presence.' "

Revelation 1:1, 17-18 – The Revelation of Jesus Christ, . . . "Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades."

Joseph provided food to save Egypt and his own family.

Acts 13:47 – "For thus the Lord has commanded us, 'I have placed You as a light for the Gentiles, that You should bring salvation to the end of the earth.' "

Through this salvation – providing food – Joseph attained a high position, and his brethren bowed down before him.

Revelation 4:10-11 – The twenty-four elders will fall down before Him who sits on the throne, and will worship Him who lives forever and ever, and will cast their crowns before the throne, saying, "Worthy art Thou, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for Thou didst create all things, and because of Thy will they existed, and were created."

Are these twenty-four elders the twelve princes of Esau and the twelve princes of Israel?

Isaiah 52 is an obvious reference to this Torah portion, and its ultimate fulfillment: *3 For thus says Yahweh, "You were sold for nothing and you will be redeemed without money." 4 For thus says Yahweh God, "My people went down at the first into Egypt to reside there, then the Assyrian oppressed them without cause." . . . 9 Break forth, shout joyfully together, you waste places of Jerusalem; for Yahweh has comforted His people, He has redeemed Jerusalem.*

Psalm 32 is a contemplation:

1 How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered! 2 How blessed is the man to whom Yahweh does not impute iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit! . . . 10 Many are the sorrows of the wicked; but he who trusts in Yahweh, lovingkindness shall surround him. 11 Be glad in Yahweh and rejoice, you righteous ones, and shout for joy, all you who are upright in heart.

Another aspect of this portion: As Joseph did, we also should portray Yeshua.

We should be lights to a dark world, being interested in spiritual profit.

Phillippians 2:13-15 – It is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure. Do all things without grumbling or disputing; that you may prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world.

By being familiar with God’s Word, knowing our end, we can resist temptation.

If we are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, we can rejoice! We can glorify God through it!

Matthew 5:10 – “Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

Through God’s Word, we can be wiser than those of the world.

Psalms 119:97-101 – O how I love Thy law! It is my meditation all the day. Thy commandments make me wiser than my enemies, for they are ever mine. I have more insight than all my teachers, for Thy testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the aged, because I have observed Thy precepts. I have restrained my feet from every evil way, that I may keep Thy word.

In the end, God will exalt us! Overcomers have a great future in store!

Revelation 2:6 – To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God.'

2:11 – 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death.'

2:17 – To him who overcomes, to him I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and a new name written on the stone which no one knows but he who receives it.'

2: 26-28 – 'And he who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of the potter are broken to pieces, as I also have received authority from My Father; and I will give him the morning star.

3: 5 'He who overcomes shall thus be clothed in white garments; and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels.

3:12 – 'He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he will not go out from it anymore; and I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God, and My new name.

3: 21 'He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

21: 7 "He who overcomes shall inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son.

Some explanations from the Hebrew text:

A rabbi (Levi) remarked: “A slave buys, the son of a slave woman sells, and a free man is slave to both!” The purchaser was Potiphar – a descendant of Ham whom Noah had cursed that he should be “a slave’s slave to his brothers” (v.9:25), and who was now a slave to Pharaoh; the sellers were Ishmaelites, descendants of Abraham’s slave Hagar; and the slave of such people was Joseph, the firstborn son of Jacob’s favorite wife. – *Artscroll Tanach*

Concerning Potiphar’s wife “lifting up her eyes to Joseph”: the Midrash teaches, “The righteous are exalted through their eyes, but the wicked fall through their eyes.”

Joseph *refused* to lie with Potiphar's wife: using the same word, Scripture later states (v.45:19) that Jacob *refused* to switch his hands, and blessed Joseph. The Zohar claims this is a reward.

Joseph left his garment in her hand and fled (v.12). Talmud teaches us to flee rather than remain and resist strong temptation.

2 Timothy 2:22 – Now flee from youthful lusts, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.

The Yalkut says that Potiphar was ready to kill Joseph, but his daughter Asenath came to him and swore that Joseph was innocent. She told her father the entire story as it actually happened. It was on the merit of this that she was eventually privileged to marry him (see v. 41:50).

Chateau / They Offended

Genesis 40:1-23 Amos 1:3 – 2:6 Psalm 33 2 Corinthians 9:8

Commentary Y1-37

Kislev 23, 5762 / Dec 8, 2001
Kislev 21, 5765 / Dec 4, 2004

Hanukkah begins Tuesday evening – 1st candle

Reader 1 Amen.* ¹Then it came about after these things, the cupbearer and the baker for the king of Egypt offended their lord, the king of Egypt. ²Pharaoh was furious with his two officials, the chief cupbearer and the chief baker. ³So he put them in confinement in the house of the captain of the bodyguard, in the jail, the same place where Joseph was imprisoned.

Reader 2 Amen.* ⁴The captain of the bodyguard put Joseph in charge of them, and he took care of them; and they were in confinement for some time. ⁵Then the cupbearer and the baker for the king of Egypt, who were confined in jail, both had a dream the same night, each man with his own dream and each dream with its own interpretation. ⁶When Joseph came to them in the morning and observed them, behold, they were dejected.

Reader 3 Amen.* ⁷He asked Pharaoh's officials who were with him in confinement in his master's house, "Why are your faces so sad today?" ⁸Then they said to him, "We have had a dream and there is no one to interpret it." Then Joseph said to them, "Do not interpretations belong to God? Tell it to me, please."

Reader 4 Amen.* ⁹So the chief cupbearer told his dream to Joseph, and said to him, "In my dream, behold, there was a vine in front of me; ¹⁰and on the vine were three branches. And as it was budding, its blossoms came out, and its clusters produced ripe grapes. ¹¹"Now Pharaoh's cup was in my hand; so I took the grapes and squeezed them into Pharaoh's cup, and I put the cup into Pharaoh's hand."

Reader 5 Amen.* ¹²Then Joseph said to him, "This is the interpretation of it: the three branches are three days; ¹³within three more days Pharaoh will lift up your head and restore you to your office; and you will put Pharaoh's cup into his hand according to your former custom when you were his cupbearer. ¹⁴"Only keep me in mind when it goes well with you, and please do me a kindness by mentioning me to Pharaoh and get me out of this house. ¹⁵"For I was in fact kidnapped from the land of the Hebrews, and even here I have done nothing that they should have put me into the dungeon."

Reader 6 Amen.* ¹⁶When the chief baker saw that he had interpreted favorably, he said to Joseph, "I also saw in my dream, and behold, there were three baskets of white bread on my head; ¹⁷and in the top basket there were some of all sorts of baked food for Pharaoh, and the birds were eating them out of the basket on my head." ¹⁸Then Joseph answered and said, "This is its interpretation: the three baskets are three days; ¹⁹within three more days Pharaoh will lift up your head from you and will hang you on a tree, and the birds will eat your flesh off you."

Reader 7 Amen.* ²⁰Thus it came about on the third day, which was Pharaoh's birthday, that he made a feast for all his servants; and he lifted up the head of the chief cupbearer and the head of the chief baker among his servants. ²¹He restored the chief cupbearer to his office, and he put the cup into Pharaoh's hand; ²²but he hanged the chief baker, just as Joseph had interpreted to them. ²³Yet the chief cupbearer did not remember Joseph, but forgot him.

Amos 1:3 – 2:6

Reader 8 Amen.* ³Thus says Yahweh, "For three transgressions of Damascus and for four I will not revoke its punishment, because they threshed Gilead with implements of sharp iron. ⁴So I will send fire upon the house of Hazael and it will consume the citadels of Ben-hadad. ⁵I will also break the gate bar of Damascus, and cut off the inhabitant from the valley of Aven, and him who holds the scepter, from Beth-eden; so the people of Aram will go exiled to Kir," Says Yahweh.

⁶Thus says Yahweh, "For three transgressions of Gaza and for four I will not revoke its punishment, because they deported an entire population to deliver it up to Edom. ⁷So I will send fire upon the wall of Gaza and it will consume her citadels. ⁸I will also cut off the inhabitant from Ashdod, and him who holds the scepter, from Ashkelon; I will even unleash My power upon Ekron, and the remnant of the Philistines will perish," Says Lord Yahweh.

⁹Thus says Yahweh, "For three transgressions of Tyre and for four I will not revoke its punishment, because they delivered up an entire population to Edom and did not remember the covenant of brotherhood.

¹⁰So I will send fire upon the wall of Tyre and it will consume her citadels."

¹¹Thus says Yahweh, "For three transgressions of Edom and for four I will not revoke its punishment, because he pursued his brother with the sword, while he stifled his compassion; his anger also tore

continually, and he maintained his fury forever. ¹² So I will send fire upon Teman and it will consume the citadels of Bozrah."

Reader 9 Amen.* ¹³ Thus says Yahweh, "For three transgressions of the sons of Ammon and for four I will not revoke its punishment, because they ripped open the pregnant women of Gilead in order to enlarge their borders. ¹⁴ So I will kindle a fire on the wall of Rabbah and it will consume her citadels amid war cries on the day of battle, and a storm on the day of tempest. ¹⁵ Their king will go into exile, he and his princes together," says Yahweh.

^{2:1} Thus says Yahweh, "For three transgressions of Moab and for four I will not revoke its punishment, because he burned the bones of the king of Edom to lime. ² So I will send fire upon Moab and it will consume the citadels of Kerioth; and Moab will die amid tumult, with war cries and the sound of a trumpet. ³ I will also cut off the judge from her midst and slay all her princes with him," says Yahweh.

⁴ Thus says Yahweh, "For three transgressions of Judah and for four I will not revoke its punishment, because they rejected the law of Yahweh and have not kept His statutes; their lies also have led them astray, those after which their fathers walked. ⁵ So I will send fire upon Judah and it will consume the citadels of Jerusalem."

⁶ Thus says Yahweh, "For three transgressions of Israel and for four I will not revoke its punishment, because they sell the righteous for money and the needy for a pair of sandals. . ."

Psalm 33 *(To be sung.)*

¹ Sing for joy in Yahweh, O you righteous ones; praise is becoming to the upright. ² Give thanks to Yahweh with the lyre; sing praises to Him with a harp of ten strings. ³ Sing to Him a new song; play skillfully with a shout of joy. ⁴ For the word of Yahweh is upright, and all His work is done in faithfulness. ⁵ He loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of the lovingkindness of Yahweh. ⁶ By the word of Yahweh the heavens were made, and by the breath of His mouth all their host. ⁷ He gathers the waters of the sea together as a heap; He lays up the deeps in storehouses. ⁸ Let all the earth fear Yahweh; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him. ⁹ For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast. ¹⁰ Yahweh nullifies the counsel of the nations; He frustrates the plans of the peoples. ¹¹ The counsel of Yahweh stands forever, the plans of His heart from generation to generation. ¹² Blessed is the nation whose God is Yahweh, the people whom He has chosen for His own inheritance. ¹³ Yahweh looks from heaven; He sees all the sons of men; ¹⁴ from His dwelling place He looks out on all the inhabitants of the earth, ¹⁵ He who fashions the hearts of them all, He who understands all their works. ¹⁶ The king is not saved by a mighty army; a warrior is not delivered by great strength. ¹⁷ A horse is a false hope for victory; nor does it deliver anyone by its great strength. ¹⁸ Behold, the eye of Yahweh is on those who fear Him, on those who hope for His lovingkindness, ¹⁹ To deliver their soul from death and to keep them alive in famine. ²⁰ Our soul waits for Yahweh; He is our help and our shield. ²¹ For our heart rejoices in Him, because we trust in His holy name. ²² Let Your lovingkindness, O Yahweh, be upon us, according as we have hoped in You.

2 Corinthians 9:6-15

Reader 10 Amen.* ⁶ Now this I say, he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. ⁷ Each one must do just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸ And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed; ⁹ as it is written, "He scattered abroad, He gave to the poor, His righteousness endures forever."

¹⁰ Now He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness; ¹¹ you will be enriched in everything for all liberality, which through us is producing thanksgiving to God. ¹² For the ministry of this service is not only fully supplying the needs of the saints, but is also overflowing through many thanksgivings to God. ¹³ Because of the proof given by this ministry, they will glorify God for your obedience to your confession of the gospel of Christ and for the liberality of your contribution to them and to all, ¹⁴ while they also, by prayer on your behalf, yearn for you because of the surpassing grace of God in you. ¹⁵ Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!

Commentary:

We light candles at Erev Shabbat and Havdallah in order to (sanctify) distinguish the Sabbath Day from the work week. But we recognize that the candles also symbolize the final war, which begins before the thousand-year reign of Yeshua, and is consummated after the millennial Sabbath of peace.

So also it seems to be with the Hanukkah candles. We light one each night to commemorate the Temple Menorah lamps. But this week when we start celebrating Hanukkah, we see in Amos eight fires of judgment!

Haftarah / Amos 1

The Kingdom is divided. It is a time of prosperity. Amos is a Judahite, but his prophecy here is to Israel, the ten tribes of the north. Israel has set up temples in Dan and Bethel, but Yahweh says that He will speak to them, “roar” to them, from Zion – Jerusalem. A lowly shepherd, Amos, will bring the message of God’s roaring to them.

First is the proclamation of judgment upon the neighboring nations, then upon Israel. God’s judgment comes upon others as a warning to us!



“I will send fire.”

Damascus is the present-day capitol of Syria, east of the Jordan. Their army regularly attacks Israel from Lebanon, to the north – Syria presently controls Lebanon.

³ Thus says Yahweh, "For three transgressions of Damascus (judgment is due) and for four I will not revoke its punishment (will not lead to repentance), because they threshed Gilead with implements of sharp iron. ⁴ So I will send fire upon the house of Hazael and it will consume the citadels of Ben-hadad. ⁵ I will also break the gate bar of Damascus, and cut off the inhabitant from the valley of Aven, and him who holds the scepter, from Beth-eden; so the people of Aram will go exiled to Kir," Says Yahweh.

1. In the times of Baasha (King of Israel).
2. In the times of Ahab (King of Israel).
3. In the times of Jehoahaz (King of Israel).
4. In the times of Ahaz. (King of Judah). Syria had cruelly treated Israel, especially the inhabitants of Gilead. They had three other sinful characteristics that would suffice for them to be judged, but this was beyond forgiving. Their land with fortified cities would be destroyed and the people taken to Assyria. (But, at the same time, Israel was being cruel to its own. This was a warning.)



“I will send fire.”

Gaza is in southern Israel, on the Mediterranean Sea. It is a major terrorist area of falsely so-called Palestinians (Philistines).

⁶ Thus says Yahweh, "For three transgressions of Gaza and for four I will not revoke its punishment, because they deported an entire population to deliver it up to Edom. ⁷ So I will send fire upon the wall of Gaza and it will consume her citadels. ⁸ I will also cut off the inhabitant from Ashdod, and him who holds the scepter, from Ashkelon; I will even unleash My power upon Ekron, and the remnant of the Philistines will perish," Says Lord Yahweh.

Philistines, within Judah’s portion, allied themselves to Israel’s enemies. They took Jews and Israelites, including all of the house of Jehoram, King of Judah, captive to Idumea. They made no distinction between men, women, children, or the aged. On top of their other sins, this fourth was unforgivable. God determined that their palaces would be destroyed, and wherever they would flee, they would become exposed to their enemies.

(But Israel was allying itself with other nations. This was a warning.)



“I will send fire.”

Tyre was in northern Israel on the Mediterranean Sea; it is now in Lebanon. Tyre delivered up an entire population to Edom and did not remember the covenant of brotherhood. Tyrus did similarly to Gaza, but they delivered brethren – both Jews and Israelites – into captivity.

⁹ Thus says Yahweh, "For three transgressions of Tyre and for four I will not revoke its punishment, because they delivered up an entire population to Edom and did not remember the covenant of brotherhood." ¹⁰ So I will send fire upon the wall of Tyre and it will consume her citadels."



“I will send fire.”

Edom (the land of Esau) was south of the Dead Sea. Here we have, not an uncircumcised nation, but Israel’s brother Esau: the sin is thereby magnified. Esau’s sin was already enough for judgment to fall, but such hatred of his brother was the last straw.

¹¹ Thus says Yahweh, "For three transgressions of Edom and for four I will not revoke its punishment, because he pursued his brother with the sword, while he stifled his compassion; his anger also tore continually, and he maintained his fury forever." ¹² So I will send fire upon Teman and it will consume the citadels of Bozrah."



“I will kindle a fire.”

Ammon was east of Israel, today’s eastern Jordan. The Ammonites were descendents of Lot, relatives of Abraham. They resorted to every kind of cruelty in their greediness to take over lands.

¹³ Thus says Yahweh, "For three transgressions of the sons of Ammon and for four I will not revoke its punishment, because they ripped open the pregnant women of Gilead in order to enlarge their borders." ¹⁴ So I will kindle a fire on the wall of Rabbah and it will consume her citadels amid war cries on the day of battle, and a storm on the day of tempest." ¹⁵ Their king will go into exile, he and his princes together," says Yahweh.



“I will send fire.”

Moabites were the descendents of Lot. Moab was between Edom and Ammon – east of the Dead Sea.

^{2:1} Thus says Yahweh, "For three transgressions of Moab and for four I will not revoke its punishment, because he burned the bones of the king of Edom to lime." ² So I will send fire upon Moab and it will consume the citadels of Kerioth; and Moab will die amid tumult, with war cries and the sound of a trumpet." ³ I will also cut off the judge from her midst and slay all her princes with him," says Yahweh.



“I will send fire.”

Judea was the area around Jerusalem, from the Mediterranean to the Jordan River. It contained the House of God – the Holy Temple – the center for worship and disseminating God’s Word.

⁴ Thus says Yahweh, "For three transgressions of Judah and for four I will not revoke its punishment, because they rejected the law of Yahweh and have not kept His statutes; their lies also have led them astray, those after which their fathers walked." ⁵ So I will send fire upon Judah and it will consume the citadels of Jerusalem."



“Lest He break forth like a fire.”

⁶ Thus says Yahweh, "For three transgressions of Israel and for four I will not revoke its punishment, because they sell the righteous for money and the needy for a pair of sandals. (v.5:6) "Seek Yahweh that you may live, lest He break forth like a fire, O house of Joseph".

After telling what was to befall the surrounding nations for their sins, Amos comes to Israel's case. Israel had experienced the leading of God, had the Word of God, prophets, and the examples of other nations. Atonements are necessary, resulting in changed ways of life. "Seek Yahweh that you may live!" Why would you suffer judgment?

We have a Savior who takes our sin upon Himself, accounts His righteousness to us, and gives us a heart to follow Him. Seek Him while He may be found! (Isaiah 55:6)

Miqetz / At the End

Genesis 41:1-37 Isaiah 29:8 Psalm 34 Matthew 2:1-23

Commentary Y1-38

Kislev 30, 5762 / Dec 15, 2001

Kislev 28, 5765 / Dec 11, 2004

Hanukkah – 4th candle before Erev Shabbat candles, 5th candle after Havdallah

Reader 1 Amen.* ¹ וַיְהִי מִקֵּץ שְׁנָתַיִם יָמִים / *Vayhi miqetz shanataim yamim*

Now it happened at the end of two full years that Pharaoh had a dream, and behold, he was standing by the Nile. ² And lo, from the Nile there came up seven cows, sleek and fat; and they grazed in the marsh grass. ³ Then behold, seven other cows came up after them from the Nile, ugly and gaunt, and they stood by the other cows on the bank of the Nile. ⁴ The ugly and gaunt cows ate up the seven sleek and fat cows. Then Pharaoh awoke.

Reader 2 Amen.* ⁵ וַיִּישָׁן וַיַּחֲלֹם שֵׁנִית / *Vayiysheh vayachalom shanit*

He fell asleep and dreamed a second time; and behold, seven ears of grain came up on a single stalk, plump and good. ⁶ Then behold, seven ears, thin and scorched by the east wind, sprouted up after them. ⁷ The thin ears swallowed up the seven plump and full ears. Then Pharaoh awoke, and behold, it was a dream. ⁸ Now in the morning his spirit was troubled, so he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt, and all its wise men. And Pharaoh told them his dreams, but there was no one who could interpret them to Pharaoh.

Reader 3 Amen.* ⁹ וַיְדַבֵּר שַׂר הַמִּשְׁקִים אֶת־פַּרְעֹה / *Vaydaber sar hamashqim Pharaoh*

Then the chief cupbearer spoke to Pharaoh, saying, "I would make mention today of my own offenses. ¹⁰ "Pharaoh was furious with his servants, and he put me in confinement in the house of the captain of the bodyguard, both me and the chief baker. ¹¹ "We had a dream on the same night, he and I; each of us dreamed according to the interpretation of his own dream. ¹² "Now a Hebrew youth was with us there, a servant of the captain of the bodyguard, and we related them to him, and he interpreted our dreams for us. To each one he interpreted according to his own dream. ¹³ "And just as he interpreted for us, so it happened; he restored me in my office, but he hanged him."

Reader 4 Amen.* ¹⁴ וַיִּשְׁלַח פַּרְעֹה וַיִּקְרָא אֶת־יוֹסֵף / *Vayishlach Pharaoh vayiqra et-Yoseph*

Then Pharaoh sent and called for Joseph, and they hurriedly brought him out of the dungeon; and when he had shaved himself and changed his clothes, he came to Pharaoh. ¹⁵ Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I have had a dream, but no one can interpret it; and I have heard it said about you, that when you hear a dream you can interpret it." ¹⁶ Joseph then answered Pharaoh, saying, "It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh a favorable answer." ¹⁷ So Pharaoh spoke to Joseph, "In my dream, behold, I was standing on the bank of the Nile; ¹⁸ and behold, seven cows, fat and sleek came up out of the Nile, and they grazed in the marsh grass. ¹⁹ "Lo, seven other cows came up after them, poor and very ugly and gaunt, such as I had never seen for ugliness in all the land of Egypt; ²⁰ and the lean and ugly cows ate up the first seven fat cows. ²¹ "Yet when they had devoured them, it could not be detected that they had devoured them, for they were just as ugly as before. Then I awoke.

Reader 5 Amen.* ²² וַיֵּרָא בְּחֻלְמוֹי / *Va-erei hachalomi*

"I saw also in my dream, and behold, seven ears, full and good, came up on a single stalk; ²³ and lo, seven ears, withered, thin, and scorched by the east wind, sprouted up after them; ²⁴ and the thin ears swallowed the seven good ears. Then I told it to the magicians, but there was no one who could explain it to me."

Reader 6 Amen.* (אֶל־פַּרְעֹה) וַיֹּאמֶר יוֹסֵף / *Vayomer Yoseph el-Pharaoh*

²⁵ Now Joseph said to Pharaoh, "Pharaoh's dreams are one and the same; God has told to Pharaoh what He is about to do. ²⁶ "The seven good cows are seven years; and the seven good ears are seven years; the dreams are one and the same. ²⁷ "The seven lean and ugly cows that came up after them are seven years, and the seven thin ears scorched by the east wind will be seven years of famine. ²⁸ "It is as I have spoken to Pharaoh: God has shown to Pharaoh what He is about to do. ²⁹ "Behold, seven years of great abundance are coming in all the land of Egypt; ³⁰ and after them seven years of famine will come, and all the abundance will be forgotten in the land of Egypt, and the famine will ravage the land. ³¹ "So the abundance will be unknown in the land because of that subsequent famine; for it will be very severe. ³² "Now as for the repeating of the dream to Pharaoh twice, it means that the matter is determined by God, and God will quickly bring it about.

Reader 7 Amen.* (וַעֲתָה יֵרָא פַּרְעֹה) / *V'attah year Pharaoh*

³³ "Now let Pharaoh look for a man discerning and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt. ³⁴ "Let Pharaoh take action to appoint overseers in charge of the land, and let him exact a fifth of the produce of the land of Egypt in the seven years of abundance. ³⁵ "Then let them gather all the food of these good years that are coming, and store up the grain for food in the cities under Pharaoh's authority, and let them guard it. ³⁶ "Let the food become as a reserve for the land for the seven years of famine which will occur in the land of Egypt, so that the land will not perish during the famine." ³⁷ Now the proposal seemed good to Pharaoh and to all his servants.

Isaiah 29:8

Reader 8 Amen.* ⁸ It will be as when a hungry man dreams – and behold, he is eating; but when he awakens, his hunger is not satisfied, or as when a thirsty man dreams – and behold, he is drinking, but when he awakens, behold, he is faint and his thirst is not quenched. Thus the multitude of all the nations will be who wage war against Mount Zion.

Psalm 34 (To be sung.)

A Psalm of David when he feigned madness before Abimelech, who drove him away and he departed.

¹ I will bless Yahweh at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth. ² My soul will make its boast in Yahweh; the humble will hear it and rejoice. ³ O magnify Yahweh with me, and let us exalt His name together. ⁴ I sought Yahweh, and He answered me, and delivered me from all my fears. ⁵ They looked to Him and were radiant, and their faces will never be ashamed. ⁶ This poor man cried, and Yahweh heard him and saved him out of all his troubles. ⁷ The angel of Yahweh encamps around those who fear Him, and rescues them. ⁸ O taste and see that Yahweh is good; how blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him! ⁹ O fear Yahweh, you His saints; for to those who fear Him there is no want. ¹⁰ The young lions do lack and suffer hunger; but they who seek Yahweh shall not be in want of any good thing. ¹¹ Come, you children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of Yahweh. ¹² Who is the man who desires life and loves length of days that he may see good? ¹³ Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking deceit. ¹⁴ Depart from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it. ¹⁵ The eyes of Yahweh are toward the righteous and His ears are open to their cry. ¹⁶ The face of Yahweh is against evildoers, to cut off the memory of them from the earth. ¹⁷ The righteous cry, and Yahweh hears and delivers them out of all their troubles. ¹⁸ Yahweh is near to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit. ¹⁹ Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but Yahweh delivers him out of them all. ²⁰ He keeps all his bones, not one of them is broken. ²¹ Evil shall slay the wicked, and those who hate the righteous will be condemned. ²² Yahweh redeems the soul of His servants, and none of those who take refuge in Him will be condemned.

Matthew 2:1-23

Reader 9 Amen.* ¹ Now after Yeshua was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, ² "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him." ³ When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. ⁴ Gathering together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. ⁵ They said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for this is what has been written by the prophet: ⁶ 'And you, Bethlehem, Land of Judah, are by no means least among the leaders of Judah; for out of you shall come forth a ruler who shall shepherd My people Israel.' " ⁷ Then Herod secretly called the magi and determined from them the exact time the star appeared. ⁸ And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the Child; and when you have found Him, report to me, so that I too may come and worship Him."

Reader 10 Amen.* ⁹ After hearing the king, they went their way; and the star, which they had seen in the east, went on before them until it came and stood over the place where the Child was. ¹⁰ When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. ¹¹ After coming into the house they saw the Child with Mary His mother; and they fell to the ground and worshiped Him. Then, opening their treasures, they presented to Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. ¹² And having been warned by God in a dream not to return to Herod, the magi left for their own country by another way.

Reader 11 Amen.* ¹³ Now when they had gone, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up! Take the Child and His mother and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is going to search for the Child to destroy Him." ¹⁴ So Joseph got up and took the Child and His mother while it was still night, and left for Egypt. ¹⁵ He remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: "Out of Egypt I called My Son." ¹⁶ Then

when Herod saw that he had been tricked by the magi, he became very enraged, and sent and slew all the male children who were in Bethlehem and all its vicinity, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the magi. ¹⁷ Then what had been spoken through Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled: ¹⁸ "A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children; and she refused to be comforted, because they were no more."

Reader 12 Amen.* ¹⁹ But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, and said, ²⁰ "Get up, take the Child and His mother, and go into the land of Israel; for those who sought the Child's life are dead." ²¹ So Joseph got up, took the Child and His mother, and came into the land of Israel. ²² But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. Then after being warned by God in a dream, he left for the regions of Galilee, ²³ and came and lived in a city called Nazareth. This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophets: "He shall be called a Nazarene."

Commentary:

Consider the general usage of visions and dreams in the Torah, as discussed in Talmud: God commonly gives messages to his prophets by angelic appearances or visions, but to the wicked in dreams of the night.

Joseph (Yoseph), the husband of Mary (Miryam), was warned by God in a dream (Matt. 2:13), to take the young Yeshua to Egypt. Then, again (Matt. 2:19-20), Joseph was told in a dream to take Yeshua back to Israel. Later (Matt. 27:19) Pilate's wife claims to have suffered greatly in a dream because of the righteous man – Yeshua. The Hebrew Gospel of Matthew (Shem Tob's) translates that an Angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph, telling him to go to Egypt, then back to Israel. But, Pilate's wife suffered a dream at night.

The Pharaoh was an Egyptian that worshipped idols like the Nile River, frogs, etc., and his "prophets" were astrologers, magicians, and soothsayers.

God gave the Pharaoh a dream: seven fat, healthy cows grazed in the lush meadows of the Nile; then ("But I don't know how she swallowed the cow!") seven scrawny, sickly cows came up from the Nile and ate the fat ones! And the latter were still scrawny!

This was enough to awaken the Pharaoh, but he went back to sleep: so God sent more. A stalk of grain came up with (an unusual) seven bountiful ears. Then seven poor ears sprouted – and swallowed the seven bountiful ones! This was enough to awaken him and leave him troubled. He recognized that this was not an ordinary dream, and he wanted an explanation. God had gotten his attention!

The Pharaoh called for ALL the wise men of Egypt. SOMEONE should know the right god to give answer. But there were none to seek answer from Yahweh (Psalm 14:2).

Then the cupbearer, whose dream had been interpreted two years earlier, remembered Joseph. Now he came penitently before the Pharaoh, acknowledging his previous offense and pardon, to make mention of the imprisoned Hebrew who had shown the interpretation of dreams.

Joseph would not accept any praise for assumed ability to interpret dreams: he forthrightly proclaimed that Elohim would provide the explanation (v.16). However, as one who had grown to great faith, he faithfully executed the position of being God's mouthpiece.

Isaiah 29:8 – *"And it will be as when a hungry man dreams – and behold, he is eating; but when he awakens, his hunger is not satisfied, or as when a thirsty man dreams – and behold, he is drinking, but when he awakens, behold, he is faint, and his thirst is not quenched. Thus the multitude of all the nations shall be, who wage war against Mount Zion."*

Yahweh made a covenant with Abraham: we may be partakers of that covenant today (Ephesians 2:12, 3:6). Catholic Christendom has declared itself to be God's replacement for His Covenant People. Islam has declared itself to be God's replacement for both Judaism and Christianity (which should be one and the same). The Islamic nations, who today are waging war to destroy Mount Zion, will dream of being filled with good food and drink, only to awaken hungry and thirsty.

(I have heard of people dreaming of eating, only to awaken eating their pillow.)

Psalm 34 is all about learning to walk with God. (Consider each line.)

(V.1) *"I will bless Yahweh at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth."* In all that we do, we should be glorifying Yahweh.

(V.2) *"My soul will make its boast in Yahweh; the humble will hear it and rejoice."* We need to continually recognize our position before the all-knowing and almighty.

(V.3) *"O magnify Yahweh with me, and let us exalt His name together."* As a community of believers, we are to praise His Name.

(V.4) *"I sought Yahweh, and He answered me, and delivered me from all my fears."* We should trust Yahweh, and pray to Him for our needs.

"⁶ This poor man cried, and Yahweh heard him and saved him out of all his troubles. ⁷ The angel of Yahweh encamps around those who fear Him, and rescues them. ⁸ O taste and see that Yahweh is good; how blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him! ⁹ O fear Yahweh, you His saints; for to those who fear Him there is no want. ¹⁰ The young lions do lack and suffer hunger; but they who seek Yahweh shall not be in want of any good thing."

(V.5) *"They looked to Him and were radiant, and their faces will never be ashamed."* If we are not ashamed of Him now, we will not be in the future.

Yeshua said, *"For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels"* – Mark 8:38.

Paul said, *"I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day"* – 2 Timothy 1:12.

(Psalm 34) *"¹¹ Come, you children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of Yahweh. ¹² Who is the man who desires life and loves length of days that he may see good? ¹³ Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking deceit. ¹⁴ Depart from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it. ¹⁵ The eyes of Yahweh are toward the righteous and His ears are open to their cry. ¹⁶ The face of Yahweh is against evildoers, to cut off the memory of them from the earth."*

Faith has many degrees. So do all commandments involving intellect, emotion, or character, have degrees of observance.

This is in contrast to commandments relating to tangible matters: a piece of meat is either kosher, or it is not – if it is from an unclean animal, draining its blood cannot make it partly kosher; a tithe is either valid or it is not – one-twentieth cannot be called a partly-valid tithe (since tithe is one-tenth by definition). This is like a window, which is either whole or broken – we do not call a window partly whole.

We all show our degree of faith by different levels of mercy, by different levels of humility, by different levels of honesty. As the Sh'ma declares, we are to love Yahweh with all of our intellect (so we must learn His word), with all of our emotion (so we must grow through trials), and with all of our abilities (so we must practice). While we are all different, we should all be “overcomers.” If we have none of the “fruits of the Spirit,” we are not “of the faith.”

“For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world – our faith” – 1 John 5:4.

We can get a glimpse of our level of faith through the level of honesty we practice before God: in day-to-day fulfilling our job obligations, in returning found valuables, or in giving truthful testimony. And there is a difference between achieving a level of honesty because we love God, and achieving such because we are trying to earn our salvation (which we cannot accomplish).

His name was called Yeshua, because He would save His people from their sins. Salvation is only possible through faith in Yeshua. And this salvation is FROM sin, not IN sin. This salvation makes us overcomers.

Joseph prefigured the Messiah that would come; he trusted God’s provision for his salvation. Then Joseph showed his faith by his attitudes, by his knowledge of God, by his trustworthiness, by being successful through walking with God.

Reader 1 Amen.* ¹ **הַמְנַצָּא כִּזֶּה אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים בּוֹ** / *Hanimitza kazah ish asher ruach Elohim ki / Can we find like this - a man in whom spirit of Elohim is?*)

³⁸ Then Pharaoh said to his servants, "Can we find a man like this, in whom is a divine spirit?" ³⁹ So Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Since God has informed you of all this, there is no one so discerning and wise as you are. ⁴⁰ "You shall be over my house, and according to your command all my people shall do homage; only in the throne I will be greater than you." ⁴¹ Pharaoh said to Joseph, "See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt." ⁴² Then Pharaoh took off his signet ring from his hand and put it on Joseph's hand, and clothed him in garments of fine linen and put the gold necklace around his neck. ⁴³ He had him ride in his second chariot; and they proclaimed before him, "Bow the knee!" And he set him over all the land of Egypt.

Reader 2 Amen.* ⁴⁴ Moreover, Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Though I am Pharaoh, yet without your permission no one shall raise his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt." ⁴⁵ Then Pharaoh named Joseph Zaphenath-paneah; and he gave him Asenath, the daughter of Potiphera priest of On, as his wife. And Joseph went forth over the land of Egypt. ⁴⁶ Now Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh, king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh and went through all the land of Egypt. ⁴⁷ During the seven years of plenty the land brought forth abundantly. ⁴⁸ So he gathered all the food of these seven years which occurred in the land of Egypt and placed the food in the cities; he placed in every city the food from its own surrounding fields. ⁴⁹ Thus Joseph stored up grain in great abundance like the sand of the sea, until he stopped measuring it, for it was beyond measure.

Reader 3 Amen.* ⁵⁰ Now before the year of famine came, two sons were born to Joseph, whom Asenath, the daughter of Potiphera priest of On, bore to him. ⁵¹ Joseph named the firstborn Manasseh, "For," he said, "God has made me forget all my trouble and all my father's household." ⁵² He named the second Ephraim, "For," he said, "God has made me fruitful in the land of my affliction."

Reader 4 Amen.* ⁵³ When the seven years of plenty which had been in the land of Egypt came to an end, ⁵⁴ and the seven years of famine began to come, just as Joseph had said, then there was famine in all the lands, but in all the land of Egypt there was bread. ⁵⁵ So when all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried out to Pharaoh for bread; and Pharaoh said to all the Egyptians, "Go to Joseph; whatever he says to you, you shall do." ⁵⁶ When the famine was spread over all the face of the earth, then Joseph opened all the storehouses, and sold to the Egyptians; and the famine was severe in the land of Egypt. ⁵⁷ The people of all the earth came to Egypt to buy grain from Joseph, because the famine was severe in all the earth.

Reader 5 Amen.* ^{42:1} Now Jacob saw that there was grain in Egypt, and Jacob said to his sons, "Why are you staring at one another?" ² He said, "Behold, I have heard that there is grain in Egypt; go down there and buy some for us from that place, so that we may live and not die." ³ Then ten brothers of Joseph went down to buy grain from Egypt. ⁴ But Jacob did not send Joseph's brother Benjamin with his brothers, for he said, "I am afraid that harm may befall him." ⁵ So the sons of Israel came to buy grain among those who were coming, for the famine was in the land of Canaan also. ⁶ Now Joseph was the ruler over the land; he was the one who sold to all the people of the land. And Joseph's brothers came and bowed down to him with their faces to the ground.

Reader 6 Amen.* ⁷ When Joseph saw his brothers he recognized them, but he disguised himself to them and spoke to them harshly. And he said to them, "Where have you come from?" And they said, "From the land of Canaan, to buy food." ⁸ But Joseph had recognized his brothers, although they did not recognize him. ⁹ Joseph remembered the dreams which he had about them, and said to them, "You are spies; you have come to look at the undefended parts of our land." ¹⁰ Then they said to him, "No, my lord, but your servants have come to buy food. ¹¹ "We are all sons of one man; we are honest men, your servants are not spies."

Reader 7 Amen.* ¹² Yet he said to them, "No, but you have come to look at the undefended parts of our land!" ¹³ But they said, "Your servants are twelve brothers in all, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and behold, the youngest is with our father today, and one is no longer alive." ¹⁴ Joseph said to them, "It is as I said to you, you are spies; ¹⁵ by this you will be tested: by the life of Pharaoh, you shall not go from this place unless your youngest brother comes here! ¹⁶ "Send one of you that he may get your brother, while you remain confined, that your words may be tested, whether there is truth in you. But if not, by the life of Pharaoh, surely you are spies." ¹⁷ So he put them all together in prison for three days.

Isaiah 11:1-9

¹ Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, and a branch from his roots will bear fruit. ² The Spirit of Yahweh will rest on Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and strength, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of Yahweh. ³ And He will delight in the fear of Yahweh, and He will not judge by what His eyes see, nor make a decision by what His ears hear; ⁴ but with righteousness He will judge the poor, and decide with fairness for the afflicted of the earth; and He will strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips He will slay the wicked. ⁵ Also righteousness will be the belt about His loins, and faithfulness the belt about His waist. ⁶ And the wolf will dwell with the lamb, and the leopard will lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little boy will lead them. ⁷ Also the cow and the bear will graze, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. ⁸ The nursing child will play by the hole of the cobra, and the weaned child will put his hand on the viper's den. ⁹ They will not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of Yahweh as the waters cover the sea.

Psalm 35 *(To be sung.) A Psalm of David.*

¹ Contend, O Yahweh, with those who contend with me; fight against those who fight against me. ² Take hold of buckler and shield and rise up for my help. ³ Draw also the spear and the battle-axe to meet those who pursue me; say to my soul, "I am your salvation." ⁴ Let those be ashamed and dishonored who seek my life; let those be turned back and humiliated who devise evil against me. ⁵ Let them be like chaff before the wind, with the angel of Yahweh driving them on. ⁶ Let their way be dark and slippery, with the angel of Yahweh pursuing them. ⁷ For without cause they hid their net for me; without cause they dug a pit for my soul. ⁸ Let destruction come upon him unawares, and let the net which he hid catch himself; into that very destruction let him fall. ⁹ And my soul shall rejoice in Yahweh; it shall exult in His salvation. ¹⁰ All my bones will say, "Yahweh, who is like You, Who delivers the afflicted from him who is too strong for him, and the afflicted and the needy from him who robs him?" ¹¹ Malicious witnesses rise up; they ask me of things that I do not know. ¹² They repay me evil for good, to the bereavement of my soul. ¹³ But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth; I humbled my soul with fasting, and my prayer kept returning to my bosom. ¹⁴ I went about as though it were my friend or brother; I bowed down mourning, as one who sorrows for a mother. ¹⁵ But at my stumbling they rejoiced and gathered themselves together; the smiters whom I did not know gathered together against me, they slandered me without ceasing. ¹⁶ Like godless jesters at a feast, they gnashed at me with their teeth. ¹⁷ Lord, how long will You look on? Rescue my soul from their ravages, my only life from the lions. ¹⁸ I will give You thanks in the great congregation; I will praise You among a mighty throng. ¹⁹ Do not let those who are wrongfully my enemies rejoice over me; nor let those who hate me without cause wink maliciously. ²⁰ For they do not speak peace, but they devise deceitful words against those who are quiet in the land. ²¹ They opened their mouth wide against me; they said, "Aha, aha, our eyes have seen it!" ²² You have seen it, O Yahweh, do not keep silent; O Lord, do not be far from me. ²³ Stir up Yourself, and awake to my right and to my cause, my God and my Lord. ²⁴ Judge me, O Yahweh my God, according to Your righteousness, and do not let them rejoice over me. ²⁵ Do not let them say in their heart, "Aha, our desire!" Do not let them say, "We have swallowed him up!" ²⁶ Let those be ashamed and humiliated altogether who rejoice at my distress; let those be clothed with shame and dishonor who magnify themselves over me. ²⁷ Let them shout for joy and rejoice, who favor my vindication; and let them say continually, "Yahweh be magnified, Who delights in the prosperity of His servant." ²⁸ And my tongue shall declare Your righteousness and Your praise all day long.

Acts 7:1-19

¹ The high priest said, "Are these things so?" ² And he said, "Hear me, brethren and fathers! The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran, ³ and said to him, 'Leave your country and your relatives, and come into the land that I will show you.' ⁴ "Then he left the land of the Chaldeans and settled in Haran. From there, after his father died, God had him move to this country in which you are now living. ⁵ "But He gave him no inheritance in it, not even a foot of ground, and yet, even when he had no child, He promised that He would give it to him as a possession, and to his descendants after him. ⁶ "But God spoke to this effect, that his descendants would be aliens in a foreign land, and that they would be enslaved and mistreated for four-hundred years. ⁷ "And whatever nation to which they will be in bondage I Myself will judge," said God, 'And after that they will come out and serve Me in this place.' ⁸ "And He gave him the covenant of circumcision; and so Abraham became the father of Isaac, and circumcised him on the eighth day; and Isaac became the father of Jacob, and Jacob of the

twelve patriarchs.⁹ "The patriarchs became jealous of Joseph and sold him into Egypt. Yet God was with him,¹⁰ and rescued him from all his afflictions, and granted him favor and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and he made him governor over Egypt and all his household.¹¹ "Now a famine came over all Egypt and Canaan, and great affliction with it, and our fathers could find no food.¹² "But when Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, he sent our fathers there the first time.¹³ "On the second visit Joseph made himself known to his brothers, and Joseph's family was disclosed to Pharaoh.¹⁴ "Then Joseph sent word and invited Jacob his father and all his relatives to come to him, seventy-five persons in all.¹⁵ "And Jacob went down to Egypt and there he and our fathers died.¹⁶ "From there they were removed to Shechem and laid in the tomb which Abraham had purchased for a sum of money from the sons of Hamor in Shechem.¹⁷ "But as the time of the promise was approaching which God had assured to Abraham, the people increased and multiplied in Egypt,¹⁸ until there arose another king over Egypt who knew nothing about Joseph.¹⁹ "It was he who took shrewd advantage of our race and mistreated our fathers so that they would expose their infants and they would not survive.

Commentary:

(V.38) *Then Pharaoh said to his servants, "Can we find a man like this, in whom is a divine spirit?" So Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Since God has informed you of all this, there is no one so discerning and wise as you are.*

Is this not what Joseph's father Jacob, saw in him?

Still, Joseph prefigures Yeshua: Isaiah (11:2,9) prophesied concerning Yeshua, *"And the Spirit of Yahweh will rest on Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and strength, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of Yahweh. . . . the earth will be full of the knowledge of Yahweh as the waters cover the sea."*

Egyptian law forbade elevating a slave to a position of aristocracy. The Talmud states (Sotah 36b) that when Pharaoh proposed elevating Joseph to this high position, the royal astrologers exclaimed, "Will you set over us a slave whom his master bought for twenty pieces of silver?"

"So they weighed for my price thirty silver shekels. Then said Yahweh to them, 'Cast them to the potter, that "magnificent" price that I was valued by them.' – Zechariah 11:12.

Matt 27:3-9 – Then when Judas, who had betrayed Him, saw that He had been condemned, he felt remorse and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood." But they said, "What is that to us? See to that yourself!" And he threw the pieces of silver into the sanctuary and departed; and he went away and hanged himself. And the chief priests took the pieces of silver and said, "It is not lawful to put them into the temple treasury, since it is the price of blood.⁷ And they counseled together and with the money bought the Potter's Field as a burial place for strangers. For this reason that field has been called the Field of Blood to this day. Then that which was spoken through Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled, saying, "And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of the one whose price had been set by the sons of Israel;

Even the Pharaoh, who considered himself a god, acknowledged that Joseph had the Spirit of God of supreme King of Kings. By referring to Joseph's wisdom as a power outside of Joseph, the Pharaoh avoided affronting the "wise men" of Egypt. No one's discernment of the future compared to that shown by Joseph, and no one's wisdom in planning for the future compared to that displayed by Joseph.

(V.40) As did Potiphar in the prison, so now the Pharaoh sets Joseph as second highest in the palace – controlling everything, notably agriculture and commerce. Again Joseph symbolizes Yeshua, reigning over everything, notably over our sustenance for which we offer blessing several times a day.

(V.42) Joseph is given the ring of authority, and a special garment of fine linen.

Rev 1:13 – *and in the middle of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed in a robe reaching to the feet,*

Rev 4:12-13 – *"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing." And every creature in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying, "To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever."*

(V.43) They proclaimed before him, "Avrech!" This means "Father (Counselor) to the King", as Joseph affirms in v.45:8. Joseph had rejected praise for himself, ascribing greatness to God; now God exalted Joseph.

(V.45) Then the Pharaoh named Joseph Zaphenath-paneah (*Tzaph-nath' Pa-ne'-ach*) – He who explains what is hidden; and he gave him Asenath (*As-nath'*), the daughter of Potiphera (*see v.39:1*) priest of On, as his wife.

A name change was normal for one promoted to a high position (as with Hosea/Joshua and Daniel/Belteshazzar). In this case, it helped conceal Joseph's identity from his brothers.

It was customary for retired Egyptian nobles to devote themselves to service of their gods. Hence, Potiphar (*Poti Phera* – emasculated), who had been responsible for Pharaoh's prison, became a priest of one of the gods.

One suspected of illicit relationship with a woman is was not allowed to marry her daughter; by giving Potiphar's daughter to Joseph, Pharaoh was showing that the accusation was not to be believed, and allowed Joseph to hold high office. In similar manner, God will show all accusations against Yeshua to be false: He will ultimately be given a "daughter of Egypt", a bride redeemed from idolatry.
Isa 19:21 – *Yahweh will make Himself known to Egypt, and the Egyptians will know Yahweh in that day. They will even worship with sacrifice and offering, and will make a vow to Yahweh and perform it.*

(V.46) Joseph went throughout the land of Egypt, learning about it, attending to its affairs, and leading the people to prepare for the coming famine. Yeshua traveled about Eretz Israel, learning, attending to its people, and leading those who were to prepare for eternal life. We should likewise be learning God's Word, attending to His people, and preparing for our future inheritance.

(V.50) Aseneth bore two sons to Joseph before the famine. The wording indicates that Joseph, the exalted slave, prevailed over Aseneth, the aristocrats daughter. Being the only Hebrew in Egypt, and married to the daughter of an idolatrous priest, Joseph raised a family to fear God. So, in the Erev Shabbat home service, we wish for our sons to emulate "Ephraim and Manassah".

(V.51) Manassah – He who causes to forget: the implication is that one thought pushes to the forefront, past other thoughts. Thoughts of this son displaced thoughts about prime years in prison, and the previous troubles with his brothers, and perhaps continuous feelings of missing his father.

(V.52) Ephraim – Fruitful: God had made Joseph fruitful after all, with honor, wealth, and now children. "In the land of my suffering" relates to one who is privileged to eat from the King's table, on the condition that he eat outside (not in Eretz Israel).

(V.53) The seven years of abundance was only in Egypt, but the following famine was in the entire world: so Egypt provided for the world. As Joseph walked with God to provide for the world, so Yeshua walked with His Father to provide salvation for the world.

(V.56) The famine spread over "the faces of the earth", meaning that it struck the wealthy first, or particularly hard.

Chapter 42

(V.17) Joseph put his ten older brothers in prison for three days. Perhaps Manassah didn't cause complete forgetting! According to the Zohar, the three days correspond to the three days that Shechemites were in pain because of the brothers' scheme (v.34:25).

Today's Psalm speaks to Joseph's situation, as well as to Yeshua's (v.26-28), *"Let those be ashamed and humiliated altogether who rejoice at my distress; let those be clothed with shame and dishonor who magnify themselves over me. Let them shout for joy and rejoice, who favor my vindication; and let them say continually, 'Yahweh be magnified, Who delights in the prosperity of His servant.' And my tongue shall declare Thy righteousness and Thy praise all day long."*

The first word of this Psalm is "(L'David – To David." It was written for David. Then we read, "Fight, Yahweh, my adversaries, battle my attackers . . ." Moses made reference to the same subject in Numbers 21:14 – "The Book of Yahweh's Wars". If we are immersed in learning and walking with God, then He will fight our wars.

The essence of praising God is to learn of God's desires and to walk accordingly. We often hear of "Praise teams" – groups within a congregation that "lead the worship." We sometimes hear of dance being referred to as the worship of God. But worshipping God is the whole of learning God's Word and obeying it.

For us today:

God has instructed us to set aside the Sabbath Day for worship. As part of that, a "solemn assembly" is required (Leviticus 23:3). This public worship service was designed by God Himself for the Holy Temple in Jerusalem, and is the pattern for synagogues/churches.

The Sabbath service is to be prayerful throughout; each activity is to be accompanied by blessings. While we do not teach that specific wording is required, some object to "written" prayers; yet most of these people use the same prayer format from day to day, though it is not written. Yeshua gave us a pattern for daily prayers (Matthew 5:9) that compares to the Shemoneh Esrei – the Eighteen Benedictions that were understood as a pattern.

God's Holy Word is to be heard and expounded. This is not primarily an evangelistic tool, but is basic to the believer's learning how to walk with God during the week (It is each individual's responsibility to evangelize outside in the world). God's Word should be heard reverently – this is a high form of worship, and distractions should be minimized.

God gave us inspired songs to be used for the worship services – many of them for specific stated times. The Songs of Ascent (Psalms 120-134) are to be sung when going up to worship. Psalm 91 is specifically for the Sabbath. Hallel (Psalms 113-118) are to be sung at each of the three Feasts. Most fundamentalists would not believe that any of our sermons were perfect – that is inspired, in the sense that the Bible is; yet, many take songs composed by today's popular artists as inspired, and use them in place of the Psalms that God gave us for the worship services! We can get so caught up in the songs that we like, that we reject what God instructed – and then call that worshipping Him: think about that.

As for the remainder of the Sabbath Day, we are instructed to "rest" from our mundane work in order to spend the day in worship. That means that we should minimize other work: it is proper to care for children and the needy, and perform basic meal preparations and health requirements – those things which are necessary. Things that can be performed on other days instead should not detract from worship time. We should take care to be rested and prepared for Sabbath, as an honor to our Savior. This is also a picture of our needed preparation for the Great Sabbath.

We are also instructed to mark-out the beginning and ending of the Sabbath Day. This is the only way that we are likely to consistently observe the day. It is customarily done with the lighting of Erev-Shabbat candles and Havdallah candles, this being also prophetic (See Millennial Sabbath).

"Sanctify My Sabbaths, and they shall be a sign between Me and You, that you may know that I am Yahweh your God" – Ezekiel 20:20.

“Also the gentiles who join themselves to Yahweh, to minister to Him, and to love the name Yahweh, to be His servants, every one who keeps from profaning the Sabbath and holds fast My covenant; even those I will bring to My holy mountain and make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their elevation offerings and their sacrifices will be acceptable on My altar; for My house will be called a house of prayer for all peoples” – Isaiah 56:6-7.

Vayomer Eleichem / He Said to Them

Genesis 42:18 – 43:23 Isaiah 50:10 – 52:11 Psalm 36 Luke 1:68-79

Commentary Y1-40

Tevet 14, 5762 / Dec 29, 2001

Tevet 13, 5765 / Dec 25, 2004

Reader 1 Amen.* ¹ וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם יוֹסֵף בְּיוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי / *Vayomer aleichem Yoseph bayom hashlishi* / And-he-said to-them {Joseph} on-the-day the-third)

¹⁸ Now Joseph said to them on the third day, "Do this and live, for I fear God: ¹⁹ if you are honest men, let one of your brothers be confined in your prison; but as for the rest of you, go, carry grain for the famine of your households, ²⁰ and bring your youngest brother to me, so your words may be verified, and you will not die." And they did so. ²¹ Then they said to one another, "Truly we are guilty concerning our brother, because we saw the distress of his soul when he pleaded with us, yet we would not listen; therefore this distress has come upon us." ²² Reuben answered them, saying, "Did I not tell you, 'Do not sin against the boy'; and you would not listen? Now comes the reckoning for his blood." ²³ They did not know, however, that Joseph understood, for there was an interpreter between them.

Reader 2 Amen.* ²⁴ He turned away from them and wept. But when he returned to them and spoke to them, he took Simeon from them and bound him before their eyes. ²⁵ Then Joseph gave orders to fill their bags with grain and to restore every man's money in his sack, and to give them provisions for the journey. And thus it was done for them. ²⁶ So they loaded their donkeys with their grain and departed from there. ²⁷ As one of them opened his sack to give his donkey fodder at the lodging place, he saw his money; and behold, it was in the mouth of his sack. ²⁸ Then he said to his brothers, "My money has been returned, and behold, it is even in my sack." And their hearts sank, and they turned trembling to one another, saying, "What is this that God has done to us?" ²⁹ When they came to their father Jacob in the land of Canaan, they told him all that had happened to them, saying, ³⁰ "The man, Yahweh of the land, spoke harshly with us, and took us for spies of the country. ³¹ "But we said to him, 'We are honest men; we are not spies. ³² 'We are twelve brothers, sons of our father; one is no longer alive, and the youngest is with our father today in the land of Canaan.'

Reader 3 Amen.* ³³ "The man, Yahweh of the land, said to us, 'By this I will know that you are honest men: leave one of your brothers with me and take grain for the famine of your households, and go. ³⁴ 'But bring your youngest brother to me that I may know that you are not spies, but honest men. I will give your brother to you, and you may trade in the land.'" ³⁵ Now it came about as they were emptying their sacks, that behold, every man's bundle of money was in his sack; and when they and their father saw their bundles of money, they were dismayed. ³⁶ Their father Jacob said to them, "You have bereaved me of my children: Joseph is no more, and Simeon is no more, and you would take Benjamin; all these things are against me." ³⁷ Then Reuben spoke to his father, saying, "You may put my two sons to death if I do not bring him back to you; put him in my care, and I will return him to you." ³⁸ But Jacob said, "My son shall not go down with you; for his brother is dead, and he alone is left. If harm should befall him on the journey you are taking, then you will bring my gray hair down to Sheol in sorrow."

Reader 4 Amen.* ^{43:1} Now the famine was severe in the land. ² So it came about when they had finished eating the grain which they had brought from Egypt, that their father said to them, "Go back, buy us a little food." ³ Judah spoke to him, however, saying, "The man solemnly warned us, 'You shall not see my face unless your brother is with you.' ⁴ "If you send our brother with us, we will go down and buy you food. ⁵ "But if you do not send him, we will not go down; for the man said to us, 'You will not see my face unless your brother is with you.'" ⁶ Then Israel said, "Why did you treat me so badly by telling the man whether you still had another brother?" ⁷ But they said, "The man questioned particularly about us and our relatives, saying, 'Is your father still alive? Have you another brother?' So we answered his questions. Could we possibly know that he would say, 'Bring your brother down'?"

Reader 5 Amen.* ⁸ Judah said to his father Israel, "Send the lad with me and we will arise and go, that we may live and not die, we as well as you and our little ones. ⁹ "I myself will be surety for him; you may hold me responsible for him. If I do not bring him back to you and set him before you, then let me bear the blame before you forever. ¹⁰ "For if we had not delayed, surely by now we could have returned twice." ¹¹ Then their father Israel said to them, "If it must be so, then do this: take some of the best products of the land in your bags, and carry down to the man as a present, a little balm and a little honey, aromatic gum and myrrh, pistachio nuts and almonds. ¹² "Take double the money in your hand, and take back in your hand the

money that was returned in the mouth of your sacks; perhaps it was a mistake. ¹³ "Take your brother also, and arise, return to the man;
Reader 6 Amen.* ¹⁴ and may God Almighty grant you compassion in the sight of the man, so that he will release to you your other brother and Benjamin. And as for me, if I am bereaved of my children, I am bereaved." ¹⁵ So the men took this present, and they took double the money in their hand, and Benjamin; then they arose and went down to Egypt and stood before Joseph. ¹⁶ When Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to his house steward, "Bring the men into the house, and slay an animal and make ready; for the men are to dine with me at noon." ¹⁷ So the man did as Joseph said, and brought the men to Joseph's house. ¹⁸ Now the men were afraid, because they were brought to Joseph's house; and they said, "It is because of the money that was returned in our sacks the first time that we are being brought in, that he may seek occasion against us and fall upon us, and take us for slaves with our donkeys."
Reader 7 Amen.* ¹⁹ So they came near to Joseph's house steward, and spoke to him at the entrance of the house, ²⁰ and said, "Oh, my lord, we indeed came down the first time to buy food, ²¹ and it came about when we came to the lodging place, that we opened our sacks, and behold, each man's money was in the mouth of his sack, our money in full. So we have brought it back in our hand. ²² "We have also brought down other money in our hand to buy food; we do not know who put our money in our sacks." ²³ He said, "Be at ease, do not be afraid. Your God and the God of your father has given you treasure in your sacks; I had your money." Then he brought Simeon out to them.

Isaiah 50:10 – 52:11

Reader 8 Amen.* ¹⁰ Who is among you that fears Yahweh, that obeys the voice of His servant, that walks in darkness and has no light? Let him trust in the name of Yahweh and rely on his God. ¹¹ Behold, all you who kindle a fire, who encircle yourselves with firebrands, walk in the light of your fire and among the brands you have set ablaze. This you will have from My hand: you will lie down in torment.

^{51:1} "Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness, who seek Yahweh: look to the rock from which you were hewn and to the quarry from which you were dug. ² "Look to Abraham your father and to Sarah who gave birth to you in pain; when he was but one I called him, then I blessed him and multiplied him." ³ Indeed, Yahweh will comfort Zion; He will comfort all her waste places. And her wilderness He will make like Eden, and her desert like the garden of Yahweh; joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and sound of a melody. ⁴ "Pay attention to Me, O My people, and give ear to Me, O My nation; for a law will go forth from Me, and I will set My justice for a light of the peoples. ⁵ "My righteousness is near, My salvation has gone forth, and My arms will judge the peoples; the coastlands will wait for Me, and for My arm they will wait expectantly.

Reader 9 Amen.* ⁶ "Lift up your eyes to the sky, then look to the earth beneath; for the sky will vanish like smoke, and the earth will wear out like a garment and its inhabitants will die in like manner; but My salvation will be forever, and My righteousness will not wane. ⁷ "Listen to Me, you who know righteousness, a people in whose heart is My law; do not fear the reproach of man, nor be dismayed at their revilings. ⁸ "For the moth will eat them like a garment, and the grub will eat them like wool. But My righteousness will be forever, and My salvation to all generations." ⁹ Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of Yahweh; awake as in the days of old, the generations of long ago. Was it not You who cut Rahab in pieces, who pierced the dragon? ¹⁰ Was it not You who dried up the sea, the waters of the great deep; who made the depths of the sea a pathway for the redeemed to cross over? ¹¹ So the ransomed of Yahweh will return and come with joyful shouting to Zion, and everlasting joy will be on their heads. They will obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing will flee away. ¹² "I, even I, am He who comforts you. Who are you that you are afraid of man who dies and of the son of man who is made like grass, ¹³ that you have forgotten Yahweh your Maker, who stretched out the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth, that you fear continually all day long because of the fury of the oppressor, as he makes ready to destroy? But where is the fury of the oppressor? ¹⁴ "The exile will soon be set free, and will not die in the dungeon, nor will his bread be lacking. ¹⁵ "For I am Yahweh your God, who stirs up the sea and its waves roar (Yahweh of hosts is His name). ¹⁶ "I have put My words in your mouth and have covered you with the shadow of My hand, to establish the heavens, to found the earth, and to say to Zion, 'You are My people.'" ¹⁷ Rouse yourself! Rouse yourself! Arise, O Jerusalem, you who have drunk from Yahweh's hand the cup of His anger; The chalice of reeling you have drained to the dregs. ¹⁸ There is none to guide her among all the sons she has borne, nor is there one to take her by the hand among all the sons she has reared. ¹⁹ These two things have befallen you; who will mourn for you? The devastation and destruction, famine and sword; how shall I comfort you? ²⁰ Your sons have fainted, they lie helpless at the head of every street, like an antelope in a

net, full of the wrath of Yahweh, the rebuke of your God.²¹ Therefore, please hear this, you afflicted, who are drunk, but not with wine.²² Thus says your Lord, Yahweh, even your God who contends for His people, "Behold, I have taken out of your hand the cup of reeling, the chalice of My anger; you will never drink it again."²³ "I will put it into the hand of your tormentors, who have said to you, 'Lie down that we may walk over you.' You have even made your back like the ground and like the street for those who walk over it."

Reader 10 Amen.*^{52:1} Awake, awake, clothe yourself in your strength, O Zion; clothe yourself in your beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city; for the uncircumcised and the unclean will no longer come into you.² Shake yourself from the dust, rise up, O captive Jerusalem; loose yourself from the chains around your neck, O captive daughter of Zion.³ For thus says Yahweh, "You were sold for nothing and you will be redeemed without money."⁴ For thus says Lord Yahweh, "My people went down at the first into Egypt to reside there; then the Assyrian oppressed them without cause."⁵ "Now therefore, what do I have here," declares Yahweh, "seeing that My people have been taken away without cause?" Again Yahweh declares, "Those who rule over them howl, and My name is continually blasphemed all day long."⁶ "Therefore My people shall know My name; therefore in that day I am the one who is speaking, 'Here I am.'"⁷ How lovely on the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who announces peace and brings good news of happiness, who announces salvation, and says to Zion, "Your God reigns!"⁸ Listen! Your watchmen lift up their voices, they shout joyfully together; for they will see with their own eyes when Yahweh restores Zion.⁹ Break forth, shout joyfully together, you waste places of Jerusalem; for Yahweh has comforted His people, He has redeemed Jerusalem.¹⁰ Yahweh has bared His holy arm in the sight of all the nations, that all the ends of the earth may see the salvation of our God.¹¹ Depart, depart, go out from there, touch nothing unclean; go out of the midst of her, purify yourselves, you who carry the vessels of Yahweh.

Psalm 36 *(To be sung.) For the conductor. A Psalm of David the servant of Yahweh.*

Transgression speaks to the ungodly within his heart; there is no fear of God before his eyes.² For it flatters him in his own eyes concerning the discovery of his iniquity and the hatred of it.³ The words of his mouth are wickedness and deceit; he has ceased to be wise and to do good.⁴ He plans wickedness upon his bed; he sets himself on a path that is not good; he does not despise evil.⁵ Your lovingkindness, O Yahweh, extends to the heavens, Your faithfulness reaches to the skies.⁶ Your righteousness is like the mountains of God; Your judgments are like a great deep. O Yahweh, You preserve man and beast.⁷ How precious is Your lovingkindness, O God! And the children of men take refuge in the shadow of Your wings.⁸ They drink their fill of the abundance of Your house; and You give them to drink of the river of Your delights.⁹ For with You is the fountain of life; in Your light we see light.¹⁰ O continue Your lovingkindness to those who know You, and Your righteousness to the upright in heart.¹¹ Let not the foot of pride come upon me, and let not the hand of the wicked drive me away.¹² There the doers of iniquity have fallen; they have been thrust down and cannot rise.

Luke 1:68-79

Reader 11 Amen.*⁶⁸ "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He has visited us and accomplished redemption for His people,⁶⁹ and has raised up a horn of salvation for us In the house of David His servant –⁷⁰ as He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from of old –⁷¹ Salvation from our enemies, and from the hand of all who hate us;⁷² to show mercy toward our fathers, and to remember His holy covenant,⁷³ The oath which He swore to Abraham our father,⁷⁴ to grant us that we, being rescued from the hand of our enemies, might serve Him without fear,⁷⁵ in holiness and righteousness before Him all our days.⁷⁶ "And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go on before the Lord to prepare His ways;⁷⁷ to give to His people the knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of their sins,⁷⁸ Because of the tender mercy of our God, with which the Sunrise from on high will visit us,⁷⁹ to shine upon those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace."

Commentary:

(V.18) "Now Joseph said to them on the third day, "Do this and live, for I fear God (Elohim)": "Elohim" is a name for God would not indicate his identity to his brothers.

"The rich man's wealth is his fortress, the ruin of the poor is their poverty" – Proverbs 10:15.

“The poor man utters supplications, But the rich man answers roughly” – Proverbs 18:23.
People who come out of poverty tend to trust their wealth and power, but Joseph feared God when he was in poverty and a slave (v.39:9), and also when wealthy and in a position of power.

(V.19) *“Wheat”* is referred to as (Hebrew) *“shever”*, a “break” from hunger.

(V.20) *“You will not die”* (they would not be under Joseph in Egypt) means that they would be granted the food for which they came.

(V.21-22) *“Indeed we are guilty”*: looking for the reason for their present distress, their contrition was limited, admitting collective guilt only for ignoring Joseph’s pleas. It is like saying, “We threw him into the pit, ignoring his pleas, now we are being thrown into prison, our pleas being ignored.” In saying they were guilty, they used the word *“ashemim”*, meaning sin through inadvertence: Benjamin refuted them, saying that he had warned them, but they wouldn’t listen. Now, Benjamin, assuming that Joseph had not survived being made a slave, told his brothers that they were seeing Joseph’s blood *“as well”* being brought upon their heads – meaning God was bringing them to death for Joseph’s murder, as well as for bringing their father in suffering to the gates of death.

(V.23-25) Joseph had been using an interpreter for their Hebrew and his Egyptian. When the interpreter left, they did not know that Joseph understood their conversation in Hebrew. At the hearing of the details of the brother’s prior planning, and present contrition, he left to weep. He returned, taking Simeon to prison; it was Simeon who had said, *“Look, that dreamer is coming”* (v.37:19), and who had thrown him into the pit. Reuben, as eldest of the brothers, would usually be held responsible; but now it was learned that Reuben had tried to spare his life, and Simeon was second-eldest. Joseph sent the others home with grain, but secretly put their money in the top of their sack, so that when they found it, they would be worried about being arrested for thievery and sold as slaves!

When one of the brothers discovered his money in his bag, they trembled, and exclaimed, “What is this that *Elohim* (the God of Justice) has done to us?” Then, upon telling their father the story, and opening their bags, they found that they all had their money! Thus they were all terrified.

Jacob said that he would not allow Benjamin to go down to Egypt: for he had been bereaved of Joseph (the first son of his beloved Rachel), and if he were now to be bereaved of Benjamin (the only other son of Rachel), there would be no life left in him for further bereavement.

Prophetically, Jacob (Israel) said: “I have been bereaved (the first destruction by the Babylonians), I am bereaved (the second destruction by Edom/Rome – which is continuing to this day), but I will be bereaved no more (the Messianic era will follow).

(V.43:6) When being questioned by hostile rulers, we should offer more information than required.

When their food ran out, Jacob relented and let Benjamin go, with Judah’s guarantee of safety (Judah had been bereaved of two children {v.38:7, 10}, and could understand). Jacob said, “May *El Shaddai* (God Almighty / the Creator-Judge who holds all power) grant you mercy”.

(V.11) As he had tried to appease Esau, Jacob would now try to appease the Viceroy of Egypt with gifts.

Prophetically, Judah would be responsible for the safekeeping of all the sons of Israel during the exile: Judah, along with Benjamin, and the Levites, kept the Word of God available for the world. It is through them that we have our Bible.

(V.18) Being very fearful, lest they were being brought to Joseph’s house to be dealt with harshly out of public view, they stopped Joseph’s steward at the door to the house, to proclaim their innocence.

(V.23) As to say, “You were not brought here to be charged with a crime, but to be dinner guests of my master. Have no fear, your money was recorded as received.”

The connections between the Torah and Haftarah portions seem obvious:

Isaiah 50:10 “*Who is among you that fears Yahweh, that obeys the voice of His servant, that walks in darkness and has no light? Let him trust in the name of Yahweh and rely on his God.*” Do you live in awe of our great God, yet feel like you cannot see the way through your present situation in life? He knows your past, present, and future, and it is all in His hands: walk in His ways, and trust Him. Consider Joseph – what way out from slavery and imprisonment could he have seen? But he walked in God’s way, and everything worked for his good! And Yeshua trusted to a horrific death on a cross, then obtained the ultimate glorious end.

Psalm 36:6-9 “*O Yahweh, You preserve man and beast. ⁷ How precious is Your lovingkindness, O God! And the children of men take refuge in the shadow of Your wings. ⁸ They drink their fill of the abundance of Your house; and You give them to drink of the river of Your delights. ⁹ For with You is the fountain of life; in Your light we see light.*” By our natural senses we cannot see where we are going in life, but by the light of God’s Word we see the path and the destination. Only He preserves us throughout this life, and then graciously gives us an eternal glorious life. We can see this exemplified in both Joseph and Yeshua, and it is a guiding principle for us.

Luke 1:68-75 “⁶⁸ *Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He has visited us and accomplished redemption for His people, ⁶⁹ and has raised up a horn of salvation for us In the house of David His servant – ⁷⁰ as He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from of old – ⁷¹ Salvation from our enemies, and from the hand of all who hate us; ⁷² to show mercy toward our fathers, and to remember His holy covenant, ⁷³ The oath which He swore to Abraham our father, ⁷⁴ to grant us that we, being rescued from the hand of our enemies, might serve Him without fear, ⁷⁵ in holiness and righteousness before Him all our days.*” Yahweh has visited us through Yeshua. He has been faithful to His word through His prophets. He has provided for us salvation from sin. Now we are to serve Him in holiness and righteousness. While we as believers need not fear retribution for failures, we still need continual instruction in righteousness, daily repentance, and growth in faith until the end of this life.

Commentary on Psalm 36:

“*For the conductor.*” Every Festival and every offering was required to have the Temple Orchestra and Choir (Levites) sing Psalms. Thus David gave the Psalms to the conductor. [This is why we sing Psalms in the synagogue Sabbath and Festival services, which are patterned after the Temple Sabbath and Festival services.]

But this word (Heb.) “*natzach*” does not only mean musical conductor, but also “He who causes the victory”.

The literal villain of this Psalm may be Goliath, representing those who exult in their own strength, not fearing God. After David slew Goliath, the women of Israel sang of David’s conquests (1 Sam 18:7), but David, in titling this Psalm, attributed all victory to God.

When David saw the giant before him, with great weapons in hand, he knew that he could defeat him, because he saw that “*there is no fear of God before his eyes*” (v.1).

The Evil One says, “Do whatever you feel like doing; disregard any promised consequence that you can’t see.” This is the “broad path” (Matt. 7:13) the masses take today; there is no fear of God before their eyes.

A Psalm of David the servant of Yahweh. Everyone who, in the Torah, called himself “the servant of Yahweh” (including Abraham, Jacob, and Moses), was later so addressed by God! David did not write Psalms of his own accord, but every word represents the inspired thoughts of the God he served. So we are taught to “*Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with Psalms, and Hymns, and Spiritual Songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God*” (Colossians 3:16), “Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs” being the titles of the five books that make up the 150 Psalms.

Vayavei Haish / The Man Brought

Commentary Y1-41

Genesis 43:24 – 44:17 Jeremiah 42:12-17; 1 Kings 3:15 Psalm 37 Luke 19:37-48

Tevet 21, 5762 / Jan 5, 2002

Tevet 20, 5765 / Jan 1, 2005

Reader 1 Amen.* ¹ וַיָּבֵא הָאִישׁ אֶת־הָאֲנָשִׁים בֵּיתָהּ יוֹסֵף / *Vayave ha-ish et-ha-anashim beita Yoseph /*
Then-came-in the-man with-the-men into-house of Joseph)

²⁴ Then the man brought the men into Joseph's house and gave them water, and they washed their feet; and he gave their donkeys fodder. ²⁵ So they prepared the present for Joseph's coming at noon; for they had heard that they were to eat a meal there. ²⁶ When Joseph came home, they brought into the house to him the present which was in their hand and bowed to the ground before him. ²⁷ Then he asked them about their welfare, and said, "Is your old father well, of whom you spoke? Is he still alive?" ²⁸ They said, "Your servant our father is well; he is still alive." They bowed down in homage.

Reader 2 Amen.* ²⁹ As he lifted his eyes and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, he said, "Is this your youngest brother, of whom you spoke to me?" And he said, "May God be gracious to you, my son." ³⁰ Joseph hurried out for he was deeply stirred over his brother, and he sought a place to weep; and he entered his chamber and wept there. ³¹ Then he washed his face and came out; and he controlled himself and said, "Serve the meal."

Reader 3 Amen.* ³² So they served him by himself, and them by themselves, and the Egyptians who ate with him by themselves, because the Egyptians could not eat bread with the Hebrews, for that is loathsome to the Egyptians. ³³ Now they were seated before him, the firstborn according to his birthright and the youngest according to his youth, and the men looked at one another in astonishment. ³⁴ He took portions to them from his own table, but Benjamin's portion was five times as much as any of theirs. So they feasted and drank freely with him.

Reader 4 Amen.* ^{44:1} Then he commanded his house steward, saying, "Fill the men's sacks with food, as much as they can carry, and put each man's money in the mouth of his sack. ² "Put my cup, the silver cup, in the mouth of the sack of the youngest, and his money for the grain." And he did as Joseph had told him. ³ As soon as it was light, the men were sent away, they with their donkeys.

Reader 5 Amen.* ⁴ They had just gone out of the city, and were not far off, when Joseph said to his house steward, "Up, follow the men; and when you overtake them, say to them, 'Why have you repaid evil for good?' ⁵ 'Is not this the one from which my lord drinks and which he indeed uses for divination? You have done wrong in doing this.'" ⁶ So he overtook them and spoke these words to them. ⁷ They said to him, "Why does my lord speak such words as these? Far be it from your servants to do such a thing. ⁸ "Behold, the money which we found in the mouth of our sacks we have brought back to you from the land of Canaan. How then could we steal silver or gold from your lord's house?"

Reader 6 Amen.* ⁹ "With whomever of your servants it is found, let him die, and we also will be my lord's slaves." ¹⁰ So he said, "Now let it also be according to your words; he with whom it is found shall be my slave, and the rest of you shall be innocent." ¹¹ Then they hurried, each man lowered his sack to the ground, and each man opened his sack. ¹² He searched, beginning with the oldest and ending with the youngest, and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack. ¹³ Then they tore their clothes, and when each man loaded his donkey, they returned to the city.

Reader 7 Amen.* ¹⁴ When Judah and his brothers came to Joseph's house, he was still there, and they fell to the ground before him. ¹⁵ Joseph said to them, "What is this deed that you have done? Do you not know that such a man as I can indeed practice divination?" ¹⁶ So Judah said, "What can we say to my lord? What can we speak? And how can we justify ourselves? God has found out the iniquity of your servants; behold, we are my lord's slaves, both we and the one in whose possession the cup has been found." ¹⁷ But he said, "Far be it from me to do this. The man in whose possession the cup has been found, he shall be my slave; but as for you, go up in peace to your father."

Jeremiah 42:12-17

Reader 8 Amen.* ¹² I will also show you compassion, so that he will have compassion on you and restore you to your own soil. ¹³ "But if you are going to say, 'We will not stay in this land,' so as not to listen to the voice of Yahweh your God, ¹⁴ saying, 'No, but we will go to the land of Egypt, where we will not see war or hear the sound of a trumpet or hunger for bread, and we will stay there'; ¹⁵ then in that case listen to the word of Yahweh, O remnant of Judah. Thus says Yahweh of Hosts, the God of Israel, "If you really set

your mind to enter Egypt and go in to reside there,¹⁶ then the sword, which you are afraid of, will overtake you there in the land of Egypt; and the famine, about which you are anxious, will follow closely after you there in Egypt, and you will die there.¹⁷ "So all the men who set their mind to go to Egypt to reside there will die by the sword, by famine and by pestilence; and they will have no survivors or refugees from the calamity that I am going to bring on them.""

1 Kings 3:15

Reader 9 Amen.*¹⁵ Then Solomon awoke, and behold, it was a dream. And he came to Jerusalem and stood before the ark of the covenant of Yahweh, and offered burnt offerings and made peace offerings, and made a feast for all his servants.

Psalm 37 *(To be sung) A Psalm of David.*

¹ Do not fret because of evildoers, be not envious toward wrongdoers. ² For they will wither quickly like the grass and fade like the green herb. ³ Trust in Yahweh and do good; dwell in the land and cultivate faithfulness. ⁴ Delight yourself in Yahweh; and He will give you the desires of your heart. ⁵ Commit your way to Yahweh, trust also in Him, and He will do it. ⁶ He will bring forth your righteousness as the light and your judgment as the noonday. ⁷ Rest in Yahweh and wait patiently for Him; do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, because of the man who carries out wicked schemes. ⁸ Cease from anger and forsake wrath; do not fret; it leads only to evildoing. ⁹ For evildoers will be cut off, but those who wait for Yahweh, they will inherit the land. ¹⁰ Yet a little while and the wicked man will be no more; and you will look carefully for his place and he will not be there. ¹¹ But the humble will inherit the land and will delight themselves in abundant prosperity. ¹² The wicked plots against the righteous and gnashes at him with his teeth. ¹³ Yahweh laughs at him, for He sees his day is coming. ¹⁴ The wicked have drawn the sword and bent their bow to cast down the afflicted and the needy, to slay those who are upright in conduct. ¹⁵ Their sword will enter their own heart, and their bows will be broken. ¹⁶ Better is the little of the righteous than the abundance of many wicked. ¹⁷ For the arms of the wicked will be broken, but Yahweh sustains the righteous. ¹⁸ Yahweh knows the days of the blameless, and their inheritance will be forever. ¹⁹ They will not be ashamed in the time of evil, and in the days of famine they will have abundance. ²⁰ But the wicked will perish; and the enemies of Yahweh will be like the glory of the pastures, they vanish-- like smoke they vanish away. ²¹ The wicked borrows and does not pay back, but the righteous is gracious and gives. ²² For those blessed by Him will inherit the land, But those cursed by Him will be cut off. ²³ The steps of a man are established by Yahweh, and He delights in his way. ²⁴ When he falls, he will not be hurled headlong, because Yahweh is the One who holds his hand. ²⁵ I have been young and now I am old, yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken or his descendants begging bread. ²⁶ All day long he is gracious and lends, and his descendants are a blessing. ²⁷ Depart from evil and do good, so you will abide forever. ²⁸ For Yahweh loves justice and does not forsake His godly ones; they are preserved forever, but the descendants of the wicked will be cut off. ²⁹ The righteous will inherit the land and dwell in it forever. ³⁰ The mouth of the righteous utters wisdom, and his tongue speaks justice. ³¹ The law of his God is in his heart; his steps do not slip. ³² The wicked spies upon the righteous and seeks to kill him. ³³ Yahweh will not leave him in his hand or let him be condemned when he is judged. ³⁴ Wait for Yahweh and keep His way, and He will exalt you to inherit the land; when the wicked are cut off, you will see it. ³⁵ I have seen a wicked, violent man spreading himself like a luxuriant tree in its native soil. ³⁶ Then he passed away, and lo, he was no more; I sought for him, but he could not be found. ³⁷ Mark the blameless man, and behold the upright; for the man of peace will have a posterity. ³⁸ But transgressors will be altogether destroyed; the posterity of the wicked will be cut off. ³⁹ But the salvation of the righteous is from Yahweh; He is their strength in time of trouble. ⁴⁰ Yahweh helps them and delivers them; He delivers them from the wicked and saves them, because they take refuge in Him.

Luke 19:37-48

Reader 10 Amen.*³⁷ As soon as He was approaching, near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the miracles which they had seen,³⁸ shouting: "Blessed is the King who comes in the Name of the Lord; peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"³⁹ Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Him, "Teacher, rebuke Your disciples." ⁴⁰ But Yeshua answered, "I tell you, if these become silent, the stones will cry out!"

Reader 11 Amen.*⁴¹ When He approached Jerusalem, He saw the city and wept over it,⁴² saying, "If you had known in this day, even you, the things which make for peace! But now they have been hidden from

your eyes. ⁴³ "For the days will come upon you when your enemies will throw up a barricade against you, and surround you and hem you in on every side, ⁴⁴ and they will level you to the ground and your children within you, and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not recognize the time of your visitation." ⁴⁵ Yeshua entered the temple and began to drive out those who were selling, ⁴⁶ saying to them, "It is written, 'And My House shall be a house of prayer,' but you have made it a robber's den." ⁴⁷ And He was teaching daily in the temple; but the chief priests and the scribes and the leading men among the people were trying to destroy Him, ⁴⁸ and they could not find anything that they might do, for all the people were hanging on to every word He said.

Commentary:

(V.24) Joseph's steward brought the eleven brothers back to Joseph's house, after assuring them that they were not being accused of anything, but were coming to dine with the Viceroy of Egypt. While the steward was feeding their donkeys, the brothers made a beautiful arrangement of the gifts from Canaan – balsam (fragrant resin of the balsam tree – similar to frankincense or myrrh), date honey, wax and lotus (aromatic gums), pistachios and almonds (rare nuts at that time).

(V.26) When Joseph came at noon, they presented their tribute, and "prostrated themselves to him toward the ground". This is the first time that all eleven brothers, including Benjamin, bowed down to him; it is seen as the fulfillment of Joseph's first dream, "*we were binding sheaves in the field, and lo, my sheaf rose up and also stood erect; and behold, your sheaves gathered around and bowed down to my sheaf*" (v.37:7).

Then Joseph asked about their "peace" (welfare), and about the "peace" (welfare) of "your aged father" (Jacob). They answered, and bowed again.

(V.29) Then Joseph "lifted up his eyes", focusing on Benjamin, "his mother's son" (his only full brother). He said, "*Is this your 'little' brother of whom you spoke to me?*" The question seems sarcastic: Benjamin was 31 years old, and the father of ten. Then, to Benjamin, he said, "*God (Elohim) be gracious to you, my son.*" Use of the term "my son" seems to be emphasizing the sarcasm. The Midrash indicates much significance to this blessing, and we later find the tribe of Benjamin with Judah, when the others have been dispersed. Note that Yeshua was a Judahite/Jew (Matt.1, Luke 3), and Paul was a Benjaminite (Rom. 11:1).

(V.30) Joseph left the room to weep. The Midrash suggests the following account of the dialog that brought Joseph to tears:

Joseph: "Have you a maternal brother?"

Benjamin: "I had a brother, but I do not know where he is."

Joseph: "Do you have sons?"

Benjamin: "I have ten."

Joseph: "What are their names?"

Benjamin: "Bela, Becher," etc.

Joseph: "What is the significance of these names?"

Benjamin: They all have some reference to my brother and the troubles that have befallen him. Bela – because he was swallowed up (nivla) among alien nations; Becher – because he was the firstborn (bechor) of his mother; Ashbel – because God sent him into captivity (sh'va'o El); Gera – because he became an alien (ger) in a strange land; Na'aman – because he was very pleasant (na'im) ; Achi and Rosh – because he was my brother (achi) and my superior (rosh); Muppim – because he learned from the mouth (mepi) of my father; Chuppim – because he did not witness my marriage canopy (chuppah), nor I his; and Ard – because he went down (yarad) among the nations (Sotah 36b).

After leaving to weep, Joseph washed his face, "fortified himself" (with great effort contained his emotions), and returned saying, "Serve bread" (the meal).

"And when (Yeshua) approached, He saw (Jerusalem) and wept over it, saying, 'If you had known in this day, even you, the things which make for peace! But now they have been hidden from your eyes'" – Luke 19:41-42.

(V.32) The Egyptians did not eat sheep (see v.46:34 & Exodus 8:22), but Joseph had an animal prepared for his brothers' meal; therefore he had his brothers eat separated from the Egyptians that were present, and Joseph ate separated from them all, which would not be surprising for a person of his position. It is interesting to note the saying that the food of the Hebrews was loathsome to Egypt: there were only seventy Hebrews in the world at the time, so they must have been notable. Even earlier (v.40:15) Joseph had called Canaan the "Land of the Hebrews".

Joseph had his brothers seated in order by age: they looked at one another in astonishment (the oldest ten were very close in age, all being born within seven years, now in their late forties to early fifties). Joseph gave Benjamin – either gifts or food portions – five times as much as the others. It is generally agreed that Joseph was testing to see if the other brothers would be jealous of his only full brother, as they had been with him.

They all ate, and drank to the point of being lightheaded and merry.

In chapter 44 we see the final test: by setting up Benjamin to be accused of stealing his personal silver cup, Joseph would find out if the other brothers were jealous of Benjamin – their father's favorite, as they had been with Joseph. Would they stand up for Benjamin, or no?

Upon being accused, they suggested that, if the cup was found with one of them, that one could be executed, and the rest could be taken as slaves (as accomplices to the crime). When they came before Joseph, their words meant that, though they were innocent of the accusation, God was bringing this upon them for some other sin, and they were prepared to be slaves. But Joseph said that he would not be so unjust: the one on whom it was found would be taken as a slave, and the others would be freed – they could go up to their father. [The stage is set for next week.]

Psalm 37

The first portion of this Psalm clearly fits Joseph's situation, and is a strong lesson for us:

¹ Do not fret because of evildoers, be not envious toward wrongdoers. ² For they will wither quickly like the grass and fade like the green herb. ³ Trust in Yahweh and do good; dwell in the land and cultivate faithfulness. ⁴ Delight yourself in Yahweh; and He will give you the desires of your heart. ⁵ Commit your way to Yahweh, trust also in Him, and He will do it. ⁶ He will bring forth your righteousness as the light and your judgment as the noonday. ⁷ Rest in Yahweh and wait patiently for Him; do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, because of the man who carries out wicked schemes. ⁸ Cease from anger and forsake wrath; do not fret; it leads only to evildoing.

This Psalm contains the basis for one of Yeshua's beatitudes: "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth" (Matt.5:5). The meek shall inherit the earth (v.9, 21), and dwell therein forever (v.29), and delight themselves in abundant peace (v.11), but the wicked will be cut off from it (v.34). These verses could refer to Canaan, or the whole earth. From other Scriptures, we see that they also mean Eden/Paradise.

At the end of the Psalm, we clearly see why the faithful are called meek:

⁴⁰ Yahweh helps them and delivers them; He delivers them from the wicked and saves them, because they take refuge in Him.

As Joseph said to the Pharaoh, it is not because of anything in us, but Yahweh – the God of grace and mercy – saves us from sin, and from the wicked; and He is our refuge, and provider; and He promises us eternal life on an earth renewed as the original Eden.

Luke 19:

³⁷ As soon as He was approaching, near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the power (*dunamis*) which they had seen, ³⁸ shouting: "Blessed is the King who comes in the Name of Yahweh; peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" I learned this week that there is no specific word in the Greek Apostolic Writings for "miracle". There are three words that are often translated miracle: *dunamis* – power (from which we get "dynamite"),

teras – wonder, and *semeion* – sign. Through such people as Moses, Elijah, Yeshua, and the Apostles, God displayed His Power, doing wondrous things that made people marvel, granting signs to authenticate His Word. The neo-Pentecostal idea, that these kinds of “miracles” are the right of all believers today to perform, is a misunderstanding of the Scriptures.

⁴⁵ *Yeshua entered the Temple and began to drive out those who were selling,* ⁴⁶ *saying to them, “It is written, ‘And My House shall be a house of prayer,’ but you have made it a robber’s den.”*

It was the duty of a priest to cleanse the Temple. Only a priest could cleanse the Temple. The very purpose of the Temple was to represent and portray Yeshua. Here Yeshua, as our Priest, was fulfilling His duty, and also making a final showing of how the Temple should represent Him.

⁴¹ *When He approached Jerusalem, He saw the city and wept over it,* ⁴² *saying, “If you had known in this day, even you, the things which make for peace! But now they have been hidden from your eyes.* ⁴³ *For the days will come upon you when your enemies will throw up a barricade against you, and surround you and hem you in on every side,* ⁴⁴ *and they will level you to the ground and your children within you, and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not recognize the time of your visitation.”*

Here the reason is clearly given, why the Holy Temple would be destroyed: because Yeshua was rejected! Messiah’s visitation was not recognized! Why should the Temple be left, when its purpose of representing Yeshua was not being fulfilled?

The rejection of Yeshua has been wrongly used as a condemnation against all Hebrews, or all “Jews”.

⁴⁷ *And He was teaching daily in the Temple; but the chief priests and the scribes and the leading men among the people were trying to destroy Him,* ⁴⁸ *and they could not find anything that they might do, for all the people were hanging on to every word He said.*

Vayigash / Then He Approached

Genesis 44:18 – 46:27 Joshua 14:6-14; Ezekiel 37:9-14 Psalm 38 Acts 2:22-37

Commentary Y1-42

Tevet 28, 5762 / Jan 12, 2002

Tevet 27, 5765 / Jan 8, 2005

Reader 1 Amen.* ¹⁸ וַיִּגַּשׁ אֵלָיו יְהוּדָה / *Vayinash elayv Yehudah /*

Then-approached toward-him Yehudah)

¹⁸ Then Judah approached him, and said, "Oh my lord, may your servant please speak a word in my lord's ears, and do not be angry with your servant; for **you are like Pharaoh.**" ¹⁹ "My lord asked his servants, saying, 'Have you a father or a brother?' ²⁰ "We said to my lord, 'We have an old father and a **little child** of his old age. Now his brother is dead, so he alone is left of his mother, and his father loves him.' ²¹ "Then you said to your servants, 'Bring him down to me that I may set my eyes on him.' ²² "But we said to my lord, 'The lad cannot leave his father, for if he should leave his father, his father would die.' ²³ "You said to your servants, however, 'Unless your youngest brother comes down with you, you will not see my face again.' ²⁴ "Thus it came about when we went up to your servant my father, we told him the words of my lord. ²⁵ "Our father said, 'Go back, buy us a little food.' ²⁶ "But we said, 'We cannot go down. If our youngest brother is with us, then we will go down; for we cannot see the man's face unless our youngest brother is with us.'

Reader 2 Amen.* ²⁷ "Your servant my father said to us, 'You know that my wife bore me two sons; ²⁸ and the one went out from me, and I said, "Surely he is torn in pieces," and I have not seen him since. ²⁹ "If you take this one also from me, and harm befalls him, you will bring my gray hair down to Sheol in sorrow.' ³⁰ "Now, therefore, when I come to your servant my father, and the lad is not with us, since his life is bound up in the lad's life, ³¹ when he sees that the lad is not with us, he will die. Thus your servants will bring the gray hair of your servant our father down to Sheol in sorrow. ³² "For your servant became surety for the lad to my father, saying, 'If I do not bring him back to you, then let me bear the blame before my father forever.' ³³ "Now, therefore, please let your servant remain instead of the lad a slave to my lord, and let the lad go up with his brothers. ³⁴ "For how shall I go up to my father if the lad is not with me-- for fear that I see **the evil that would overtake my father?**"

Reader 3 Amen.* ^{45:1} Then Joseph could not control himself before all those who stood by him, and he cried, "Have everyone go out from me." So there was no man with him when Joseph made himself known to his brothers. ² He wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard it, and the household of Pharaoh heard of it. ³ Then Joseph said to his brothers, "**I am Joseph! Is my father still alive?**" **But his brothers could not answer him, for they were dismayed at his presence.** ⁴ Then Joseph said to his brothers, "Please come closer to me." And they came closer. And he said, "I am your brother Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. ⁵ "Now do not be grieved or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life. ⁶ "For the famine has been in the land these two years, and there are still five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvesting. ⁷ "God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant in the earth, and to keep you alive by a great deliverance. ⁸ "Now, therefore, it was not you who sent me here, but God; and He has made me a father to Pharaoh and lord of all his household and ruler over all the land of Egypt.

Reader 4 Amen.* ⁹ "Hurry and go up to my father, and say to him, 'Thus says your son Joseph, "God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me, do not delay. ¹⁰ "You shall live in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near me, you and your children and your children's children and your flocks and your herds and all that you have. ¹¹ "There I will also provide for you, for there are still five years of famine to come, and you and your household and all that you have would be impoverished.'" ¹² "Behold, your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see, that it is my mouth which is speaking to you. ¹³ "Now you must tell my father of all my splendor in Egypt, and all that you have seen; and you must hurry and bring my father down here." ¹⁴ Then he fell on his brother Benjamin's neck and wept, and Benjamin wept on his neck. ¹⁵ He kissed all his brothers and wept on them, and afterward his brothers talked with him.

Reader 5 Amen.* ¹⁶ Now when the news was heard in Pharaoh's house that Joseph's brothers had come, it pleased Pharaoh and his servants. ¹⁷ Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Say to your brothers, 'Do this: load your beasts and go to the land of Canaan, ¹⁸ and take your father and your households and come to me, and I will give you the best of the land of Egypt and you will eat the fat of the land.' ¹⁹ "Now you are ordered, 'Do this: take wagons from the land of Egypt for your little ones and for your wives, and bring your father and come. ²⁰ 'Do not concern yourselves with your goods, for the best of all the land of Egypt is yours.'" ²¹ Then

the sons of Israel did so; and Joseph gave them wagons according to the command of Pharaoh, and gave them provisions for the journey.²² To each of them he gave changes of garments, but to Benjamin he gave three hundred pieces of silver and five changes of garments.²³ To his father he sent as follows: ten donkeys loaded with the best things of Egypt, and ten female donkeys loaded with grain and bread and sustenance for his father on the journey.²⁴ So he sent his brothers away, and as they departed, he said to them, "Do not quarrel on the journey."

Reader 6 Amen.*²⁵ Then they went up from Egypt, and came to the land of Canaan to their father Jacob.²⁶ They told him, saying, "Joseph is still alive, and indeed he is ruler over all the land of Egypt." But he was stunned, for he did not believe them.²⁷ When they told him all the words of Joseph that he had spoken to them, and when he saw the wagons that Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of their father Jacob revived.²⁸ Then Israel said, "It is enough; my son Joseph is still alive. I will go and see him before I die."^{46:1} So Israel set out with all that he had, and came to Beersheba, and offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac.² God spoke to Israel in visions of the night and said, "Jacob, Jacob." And he said, "Here I am."³ He said, "I am God, the God of your father; do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for I will make you a great nation there."⁴ "I will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also surely bring you up again; and Joseph will close your eyes."

Reader 7 Amen.*⁵ Then Jacob arose from Beersheba; and the sons of Israel carried their father Jacob and their little ones and their wives in the wagons which Pharaoh had sent to carry him.⁶ They took their livestock and their property, which they had acquired in the land of Canaan, and came to Egypt, Jacob and all his descendants with him:⁷ his sons and his grandsons with him, his daughters and his granddaughters, and all his descendants he brought with him to Egypt.⁸ Now these are the names of the sons of Israel, Jacob and his sons, who went to Egypt:

Reuben, Jacob's firstborn.⁹ The sons of Reuben: Hanoch and Pallu and Hezron and Carmi.¹⁰ The sons of Simeon: Jemuel and Jamin and Ohad and Jachin and Zohar and Shaul the son of a Canaanite woman.¹¹ The sons of Levi: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari.¹² The sons of Judah: Er and Onan and Shelah and Perez and Zerah (but Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan). And the sons of Perez were Hezron and Hamul.¹³ The sons of Issachar: Tola and Puvvah and Job and Shimron.¹⁴ The sons of Zebulun: Sered and Elon and Jahleel.¹⁵ These are the sons of Leah, whom she bore to Jacob in Paddan-aram, with his daughter Dinah; all his sons and his daughters numbered thirty-three.¹⁶ The sons of Gad: Ziphion and Haggi, Shuni and Ezbon, Eri and Arodi and Areli.¹⁷ The sons of Asher: Imnah and Ishvah and Ishvi and Beriah and their sister Serah. And the sons of Beriah: Heber and Malchiel.¹⁸ These are the sons of Zilpah, whom Laban gave to his daughter Leah; and she bore to Jacob these sixteen persons.¹⁹ The sons of Jacob's wife Rachel: Joseph and Benjamin.²⁰ Now to Joseph in the land of Egypt were born Manasseh and Ephraim, whom Asenath, the daughter of Potiphera, priest of On, bore to him.²¹ The sons of Benjamin: Bela and Becher and Ashbel, Gera and Naaman, Ehi and Rosh, Muppim and Huppim and Ard.²² These are the sons of Rachel, who were born to Jacob; there were fourteen persons in all.²³ The sons of Dan: Hushim.²⁴ The sons of Naphtali: Jahzeel and Guni and Jezer and Shillem.²⁵ These are the sons of Bilhah, whom Laban gave to his daughter Rachel, and she bore these to Jacob; there were seven persons in all.

²⁶ All the persons belonging to Jacob, who came to Egypt, his direct descendants, not including the wives of Jacob's sons, were sixty-six persons in all,²⁷ and the sons of Joseph, who were born to him in Egypt were two; all the persons of the house of Jacob, who came to Egypt, were seventy.

Joshua 14:6-14

Reader 8 Amen.*⁶ Then the sons of Judah drew near to Joshua in Gilgal, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite said to him, "You know the word which Yahweh spoke to Moses the man of God concerning you and me in Kadesh-barnea."⁷ "I was forty years old when Moses the servant of Yahweh sent me from Kadesh-barnea to spy out the land, and I brought word back to him as it was in my heart."⁸ "Nevertheless my brethren who went up with me made the heart of the people melt with fear; but I followed Yahweh my God fully."⁹ "So Moses swore on that day, saying, 'Surely the land on which your foot has trodden will be an inheritance to you and to your children forever, because you have followed Yahweh my God fully.'¹⁰ "Now behold, Yahweh has let me live, just as He spoke, these forty-five years, from the time that Yahweh spoke this word to Moses, when Israel walked in the wilderness; and now behold, I am eighty-five years old today."¹¹ "I am still as strong today as I was in the day Moses sent me; as my strength was then, so my

strength is now, for war and for going out and coming in. ¹² "Now then, give me this hill country about which Yahweh spoke on that day, for you heard on that day that Anakim were there, with great fortified cities; perhaps Yahweh will be with me, and I will drive them out as Yahweh has spoken." ¹³ So Joshua blessed him and gave Hebron to Caleb the son of Jephunneh for an inheritance. ¹⁴ Therefore, Hebron became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite until this day, because he followed Yahweh God of Israel fully.

Ezekiel 37:9-14

Reader 9 Amen.* ⁹ Then He said to me, "Prophecy to the breath, prophesy, son of man, and say to the breath, 'Thus says Lord Yahweh, "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they come to life.'"" ¹⁰ So I prophesied as He commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they came to life and stood on their feet, an exceedingly great army. ¹¹ Then He said to me, "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel; behold, they say, 'Our bones are dried up and our hope has perished. We are completely cut off.' ¹² "Therefore prophesy and say to them, 'Thus says Lord Yahweh, "Behold, I will open your graves and cause you to come up out of your graves, My people; and I will bring you into the land of Israel. ¹³ "Then you will know that I am Yahweh, when I have opened your graves and caused you to come up out of your graves, My people. ¹⁴ "I will put My Spirit within you and you will come to life, and I will place you on your own land. Then you will know that I, Yahweh, have spoken and done it," declares Yahweh."

Psalm 38 *(To be sung.) A Psalm of David, for a memorial.*

¹ O Yahweh, rebuke me not in Your wrath, and chasten me not in Your burning anger. ² For Your arrows have sunk deep into me, and Your hand has pressed down on me. ³ There is no soundness in my flesh because of Your indignation; there is no health in my bones because of my sin. ⁴ For my iniquities are gone over my head; as a heavy burden they weigh too much for me. ⁵ My wounds grow foul and fester because of my folly. ⁶ I am bent over and greatly bowed down; I go mourning all day long. ⁷ For my loins are filled with burning, and there is no soundness in my flesh. ⁸ I am benumbed and badly crushed; I groan because of the agitation of my heart. ⁹ Lord, all my desire is before You; and my sighing is not hidden from You. ¹⁰ My heart throbs, my strength fails me; and the light of my eyes, even that has gone from me. ¹¹ My loved ones and my friends stand aloof from my plague; and my kinsmen stand afar off. ¹² Those who seek my life lay snares for me; and those who seek to injure me have threatened destruction, and they devise treachery all day long. ¹³ But I, like a deaf man, do not hear; and I am like a mute man who does not open his mouth. ¹⁴ Yes, I am like a man who does not hear, and in whose mouth are no arguments. ¹⁵ For I hope in You, O Yahweh; You will answer, O Lord my God. ¹⁶ For I said, "May they not rejoice over me, who, when my foot slips, would magnify themselves against me." ¹⁷ For I am ready to fall, and my sorrow is continually before me. ¹⁸ For I confess my iniquity; I am full of anxiety because of my sin. ¹⁹ But my enemies are vigorous and strong, and many are those who hate me wrongfully. ²⁰ And those who repay evil for good, they oppose me, because I follow what is good. ²¹ Do not forsake me, O Yahweh; O my God, do not be far from me! ²² Make haste to help me, O Lord, my salvation!

Acts 2:22-37

Reader 10 Amen.* ²² "Men of Israel, listen to these words: Yeshua the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know-- ²³ this Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death. ²⁴ "But God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power.

Reader 11 Amen.* ²⁵ "For David says of Him, 'I saw the Lord always in my presence; for He is at my right hand, so that I will not be shaken. ²⁶ Therefore my heart was glad and my tongue exulted; moreover my flesh also will live in hope; ²⁷ because You will not abandon my soul to hades, nor allow Your Holy One to undergo decay. ²⁸ You have made known to me the ways of life; You will make me full of gladness with Your presence.' ²⁹ "Brethren, I may confidently say to you regarding the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. ³⁰ "And so, because he was a prophet and knew that God had sworn to him with an oath to seat one of his descendants on his throne, ³¹ he looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, that He was neither abandoned to hades, nor did His flesh suffer decay. ³² "This Yeshua God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses.

Reader 12 Amen.* ³³ "Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear. ³⁴ "For it was not David who ascended into heaven, but he himself says: 'The Lord said to my lord, "Sit at My right hand, ³⁵ until I make Your enemies a footstool for your feet.'" ³⁶ "Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Messiah-- this Yeshua whom you crucified." ³⁷ Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?"

Commentary:

This is one of the most emotional scenes in all of Scripture.

Joseph had named his first son Manasseh, partly because God made him forget his father's household (v.41:51) – meaning that it was no longer in the forefront of his memory. Now all is brought into immediate remembrance, with Judah telling how his father's life is wrapped up in Joseph and Benjamin. With Joseph presumed dead, Benjamin is as an only son to Jacob – being the only known living son of his late beloved wife Rachael.

To add to the emotion, Judah is now taking responsibility for Benjamin and his father's peace. Joseph has the answer he sought, that his brothers have a new attitude.

Joseph can no longer retain his composure.

At issue was Jacob's prospective loss of peace over a missing son. Benjamin had ten children at home: their prospective loss of peace due to a missing father was not mentioned. Judah's testimony here is used as an example of how parents have more compassion for their children than children have for their parents (R.Menachem Mendel of Kotzk).

Judah (v.24) spoke of "your servant, my father". Joseph could have said that a resident of Canaan was not his servant, without revealing his identity. But he kept silent when his father was described in this "degrading manner". The sages (Sotah 13b) say that Joseph lost ten years of his life for doing so. In any case, this is basis for consideration of how children should respect their parents.

Judah relates details here (v.27-28) that were not recorded in the previous account (v.43:6-7). It is common for the Torah to be brief in one place, and then give details later where they are more pertinent. We see this in the account of creation (Gen.1 vs. Gen.2), and in Eve's saying "Neither shall you touch . . ." (v.3:3) [If, as some say, Eve had added these words, that would have been the first human sin (lying), rather than the taking of the forbidden fruit upon being tempted].

Joseph's uncontrollable weeping could be heard by the stewards whom he had sent out. For one in such an office to be heard weeping was cause for concern throughout the kingdom.

Joseph then stunned his brothers with, "I am Joseph! Is my father still alive?"

Hear what an Orthodox Rabbinical source (Chafetz Chaim) says:

"When Joseph said, 'I am Joseph,' God's master plan became clear to the brothers. They had no more questions. Everything that had happened for the last twenty-two years fell into perspective. So, too, will it be in the time to come when God will reveal Himself and announce. 'I am Hashem!' The veil will be lifted from our eyes and we will comprehend everything that transpired throughout history."

Here are some related prophecies concerning the return of Yeshua:

*“Then I will turn your festivals into mourning and all your songs into lamentation; and I will bring sackcloth on everyone's loins and baldness on every head. And I will make it like a time of mourning for an **only son**, and the end of it will be like a bitter day” – Amos 8:10.*

*“And in that day I will set about to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an **only son**, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn. In that day there will be great mourning in Jerusalem, . . .the families that remain, every family by itself and their wives by themselves. In that day a fountain will be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for impurity. It will come about in that day,” declares Yahweh of hosts, “that I will cut off the names of the idols from the land, and they will no longer be remembered; . . . And one will say to him, 'What are these wounds between your arms?' Then he will say, 'Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.'” – Zechariah 12:9 – 13:6.*

Joseph then sent his brothers home with food and provision for all of them to return to live in the rich Nile Delta of Egypt. There they would be separate from Egyptian idolatry, the reason given the Egyptians being because they were shepherds.

Jacob and his descendants who dwelt in Egypt numbered seventy men. After hundreds of years, Israel would be delivered from Egypt, returned to the Promised Land, and forbidden to ever return to Egypt.

We have been placed in a rich land. But when we finally are delivered to the Promised Land, we will never be allowed to return to this world of sin.

The portion from Joshua refers to the return to Canaan after four-hundred years. The portion from Ezekiel tells of a future return to the Promised Land.

Today's Psalm sounds like Joseph's brothers pleading:

“¹ Rebuke me not in Your wrath, and chasten me not in Your burning anger. . . ⁴ For my iniquities are gone over my head; as a heavy burden they weigh too much for me. ⁵ My wounds grow foul and fester because of my folly. ⁶ I am bent over and greatly bowed down; . . . ¹⁷ For I am ready to fall, and my sorrow is continually before me. ¹⁸ For I confess my iniquity; I am full of anxiety because of my sin.”

In Acts 2, Peter tells a story reminiscent of Joseph and his brothers. His audience, Yeshua's brethren of the tribe of Judah, are told that they crucified their Messiah. But God brought Him back, and they would one day bow to Him, and He would rule over them.

But, as Joseph said to his brothers, it was all in God's plan. Like Joseph, Yeshua was not left in the pit.

Our Journey and Destination

(וַיִּשְׁלַח יְהוּדָה לְפָנָיו / *V'et Yehudah shalach l'fanayo el-Yoseph* /
Now Yehudah he-sent before-him to-Joseph)

Reader 1 Amen.* ²⁸ Now he sent Judah before him to Joseph, to point out the way before him to Goshen; and they came into the land of Goshen. ²⁹ Joseph prepared his chariot and went up to Goshen to meet his father Israel; as soon as he appeared before him, he fell on his neck and wept on his neck a long time. ³⁰ Then Israel said to Joseph, "Now let me die, since I have seen your face, that you are still alive." ³¹ Joseph said to his brothers and to his father's household, "I will go up and tell Pharaoh, and will say to him, 'My brothers and my father's household, who were in the land of Canaan, have come to me; ³² and the men are shepherds, for they have been keepers of livestock; and they have brought their flocks and their herds and all that they have.' ³³ "When Pharaoh calls you and says, 'What is your occupation?' ³⁴ you shall say, 'Your servants have been keepers of livestock from our youth even until now, both we and our fathers,' that you may live in the land of Goshen; for every shepherd is loathsome to the Egyptians." ^{47:1} Then Joseph went in and told Pharaoh, and said, "My father and my brothers and their flocks and their herds and all that they have, have come out of the land of Canaan; and behold, they are in the land of Goshen." ² He took five men from among his brothers and presented them to Pharaoh. ³ Then Pharaoh said to his brothers, "What is your occupation?" So they said to Pharaoh, "Your servants are shepherds, both we and our fathers."

Reader 2 Amen.* ⁴ They said to Pharaoh, "We have come to sojourn in the land, for there is no pasture for your servants' flocks, for the famine is severe in the land of Canaan. Now, therefore, please let your servants live in the land of Goshen." ⁵ Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Your father and your brothers have come to you. ⁶ "The land of Egypt is at your disposal; settle your father and your brothers in the best of the land, let them live in the land of Goshen; and if you know any capable men among them, then put them in charge of my livestock." ⁷ Then Joseph brought his father Jacob and presented him to Pharaoh; and Jacob blessed Pharaoh. ⁸ Pharaoh said to Jacob, "How many years have you lived?" ⁹ So Jacob said to Pharaoh, "The years of my sojourning are one hundred and thirty; few and unpleasant have been the years of my life, nor have they attained the years that my fathers lived during the days of their sojourning." ¹⁰ And Jacob blessed Pharaoh, and went out from his presence. ¹¹ So Joseph settled his father and his brothers and gave them a possession in the land of Egypt, in the best of the land, in the land of Rameses, as Pharaoh had ordered. ¹² Joseph provided his father and his brothers and all his father's household with food, according to their little ones.

Reader 3 Amen.* ¹³ Now there was no food in all the land, because the famine was very severe, so that the land of Egypt and the land of Canaan languished because of the famine. ¹⁴ Joseph gathered all the money that was found in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan for the grain which they bought, and Joseph brought the money into Pharaoh's house. ¹⁵ When the money was all spent in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan, all the Egyptians came to Joseph and said, "Give us food, for why should we die in your presence? For our money is gone." ¹⁶ Then Joseph said, "Give up your livestock, and I will give you food for your livestock, since your money is gone." ¹⁷ So they brought their livestock to Joseph, and Joseph gave them food in exchange for the horses and the flocks and the herds and the donkeys; and he fed them with food in exchange for all their livestock that year. ¹⁸ When that year was ended, they came to him the next year and said to him, "We will not hide from my lord that our money is all spent, and the cattle are my lord's. There is nothing left for my lord except our bodies and our lands. ¹⁹ "Why should we die before your eyes, both we and our land? Buy us and our land for food, and we and our land will be slaves to Pharaoh. So give us seed, that we may live and not die, and that the land may not be desolate." ²⁰ So Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh, for every Egyptian sold his field, because the famine was severe upon them. Thus the land became Pharaoh's.

Reader 4 Amen.* ²¹ As for the people, he removed them to the cities from one end of Egypt's border to the other. ²² Only the land of the priests he did not buy, for the priests had an allotment from Pharaoh, and they lived off the allotment which Pharaoh gave them. Therefore, they did not sell their land. ²³ Then Joseph said to the people, "Behold, I have today bought you and your land for Pharaoh; now, here is seed for you,

and you may sow the land.²⁴ "At the harvest you shall give a fifth to Pharaoh, and four-fifths shall be your own for seed of the field and for your food and for those of your households and as food for your little ones."²⁵ So they said, "You have saved our lives! Let us find favor in the sight of my lord, and we will be Pharaoh's slaves."²⁶ Joseph made it a statute concerning the land of Egypt valid to this day, that Pharaoh should have the fifth; only the land of the priests did not become Pharaoh's.²⁷ Now Israel lived in the land of Egypt, in Goshen, and they acquired property in it and were fruitful and became very numerous.²⁸ Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years; so the length of Jacob's life was one hundred and forty-seven years.

Reader 5 Amen.*²⁹ When the time for Israel to die drew near, he called his son Joseph and said to him, "Please, if I have found favor in your sight, place now your hand under my thigh and deal with me in kindness and faithfulness. Please do not bury me in Egypt,³⁰ but when I lie down with my fathers, you shall carry me out of Egypt and bury me in their burial place." And he said, "I will do as you have said."³¹ He said, "Swear to me." So he swore to him. Then Israel bowed in worship at the head of the bed.^{48:1} Now it came about after these things that Joseph was told, "Behold, your father is sick." So he took his two sons Manasseh and Ephraim with him.² When it was told to Jacob, "Behold, your son Joseph has come to you," Israel collected his strength and sat up in the bed.³ Then Jacob said to Joseph, "God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan and blessed me,⁴ and He said to me, 'Behold, I will make you fruitful and numerous, and I will make you a company of peoples, and will give this land to your descendants after you for an everlasting possession.'⁵ "Now your two sons, who were born to you in the land of Egypt before I came to you in Egypt, are mine; Ephraim and Manasseh shall be mine, as Reuben and Simeon are."⁶ "But your offspring that have been born after them shall be yours; they shall be called by the names of their brothers in their inheritance.

Reader 6 Amen.*⁷ "Now as for me, when I came from Paddan, Rachel died, to my sorrow, in the land of Canaan on the journey, when there was still some distance to go to Ephrath; and I buried her there on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem)."⁸ When Israel saw Joseph's sons, he said, "Who are these?"⁹ Joseph said to his father, "They are my sons, whom God has given me here." So he said, "Bring them to me, please, that I may bless them."¹⁰ Now the eyes of Israel were so dim from age that he could not see. Then Joseph brought them close to him, and he kissed them and embraced them.¹¹ Israel said to Joseph, "I never expected to see your face, and behold, God has let me see your children as well."¹² Then Joseph took them from his knees, and bowed with his face to the ground.¹³ Joseph took them both, Ephraim with his right hand toward Israel's left, and Manasseh with his left hand toward Israel's right, and brought them close to him.

Reader 7 Amen.*¹⁴ But Israel stretched out his right hand and laid it on the head of Ephraim, who was the younger, and his left hand on Manasseh's head, crossing his hands, although Manasseh was the firstborn.¹⁵ He blessed Joseph, and said, "The God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, The God who has been my shepherd all my life to this day,¹⁶ The angel who has redeemed me from all evil, Bless the lads; And may my name live on in them, And the names of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; And may they grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth."¹⁷ When Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand on Ephraim's head, it displeased him; and he grasped his father's hand to remove it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's head.¹⁸ Joseph said to his father, "Not so, my father, for this one is the firstborn. Place your right hand on his head."¹⁹ But his father refused and said, "I know, my son, I know; he also will become a people and he also will be great. However, his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his descendants shall become a multitude of nations."²⁰ He blessed them that day, saying, "By you Israel will pronounce blessing, saying, 'May God make you like Ephraim and Manasseh!'" Thus he put Ephraim before Manasseh.²¹ Then Israel said to Joseph, "Behold, I am about to die, but God will be with you, and bring you back to the land of your fathers."²² "I give you one portion more than your brothers, which I took from the hand of the Amorite with my sword and my bow."

1 Kings 2:1-4

Reader 8 Amen.* As David's time to die drew near, he charged Solomon his son, saying,² "I am going the way of all the earth. Be strong, therefore, and show yourself a man."³ "Keep the charge of Yahweh your God, to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, His commandments, His ordinances, and His testimonies, according to what is written in the Law of Moses, that you may succeed in all that you do and wherever you turn,⁴ so that Yahweh may carry out His promise which He spoke concerning me, saying, 'If your sons are careful of their way, to walk before Me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul, you shall not lack a man on the throne of Israel.'

2 Kings 13:14

When Elisha became sick with the illness of which he was to die, Joash the king of Israel came down to him and wept over him and said, "My father, my father, the chariots of Israel and its horsemen!"

Psalm 39 *(To be sung.) For the choir director, for Jeduthun. A Psalm of David.*

¹ I said, "I will guard my ways that I may not sin with my tongue; I will guard my mouth as with a muzzle while the wicked are in my presence." ² I was mute and silent, I refrained even from good, and my sorrow grew worse. ³ My heart was hot within me, while I was musing the fire burned; then I spoke with my tongue: ⁴ "Yahweh, make me to know my end and what is the extent of my days; let me know how transient I am." ⁵ "Behold, You have made my days as handbreadths, and my lifetime as nothing in Your sight; surely every man at his best is a mere breath. Selah. ⁶ "Surely every man walks about as a phantom; surely they make an uproar for nothing; he amasses riches and does not know who will gather them. ⁷ "And now, Lord, for what do I wait? My hope is in You. ⁸ "Deliver me from all my transgressions; make me not the reproach of the foolish. ⁹ "I have become mute, I do not open my mouth, because it is You who have done it. ¹⁰ "Remove Your plague from me; because of the opposition of Your hand I am perishing. ¹¹ "With reproofs You chasten a man for iniquity; You consume as a moth what is precious to him; surely every man is a mere breath. Selah. ¹² "Hear my prayer, O Yahweh, and give ear to my cry; do not be silent at my tears; for I am a stranger with You, a sojourner like all my fathers. ¹³ "Turn Your gaze away from me, that I may smile again before I depart and am no more."

Revelation 21:1-10, 22:1-10

Reader 9 Amen.* ^{21:1} Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. ² And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, ⁴ and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away." ⁵ And He who sits on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." And He said, "Write, for these words are faithful and true." ⁶ Then He said to me, "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost. ⁷ "He who overcomes will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son. ⁸ "But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." ⁹ Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and spoke with me, saying, "Come here, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb." ¹⁰ And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God,

Reader 10 Amen.* ^{22:1} Then he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb, ² in the middle of its street. On either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. ³ There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His bond-servants will serve Him; ⁴ they will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads. ⁵ And there will no longer be any night; and they will not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illumine them; and they will reign forever and ever. ⁶ And he said to me, "These words are faithful and true"; and the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent His angel to show to His bond-servants the things which must soon take place. ⁷ "And behold, I am coming quickly. Blessed is he who heeds the words of the prophecy of this book." ⁸ I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed me these things. ⁹ But he said to me, "Do not do that. I am a fellow servant of yours and of your brethren the prophets and of those who heed the words of this book. Worship God." ¹⁰ And he said to me, "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near.

Commentary:

Praise of Yahweh (Yehudah) leads the way.

(V.46:28) Now Judah (is the one) Jacob sent before him to Joseph, to prepare before/teach ahead the way to Goshen; and they came into the land of Goshen. Reuben, the first-born, lost his position through the sin concerning Bilhah. Simeon and Levi, the next two in line, lost the position through their impetuous ways with Shechem. Judah was fourth in line, and had earned some trust with his standing up for Benjamin. Judah was sent ahead to prepare for a family that would not live like the Egyptians, but needed a community setup for purity and worship and teaching God's way to others – Torah observance before Moses.

(V.29) And Joseph prepared his chariot and went up to Goshen to meet his father Israel; as soon as he appeared before him, he fell on his neck and wept on his neck a long time. Joseph, who had not seen his father for 22 years, came to him, not as "Viceroy of Egypt", but as a respectful son. Joseph, it is taught, did not live a long life because he previously dishonored his father, allowing him to be called "your servant" (v.43:28; see also Exodus 20:12 – "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be prolonged in the land which Yahweh your God gives you").

(V.30) Then Israel said to Joseph, "Now let me die, since I have seen your face, that you are still alive." In other words, Israel could now die in peace, because he knew that Joseph was doing well before God. Israel/Jacob would live another 17 years.

(V.47:8) The Pharaoh asked the elderly man, "How many are the days of the years of your **life**?" Israel answered, "The days of the years of my **sojourning** are one hundred and thirty; few and unpleasant have been the years of my life, nor have they attained the years that my fathers lived during the days of their sojourning." Israel's answer implies that he had not really "lived", but only "sojourning" temporarily in lands not his own. Also, he had not had peace, but one evil circumstance following another (his brother Esau desiring to kill him, Laban tricking him concerning marrying Rachel, then cheating him of his wages, Rachel dying, his sons creating havoc for him, then Joseph being lost for 22 years).

David shares a similar idea of years being few (Psalm 39:5): "*Behold, You have made my days as handbreadths, and my lifetime as nothing in Your sight; surely every man at his best is a mere breath.*"

(V.13) Israel came down to Egypt in the second year of the famine. In the third year, Joseph collected all of the Egyptian's money for grain. In the fourth year, he purchased all of their livestock for grain. In the fifth year, Joseph obtained title to all of their lands for grain. In the sixth year, the Egyptians became indentured servants in return for grain. In the seventh year of the famine, Joseph gave the Egyptians seed to sow for the next year's crops. Joseph moved the Egyptians around (moving all of City A to City B, City B to City C, and City C to City A) so that the people would not feel connected to certain lands as owners.

Thus Joseph purchased everything for the Pharaoh, picturing how Yeshua would purchase everything for his Father.

After the famine was over, Joseph required the Egyptians to return one-fifth of every crop to the Pharaoh's treasury.

(V.28) The length of Jacob's life was "seven and forty and one-hundred years". This indicates that he only considered the last part of his life "living": it was the only part that was peaceful, and with all his children.

Israel and his family came to Egypt to "sojourn" (v.4), but they obtained ownership of land and "settled" (v.5). However, Israel did not give up the desire for the Promised Land, and instructed Joseph to bury him in Canaan (v.29).

In chapter 48, we see Israel prophetically blessing his sons, and counting Ephraim and Manasseh as his own sons in inheritance (Joseph thus receiving a double portion). This account of a blessing is in contrast to the way Jacob received his promised blessing by deceit (Genesis 27). We can also see from the case of

Balaam (Numbers 22) that God's promised blessings do not need our sinful intervention in order to succeed. David said (Psalm 39:1): " *I will guard my ways that I may not sin with my tongue.* "

In 1 Kings 2, David, like Jacob, is approaching death, and charges his son Solomon to walk in God's ways.

Moses was sent ahead to teach us the way. In a like prophetic manner, Yeshua was sent ahead to teach us the way.

"Yahweh your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him" – Deuteronomy 18:15.

"Moses said, 'Yahweh your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brethren; to Him you shall give heed to everything He says to you. And it will be that every soul that does not heed that prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people'" – Acts 3:22-23.

Moses was sent with signs from God to authenticate his work. He gave detailed instruction for setting up the Tabernacle services, with animal offerings. These offerings, from Adam's time, pictured Yeshua as our needed sacrifice. Moses went on to teach us how to walk with God.

Yeshua was sent with signs from God to authenticate his work. He clarified degraded Temple rituals before becoming our sacrifice. He further taught us how to walk with God.

The praise of Yahweh leads us towards repentance from dead works, and faith in the Living God (Hebrews 6:1). While some teach "just believe," we must first know what we are to believe, or rather, in who we are to believe. We must know who He is, through someone praising His attributes, before we have a reason to turn from the way of death to a life-giving faith.

Joseph's brothers, who previously despised him, learned who Joseph was, and repented, and came to him for life. But Joseph put them through some tests first.

In our worldly life, we despised Yeshua. But when we learned who He was, we repented, and came to Him for life. But He puts us through some tests. David said (Psalm 39:11): "*With reproofs You chasten a man for iniquity*". Overcomers – those whose faith is witnessed by their actions – have a glorious future, as we read in our last reading.

In this Apostolic portion, we see the promise and description of the ultimate Canaan: the New Jerusalem on a renewed earth. There is no more hunger, no more unpleasant life, and no more shortness of days. We will worship and serve God in spirit and in truth, and no one will have to teach another to "know God", for all will perfectly know Him, from the greatest to the least (Jeremiah 31:34).

The title, "The Revelation of Yeshua the Messiah," does not mean the book contains various revelations concerning the future. It means that the prophesied events are to reveal the Messiah – to remove the veil so that He may be clearly seen. Like the revealing of Joseph who was veiled as an Egyptian, it is the unveiling – the revealing of Yeshua as Messiah!

David says (Psalm 39:7-8): "*And now, Lord, for what do I wait? My hope is in You. Deliver me from all my transgressions; make me not the reproach of the foolish.*"

"You shall call His Name Yeshua, for He shall save His people from their sins" – Matthew 1:21.

The Future Messianic Age

(וַיִּקְרָא יַעֲקֹב אֶל-בָּנָיו / *Vayiqra Yaacov el-banayv* / Then Jacob summoned his sons)

Reader 1 Amen.* ¹ Then Jacob summoned his sons and said, "Assemble yourselves that I may tell you what will befall you in the days to come. ² "Gather together and hear, O sons of Jacob; and listen to Israel your father. ³ "REUBEN, you are my firstborn; my might and the beginning of my strength, preeminent in dignity and preeminent in power. ⁴ "Uncontrolled as water, you shall not have preeminence, because you went up to your father's bed; then you defiled it-- he went up to my couch.

Reader 2 Amen.* ⁵ "SIMEON and LEVI are brothers; their swords are implements of violence. ⁶ "Let my soul not enter into their council; let not my glory be united with their assembly; because in their anger they slew men, and in their self-will they lamed oxen. ⁷ "Cursed be their anger, for it is fierce; and their wrath, for it is cruel. I will disperse them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel.

Reader 3 Amen.* ⁸ "Judah, your brothers shall praise you; your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies; your father's sons shall bow down to you. ⁹ "JUDAH is a lion's whelp; from the prey, my son, you have gone up. He couches, he lies down as a lion, and as a lion, who dares rouse him up? ¹⁰ "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until Shiloh comes, and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples. ¹¹ "He ties his foal to the vine, and his donkey's colt to the choice vine; he washes his garments in wine, and his robes in the blood of grapes. ¹² "His eyes are dull from wine, and his teeth white from milk.

Reader 4 Amen.* ¹³ "ZEBULUN will dwell at the seashore; and he shall be a haven for ships, and his flank shall be toward Sidon. ¹⁴ "ISSACHAR is a strong donkey, lying down between the sheepfolds. ¹⁵ "When he saw that a resting place was good and that the land was pleasant, he bowed his shoulder to bear burdens, and became a slave at forced labor.

Reader 5 Amen.* ¹⁶ "DAN shall judge his people, as one of the tribes of Israel. ¹⁷ "Dan shall be a serpent in the way, a horned snake in the path, that bites the horse's heels, so that his rider falls backward. ¹⁸ "For Your salvation I wait, O Yahweh. ¹⁹ "As for GAD, raiders shall raid him, but he will raid at their heels.

Reader 6 Amen.* ²⁰ "As for ASHER, his food shall be rich, and he will yield royal dainties. ²¹ "NAPHTALI is a doe let loose, he gives beautiful words. ²² "JOSEPH is a fruitful bough, a fruitful bough by a spring; its branches run over a wall. ²³ "The archers bitterly attacked him, and shot at him and harassed him; ²⁴ but his bow remained firm, and his arms were agile, from the hands of the Mighty One of Jacob (From there is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel), ²⁵ from the God of your father who helps you, and by the Almighty who blesses you with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lies beneath, blessings of the breasts and of the womb.

Reader 7 Amen.* ²⁶ "The blessings of your father have surpassed the blessings of my ancestors up to the utmost bound of the everlasting hills; may they be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of the one distinguished among his brothers. ²⁷ "BENJAMIN is a ravenous wolf; in the morning he devours the prey, and in the evening he divides the spoil."

Isaiah 43:1-21

Reader 8 Amen.* ¹ But now, thus says Yahweh, your Creator, O Jacob, and He who formed you, O Israel, "Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name; you are Mine! ² "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they will not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be scorched, nor will the flame burn you. ³ "For I am Yahweh your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior; I have given Egypt as your ransom, Cush and Seba in your place. ⁴ "Since you are precious in My sight, since you are honored and I love you, I will give other men in your place and other peoples in exchange for your life. ⁵ "Do not fear, for I am with you; I will bring your offspring from the east, and gather you from the west. ⁶ "I will say to the north, 'Give them up!' And to the south, 'Do not hold them back.' Bring My sons from afar and My daughters from the ends of the earth, ⁷ Everyone who is called by My name, and whom I have created for My glory, whom I have formed, even whom I have made." ⁸ Bring out the people who are blind, even though they have eyes, and the deaf, even though they have ears. ⁹ All the nations have gathered together so that the peoples may be assembled. Who among them

can declare this and proclaim to us the former things? Let them present their witnesses that they may be justified, or let them hear and say, "It is true."

Reader 9 Amen.* ¹⁰ "You are My witnesses," declares Yahweh, "and My servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and believe Me and understand that I am He. Before Me there was no God formed, and there will be none after Me. ¹¹ "I, even I, am Yahweh, and there is no savior besides Me. ¹² "It is I who have declared and saved and proclaimed, and there was no strange god among you; so you are My witnesses," declares Yahweh, "and I am God. ¹³ "Even from eternity I am He, and there is none who can deliver out of My hand; I act and who can reverse it?" ¹⁴ Thus says Yahweh your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, "For your sake I have sent to Babylon, and will bring them all down as fugitives, even the Chaldeans, into the ships in which they rejoice. ¹⁵ "I am Yahweh, your Holy One, the Creator of Israel, your King." ¹⁶ Thus says Yahweh, Who makes a way through the sea and a path through the mighty waters, ¹⁷ Who brings forth the chariot and the horse, the army and the mighty man (They will lie down together and not rise again; they have been quenched and extinguished like a wick): ¹⁸ "Do not call to mind the former things, or ponder things of the past. ¹⁹ "Behold, I will do something new, now it will spring forth; will you not be aware of it? I will even make a roadway in the wilderness, rivers in the desert. ²⁰ "The beasts of the field will glorify Me, the jackals and the ostriches, because I have given waters in the wilderness and rivers in the desert, to give drink to My chosen people. ²¹ "The people whom I formed for Myself will declare My praise.

Psalm 40 *(To be sung.) For the choir director. A Psalm of David.*

¹ I waited patiently for Yahweh; and He inclined to me and heard my cry. ² He brought me up out of the pit of destruction, out of the miry clay, and He set my feet upon a rock making my footsteps firm. ³ He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God; many will see and fear And will trust in Yahweh. ⁴ How blessed is the man who has made Yahweh his trust, and has not turned to the proud, nor to those who lapse into falsehood. ⁵ Many, O Yahweh my God, are the wonders which You have done, and Your thoughts toward us; there is none to compare with You. If I would declare and speak of them, they would be too numerous to count. ⁶ Sacrifice and meal offering You have not desired; my ears You have opened; burnt offering and sin offering You have not required. ⁷ Then I said, "Behold, I come; in the scroll of the book it is written of me. ⁸ I delight to do Your will, O my God; Your Law is within my heart." ⁹ I have proclaimed glad tidings of righteousness in the great congregation; behold, I will not restrain my lips, O Yahweh, You know. ¹⁰ I have not hidden Your righteousness within my heart; I have spoken of Your faithfulness and Your salvation; I have not concealed Your lovingkindness and Your truth from the great congregation. ¹¹ You, O Yahweh, will not withhold Your compassion from me; Your lovingkindness and Your truth will continually preserve me. ¹² For evils beyond number have surrounded me; my iniquities have overtaken me, so that I am not able to see; they are more numerous than the hairs of my head, And my heart has failed me. ¹³ Be pleased, O Yahweh, to deliver me; make haste, O Yahweh, to help me. ¹⁴ Let those be ashamed and humiliated together who seek my life to destroy it; let those be turned back and dishonored who delight in my hurt. ¹⁵ Let those be appalled because of their shame who say to me, "Aha, aha!" ¹⁶ Let all who seek You rejoice and be glad in You; let those who love Your salvation say continually, "Yahweh be magnified!" ¹⁷ Since I am afflicted and needy, let the Lord be mindful of me. You are my help and my deliverer; do not delay, O my God.

John 21:12-19

Reader 10 Amen.* ¹² Yeshua said to them, "Come and have breakfast." None of the disciples ventured to question Him, "Who are You?" knowing that it was the Lord. ¹³ Yeshua came and took the bread and gave it to them, and the fish likewise. ¹⁴ This is now the third time that Yeshua was manifested to the disciples, after He was raised from the dead. ¹⁵ So when they had finished breakfast, Yeshua said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Tend My lambs." ¹⁶ He said to him again a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Shepherd My sheep." ¹⁷ He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." Yeshua said to him, "Tend My sheep. ¹⁸ "Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were younger, you used to gird yourself and walk wherever you wished; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands and someone else will gird you, and bring you where you do not wish to go." ¹⁹ Now this

He said, signifying by what kind of death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, "Follow Me!"

Commentary:

As we come to the end of the Book of Genesis, where we have followed the Messianic line from Adam, we have prophecies of the future Messianic Age.

The twelve sons of Jacob – the twelve tribes of Israel – were chosen by God to be His messengers to the whole world – the “Light of the World.” They would be given the Torah at Mt. Sinai, and be the progenitors of Messiah. None of this was because of any inherent righteousness or ability or greatness of theirs: it was so that God could show His righteousness and strength through their weaknesses.

(V.1) JACOB (the name representing him as natural father) called for his twelve sons and said, “*assemble yourselves, and I will tell you what will (yiqra) call to you in the end of days*” (literal translation). The immediate generation was to be told what their calling would be for the Messianic Age (Last Days).

(V.2) ISRAEL (the name representing him as spiritual father) said, “gather yourselves and listen”. All spiritual descendents should gather to learn of these words to obey them.

REUBEN was the firstborn: with him Jacob’s primary purpose in life should have been carried on. He inherited the natural right to the “lifting of hands” of priesthood, and the authority of kingship. But he was “*impetuous like water*”, making rash decisions, like in the incident of Bilhah. So he lost his birthright to Joseph, he lost his kingship to Judah, and he lost his priesthood to Levi.

We should carefully consider the end of our actions, and our purpose before God; we should avoid making quick, emotional decisions.

Messiah would come through Joseph and Judah-David, not Reuben. Messiah’s priesthood, however, is not through Levi, but goes back to that of the firstborn (Malchi-Tzedek), though not through Reuben. This is why we read in Hebrews 6:20 that Yeshua is a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.

SIMEON and LEVI were comrades in deed. They conspired against Shechem (v.34:25) and against Joseph (v.37:19). Their kinship was based on violence (*Rashbam*). Jacob previously denied knowledge of their plotting (v.34:13), and now, for his descendents, desired no part in their conspiratorial ways. This may be applied to such matters as the spies who slandered Israel (Num 13:4), and the uprising led by Levi’s descendent Korach against Moses and Aaron (Num 16:1). (V.6) “*At their whim they maimed an ox*” may refer to their attempt to unseat Joseph, who is likened to an ox (Deut 33:17). (V.5) “*Their weaponry is a stolen craft*” – from Esau.

Jacob desired the annihilation of their fierce rage and harsh wrath (this curse on their rage is actually a blessing to the brothers). So he prophesied of their separation and dispersion within Israel (v.7). Simeon’s cities were scattered throughout the south of Judah’s territory (Joshua 19:1). Levi was not numbered among the tribes (Num 26:62), though he held the position of priest, and received no territory, but forty-eight cities dispersed among the tribes.

Our anger and wrath does not fulfill the purposes of God. We need to overcome such ways for our own good.

Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God (James 1:19-20). However, this in no way detracts from the righteousness of God’s wrath: we cannot put God under our laws!

JUDAH is a lion cub – who will mature into the lion king. In Messianic prophecy, his brothers will ascribe majesty to him; they will prostrate themselves before him (v.8). “*His hand will be at his enemies’ nape*” was fulfilled in David (2 Samuel 22:41) – “*You have given me the nape of my enemies*”, and will see greater fulfillment in the future when all of Yeshua’s enemies are put under his feet.

(V.10) *“The scepter shall not depart from Judah . . .”* means that Judah will be the tribe providing Israel’s sovereign ruler, from David all the way to Messiah Yeshua; it does not mean that there would always be a Judean king. Judah has had preeminence in leading Israel even in exile and other times when they had no king: Judah led the Sanhedrin even under Roman domination.

The ancient sages, and even most rabbis in modern rabbinic Judaism, see this as referring to the coming King Messiah ben David. Modern rabbinic Judaism has rejected the already-come suffering-servant Messiah ben Joseph. *“To him will be the assemblage of the nations”* (see Isaiah 18:7 and Psalm 76:12), ultimately fulfilling Jacob’s preface – *“gather yourselves and listen”* (v.2).

“He will tie his donkey to the vine” indicates the future abundance of the land, where the vines would be strong enough to restrain one’s animals. So Yeshua’s coming on a donkey represented his proper place of kingship in a prosperous land.

“He will wash his garments in wine” is seen by ancients as a Messianic prophecy concerning the blood of His enemies: (Isaiah 63:1-6) – *Who is this who comes from Edom, with garments of glowing colors from Bozrah, this One who is majestic in His apparel, marching in the greatness of His strength? "It is I who speak in righteousness, mighty to save." Why is Your apparel red, and Your garments like the one who treads in the wine press? "I have trodden the wine trough alone, and from the peoples there was no man with Me. I also trod them in My anger, and trampled them in My wrath; and their lifeblood is sprinkled on My garments, and I stained all My raiment. "For the day of vengeance was in My heart, and My year of redemption has come. "And I looked, and there was no one to help, and I was astonished and there was no one to uphold; so My own arm brought salvation to Me; and My wrath upheld Me. "And I trod down the peoples in My anger, and made them drunk in My wrath, and I poured out their lifeblood on the earth."*

(V.10) *“Nor a scholar . . . until Shiloh arrives”*: Judahites (Jews) are the ones responsible for preserving God’s instruction that we have today. And our only “rabbi” (Matthew 23:8) – Yeshua our ultimate teacher, is a Judahite. Shiloh means *a gift to him*, which the Midrash explains is a reference to King Messiah, to whom all nations will bring gifts.

ZEBULUN and ISSACHAR, the next to be blessed, are not the next of Jacob’s sons in age, but complete the list of sons by Leah. The remaining sons are blessed in birth order.

“DAN will be a serpent on the highway (v.17).” Dan represents the Messianic judge: *“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ”* (2 Corinthians 5:10). We, in this life, are to judge righteously: the quotations that we commonly hear against “judging” are really against “condemning” others (there being several Biblical words that are commonly translated “judge” in various versions).

GAD and ASHER are the two sons by Zilpah, Leah’s handmaid.

Dan (mentioned previously) and NAPHTALI are the two sons by Bilhah, Rachel’s handmaid.

JOSEPH is the only son not mentioned first by name, but as *“a charming son”* (v.22), which is repeated. He is treated as the firstborn insofar as he was given a double portion of inheritance – through Ephraim and Manassah. (He was the firstborn of Jacob’s intended only wife Rachel.) He displayed an upright walk, even in great tribulation; and through him would come the suffering Messiah, to bring righteousness to Israel. [*“A fruitful bough”* - NASB / *“A charming son is Joseph, a charming son to the eye; each of the girls climbed heights to gaze”* - The Chumash - The Stone Edition.]

BENJAMIN is the second son of the beloved Rachel, who died giving birth to him.

Year by Leah - Zilpah ; Rachel - Bilhah

1	Reuven	
2	Shimon	
3	Levi	
4	Yehudah*	Dan

5		Gad	Naphtali
6	Issachar	Asher	
7	Zevulun		Yoseph*
(later)			Binyamin

(V.28) Israel “*blessed each according to his appropriate blessing.*” They were blessed according to their respective spiritual attainment, their ancestors fulfilled their prophesied futures, and their Messianic positions are for us to see.

In the Haftarah, we see an allusion to these blessings: “*When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they will not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be scorched, nor will the flame burn you*” – Isaiah 43:2.

In Psalm 40, Joseph’s life is pictured; ultimately, it is Yeshua’s life that is pictured. “*He brought me up out of the pit of destruction*” (v.2). “*I have not hidden Thy righteousness within my heart; I have spoken of Thy faithfulness and Thy salvation*” (v.10).

In today’s portion, we see the burials of both Jacob and Joseph. In the Apostolic portion, we see the burial of Yeshua. Then, as Jacob said, “*Gather together and hear, O sons of Jacob; and listen to Israel your father*”, so after Yeshua was raised, he said to Peter, “*Follow Me!*”

Our congregation is named “Followers of the Messiah”, and we are to gather to learn Torah, and we are to follow Yeshua.

From Death to Life

(בְּלֹאֵי־אֵלֶּהָ שְׁבֵטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל שְׁנַיִם עָשָׂר) / *Cal-elleh shivtey Yisrael – sh'neyim asar* / All these are the tribes of Israel - twelve)

Reader 1 Amen.* ²⁸ All these are the twelve tribes of Israel, and this is what their father said to them when he blessed them. He blessed them, every one with the blessing appropriate to him. ²⁹ Then he charged them and said to them, "I am about to be gathered to my people; bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite, ³⁰ in the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, which is before Mamre, in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought along with the field from Ephron the Hittite for a burial site. ³¹ "There they buried Abraham and his wife Sarah, there they buried Isaac and his wife Rebekah, and there I buried Leah-- ³² the field and the cave that is in it, purchased from the sons of Heth." ³³ When Jacob finished charging his sons, he drew his feet into the bed and breathed his last, and was gathered to his people.

Reader 2 Amen.* ^{50:1} Then Joseph fell on his father's face, and wept over him and kissed him. ² Joseph commanded his servants the physicians to embalm his father. So the physicians embalmed Israel. ³ Now forty days were required for it, for such is the period required for embalming. And the Egyptians wept for him seventy days. ⁴ When the days of mourning for him were past, Joseph spoke to the household of Pharaoh, saying, "If now I have found favor in your sight, please speak to Pharaoh, saying, ⁵ 'My father made me swear, saying, "Behold, I am about to die; in my grave which I dug for myself in the land of Canaan, there you shall bury me." Now therefore, please let me go up and bury my father; then I will return.'"

Reader 3 Amen.* ⁶ Pharaoh said, "Go up and bury your father, as he made you swear." ⁷ So Joseph went up to bury his father, and with him went up all the servants of Pharaoh, the elders of his household and all the elders of the land of Egypt, ⁸ and all the household of Joseph and his brothers and his father's household; they left only their little ones and their flocks and their herds in the land of Goshen. ⁹ There also went up with him both chariots and horsemen; and it was a very great company.

Reader 4 Amen.* ¹⁰ When they came to the threshing floor of Atad, which is beyond the Jordan, they lamented there with a very great and sorrowful lamentation; and he observed seven days mourning for his father. ¹¹ Now when the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, saw the mourning at the threshing floor of Atad, they said, "This is a grievous mourning for the Egyptians." Therefore it was named Abel-mizraim, which is beyond the Jordan. ¹² Thus his sons did for him as he had charged them; ¹³ for his sons carried him to the land of Canaan and buried him in the cave of the field of Machpelah before Mamre, which Abraham had bought along with the field for a burial site from Ephron the Hittite.

Reader 5 Amen.* ¹⁴ After he had buried his father, Joseph returned to Egypt, he and his brothers, and all who had gone up with him to bury his father. ¹⁵ When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, "What if Joseph bears a grudge against us and pays us back in full for all the wrong which we did to him!" ¹⁶ So they sent a message to Joseph, saying, "Your father charged before he died, saying, ¹⁷ 'Thus you shall say to Joseph, "Please forgive, I beg you, the transgression of your brothers and their sin, for they did you wrong.'" And now, please forgive the transgression of the servants of the God of your father." And Joseph wept when they spoke to him.

Reader 6 Amen.* ¹⁸ Then his brothers also came and fell down before him and said, "Behold, we are your servants." ¹⁹ But Joseph said to them, "Do not be afraid, for am I in God's place? ²⁰ "As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive. ²¹ "So therefore, do not be afraid; I will provide for you and your little ones." So he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.

Reader 7 Amen.* ²² Now Joseph stayed in Egypt, he and his father's household, and Joseph lived one hundred and ten years. ²³ Joseph saw the third generation of Ephraim's sons; also the sons of Machir, the son of Manasseh, were born on Joseph's knees. ²⁴ Joseph said to his brothers, "I am about to die, but God will surely take care of you and bring you up from this land to the land which He promised on oath to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob." ²⁵ Then Joseph made the sons of Israel swear, saying, "God will surely

take care of you, and you shall carry my bones up from here." ²⁶ So Joseph died at the age of one hundred and ten years; and he was embalmed and placed in a coffin in Egypt.

Zechariah 14:1-21

Reader 8 Amen.* ¹ Behold, a day is coming for Yahweh when the spoil taken from you will be divided among you. ² For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city will be captured, the houses plundered, the women ravished and half of the city exiled, but the rest of the people will not be cut off from the city. ³ Then Yahweh will go forth and fight against those nations, as when He fights on a day of battle. ⁴ In that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south. ⁵ You will flee by the valley of My mountains, for the valley of the mountains will reach to Azel; yes, you will flee just as you fled before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then Yahweh, my God, will come, and all the holy ones with Him! ⁶ In that day there will be no light; the luminaries will dwindle.

Reader 9 Amen.* ⁷ For it will be a unique day which is known to Yahweh, neither day nor night, but it will come about that at evening time there will be light. ⁸ And in that day living waters will flow out of Jerusalem, half of them toward the eastern sea and the other half toward the western sea; it will be in summer as well as in winter. ⁹ And Yahweh will be king over all the earth; in that day Yahweh will be the only one, and His name the only one. ¹⁰ All the land will be changed into a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem; but Jerusalem will rise and remain on its site from Benjamin's Gate as far as the place of the First Gate to the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Hananel to the king's wine presses. ¹¹ People will live in it, and there will no longer be a curse, for Jerusalem will dwell in security.

Reader 10 Amen.* ¹² Now this will be the plague with which Yahweh will strike all the peoples who have gone to war against Jerusalem; their flesh will rot while they stand on their feet, and their eyes will rot in their sockets, and their tongue will rot in their mouth. ¹³ It will come about in that day that a great panic from Yahweh will fall on them; and they will seize one another's hand, and the hand of one will be lifted against the hand of another. ¹⁴ Judah also will fight at Jerusalem; and the wealth of all the surrounding nations will be gathered, gold and silver and garments in great abundance. ¹⁵ So also like this plague will be the plague on the horse, the mule, the camel, the donkey and all the cattle that will be in those camps.

Reader 11 Amen.* ¹⁶ Then it will come about that any who are left of all the nations that went against Jerusalem will go up from year to year to worship the King, Yahweh of hosts, and to celebrate the Feast of Booths. ¹⁷ And it will be that whichever of the families of the earth does not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, Yahweh of hosts, there will be no rain on them. ¹⁸ If the family of Egypt does not go up or enter, then no rain will fall on them; it will be the plague with which Yahweh smites the nations who do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Booths. ¹⁹ This will be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all the nations who do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Booths. ²⁰ In that day there will be inscribed on the bells of the horses, "Holy to Yahweh." And the cooking pots in Yahweh's house will be like the bowls before the altar. ²¹ Every cooking pot in Jerusalem and in Judah will be holy to Yahweh of hosts; and all who sacrifice will come and take of them and boil in them. And there will no longer be a Canaanite in the house of Yahweh of hosts in that day.

Micah 2:12

Reader 12 Amen.* ¹² "I will surely assemble all of you, Jacob, I will surely gather the remnant of Israel. I will put them together like sheep in the fold; like a flock in the midst of its pasture they will be noisy with men.

John 19:39 – 20:9

Reader 13 Amen.* ³⁹ Nicodemus, who had first come to Him by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds weight. ⁴⁰ So they took the body of Yeshua and bound it in linen wrappings with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews. ⁴¹ Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid. ⁴² Therefore because of the Jewish day of preparation, since the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

Reader 14 Amen.* ^{20:1} Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came early to the tomb, while it was still dark, and saw the stone already taken away from the tomb. ² So she ran and came to Simon Peter

and to the other disciple whom Yeshua loved, and said to them, "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him." ³ So Peter and the other disciple went forth, and they were going to the tomb. ⁴ The two were running together; and the other disciple ran ahead faster than Peter and came to the tomb first; ⁵ and stooping and looking in, he saw the linen wrappings lying there; but he did not go in. ⁶ And so Simon Peter also came, following him, and entered the tomb; and he saw the linen wrappings lying there, ⁷ and the face-cloth which had been on His head, not lying with the linen wrappings, but rolled up in a place by itself. ⁸ So the other disciple who had first come to the tomb then also entered, and he saw and believed. ⁹ For as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead.

Commentary:

Genesis:

Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca, and Jacob, were all buried in the same cave in Canaan – in the field of Machpelah. Joseph was buried temporarily in Egypt, to be carried to Canaan when his family was restored to the Promised Land.

Jacob died at 147, in the year AM 2255. Joseph died at 110, in the year 2309. Joseph lived 54 years after his father died. This is the time period covered in this Torah portion. The restoration to Canaan would be 179 years later – 400 years after the birth of Isaac. [For explanation see *Sequence of Events in the Old Testament* by Eliezer Shulman, page 61.]

Zechariah:

"*A day for Yahweh*" (v.1) is different wording than "*the Day of Yahweh*" (Isaiah 13:6, Joel 1:15, etc.) but may refer to the same time. It may be noted that "*the Day of Yahweh*" (*the Day of the Lord* or *the Lord's Day*) has always meant the Sabbath to Hebrews – both the weekly Sabbath and the Millennial Sabbath. When John said that he was "*in the spirit on the Lord's Day*" (Revelation 1:10), he had never heard of that term meaning Sunday.

Here we find some details about the final return of God's people to Canaan. The times are what we call the tribulation time and the thousand-year reign of Messiah – the Sabbath Millennium.

In the future, there will be a seven-year period that will end with much of this world's people being killed (Revelation 6-9). Then Yeshua will reign on this earth for a thousand years. Afterwards, the earth will be renewed by fire, and Eden / Paradise will be restored on the earth.

We need to know about these things, because this is our God-given preparation time for that Great Sabbath!

Let us consider the heritage of Jacob.

"If because of the Sabbath, you turn your foot from doing your own pleasure on My Holy Day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the Holy Day of Yahweh honorable, and honor it, desisting from your own ways, from seeking your own pleasure and speaking your own word, then you will take delight in Yahweh, and I will make you ride on the heights of the earth; and I will feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father, for the mouth of Yahweh has spoken" – Isaiah 58:13-14.

Today, many people find the Sabbath "happening" while they are doing their own thing in life. It may come upon them while they are still busy with their usual endeavors. They may make some effort to attend a Sabbath service. They may use the day to rest-up from a week of over-working.

But those who take God's Word seriously use the week to prepare for the anticipated Sabbath. A while before sundown on Friday, they stop other endeavors to make final preparations for the Holy Day. The "Lord's Day" does not catch them unawares. This is the day to set aside our mundane work in order to focus on the worship of our creator, including taking part in a public worship service. Necessary work, such as food preparation, is minimized by preparing ahead.

“But be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what time of the night the thief was coming, he would have been on the alert and would not have allowed his house to be broken into. For this reason you also must be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think He will. Who then is the faithful and sensible slave whom his master put in charge of his household to give them their food at the proper time? Blessed is that slave whom his master finds so doing when he comes. Truly I say to you that he will put him in charge of all his possessions.” – Matthew 24:43-47.

So it is with the coming Great Sabbath. Many people will find Yeshua returning while they are doing their own thing in life. They may occasionally take time out to worship God. They may look forward to a rest from their troubles of this life.

But those who are truly looking forward to dwelling with Messiah in righteousness use this time to prepare for the coming millennium – which will, for them, extend to eternity. This is the time to “overcome,” the time to “grow in grace and knowledge.” This is the time to “store up treasures” for eternity.

“To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God” – Revelation 2:7.

“You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard so that you are not carried away by the error of unprincipled men and fall from your own steadfastness, but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Yeshua the Messiah. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen” – 2 Peter 3:17-18.

“But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal, for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” – Matthew 6:20-21.

(V.1) *“Behold, a day is coming for Yahweh when the spoil taken from you will be divided among you.”* The enemy is stealing from us – believers – every day. But God is going to restore everything to us. We will soon be studying the Passover in Egypt: then we will see the prophetic example, how that what was stolen from Israel by the Egyptians was returned upon their leaving Egypt, and Israel “plundered” the Egyptians who had kept them in slavery (Exodus 12:36).

(V.3) On Erev Shabbat – that is just preceding the Sabbath millennium – the last fires of the week will be lit. Yahweh will go forth and fight the nations.

(V.4-5) Yeshua, coming in the Name of Yahweh, will set His feet on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem from the east. The mountain will split, and a valley created for Israel to flee east. The valley will stretch to the tenth mountain, which going east, is Mount Azazel, where the “scapegoat” was cast over on Yom haKippurim / the Day of the Atonements. Looking down to the south from Mount Azazel, one sees the Dead Sea, which was annually the Lake of Fire.

(V.9) Then Yeshua, in the Name of Yahweh, will become King over All the Earth.

Those who fought against Jerusalem will experience a hideous curse (v.12). The remainder of gentiles will be required to go up annually to Jerusalem for Hag Sukkot / the Feast of Tabernacles, or they will be under a curse (v.17).

(V.20) In that day, Jerusalem will experience true holiness.

John 19-20:

Yeshua was offered for sin, and buried on the Preparation Day for the Passover – Wednesday before sunset. Three days and three nights later, fulfilling Jonah’s prophecy (Matthew 12:40) and Yeshua’s parable (Matthew 12:11), He was raised and left a sealed tomb at the end of a weekly Sabbath.

Before Queen Easter, the Sun Goddess, rose in the morning – before sunrise, some followers came to the tomb, and He was gone. “*For as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead*” – (v.9). Likewise, people today generally do not understand the Scripture.

On the third day – three millenniums after the Holy Temple was destroyed, Yeshua will raise it up! It was destroyed at the end of the fourth millennium, so we may expect the Sabbath Millennium to begin soon, with the eternal Temple to follow on a renewed earth. The Holy Temple represents Yeshua (John 2:19, Revelation 21:22). It was destroyed for failure to represent Him – those who “ministered” there denied Yeshua.

In today’s Torah portion, we see the burials of both Jacob and Joseph. In the Apostolic portion, we see the burial of Yeshua. Then, as Jacob said, “*Gather together and hear, O sons of Jacob; and listen to Israel your father*”, so after Yeshua was raised, he said to Peter, “*Follow Me!*”

Our congregation is named “Followers of the Messiah”, and we are to gather to learn Torah, and we are to follow Yeshua.

(וְאֵלֶּה שְׁמוֹת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל) / *V'elleh shemot beney Yisrael* / And these are the names of the Children of Israel)

Reader 1* Amen. ¹ Now these are the names of the sons of Israel who came to Egypt with Jacob; they came each one with his household: ² Reuben, Simeon, Levi and Judah; ³ Issachar, Zebulun and Benjamin; ⁴ Dan and Naphtali, Gad and Asher. ⁵ All the persons who came from the loins of Jacob were seventy in number, but Joseph was already in Egypt. ⁶ Joseph died, and all his brothers and all that generation. ⁷ But the sons of Israel were fruitful and increased greatly, and multiplied, and became exceedingly mighty, so that the land was filled with them.

Reader 2* Amen. ⁸ Now a new king arose over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. ⁹ He said to his people, "Behold, the people of the sons of Israel are more and mightier than we. ¹⁰ "Come, let us deal wisely with them, or else they will multiply and in the event of war, they will also join themselves to those who hate us, and fight against us and depart from the land." ¹¹ So they appointed taskmasters over them to afflict them with hard labor. And they built for Pharaoh storage cities, Pithom and Raamses. ¹² But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and the more they spread out, so that they were in dread of the sons of Israel. ¹³ The Egyptians compelled the sons of Israel to labor rigorously; ¹⁴ and they made their lives bitter with hard labor in mortar and bricks and at all kinds of labor in the field, all their labors which they rigorously imposed on them.

Reader 3* Amen. ¹⁵ Then the king of Egypt spoke to the Hebrew midwives, one of whom was named Shiprah and the other was named Puah; ¹⁶ and he said, "When you are helping the Hebrew women to give birth and see them upon the birthstool, if it is a son, then you shall put him to death; but if it is a daughter, then she shall live." ¹⁷ But the midwives feared God, and did not do as the king of Egypt had commanded them, but let the boys live. ¹⁸ So the king of Egypt called for the midwives and said to them, "Why have you done this thing, and let the boys live?" ¹⁹ The midwives said to Pharaoh, "Because the Hebrew women are not as the Egyptian women; for they are vigorous and give birth before the midwife can get to them." ²⁰ So God was good to the midwives, and the people multiplied, and became very mighty.

Reader 4* Amen. ²¹ Because the midwives feared God, He established households for them. ²² Then Pharaoh commanded all his people, saying, "Every son who is born you are to cast into the Nile, and every daughter you are to keep alive."

^{2:1} Now a man from the house of Levi went and married a daughter of Levi. ² The woman conceived and bore a son; and when she saw that he was beautiful, she hid him for three months. ³ But when she could hide him no longer, she got him a wicker basket and covered it over with tar and pitch. Then she put the child into it and set it among the reeds by the bank of the Nile. ⁴ His sister stood at a distance to find out what would happen to him.

Reader 5* Amen. ⁵ The daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the Nile, with her maidens walking alongside the Nile; and she saw the basket among the reeds and sent her maid, and she brought it to her. ⁶ When she opened it, she saw the child, and behold, the boy was crying. And she had pity on him and said, "This is one of the Hebrews' children." ⁷ Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and call a nurse for you from the Hebrew women that she may nurse the child for you?" ⁸ Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Go ahead." So the girl went and called the child's mother. ⁹ Then Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this child away and nurse him for me and I will give you your wages." So the woman took the child and nursed him. ¹⁰ The child grew, and she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter and he became her son. And she named him Moses, and said, "Because I drew him out of the water."

Reader 6* Amen. ¹¹ Now it came about in those days, when Moses had grown up, that he went out to his brethren and looked on their hard labors; and he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his brethren. ¹² So he looked this way and that, and when he saw there was no one around, he struck down the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. ¹³ He went out the next day, and behold, two Hebrews were fighting with each other; and he said to the offender, "Why are you striking your companion?" ¹⁴ But he said, "Who made you a prince or a judge over us? Are you intending to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?" Then Moses was afraid and said, "Surely the matter has become known." ¹⁵ When Pharaoh heard of this matter, he tried to

kill Moses. But Moses fled from the presence of Pharaoh and settled in the land of Midian, and he sat down by a well.

Reader 7 Amen.* ¹⁶ Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters; and they came to draw water and filled the troughs to water their father's flock. ¹⁷ Then the shepherds came and drove them away, but Moses stood up and helped them and watered their flock. ¹⁸ When they came to Reuel their father, he said, "Why have you come back so soon today?" ¹⁹ So they said, "An Egyptian delivered us from the hand of the shepherds, and what is more, he even drew the water for us and watered the flock." ²⁰ He said to his daughters, "Where is he then? Why is it that you have left the man behind? Invite him to have something to eat." ²¹ Moses was willing to dwell with the man, and he gave his daughter Zipporah to Moses. ²² Then she gave birth to a son, and he named him Gershom, for he said, "I have been a sojourner in a foreign land." ²³ Now it came about in the course of those many days that the king of Egypt died. And the sons of Israel sighed because of the bondage, and they cried out; and their cry for help because of their bondage rose up to God. ²⁴ So God heard their groaning; and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. ²⁵ God saw the sons of Israel, and God took notice of them.

Isaiah 27:6

Reader 8 Amen.* In the days to come Jacob will take root, Israel will blossom and sprout; and they will fill the whole world with fruit.

Jeremiah 1:1-19

Reader 9 Amen.* ¹ The words of Jeremiah the son of Hilkiah, of the priests who were in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin, ² to whom the word of Yahweh came in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah, in the thirteenth year of his reign. ³ It came also in the days of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, until the end of the eleventh year of Zedekiah the son of Josiah, king of Judah, until the exile of Jerusalem in the fifth month. ⁴ Now the word of Yahweh came to me saying, ⁵ "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations." ⁶ Then I said, "Alas, Lord Yahweh! Behold, I do not know how to speak, because I am a youth." ⁷ But Yahweh said to me, "Do not say, 'I am a youth,' because everywhere I send you, you shall go, and all that I command you, you shall speak. ⁸ "Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you," declares Yahweh. ⁹ Then Yahweh stretched out His hand and touched my mouth, and Yahweh said to me, "Behold, I have put My words in your mouth. ¹⁰ "See, I have appointed you this day over the nations and over the kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant."

Reader 10 Amen.* ¹¹ The word of Yahweh came to me saying, "What do you see, Jeremiah?" And I said, "I see a rod of an almond tree." ¹² Then Yahweh said to me, "You have seen well, for I am watching over My word to perform it." ¹³ The word of Yahweh came to me a second time saying, "What do you see?" And I said, "I see a boiling pot, facing away from the north." ¹⁴ Then Yahweh said to me, "Out of the north the evil will break forth on all the inhabitants of the land. ¹⁵ "For, behold, I am calling all the families of the kingdoms of the north," declares Yahweh; "and they will come and they will set each one his throne at the entrance of the gates of Jerusalem, and against all its walls round about and against all the cities of Judah. ¹⁶ "I will pronounce My judgments on them concerning all their wickedness, whereby they have forsaken Me and have offered sacrifices to other gods, and worshiped the works of their own hands. ¹⁷ "Now, gird up your loins and arise, and speak to them all which I command you. Do not be dismayed before them, or I will dismay you before them. ¹⁸ "Now behold, I have made you today as a fortified city and as a pillar of iron and as walls of bronze against the whole land, to the kings of Judah, to its princes, to its priests and to the people of the land. ¹⁹ "They will fight against you, but they will not overcome you, for I am with you to deliver you," declares Yahweh.

Ezekiel 16:1-20

Reader 11 Amen.* ¹ Then the word of Yahweh came to me, saying, ² "Son of man, make known to Jerusalem her abominations ³ and say, 'Thus says Lord Yahweh to Jerusalem, "Your origin and your birth are from the land of the Canaanite, your father was an Amorite and your mother a Hittite. ⁴ As for your birth, on the day you were born your navel cord was not cut, nor were you washed with water for cleansing; you were not rubbed with salt or even wrapped in cloths. ⁵ No eye looked with pity on you to do any of these things for you, to have compassion on you. Rather you were thrown out into the open field, for you were abhorred on the day you were born. ⁶ When I passed by you and saw you squirming in your blood, I said to you while you were in your blood, 'Live!' Yes, I said to you while you were in your blood, 'Live!' ⁷ I

made you numerous like plants of the field. Then you grew up, became tall and reached the age for fine ornaments; your breasts were formed and your hair had grown. Yet you were naked and bare. *Reader 12* Amen.* ⁸ Then I passed by you and saw you, and behold, you were at the time for love; so I spread My skirt over you and covered your nakedness. I also swore to you and entered into a covenant with you so that you became Mine," declares Lord Yahweh. ⁹ "Then I bathed you with water, washed off your blood from you and anointed you with oil. ¹⁰ I also clothed you with embroidered cloth and put sandals of porpoise skin on your feet; and I wrapped you with fine linen and covered you with silk. ¹¹ I adorned you with ornaments, put bracelets on your hands and a necklace around your neck. ¹² I also put a ring in your nostril, earrings in your ears and a beautiful crown on your head. ¹³ Thus you were adorned with gold and silver, and your dress was of fine linen, silk and embroidered cloth. You ate fine flour, honey and oil; so you were exceedingly beautiful and advanced to royalty. ¹⁴ Then your fame went forth among the nations on account of your beauty, for it was perfect because of My splendor which I bestowed on you," declares Lord Yahweh.

Reader 13 Amen.* ¹⁵ "But you trusted in your beauty and played the harlot because of your fame, and you poured out your harlotries on every passer-by who might be willing. ¹⁶ You took some of your clothes, made for yourself high places of various colors and played the harlot on them, which should never come about nor happen. ¹⁷ You also took your beautiful jewels made of My gold and of My silver, which I had given you, and made for yourself male images that you might play the harlot with them. ¹⁸ Then you took your embroidered cloth and covered them, and offered My oil and My incense before them. ¹⁹ Also My bread which I gave you, fine flour, oil and honey with which I fed you, you would offer before them for a soothing aroma; so it happened," declares Lord Yahweh. ²⁰ "Moreover, you took your sons and daughters whom you had borne to Me and sacrificed them to idols to be devoured. Were your harlotries so small a matter?" ' ' "

Psalm 41 *(To be sung.) For the choir director. A Psalm of David.*

¹ How blessed is he who considers the helpless; Yahweh will deliver him in a day of trouble. ² Yahweh will protect him and keep him alive, and he shall be called blessed upon the earth; and do not give him over to the desire of his enemies. ³ Yahweh will sustain him upon his sickbed; in his illness, You restore him to health. ⁴ As for me, I said, "O Yahweh, be gracious to me; heal my soul, for I have sinned against You." ⁵ My enemies speak evil against me, "When will he die, and his name perish?" ⁶ And when he comes to see me, he speaks falsehood; his heart gathers wickedness to itself; when he goes outside, he tells it. ⁷ All who hate me whisper together against me; against me they devise my hurt, saying, ⁸ "A wicked thing is poured out upon him, that when he lies down, he will not rise up again." ⁹ Even my close friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted up his heel against me. ¹⁰ But You, O Yahweh, be gracious to me and raise me up, that I may repay them. ¹¹ By this I know that You are pleased with me, because my enemy does not shout in triumph over me. ¹² As for me, You uphold me in my integrity, and You set me in Your presence forever. ¹³ Blessed be Yahweh, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. Amen and Amen.

2 Corinthians 6:1-10

Reader 14 Amen.* ¹ And working together with Him, we also urge you not to receive the grace of God in vain-- ² for He says, "At the acceptable time I listened to you, and on the day of salvation I helped you." Behold, now is "the acceptable time," behold, now is "the day of salvation" -- ³ giving no cause for offense in anything, so that the ministry will not be discredited, ⁴ but in everything commending ourselves as servants of God, in much endurance, in afflictions, in hardships, in distresses, ⁵ in beatings, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in hunger, ⁶ in purity, in knowledge, in patience, in kindness, in the Holy Spirit, in genuine love, ⁷ in the word of truth, in the power of God; by the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and the left, ⁸ by glory and dishonor, by evil report and good report; regarded as deceivers and yet true; ⁹ as unknown yet well-known, as dying yet behold, we live; as punished yet not put to death, ¹⁰ as sorrowful yet always rejoicing, as poor yet making many rich, as having nothing yet possessing all things.

Commentary:

(V.1-7) God chose something small – the twelve sons of Jacob who became seventy descendents – and made something “exceedingly mighty” out of it – the Hebrews “filled the land,” even though their lives were very difficult in slavery. Is this not a clear picture of His church, from its beginning? As the Hebrews

were delivered from Egyptian bondage through Moses, so we will be delivered from this world of sin through Yeshua.

“These are the names”: -Meaning to mother, to Israel, to Messiah-

Reuben – “Behold, a son!”

“Behold, . . . the Son of Man” – Acts 7:56.

Simeon – “Hear!” (From “Sh’ma” – obey.)

“Every soul that does not hear that prophet (Yeshua) shall be utterly destroyed from among the people”

– Acts 3:23.

Levi – “Attachment”

“Use your freedom . . . as bond-servants of God” – 1 Peter 2:16.

Judah – “Praisers of Yahweh”

“If these (praisers of Yeshua) become silent, the stones will cry out!” – Luke 19:40.

Issachar – “Hired One”

“Make me as one of your hired men” – Luke 15:19.

Zebulun – “Haven of the Sea”

“Do not harm the earth or the sea . . . until we have sealed the bond-servants of our God” –

Revelation 7:3.

Benjamin – “Son of My Right Hand”

“Messiah Yeshua, who is at the right hand of God” – 1 Peter 3:22.

Dan – “Judge”

“Behold, the Judge is standing right at the door” – James 5:9.

Naphtali – “My Wrestling”

“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places”

– Ephesians 6:12

Gad – “Fortune”

“For Yahweh their God will care for them And restore their fortune” – Zephaniah 2:7.

Asher – “Happiness”

“Happy is he who does not condemn himself” – Romans 14:22.

Joseph – “Increase”, the one who was already in Egypt, who would receive a double portion.

“He must increase, but I must decrease” John 3:30.

“May the Lord cause you to increase and abound in love for one another” – 1 Thessalonians 3:12.

Time frame:

The 400-year Egyptian exile is counted from the birth of Isaac in AM 2048, to the exodus in AM 2448.

Jacob’s family went down to Egypt, during the famine, in AM 2238. Moses was born in AM 2366 – 318 years into the exile. Today’s portion covers almost 200 years, late in the 400-year exile.

(V.6) And Joseph died, and all his brothers and all that generation.

¹³ *All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.* ¹⁴ *For those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a country of their own.* ¹⁵ *And indeed if they had been thinking of that country from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return.* ¹⁶ *But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them.*

– Hebrews 11:13-16.

In verses 8-11, we see a forerunner to Hitler’s “final solution”. The Pharaoh didn’t want to lose the benefits of Hebrew labor, but he wanted to make certain that the Hebrew’s couldn’t become a power against his authority. His first stage was to commit them to hard forced labor. When they only increased more rapidly, he ordered the midwives to kill any boys as they were born. When that failed, his third stage was to have every baby boy cast into the Nile – that is, given to their major god. Perhaps this appeasement of their god would make this plan work?

Today, we tend to be caught up in the work that the world requires of us in order for us to live like our neighbors, to the extent that spiritual growth is left out. When that fails to stop us, our children are offered to the idols of sin. But God will prevail in bringing His sheep out of Egypt.

The Haftarah fits here: *In the days to come Jacob will take root, Israel will blossom and sprout; and they will fill the whole world with fruit (Isaiah 27:6).*

For several chapters of Genesis, we saw how Joseph prophetically pictured Yeshua. Now we will see how Moses takes up the prophetic picturing. (We say that Moses was a prophetic type – he typified Yeshua.)

As a baby, Moses lived to fulfill God’s plan, though the Pharaoh of Egypt had ordered all the sons of Israel to be killed at birth. Moses was raised in an Egyptian household.

Likewise Yeshua, as a baby, lived to fulfill God’s plan, though King Herod ordered that all the male children around Bethlehem be killed. Yeshua was secreted away to Egypt.

God called Moses out of Egypt (v.3:10). God said of Yeshua, “Out of Egypt have I called My Son” (Matthew 2:15).

(Chapter 2) Moses means “drawn from water”, yet Moses was not allowed to enter Canaan because of a sin involving water!

And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, "Take the rod; and you and your brother Aaron assemble the congregation and speak to the rock before their eyes, that it may yield its water. You shall thus bring forth water for them out of the rock and let the congregation and their beasts drink." So Moses took the rod from before Yahweh, just as He had commanded him; and Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly before the rock. And he said to them, "Listen now, you rebels; shall we bring forth water for you out of this rock?" Then Moses lifted up his hand and struck the rock twice with his rod; and water came forth abundantly, and the congregation and their beasts drank. But Yahweh said to Moses and Aaron, "Because you have not believed Me, to treat Me as holy in the sight of the sons of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them." (Numbers 20:7-12)

At the end of this chapter, we read familiar words: “Elohim zachar” – the Creator-Judge remembered – He remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This does not imply that God forgets, as a man does, but that now the time had come for Him to act upon His promise.

We presently live in exile in “Egypt”, the world of sin. But we are partakers of the Abrahamic Covenant (Ephesians 2:12-3:9). Therefore, we are to look forward to, and prepare for, the heavenly city, which will come down to a renewed earth. There Yeshua will dwell with us.

Psalms 41 readily fits both Moses and Yeshua: (v.1-2) *How blessed is he who considers the helpless; Yahweh will deliver him in a day of trouble. Yahweh will protect him, and keep him alive, and he shall be called blessed upon the earth.* Moses was willing to give his life for God’s helpless people; Yeshua did.

Paul quotes God, saying, (2 Corinthians 6:2) *“At the acceptable time I listened to you, and on the day of salvation I helped you”; behold, now is “the acceptable time,” behold, now is “the day of salvation.” (V.4) In everything commending ourselves as servants of God, in much endurance, in afflictions, in hardships, in distresses . . .*

Moses was coming to “the day of salvation” – this is the prelude to the Passover. This was his “acceptable time”. He would have to endure afflictions and hardships.

This is our “day of salvation”. Now is “the acceptable time”. We must learn to serve God, though it be through affliction and hardship. We must be willing to give up the “pleasures of sin for a season” and hold the ultimate goal before us.

We should maintain purity, the Word of Truth, and genuine love (v.6-7). Maintaining purity is about being holy to God – separated from the world for His service. The Word of Truth is not subject to “private interpretation” (1 Peter 1:20): not denominational dogma or personal feelings; we must seek the historical truth. Genuine love is not just being lovey-dovey, condoning freedom-of-choice, one-religion-is-as-good-as-another, or accepting false worship “to gain converts”; it is doing what will lead others toward Godliness, to repentance from dead works, and faith in the Living God (Hebrews 6:1).

Who defines God?

(וּמֹשֶׁה הָיָה רֹעֵה אֶת-צֹאֵן) / *uMoshe hayah ro'eh et-zen* / Now Moses was pasturing the flock)

Reader 1 Amen.* ¹ Now Moses was pasturing the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian; and he led the flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. ² The angel of Yahweh appeared to him in a blazing fire from the midst of a bush; and he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, yet the bush was not consumed. ³ So Moses said, "I must turn aside now and see this marvelous sight, why the bush is not burned up."

Reader 2 Amen.* ⁴ When Yahweh saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." ⁵ Then He said, "Do not come near here; remove your sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." ⁶ He said also, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." Then Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God. ⁷ Yahweh said, "I have surely seen the affliction of My people who are in Egypt, and have given heed to their cry because of their taskmasters, for I am aware of their sufferings. ⁸ "So I have come down to deliver them from the power of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and spacious land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanite and the Hittite and the Amorite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite. ⁹ "Now, behold, the cry of the sons of Israel has come to Me; furthermore, I have seen the oppression with which the Egyptians are oppressing them.

Reader 3 Amen.* ¹⁰ "Therefore, come now, and I will send you to Pharaoh, so that you may bring My people, the sons of Israel, out of Egypt." ¹¹ But Moses said to God, "Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the sons of Israel out of Egypt?" ¹² And He said, "Certainly I will be with you, and this shall be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God at this mountain." ¹³ Then Moses said to God, "Behold, I am going to the sons of Israel, and I will say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you.' Now they may say to me, 'What is His name?' What shall I say to them?" ¹⁴ God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM"; and He said, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'" ¹⁵ God, furthermore, said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'Yahweh, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.' This is My name forever, and this is My memorial-name to all generations.

Reader 4 Amen.* ¹⁶ "Go and gather the elders of Israel together and say to them, 'Yahweh, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, has appeared to me, saying, "I am indeed concerned about you and what has been done to you in Egypt. ¹⁷ "So I said, I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to the land of the Canaanite and the Hittite and the Amorite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite, to a land flowing with milk and honey.'" ¹⁸ "They will pay heed to what you say; and you with the elders of Israel will come to the king of Egypt and you will say to him, 'Yahweh, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us. So now, please, let us go a three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to Yahweh our God.' ¹⁹ "But I know that the king of Egypt will not permit you to go, except under compulsion. ²⁰ "So I will stretch out My hand and strike Egypt with all My miracles which I shall do in the midst of it; and after that he will let you go. ²¹ "I will grant this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians; and it shall be that when you go, you will not go empty-handed. ²² "But every woman shall ask of her neighbor and the woman who lives in her house, articles of silver and articles of gold, and clothing; and you will put them on your sons and daughters. Thus you will plunder the Egyptians."

Reader 5 Amen.* ^{4:1} Then Moses said, "What if they will not believe me or listen to what I say? For they may say, 'Yahweh has not appeared to you.'" ² Yahweh said to him, "What is that in your hand?" And he said, "A staff." ³ Then He said, "Throw it on the ground." So he threw it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from it. ⁴ But Yahweh said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand and grasp it by its tail"-- so he stretched out his hand and caught it, and it became a staff in his hand-- ⁵ "that they may believe that Yahweh, the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you."

Reader 6 Amen.* ⁶ Yahweh furthermore said to him, "Now put your hand into your bosom." So he put his hand into his bosom, and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous like snow. ⁷ Then He said, "Put your hand into your bosom again." So he put his hand into his bosom again, and when he took it out of his bosom, behold, it was restored like the rest of his flesh. ⁸ "If they will not believe you or heed the witness of the first sign, they may believe the witness of the last sign." ⁹ "But if they will not believe even these two signs or heed what you say, then you shall take some water from the Nile and pour it on the dry ground; and the water which you take from the Nile will become blood on the dry ground."

Reader 7 Amen.* ¹⁰ Then Moses said to Yahweh, "Please, Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither recently nor in time past, nor since You have spoken to Your servant; for I am slow of speech and slow of tongue." ¹¹ Yahweh said to him, "Who has made man's mouth? Or who makes him mute or deaf, or seeing or blind? Is it not I, Yahweh?" ¹² "Now then go, and I, even I, will be with your mouth, and teach you what you are to say." ¹³ But he said, "Please, Lord, now send the message by whomever You will." ¹⁴ Then the anger of Yahweh burned against Moses, and He said, "Is there not your brother Aaron the Levite? I know that he speaks fluently. And moreover, behold, he is coming out to meet you; when he sees you, he will be glad in his heart. ¹⁵ "You are to speak to him and put the words in his mouth; and I, even I, will be with your mouth and his mouth, and I will teach you what you are to do. ¹⁶ "Moreover, he shall speak for you to the people; and he will be as a mouth for you and you will be as God to him. ¹⁷ "You shall take in your hand this staff, with which you shall perform the signs."

Isaiah 49:11-19

Reader 8 Amen.* ¹¹ "I will make all My mountains a road, and My highways will be raised up. ¹² "Behold, these will come from afar; and lo, these will come from the north and from the west, and these from the land of Sinim." ¹³ Shout for joy, O heavens! And rejoice, O earth! Break forth into joyful shouting, O mountains! For Yahweh has comforted His people and will have compassion on His afflicted. ¹⁴ But Zion said, "Yahweh has forsaken me, and Yahweh has forgotten me." ¹⁵ "Can a woman forget her nursing child and have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, but I will not forget you. ¹⁶ "Behold, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands; your walls are continually before Me. ¹⁷ "Your builders hurry; your destroyers and devastators will depart from you. ¹⁸ "Lift up your eyes and look around; all of them gather together, they come to you. As I live," declares Yahweh, "you will surely put on all of them as jewels and bind them on as a bride. ¹⁹ "For your waste and desolate places and your destroyed land – surely now you will be too cramped for the inhabitants, and those who swallowed you will be far away."

1 Kings 20:8 (1-30)

Reader 9 Amen.* And all the elders and all the people said to him, "Do not listen or consent."

Psalm 42 *(To be sung.) For the choir director. A Maskil of the sons of Korah.*

¹ As the deer pants for the water brooks, so my soul pants for You, O God. ² My soul thirsts for God, for the living God; when shall I come and appear before God? ³ My tears have been my food day and night, while they say to me all day long, "Where is your God?" ⁴ These things I remember and I pour out my soul within me. For I used to go along with the throng and lead them in procession to the house of God, with the voice of joy and thanksgiving, a multitude keeping festival. ⁵ Why are you in despair, O my soul? And why have you become disturbed within me? Hope in God, for I shall again praise Him for the help of His presence. ⁶ O my God, my soul is in despair within me; therefore I remember You from the land of the Jordan and the peaks of Hermon, from Mount Mizar. ⁷ Deep calls to deep at the sound of Your waterfalls; all Your breakers and Your waves have rolled over me. ⁸ Yahweh will command His lovingkindness in the daytime; and His song will be with me in the night, a prayer to the God of my life. ⁹ I will say to God my rock, "Why have You forgotten me? Why do I go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?" ¹⁰ As a shattering of my bones, my adversaries revile me, while they say to me all day long, "Where is your God?" ¹¹ Why are you in despair, O my soul? And why have you become disturbed within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him, the help of my countenance and my God.

Romans 9:1 – 10:1

Reader 10 Amen.* ¹ I am telling the truth in Messiah, I am not lying, my conscience testifies with me in the Holy Spirit, ² that I have great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart. ³ For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Messiah for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh, ⁴ who are Israelites, to whom belongs the adoption as sons, and the glory and the covenants and the giving of

the Law and the Temple service and the promises,⁵ whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Messiah according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.

Reader 11 Amen.*⁶ But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel;⁷ nor are they all children because they are Abraham's descendants, but: "through Isaac your descendants will be named."⁸ That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants.⁹ For this is the word of promise: "At this time I will come, and Sarah shall have a son."¹⁰ And not only this, but there was Rebekah also, when she had conceived twins by one man, our father Isaac;¹¹ for though the twins were not yet born and had not done anything good or bad, so that God's purpose according to His choice would stand, not because of works but because of Him who calls,¹² it was said to her, "The older will serve the younger." ¹³ Just as it is written, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated."¹⁴ What shall we say then? There is no injustice with God, is there? May it never be!¹⁵ For He says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion."¹⁶ So then it does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy.¹⁷ For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I raised you up, to demonstrate My power in you, and that My name might be proclaimed throughout the whole earth."¹⁸ So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires.

Reader 12 Amen.*¹⁹ You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who resists His will?"²⁰ On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, "Why did you make me like this," will it?²¹ Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for common use?²² What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction?²³ And He did so to make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory,²⁴ even us, whom He also called, not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles.

Reader 13 Amen.*²⁵ As He says also in Hosea, "I will call those who were not My people, 'My people,' And her who was not beloved, 'beloved.'²⁶ And it shall be that in the place where it was said to them, 'you are not My people,' There they shall be called sons of the living God."²⁷ Isaiah cries out concerning Israel, "Though the number of the sons of Israel be as the sand of the sea, it is the remnant that will be saved; ²⁸ for the Lord will execute His word upon the earth, thoroughly and quickly." ²⁹ And just as Isaiah foretold, "Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left to us a posterity, We would have become as Sodom, and would have resembled Gomorrah."³⁰ What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, attained righteousness, even the righteousness which is by faith;³¹ but Israel, pursuing a law of righteousness, did not arrive at that law.³² Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as though it were by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone,³³ just as it is written, "Behold, I lay in Zion a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense, and he who believes in Him will not be disappointed."^{10:1} Brethren, my heart's desire and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation.

Commentary: Who defines God?

Today's portions are about who God is. While we may think that anyone who would worship a wood or stone idol is lacking some gray cells, we nevertheless commonly make our own definitions of our God. Consider this: God tells us who He is; we do not get to define Him with our little understanding – that would be idolatry. We all need to leave our own prejudices, and take care to learn who God says He is.

Exodus 3:

- (1) Here we see God stating by what name He would be called.
- (2) We also see Him granting signs to validate for His people His call to Moses.
- (3) We further see God stating what He would do in the near future – and what others would do.

In the Psalm, we are to contemplate where our God is.

In the Haftarah, we read that Yahweh is compassionate toward His people.

In Romans, we find that God makes known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy – including Gentiles, which He prepared beforehand for glory.

Moses was told (v.14) that God is the “*I Am*” (אֲנִי־אֶהְיֶה / Eh-yeh). He then was told (v.15) that God’s Name for all generations is “*Yahweh*” (יהוה), meaning “*I Was, I Am, I Will Be,*” – the Eternal. This is an expansion of “*I Am*”. His Name, Yahweh, is used when referring to His character of Gracious / Merciful One. It is used 24 times in today’s Torah portion alone. Beginning with Genesis 2:4, it is used about 7000 times in the *Tanach* (Torah, Prophets, and Holy Writings), far more than any other proper noun. It is used by all sorts of people, over many centuries. The most-oft repeated commandment in Scripture is to praise the Name Yahweh (Nehemiah 9:5; Psalm 113:1). To Isaiah God said, “I am Yahweh, that is My name; I will not give My glory to another, nor My praise to graven images.” (Isaiah 42:8). This name indicates that God is eternal in all of His attributes, such as omnipotence, omniscience, holiness, and grace.

It can be difficult for us to get used to calling God by a different name than that which we are used to using. We are to use His Name reverently, not as a common word. We use it when reading it in Scripture – we do not substitute words of a different meaning (such as *Adonai*, Lord, or *Hashem*) for God’s Word (Deuteronomy 4:2; Revelation 22:18-19). We use it when singing His praise with the inspired Psalms (Colossians 3:16). We use it when blessing His Name for His benefits.

Adonai, a Hebrew name which translates Lord, is used a few times in Scripture. The term refers to a master over slaves. It is used in conjunction with Yahweh – *Adonai Yahweh* (Ezekiel 2:4). *Adonai* or Lord is an appropriate title for God, but it is not a substitution for His Name Yahweh.

It is an untruth that it is not pronounced by rabbinic Jews – they commonly teach that it is to be used reverently and therefore sparingly, as using it in vain is a serious sin (Exodus 20:7).

Another Biblical name of God, *Elohim*, is a Hebrew term referring to His position as judge of His creation: it was judged very good (Genesis 1:31). This name is also used in conjunction with Yahweh – *Yahweh Elohim* (Genesis 2:4), referring to the Gracious God who is Judge of His creation.

When Yahweh is graciously granting a special pronouncement to His people, He verifies it with signs – actions which we call miracles or wonders, because they are so out of the ordinary that we see them as supernatural. He did this when He sent Moses to deliver and instruct His people, and He did it when He sent Yeshua to deliver and instruct His people. He has also granted signs at many other times. However, this is not a reason to accept every tale of miracles that people claim to have seen, or claim ability to perform. Such claims are often self-aggrandizing, and often not apparent – not wondrous at all, but only causing wonder about their verity.

Alongside granting signs, Yahweh states clearly what He is about to do, and how people will react!

Moses was told to throw his staff on the ground, and it then became a snake. He was told to pick it up by the tail, and it then became a stick again (v.4:1-5). This was a sign.

Moses was told to go to the Pharaoh with the elders of Israel and request in the Name of Yahweh the he let God’s people go. Moses was then told that the Pharaoh would not listen until God performed certain signs. Every detail would come to pass just as the Ruler of the Universe had said.

So we say regularly, “Blessed are You, Yahweh our God, Ruler of the Universe . . .”.

In today’s contemplative poem (Psalm 42) – now contemplate this – we read (v.3): “*They say to me all day long, ‘Where is your God?’*” Where is your God? Is He above all, ruling over His creation, and acting graciously on your behalf? If he is anywhere else, he is an idol of your own creation.

In today’s Haftarah portion (Isaiah 49:13) we read, “*Yahweh has comforted His people and will have compassion on His afflicted.*”

In his Epistle to the Romans, through Paul we are granted detailed understanding of some of God’s ways.

By using the story of Abraham's children – Ishmael and Isaac, Paul is teaching that God's Covenant (promises) is not for all of the natural descendants of Israel, but for the spiritual. *"It is not as though the word of God has failed"* (v.6). It is that, as God says of Himself, *"I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion"* (v.15).

The application of God's covenant is not according to one's parentage – *"It is not the children of the flesh who are children of God"* (v.8); *"who were born, not of blood"* (John 1:13). It is not through one's own will – *"It does not depend on the man who wills"* (v.16); *"not of the will of the flesh"* (John 1:13). It is not according to a man's works – *"It does not depend on . . . the man who runs"* (v.16). It is not through another man's ability to convince – *"not of the will of (another) man"* (John 1:16). It is only dependent *"on God who has mercy"*.

The conclusion is: A remnant of natural Israel will be saved, and a remnant of the Gentiles will be grafted in to that number. *"Though the number of the sons of Israel be as the sand of the sea, it is the remnant that will be saved"* (v.27). *"Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, attained righteousness, even the righteousness which is by faith"* (v.30); and we know that such faith itself is a gift of God (Ephesians 2:8).

After such clear teaching, Paul anticipates the reaction: *"You will say to me then, 'Why does He still find fault? For who resists His will?'"* (v.19). Here is where idolatry comes in: men who are as but worms, creating a God who fits their own doctrine. *"Who are you, O man, who answers back to God?"* (v.20).

God says that His Name for all generations is Yahweh. He is the eternal in all of His attributes, and does not change. He says that He maintains the right of determining life and death, and He controls who are His own and who are created for destruction. He holds all of the rights. We may acknowledge a Sovereign God, or make our own idols according to our own desires.

Then Paul says, *"Brethren, my heart's desire and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation."* Our desire and effort should be toward seeing others come to repentance and faith. Knowing that God will use His Word to work repentance and faith in others is the motivation for evangelization, and the basis for sticking to His Word in all such endeavor.

The Spiritual among the Worldly

(וּמֹשֶׁה הָיָה רֹעֵה אֶת-צֹאֵן) / *uMoshe hayah ro'eh et-zen* / Then Moses departed)

Reader 1 Amen.* ¹⁸ Then Moses departed and returned to Jethro his father-in-law and said to him, "Please, let me go, that I may return to my brethren who are in Egypt, and see if they are still alive." And Jethro said to Moses, "Go in peace." ¹⁹ Now Yahweh said to Moses in Midian, "Go back to Egypt, for all the men who were seeking your life are dead." ²⁰ So Moses took his wife and his sons and mounted them on a donkey, and returned to the land of Egypt. Moses also took the staff of God in his hand. ²¹ Yahweh said to Moses, "When you go back to Egypt see that you perform before Pharaoh all the wonders which I have put in your power; but I will harden his heart so that he will not let the people go." ²² "Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says Yahweh, 'Israel is My son, My firstborn.' ²³ "So I said to you, 'Let My son go that he may serve Me'; but you have refused to let him go. Behold, I will kill your son, your firstborn.'"

Reader 2 Amen.* ²⁴ Now it came about at the lodging place on the way that Yahweh met him and sought to put him to death. ²⁵ Then Zipporah took a flint and cut off her son's foreskin and threw it at Moses' feet, and she said, "You are indeed a bridegroom of blood to me." ²⁶ So He let him alone. At that time she said, "You are a bridegroom of blood"-- because of the circumcision. ²⁷ Now Yahweh said to Aaron, "Go to meet Moses in the wilderness." So he went and met him at the mountain of God and kissed him. ²⁸ Moses told Aaron all the words of Yahweh with which He had sent him, and all the signs that He had commanded him to do.

Reader 3 Amen.* ²⁹ Then Moses and Aaron went and assembled all the elders of the sons of Israel; ³⁰ and Aaron spoke all the words which Yahweh had spoken to Moses. He then performed the signs in the sight of the people. ³¹ So the people believed; and when they heard that Yahweh was concerned about the sons of Israel and that He had seen their affliction, then they bowed low and worshiped. ^{5:1} And afterward Moses and Aaron came and said to Pharaoh, "Thus says Yahweh, the God of Israel, 'Let My people go that they may celebrate a feast to Me in the wilderness.'" ² But Pharaoh said, "Who is Yahweh that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know Yahweh, and besides, I will not let Israel go." ³ Then they said, "The God of the Hebrews has met with us. Please, let us go a three days' journey into the wilderness that we may sacrifice to Yahweh our God, otherwise He will fall upon us with pestilence or with the sword."

Reader 4 Amen.* ⁴ But the king of Egypt said to them, "Moses and Aaron, why do you draw the people away from their work? Get back to your labors!" ⁵ Again Pharaoh said, "Look, the people of the land are now many, and you would have them cease from their labors!" ⁶ So the same day Pharaoh commanded the taskmasters over the people and their foremen, saying, ⁷ "You are no longer to give the people straw to make brick as previously; let them go and gather straw for themselves." ⁸ "But the quota of bricks which they were making previously, you shall impose on them; you are not to reduce any of it. Because they are lazy, therefore they cry out, 'Let us go and sacrifice to our God.'" ⁹ "Let the labor be heavier on the men, and let them work at it so that they will pay no attention to false words."

Reader 5 Amen.* ¹⁰ So the taskmasters of the people and their foremen went out and spoke to the people, saying, "Thus says Pharaoh, 'I am not going to give you any straw.' ¹¹ 'You go and get straw for yourselves wherever you can find it, but none of your labor will be reduced.'" ¹² So the people scattered through all the land of Egypt to gather stubble for straw. ¹³ The taskmasters pressed them, saying, "Complete your work quota, your daily amount, just as when you had straw." ¹⁴ Moreover, the foremen of the sons of Israel, whom Pharaoh's taskmasters had set over them, were beaten and were asked, "Why have you not completed your required amount either yesterday or today in making brick as previously?"

Reader 6 Amen.* ¹⁵ Then the foremen of the sons of Israel came and cried out to Pharaoh, saying, "Why do you deal this way with your servants? ¹⁶ "There is no straw given to your servants, yet they keep saying to us, 'Make bricks!' And behold, your servants are being beaten; but it is the fault of your own people." ¹⁷ But he said, "You are lazy, very lazy; therefore you say, 'Let us go and sacrifice to Yahweh.'" ¹⁸ "So go now and work; for you will be given no straw, yet you must deliver the quota of bricks." ¹⁹ The foremen of the sons of Israel saw that they were in trouble because they were told, "You must not reduce your daily amount of bricks."

Reader 7 Amen.* ²⁰ When they left Pharaoh's presence, they met Moses and Aaron as they were waiting for them. ²¹ They said to them, "May Yahweh look upon you and judge you, for you have made us odious in Pharaoh's sight and in the sight of his servants, to put a sword in their hand to kill us." ²² Then Moses returned to Yahweh and said, "O Lord, why have You brought harm to this people? Why did You ever send me?" ²³ "Ever since I came to Pharaoh to speak in Your name, he has done harm to this people, and You have not delivered Your people at all." ^{6:1} Then Yahweh said to Moses, "Now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh; for under compulsion he will let them go, and under compulsion he will drive them out of his land."

Isaiah 55:6-13

Reader 8 Amen.* ⁶ Seek Yahweh while He may be found; call upon Him while He is near. ⁷ Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return to Yahweh, and He will have compassion on him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon. ⁸ "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways," declares Yahweh. ⁹ "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts." ¹⁰ "For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there without watering the earth and making it bear and sprout, and furnishing seed to the sower and bread to the eater; ¹¹ so will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; it will not return to Me empty, without accomplishing what I desire, and without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it. ¹² "For you will go out with joy and be led forth with peace; the mountains and the hills will break forth into shouts of joy before you, and all the trees of the field will clap their hands. ¹³ "Instead of the thorn bush the cypress will come up, and instead of the nettle the myrtle will come up, and it will be a memorial to Yahweh, for an everlasting sign which will not be cut off."

Psalm 43 (To be sung.)

¹ Vindicate me, O God, and plead my case against an ungodly nation; O deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man! ² For You are the God of my strength; why have You rejected me? Why do I go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy? ³ O send out Your light and Your truth, let them lead me; let them bring me to Your holy hill and to Your dwelling places. ⁴ Then I will go to the altar of God, to God my exceeding joy; and upon the lyre I shall praise You, O God, my God. ⁵ Why are you in despair, O my soul? And why are you disturbed within me? Hope in God, for I shall again praise Him, the help of my countenance and my God.

John 8:26-59

Reader 9 Amen.* ²⁶ "I have many things to speak and to judge concerning you, but He who sent Me is true; and the things which I heard from Him, these I speak to the world." ²⁷ They did not realize that He had been speaking to them about the Father. ²⁸ So Yeshua said, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me. ²⁹ "And He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him." ³⁰ As He spoke these things, many came to believe in Him. ³¹ So Yeshua was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; ³² and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free."

³³ They answered Him, "We are Abraham's descendants and have never yet been enslaved to anyone; how is it that You say, 'You will become free'?" ³⁴ Yeshua answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin. ³⁵ "The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son does remain forever. ³⁶ "So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.

Reader 10 Amen.* ³⁷ "I know that you are Abraham's descendants; yet you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you. ³⁸ "I speak the things which I have seen with My Father; therefore you also do the things which you heard from your father." ³⁹ They answered and said to Him, "Abraham is our father." Yeshua said to them, "If you are Abraham's children, do the deeds of Abraham. ⁴⁰ "But as it is, you are seeking to kill Me, a man who has told you the truth, which I heard from God; this Abraham did not do. ⁴¹ "You are doing the deeds of your father."

They said to Him, "We were not born of fornication; we have one Father: God." ⁴² Yeshua said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and have come from God, for I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me.

Reader 11 Amen.* ⁴³ "Why do you not understand what I am saying? It is because you cannot hear My word. ⁴⁴ "You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer

from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies. ⁴⁵ "But because I speak the truth, you do not believe Me. ⁴⁶ "Which one of you convicts Me of sin? If I speak truth, why do you not believe Me? ⁴⁷ "He who is of God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not hear them, because you are not of God." ⁴⁸ The Jews answered and said to Him, "Do we not say rightly that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?" ⁴⁹ Yeshua answered, "I do not have a demon; but I honor My Father, and you dishonor Me. ⁵⁰ "But I do not seek My glory; there is One who seeks and judges.

Reader 12 Amen.* ⁵¹ "Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he will never see death." ⁵² The Jews said to Him, "Now we know that You have a demon. Abraham died, and the prophets also; and You say, 'If anyone keeps My word, he will never taste of death.' ⁵³ "Surely You are not greater than our father Abraham, who died? The prophets died too; whom do You make Yourself out to be?" ⁵⁴ Yeshua answered, "If I glorify Myself, My glory is nothing; it is My Father who glorifies Me, of whom you say, 'He is our God'; ⁵⁵ and you have not come to know Him, but I know Him; and if I say that I do not know Him, I will be a liar like you, but I do know Him and keep His word. ⁵⁶ "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad." ⁵⁷ So the Jews said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?" ⁵⁸ Yeshua said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am." ⁵⁹ Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him, but Yeshua hid Himself and went out of the temple.

Commentary:

(V.18) *Moses went to Jethro his father-in-law, and said to him, "Please, let me go, that I may return to my brethren who are in Egypt."* After being sustained for many years through his father-in-law, it was appropriate for Moses to go to him and ask for leave. This has very practical guidance for us, though, ultimately, we need to obey God even if the world system does not give us leave.

(V.21) *Yahweh said to Moses, "When you go back to Egypt, see that you perform before Pharaoh all the wonders which I have put in your power; but I will harden his heart so that he will not let the people go."*

Moses had been living in Midian, in present-day Saudi Arabia. This was far south-east from his Hebrew relatives in Egypt. Yahweh had met with him at the burning bush in Midian, and ordered him to go to Egypt, where he was to meet with the leaders of his people, then go to the Pharaoh. Canaan, the Promised Land, was to the north-east of Egypt.

Moses was to take care to perform all that Yahweh instructed. As an imperfect picture of Yeshua, Moses did not always fulfill that command (as in striking the rock for water). Yeshua did perfectly fulfill all that the Father instructed. We, as His followers, are to take care to fulfill all of His instruction; only through His Spirit can we even desire to do this, and being led by His Spirit requires that we first have received faith, which requires knowledge of His Word.

The God Who created all and rules over all, said beforehand that He would harden the Pharaoh's heart, to disobey. Note that God stated this *before* any action on the Pharaoh's part. Afterward, the Pharaoh said he had neither knowledge of nor faith in Yahweh, nor any inclination to obey in any case. The Apostle Paul used this particular case as an example of how God grants faith by grace (unmerited favor), and hardens whom He will (Romans 9:14-22), without regard for any good or evil done by the recipient.

(V.24) Part of God's requirement upon Moses was that his own son should be under the Covenant – indicated by circumcision on the eighth day. Moses was traveling at God's command, and circumcision can be delayed for life's sake, such as during travel. However, when the family was resting at a lodge, there was no excuse for delay, and God made an issue of Moses' default. Moses' wife, Zipporah, performed the circumcision to save Moses' life. It seems hard for most Christians today to understand the importance God places upon observance of His ordinances – the commandments that signify our relationship to God, that teach us spiritual truths. Here we have a great example: God's ordinances are not subject to our judgments of what is important! Zipporah referred to Moses as a "bridegroom of blood", which seems to fit Yeshua's position: the Bridegroom of the Covenant.

(V.29-31) *Then Moses and Aaron went and assembled all the elders of the sons of Israel; and Aaron spoke all the words which Yahweh had spoken to Moses. He then performed the signs in the sight of the people. So the people believed; and when they heard that Yahweh was concerned about the sons of Israel and that He had seen their affliction, then they bowed low and worshiped.* This is reminiscent of Yeshua's time on earth 1300 years later: He spoke God's words at the Temple and in synagogues; He performed miracles before multitudes of people – to show that He was indeed the Messiah. There were a chosen few who recognized His concern for them, and they bowed low and worshipped. *Yeshua said therefore to the twelve, "You do not want to go away also, do you?" Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life"* (John 6:67-68).

(V.5:1) Moses and Aaron came to the Pharaoh, saying, "Thus says *Yahweh*, the God of Israel, 'Let My people go' ". After the Pharaoh said that he did not know *Yahweh*, nor would he obey Him, Moses referred to God as "*The God of the Hebrews*" (v.3). If the Pharaoh would not recognize *Yahweh* as *the* God, at least he should respect Him as God of the Hebrews. The request, "*Please, let us go a three days' journey into the wilderness that we may sacrifice to Yahweh our God, lest He fall upon us with pestilence or with the sword*", amounts to a warning, in respectful language, that Egypt would be in danger: "*fall upon us*" is meant for Egypt.

Moses was sent to deliver God's people, but when life got harder for the people, they complained about Moses' actions.

Yeshua was sent to deliver us from "Egypt", the world of sin. But, if life here doesn't become immediately easier, we often complain about God's ways, or doubt His messenger, as the people did Moses. Life commonly gets harder when we become believers, because we are struggling against the world. The world expects us to live for things like pleasure and money. Sabbath-keeping is made extremely difficult by the world and its expectations of us: weddings and funerals are held on Sabbath, stores have their sales on Sabbath, etc. We may be called derogatory names by those who resent our manner of life, sometimes because we make them feel guilty, sometimes just because we are different. Too often, we just don't want to be different – often in areas such as language and dress and entertainment.

David says (Psalm 43), "*Vindicate me, O God, and plead my case against an ungodly nation; . . . Why do I go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy? O send out Thy light and Thy truth, let them lead me*".

Isaiah (v.55:12) fortells us, "*For you will go out with joy, and be led forth with peace; the mountains and the hills will break forth into shouts of joy before you, and all the trees of the field will clap their hands.*"

Moses was sent, as a prophetic type of Yeshua, to deliver God's people. Through Moses, God's people were delivered from slavery in Egypt. While this pictured spiritual deliverance, those without faith were still slaves to sin. Of Yeshua's deliverance, it is said (John 8:36), "If therefore the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed."

Yeshua goes on to describe (in keeping with the beginning of today's Torah portion – Exodus 4:21), "*He who is of God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not hear them, because you are not of God*" (John 8:47). Note that, Yeshua does *not* say, "You are not of God because you do not hear God's words"; we are not at liberty to reverse the order of cause and effect. God rules all of His creation; we do not control God.

Several times a day I am made to consider: *Elohim*, the Creator who judges His creation, is *Yahweh*, the Eternal who is gracious to provide for our needs, and that in order for us to serve *Him*, not ourselves! "*Blessed are You, Yahweh Eloheinu, Ruler of the Universe . . .*" He is blessed, because He provides for us sustenance, so that we can bless Him!

(John 8:58) *Yeshua said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am."* In last weeks Torah portion (Exodus 3:14), God told Moses that He was the "*I Am*". Because Yeshua identified Himself

with God, some Jews sought to stone Him. This does not leave much room for doubt about the proper interpretation of Yeshua's statement, that He is the Eternal.

From the Haftarah we read (Isaiah 55:6-9), *"Seek Yahweh while He may be found; call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return to Yahweh, and He will have compassion on him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon. For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways," declares Yahweh. "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts."*

And then in the Apostolic portion (John 8:30-32), *"As He spoke these things, many came to believe in Him. So Yeshua was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, 'If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.'"*

(אֲנִי יְהוָה: וָאֵלֶּיךָ אֶל־אַבְרָהָם אֶל־יִצְחָק וְאֶל־יַעֲקֹב) / *Ani Yahweh, va-era el Avraham el Yitzchak v'el Yaacov* /

I Am Yahweh, and I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob)

Reader 1 Amen.* ² God spoke further to Moses and said to him, "I am Yahweh; ³ and I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as God Almighty, but by My name, Yahweh, I did not make Myself known to them. ⁴ "I also established My covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land in which they sojourned. ⁵ "Furthermore I have heard the groaning of the sons of Israel, because the Egyptians are holding them in bondage, and I have remembered My covenant.

Reader 2 Amen.* ⁶ "Say, therefore, to the sons of Israel, 'I am Yahweh, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from their bondage. I will also redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. ⁷ 'Then I will take you for My people, and I will be your God; and you shall know that I am Yahweh your God, who brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.

⁸ 'I will bring you to the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and I will give it to you for a possession; I am Yahweh.'"

Reader 3 Amen.* ⁹ So Moses spoke thus to the sons of Israel, but they did not listen to Moses on account of their despondency and cruel bondage. ¹⁰ Now Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, ¹¹ "Go, tell Pharaoh king of Egypt to let the sons of Israel go out of his land." ¹² But Moses spoke before Yahweh, saying, "Behold, the sons of Israel have not listened to me; how then will Pharaoh listen to me, for I am unskilled in speech?"

Reader 4 Amen.* ¹³ Then Yahweh spoke to Moses and to Aaron, and gave them a charge to the sons of Israel and to Pharaoh king of Egypt, to bring the sons of Israel out of the land of Egypt.

¹⁴ These are the heads of their fathers' households. The sons of Reuben, Israel's firstborn: Hanoch and Pallu, Hezron and Carmi; these are the families of Reuben. ¹⁵ The sons of Simeon: Jemuel and Jamin and Ohad and Jachin and Zohar and Shaul the son of a Canaanite woman; these are the families of Simeon. ¹⁶ These are the names of the sons of Levi according to their generations: Gershon and Kohath and Merari; and the length of Levi's life was one hundred and thirty-seven years. ¹⁷ The sons of Gershon: Libni and Shimei, according to their families. ¹⁸ The sons of Kohath: Amram and Izhar and Hebron and Uzziel; and the length of Kohath's life was one hundred and thirty-three years. ¹⁹ The sons of Merari: Mahli and Mushi. These are the families of the Levites according to their generations. ²⁰ Amram married his father's sister Jochebed, and she bore him Aaron and Moses; and the length of Amram's life was one hundred and thirty-seven years. ²¹ The sons of Izhar: Korah and Nepheg and Zichri. ²² The sons of Uzziel: Mishael and Elzaphan and Sithri. ²³ Aaron married Elisheba, the daughter of Amminadab, the sister of Nahshon, and she bore him Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. ²⁴ The sons of Korah: Assir and Elkanah and Abiasaph; these are the families of the Korahites. ²⁵ Aaron's son Eleazar married one of the daughters of Putiel, and she bore him Phinehas. These are the heads of the fathers' households of the Levites according to their families. ²⁶ It was the same Aaron and Moses to whom Yahweh said, "Bring out the sons of Israel from the land of Egypt according to their hosts."

²⁷ They were the ones who spoke to Pharaoh king of Egypt about bringing out the sons of Israel from Egypt; it was the same Moses and Aaron.

Reader 5 Amen.* ²⁸ Now it came about on the day when Yahweh spoke to Moses in the land of Egypt, ²⁹ that Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, "I am Yahweh; speak to Pharaoh king of Egypt all that I speak to you." ³⁰ But Moses said before Yahweh, "Behold, I am unskilled in speech; how then will Pharaoh listen to me?"

Reader 6 Amen.* ^{7:1} Then Yahweh said to Moses, "See, I make you as God to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron shall be your prophet. ² "You shall speak all that I command you, and your brother Aaron shall speak

to Pharaoh that he let the sons of Israel go out of his land. ³ "But I will harden Pharaoh's heart that I may multiply My signs and My wonders in the land of Egypt.
Reader 7 Amen.* ⁴ "When Pharaoh does not listen to you, then I will lay My hand on Egypt and bring out My hosts, My people the sons of Israel, from the land of Egypt by great judgments. ⁵ "The Egyptians shall know that I am Yahweh, when I stretch out My hand on Egypt and bring out the sons of Israel from their midst." ⁶ So Moses and Aaron did it; as Yahweh commanded them, thus they did. ⁷ Moses was eighty years old and Aaron eighty-three, when they spoke to Pharaoh.

Ezekiel 28:25 – 29:21

Reader 8 Amen.* ²⁵ "Thus says Lord Yahweh, "When I gather the house of Israel from the peoples among whom they are scattered, and will manifest My holiness in them in the sight of the nations, then they will live in their land which I gave to My servant Jacob. ²⁶ They will live in it securely; and they will build houses, plant vineyards and live securely when I execute judgments upon all who scorn them round about them. **Then they will know that I am Yahweh their God.**"

Reader 9 Amen.* ^{29:1} In the tenth year, in the tenth month, on the twelfth of the month, the word of Yahweh came to me saying, ² "Son of man, set your face against Pharaoh king of Egypt and prophesy against him and against all Egypt. ³ Speak and say, "Thus says Lord Yahweh, "Behold, I am against you, Pharaoh king of Egypt, the great monster that lies in the midst of his rivers, that has said, 'My Nile is mine, and I myself have made it.' ⁴ I will put hooks in your jaws and make the fish of your rivers cling to your scales. And I will bring you up out of the midst of your rivers, and all the fish of your rivers will cling to your scales. ⁵ I will abandon you to the wilderness, you and all the fish of your rivers; you will fall on the open field; you will not be brought together or gathered. I have given you for food to the beasts of the earth and to the birds of the sky. ⁶ **Then all the inhabitants of Egypt will know that I am Yahweh,** because they have been only a staff made of reed to the house of Israel.

Reader 10 Amen.* ⁷ When they took hold of you with the hand, you broke and tore all their hands; and when they leaned on you, you broke and made all their loins quake." ⁸ "Therefore thus says Lord Yahweh, "Behold, I will bring upon you a sword and I will cut off from you man and beast. ⁹ The land of Egypt will become a desolation and waste. **Then they will know that I am Yahweh.** Because you said, 'The Nile is mine, and I have made it,' ¹⁰ therefore, behold, I am against you and against your rivers, and I will make the land of Egypt an utter waste and desolation, from Migdol to Syene and even to the border of Ethiopia. ¹¹ A man's foot will not pass through it, and the foot of a beast will not pass through it, and it will not be inhabited for forty years. ¹² So I will make the land of Egypt a desolation in the midst of desolated lands. And her cities, in the midst of cities that are laid waste, will be desolate forty years; and I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations and disperse them among the lands."

Reader 11 Amen.* ¹³ "For thus says Lord Yahweh, "At the end of forty years I will gather the Egyptians from the peoples among whom they were scattered. ¹⁴ I will turn the fortunes of Egypt and make them return to the land of Pathros, to the land of their origin, and there they will be a lowly kingdom. ¹⁵ It will be the lowest of the kingdoms, and it will never again lift itself up above the nations. And I will make them so small that they will not rule over the nations. ¹⁶ And it will never again be the confidence of the house of Israel, bringing to mind the iniquity of their having turned to Egypt. **Then they will know that I am Lord Yahweh.**"

Reader 12 Amen.* ¹⁷ Now in the twenty-seventh year, in the first month, on the first of the month, the word of Yahweh came to me saying, ¹⁸ "Son of man, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon made his army labor hard against Tyre; every head was made bald and every shoulder was rubbed bare. But he and his army had no wages from Tyre for the labor that he had performed against it." ¹⁹ Therefore thus says Lord Yahweh, "Behold, I will give the land of Egypt to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. And he will carry off her wealth and capture her spoil and seize her plunder; and it will be wages for his army. ²⁰ I have given him the land of Egypt for his labor which he performed, because they acted for Me," declares Lord Yahweh. ²¹ "On that day I will make a horn sprout for the house of Israel, and I will open your mouth in their midst. **Then they will know that I am Yahweh.**"

Isaiah 42:8

Reader 13 Amen.* "I am Yahweh, that is My name; I will not give My glory to another, nor My praise to graven images."

Psalm 44 (To be sung.) For the choir director. A Maskil of the sons of Korah. (A Maskil is a contemplative poem.)

¹ O God, we have heard with our ears, our fathers have told us the work that You did in their days, in the days of old. ² You with Your own hand drove out the nations; then You planted them; You afflicted the peoples, then You spread them abroad. ³ For by their own sword they did not possess the land, and their own arm did not save them, but Your right hand and Your arm and the light of Your presence, for You favored them. ⁴ You are my King, O God; command victories for Jacob. ⁵ Through You we will push back our adversaries; **through Your name we will trample down those who rise up against us.** ⁶ For I will not trust in my bow, nor will my sword save me. ⁷ But You have saved us from our adversaries, and You have put to shame those who hate us. ⁸ In God we have boasted all day long, and **we will give thanks to Your name forever. Selah.** ⁹ Yet You have rejected us and brought us to dishonor, and do not go out with our armies. ¹⁰ You cause us to turn back from the adversary; and those who hate us have taken spoil for themselves. ¹¹ You give us as sheep to be eaten and have scattered us among the nations. ¹² You sell Your people cheaply, and have not profited by their sale. ¹³ You make us a reproach to our neighbors, a scoffing and a derision to those around us. ¹⁴ You make us a byword among the nations, a laughingstock among the peoples. ¹⁵ All day long my dishonor is before me and my humiliation has overwhelmed me, ¹⁶ because of the voice of him who reproaches and reviles, because of the presence of the enemy and the avenger. ¹⁷ All this has come upon us, but we have not forgotten You, and we have not dealt falsely with Your covenant. ¹⁸ Our heart has not turned back, and our steps have not deviated from Your way, ¹⁹ Yet You have crushed us in a place of jackals and covered us with the shadow of death. ²⁰ **If we had forgotten the name of our God** or extended our hands to a strange god, ²¹ would not God find this out? For He knows the secrets of the heart. ²² But for Your sake we are killed all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered. ²³ Arouse Yourself, why do You sleep, O Lord? Awake, do not reject us forever. ²⁴ Why do You hide Your face and forget our affliction and our oppression? ²⁵ For our soul has sunk down into the dust; our body cleaves to the earth. ²⁶ Rise up, be our help, and redeem us for the sake of Your lovingkindness.

III John 1-8

Reader 14 Amen.*

¹ The elder to the beloved Gaius, whom I love in truth. ² Beloved, I pray that in all respects you may prosper and be in good health, just as your soul prospers. ³ For I was very glad when brethren came and testified to your truth, that is, how you are walking in truth. ⁴ I have no greater joy than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth. ⁵ Beloved, you are acting faithfully in whatever you accomplish for the brethren, and especially when they are strangers; ⁶ and they have testified to your love before the church. You will do well to send them on their way in a manner worthy of God. ⁷ For **they went out for the sake of the Name**, accepting nothing from the Gentiles. ⁸ Therefore we ought to support such men, so that we may be fellow workers with the truth.

Revelation 3:7-13

Reader 15 Amen.* ⁷ "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: He who is holy, who is true, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, and who shuts and no one opens, says this: ⁸ 'I know your deeds. Behold, I have put before you an open door which no one can shut, because you have a little power, and have kept My word, and have not denied My name. ⁹ Behold, I will cause those of the synagogue of Satan, who say that they are Jews and are not, but lie-- I will make them come and bow down at your feet, and make them know that I have loved you. ¹⁰ Because you have kept the word of My perseverance, I also will keep you from the hour of testing, that hour which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth. ¹¹ I am coming quickly; hold fast what you have, so that no one will take your crown. ¹² He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he will not go out from it anymore; and **I will write on him the name of My God**, and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God, and My new name. ¹³ He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'

Revelation 14:1

And I looked, and behold, the Lamb was standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, **having His Name and the Name of His Father written on their foreheads.**

Commentary:

“I am Yahweh; and I appeared . . .”

One might readily discern from today’s portion that Yahweh is making a strong point about His Name.

“Yahweh” is used sixteen times in the Torah portion, and twelve times in the Haftarah – Ezekiel portion, with once more in the verse of Isaiah. It is never used in Psalm 44, but twice “Thy Name” is used. We have chosen Apostolic portions that continue the theme into the New World.

(V.2-3) God said to Moses, **“I am Yahweh; and I appeared** to Abraham (Gen 17:1), Isaac (Gen 28:3), and Jacob (Gen 35:11), as El Shaddai (God Almighty), but by My name, Yahweh (The Eternal), I did not make Myself known to them.” Earlier in the Torah, we noted that “Elohim” is used when referring to the Creator who judges His creation, and “Yahweh” is used when referring to Him as The Eternal in His attribute of Grace/Mercy. But, it was Moses who wrote Genesis, and here we learn that God was not known to the earlier patriarchs as “Yahweh”, even though Moses used that Name throughout the accounts of their lives.

“Now when Abram was ninety-nine years old, Yahweh appeared to Abram and said to him, ‘I am El Shaddai / God Almighty; walk before Me, and be blameless’” – Genesis 17:1.

“Yahweh appeared to (Isaac) and said, ‘Do not go down to Egypt; stay in the land of which I shall tell you’” – Genesis 26:2. (Jacob said to Isaac) “May El Shaddai / God Almighty bless you and make you fruitful and multiply you, that you may become a company of peoples” – Genesis 28:3.

“Then Elohim appeared to Jacob again when he came from Paddan-aram, and He blessed him . . . Elohim also said to him, ‘I am El Shaddai / God Almighty; be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall come from you, and kings shall come forth from you’” – Genesis 35:9-11.

God also said (Exodus 3:15), *“This is My Name forever, and this is My Memorial-Name to all generations.”* He didn’t say, “As long as you remember how to pronounce it exactly as it was first said”. He didn’t say, “It’s okay to change My Word and substitute a word of different meaning” (such as Adonai/Lord, Hashem/The Name, etc.). He did allow contractions of His Name: “halleluyah” is *hallel* (praise) to Yah (Yahweh); “Yeshua” is *Yah is shua* (salvation). He did say, *“You shall not take the name of Yahweh your Elohim in vain”* (Exodus 20:7). He will not give the glory of His Name to any other god (Isaiah 42:8). [There are very limited grammatical possibilities that The Name could be pronounced in some other way.]

When Abraham took Isaac to Mt. Moriah to offer him, he said to his servants, “Stay here with the donkey, and **I and the lad will go yonder; and we will worship and return to you**” (Genesis 22:5). Note that Abraham said that they were going to **“worship”**. And he said that they were going to return, though he was going to offer Isaac.

Remember that for Abraham’s first 56 years, Noah was still alive: Abraham’s world was very young, and it was most significant for him that God was the Creator that had the power to do anything He said. It is almost inconceivable to us that a father would be willing to sacrifice his son, especially one that he had awaited for much of his life, was the miraculous and only son of his beloved wife, and one to whom God had promised a great future. Tradition tells us that Sarah died upon hearing of this (Sarah’s life is no longer spoken of in the passage). We often hear of the great miracle of a ram being caught in a thicket by its horns – its strongest asset. And we often hear of Abraham’s faith, as though he was great of himself. But the greatest miracle here was that the Almighty gave Abraham faith to “worship” according to divine design!

My definition of a miracle is, since God controls everything, a situation where God does the unusual or unexpected. God usually causes apples to fall “down”, so we say there is a “law of gravity”; if we saw an

apple fall “up”, we would call it a miracle. God usually causes water pour from higher into lower places, so when God caused a dry path in the midst of the Sea, it was called a miracle.

Today, we see people all around us inventing their ways to worship that “seem good” to them. We see churches with “worship teams” leading the singing of extra-biblical songs, starting with the misconception that worship means singing. Worship is more basically doing and learning what God says: Bible teachers, in word and deed, should be seen as the main “worship” leaders. When anyone desires to “worship” as God designed according to His Word, I call it a miracle! It is unusual, unexpected, and “unnatural”.

Now, 400 years after Abraham, Moses is on the scene. God is preparing to redeem a Bride for Messiah. He is remembering – that is preparing to fulfill – His ancient promise to Abraham concerning Isaac’s descendants. Now is the time for His people to know Him as Yahweh – The Eternal who remembers, who is gracious/merciful to His chosen. Now that His chosen are identified, they shall henceforth forever worship the Eternal Gracious One by His Name, Yahweh.

(V.6-8) This paragraph is known as the Passover Covenant. It is the basis of the four cups of the Passover seder: (1) the cup of sanctification or blessing, (2) the cup of deliverance, (3) the cup of redemption, and (4) the cup of completion/glorification.

(1) *“I am Yahweh, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians,*

(2) and I will deliver you from their bondage.

(3) I will also redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments.

(4) Then I will take you for My people, and I will be your God; and you shall know that I am Yahweh your God, who brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. And I will bring you to the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and I will give it to you for a possession; I am Yahweh.”

(V.7:3) *“But I will harden Pharaoh's heart that I may multiply My signs and My wonders in the land of Egypt.”* In chapter seven, God sends Moses and Aaron to confront the Pharaoh, but says that He will harden the Pharaoh’s heart – and why: He will show signs and wonders, culminating in the death of Egypt’s firstborn. Then, not only God’s chosen people, but all Egypt will know that Yahweh is God! This was but a taste of the final fulfillment: at the end of the age, not only believers, but all of the world will know that Yahweh is God! He rules over all for eternity! This is the message of Ezekiel 28.

In Psalm 44 we read, *“In Thy name we will trample down those who rise up against us”* and *“we will give thanks to Thy name forever. Selah.”* Therefore we say, “Blessed are You, Yahweh our God ...”.

This is the time to learn true worship! Those who will not learn early, are destined to learn too late that Yahweh has sent a redeemer, and will not share His glory with any other.

In III John, we read of those who were walking in truth, who “went out for the sake of The Name” to the gentiles, taking nothing from them.

In Revelation 3 we read that “he who overcomes” will have the Name of God written on him. Then, in Revelation 14, we read of the 144,000 Hebrew missionaries, that they will have “(Yeshua’s) Name and the Name of His Father written on their foreheads.”

In a couple of days [in non-leap years], we start the month of preparation for the Passover seder. God has instructed us to worship in the Festivals, from Unleavened Bread to the Eighth Day Assembly, portraying redemption to glorification through Yeshua. We have no authority to make something else out of them, other than what His Word says. We cannot change “Yahweh’s Feast” (the Passover seder) to a “Lord’s Supper” consisting of two small elements: we are instructed to portray the whole Feast of “remembrance of Him”. We cannot change “You shall dwell in sukkot for seven days” (Leviticus 23:42) to “hold a conference”: we are instructed to “experience” the past to learn for the future. We cannot change “the blood of the Covenant” – grape juice/wine (Exodus 24:8, Matthew 24:28) to “water” or “whatever is handy”: God gave punishments for those who messed-up His pictures. By these Festivals we and the world are ultimately to understand that “Yahweh is God”, and “Yahweh is our Salvation” (meaning of Yeshua). We cannot change “the only name under heaven . . . by which you must be saved” (Acts 4:12) to “God would

not be so unfair as to deny someone who sincerely tries his best”: He is sovereign: none of us “sincerely” seek God on our own (Psalm 14:2-3).

In conclusion:

We are to sanctify God’s Name. That means that we are to use it in holy ways, such as when quoting His Holy Word, or when blessing His Holy Name for His gracious acts toward us.

“I Am Yahweh Your God” – Deuteronomy 20:2 (The first of the Ten Commandments by Hebrew enumeration.

“Yahweh is our God, Yahweh is the only one!” – Deuteronomy 6:4.

“There is no one like Yahweh our God” – Exodus 8:10.

“Blessed be Yahweh . . .” – Genesis 9:26, 24:7, Exodus 18:10, Psalm 28:6, 144:1 (as examples).

We are not to use His Name in vain. That refers to using His Name not only in a derogatory manner, but also using it as common slang. It includes using it in making an oath which we do not intend to keep. Using a substitute intended to represent His Name does not absolve us of guilt.

“You shall not use the Name of Yahweh your God in vain, for Yahweh will not leave him guiltless who takes His Name in vain” – Exodus 20:7, Deuteronomy 5:11.

“Your enemies take Your Name in vain” – Psalm 139:20.

“Whoever swears by heaven, swears both by the throne of God and by Him Who sits upon it”
– Matthew 23:21

We are not to deny His Name. By definition, that would include refusing to use it in holy circumstances, as well as using the name of another in holy circumstances. It also includes doing things that are contrary to His glory.

“Give me neither poverty nor riches . . . that I not be full and deny You and say, ‘Who is Yahweh?’ Or that I not be in want and steal, and profane the Name of my God” – Proverbs 30:8-9.

Ki Y'daber / When He Speaks

Exodus 7:8 – 8:19 Joel 3:1-7 Psalm 45 Revelation 16:1-17
8:15 in Hebrew Bibles

Commentary Y1-49

Adar 18, 5762 / Mar 2, 2002
I Adar 24, 5765 / Mar 5, 2005

(כִּי יִדְבֹר אֵלֵיכֶם פְּרֹעָה לְאמֹר הֲנִי לָכֶם מוֹפֵת) / Ki v'daber alechem Pharaoh lemor t'nou lachem mophet / When speaks to-you Pharaoh, regarding working a miracle)

Reader 1 Amen.* ⁸ Now Yahweh spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, ⁹ "When Pharaoh speaks to you, saying, 'Work a miracle,' then you shall say to Aaron, 'Take your staff and throw it down before Pharaoh, that it may become a serpent.'" ¹⁰ So Moses and Aaron came to Pharaoh, and thus they did just as Yahweh had commanded; and Aaron threw his staff down before Pharaoh and his servants, and it became a serpent. ¹¹ Then Pharaoh also called for the wise men and the sorcerers, and they also, the magicians of Egypt, did the same with their secret arts. ¹² For each one threw down his staff and they turned into serpents. But Aaron's staff swallowed up their staffs.

Reader 2 Amen.* ¹³ Yet Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he did not listen to them, as Yahweh had said. ¹⁴ Then Yahweh said to Moses, "Pharaoh's heart is stubborn; he refuses to let the people go. ¹⁵ "Go to Pharaoh in the morning as he is going out to the water, and station yourself to meet him on the bank of the Nile; and you shall take in your hand the staff that was turned into a serpent. ¹⁶ "You shall say to him, 'Yahweh, the God of the Hebrews, sent me to you, saying, "Let My people go, that they may serve Me in the wilderness. But behold, you have not listened until now."

Reader 3 Amen.* ¹⁷ "Thus says Yahweh, "By this you shall know that I am Yahweh: behold, I will strike the water that is in the Nile with the staff that is in my hand, and it will be turned to **blood**. ¹⁸ "The fish that are in the Nile will die, and the Nile will become foul, and the Egyptians will find difficulty in drinking water from the Nile." ¹⁹ Then Yahweh said to Moses, "Say to Aaron, 'Take your staff and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt, over their rivers, over their streams, and over their pools, and over all their reservoirs of water, that they may become blood; and there will be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in vessels of wood and in vessels of stone.'" ²⁰ So Moses and Aaron did even as Yahweh had commanded. And he lifted up the staff and struck the water that was in the Nile, in the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants, and all the water that was in the Nile was turned to blood. ²¹ The fish that were in the Nile died, and the Nile became foul, so that the Egyptians could not drink water from the Nile. And the blood was through all the land of Egypt.

Reader 4 Amen.* ²² But the magicians of Egypt did the same with their secret arts; and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he did not listen to them, as Yahweh had said. ²³ Then Pharaoh turned and went into his house with no concern even for this. ²⁴ So all the Egyptians dug around the Nile for water to drink, for they could not drink of the water of the Nile. ²⁵ Seven days passed after Yahweh had struck the Nile.

Reader 5 Amen.* ^{8:1} Then Yahweh said to Moses, "Go to Pharaoh and say to him, 'Thus says Yahweh, "Let My people go, that they may serve Me. ² "But if you refuse to let them go, behold, I will smite your whole territory with **frogs**. ³ "The Nile will swarm with frogs, which will come up and go into your house and into your bedroom and on your bed, and into the houses of your servants and on your people, and into your ovens and into your kneading bowls. ⁴ "So the frogs will come up on you and your people and all your servants.'" ⁵ Then Yahweh said to Moses, "Say to Aaron, 'Stretch out your hand with your staff over the rivers, over the streams and over the pools, and make frogs come up on the land of Egypt.'" ⁶ So Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt, and the frogs came up and covered the land of Egypt.

Reader 6 Amen.* ⁷ The magicians did the same with their secret arts, making frogs come up on the land of Egypt. ⁸ Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron and said, "Entreat Yahweh that He remove the frogs from me and from my people; and I will let the people go, that they may sacrifice to Yahweh." ⁹ Moses said to Pharaoh, "The honor is yours to tell me: when shall I entreat for you and your servants and your people, that the frogs be destroyed from you and your houses, that they may be left only in the Nile?" ¹⁰ Then he said, "Tomorrow." So he said, "May it be according to your word, that you may know that there is no one like Yahweh our God. ¹¹ "The frogs will depart from you and your houses and your servants and your people; they will be left only in the Nile."

Reader 7 Amen.* ¹² Then Moses and Aaron went out from Pharaoh, and Moses cried to Yahweh concerning the frogs which He had inflicted upon Pharaoh. ¹³ Yahweh did according to the word of Moses, and the frogs died out of the houses, the courts, and the fields. ¹⁴ So they piled them in heaps, and the land became foul. ¹⁵ But when Pharaoh saw that there was relief, he hardened his heart and did not listen to them, as Yahweh had said. ¹⁶ Then Yahweh said to Moses, "Say to Aaron, 'Stretch out your staff and strike

the dust of the earth, that it may become gnats through all the land of Egypt." ¹⁷ They did so; and Aaron stretched out his hand with his staff, and struck the dust of the earth, and there were gnats on man and beast. All the dust of the earth became gnats through all the land of Egypt. ¹⁸ The magicians tried with their secret arts to bring forth gnats, but they could not; so there were gnats on man and beast. ¹⁹ Then the magicians said to Pharaoh, "This is the finger of God." But Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he did not listen to them, as Yahweh had said.

Joel 3:1-7

Reader 8 Amen.* ¹ "For behold, in those days and at that time, When I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem, ² I will gather all the nations and bring them down to the valley of Jehoshaphat. Then I will enter into judgment with them there on behalf of My people and My inheritance, Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations; and they have divided up My land. ³ "They have also cast lots for My people, traded a boy for a harlot and sold a girl for wine that they may drink. ⁴ "Moreover, what are you to Me, O Tyre, Sidon and all the regions of Philistia? Are you rendering Me a recompense? But if you do recompense Me, swiftly and speedily I will return your recompense on your head. ⁵ "Since you have taken My silver and My gold, brought My precious treasures to your temples, ⁶ and sold the sons of Judah and Jerusalem to the Greeks in order to remove them far from their territory, ⁷ behold, I am going to arouse them from the place where you have sold them, and return your recompense on your head.

Psalm 45 (To be sung.)

For the choir director; according to the Shoshannim. A Maskil of the sons of Korah. A Song of Love.

¹ My heart overflows with a good theme; I address my verses to the King; my tongue is the pen of a ready writer. ² You are fairer than the sons of men; grace is poured upon Your lips; therefore God has blessed You forever. ³ Gird Your sword on Your thigh, O Mighty One, in Your splendor and Your majesty! ⁴ And in Your majesty ride on victoriously, for the cause of truth and meekness and righteousness; let Your right hand teach You awesome things. ⁵ Your arrows are sharp; the peoples fall under You; Your arrows are in the heart of the King's enemies. ⁶ Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; a scepter of uprightness is the scepter of Your kingdom. ⁷ You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of joy above Your fellows. ⁸ All Your garments are fragrant with myrrh and aloes and cassia; out of ivory palaces stringed instruments have made You glad. ⁹ Kings' daughters are among Your noble ladies; at Your right hand stands the queen in gold from Ophir. ¹⁰ Listen, O daughter, give attention and incline your ear: forget your people and your father's house; ¹¹ then the King will desire your beauty. Because He is your Lord, bow down to Him. ¹² The daughter of Tyre will come with a gift; the rich among the people will seek your favor. ¹³ The King's daughter is all glorious within; her clothing is interwoven with gold. ¹⁴ She will be led to the King in embroidered work; the virgins, her companions who follow her, will be brought to You. ¹⁵ They will be led forth with gladness and rejoicing; they will enter into the King's palace. ¹⁶ In place of your fathers will be your sons; You shall make them princes in all the earth. ¹⁷ I will cause Your name to be remembered in all generations; therefore the peoples will give You thanks forever and ever.

Revelation 16:1-17

Reader 9 Amen.* ¹ Then I heard a loud voice from the temple, saying to the seven angels, "Go and pour out on the earth the seven bowls of the wrath of God." ² So the first angel went and poured out his bowl on the earth; and it became a loathsome and malignant sore on the people who had the mark of the beast and who worshiped his image. ³ The second angel poured out his bowl into the sea, and it became blood like that of a dead man; and every living thing in the sea died. ⁴ Then the third angel poured out his bowl into the rivers and the springs of waters; and they became blood. ⁵ And I heard the angel of the waters saying, "Righteous are You, who are and who were, O Holy One, because You judged these things; ⁶ for they poured out the blood of saints and prophets, and You have given them blood to drink. They deserve it." ⁷ And I heard the altar saying, "Yes, O Lord God, the Almighty, true and righteous are Your judgments." *Reader 10* Amen.* ⁸ The fourth angel poured out his bowl upon the sun, and it was given to it to scorch men with fire. ⁹ Men were scorched with fierce heat; and they blasphemed the name of God who has the power over these plagues, and they did not repent so as to give Him glory. ¹⁰ Then the fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom became darkened; and they gnawed their tongues because of pain, ¹¹ and they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores; and they did not repent of their deeds.

Reader 11 Amen.* ¹² The **sixth** angel poured out his bowl on the great river, the Euphrates; and its water was **dried up**, so that the way would be prepared for the kings from the east. ¹³ And I saw coming out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits like frogs; ¹⁴ for they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them together for the war of the great day of God, the Almighty. ¹⁵ ("Behold, I am coming like a thief. Blessed is the one who stays awake and keeps his clothes, so that he will not walk about naked and men will not see his shame.") ¹⁶ And they gathered them together to the place which in Hebrew is called Har-Magedon. ¹⁷ Then the **seventh** angel poured out his bowl upon the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple from the throne, saying, "It is done."

Commentary:

Note on Ex 7:7

Gen 15:13 notes 400 years. Isaac lived 180 years, AM 2048-2228. Kohath (born in Canaan and went to Egypt) lived 133 years (Ex 6:18), AM 2235-2368. His son Amram lived 137 years (Ex 6:20), 2255-2392. Moses lived from 2368 to the exodus at 2448, when he was 80 years old (Ex 7:7). Thus the computation that the 400 years began with the birth of Isaac: from the birth of Isaac in AM 2048 to the exodus in 2448 was 400 years. (*per Seder Olam*)

Exodus 7:

Going back to the beginning of this chapter, we read, “*Then Yahweh said to Moses, ‘See, I make you as God to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron shall be your prophet. You shall speak all that I command you, and your brother Aaron shall speak to Pharaoh that he let the sons of Israel go out of his land. But I will harden Pharaoh’s heart that I may multiply My signs and My wonders in the land of Egypt’.*” Before we ever hear of Pharaoh hardening his heart, even before the Pharaoh ever hears of an uprising, Yahweh says that He will harden the Pharaoh’s heart in order to accomplish His purpose: namely, that (concerning the Hebrews) “*you shall know that I am Yahweh your God*” (v.6:7), and “*The Egyptians shall know that I am Yahweh, when I stretch out My hand on Egypt and bring out the sons of Israel from their midst*” (v.7:5). We have spent two Sabbaths (Y1-46 and Y1-48) learning of the Name that God proclaimed for Himself for all generations, and now we are to understand that He would have both righteous and wicked know Him as the Eternal I Am – with no doubt to be left.

We all should be in awe of the Eternal Gracious One. He is not like us: He is so far above us that we are as worms or grasshoppers. We cannot put Him under our rules, or control what He does. He holds all of the rights, including life and death and destiny. But everything that befalls believers is planned in love for their ultimate good.

(V.12) “*But Aaron’s staff swallowed up their staffs.*” This prefigured the Red Sea swallowing up Egypt’s armies.

(Ex 7:14 – 12:36) The Ten Plagues

The first three plagues showed the existence of Yahweh (v.7:17). The next three plagues showed that Yahweh ruled over all things (v.8:18). The last three plagues showed Yahweh’s omnipotence – more powerful than any other (v.9:14). The tenth was the promised (Ex 4:21-23) death of the firstborn. In each group of three plagues, the first two were preceded by warnings to the Pharaoh, but after two “witnesses”, the third came without warning as a judgment. The first warning of each group came at the Nile River, and the second warning of each group came at the Pharaoh’s palace: he claimed mastery over the River, and the palace was his seat of authority; God used these two places to warn him of his arrogance. (*from R. Bachya*)

	Warning given at Nile (place of claimed mastery)	Warning given at palace (seat of authority)	Judgment without further warning
Existence of Yahweh	1 Water becomes blood		
		2 Frogs cover land	
			3 Gnats from dust
	4 Crocodiles from river		

Rulership of Yahweh		5 Pestilence on cattle	
			6 Boils from soot
Omnipotence of Yahweh	7 Hail (from evaporation)		
		8 Locusts consume crops	
			9 Darkness
Fulfillment of Word	10 Death of firstborn		

(V.21-25) Only the Egyptians were plagued by their water turning to blood; when the Pharaoh had his magicians copy the plague, they had to get water from the Hebrews' area (or possibly from new wells). After seven days, the blood turned back to water.

[Traditionally, it is taught that each plague lasted seven days, except when the Pharaoh asked Moses for relief; and each plague occurred in a succeeding month.]

The Pharaoh apparently only asked for relief from those plagues that were life threatening (frogs, wild beasts, hail, locusts, and death of the firstborn – of which the Pharaoh was one). (*Or HaChaim*)

(V.8:8-11) The Pharaoh may have suspected that Moses was but a superior magician, who could determine when a plague would naturally end: so he asked Moses to pray immediately that the plague of frogs would cease at a specific time – the next day. He was willing to endure the frogs longer to test this God of Moses.

(V.16-19) When the magicians could not copy the plague of lice, they said, “This is the finger of Elohim.” They acknowledged a God of creation, but not Yahweh, the One Eternal.

Revelation 16:

When God's people are finally delivered from this world of sin, which Egypt represents, then there will again be plagues similar to those of the past. Upon the 'Egyptians' – those who worship the 'beast' – there will be malignant sores, reminiscent of the boils. Then the sea, and next the rivers, will be turned to blood. Fourthly, there will be a plague of fire and heat – more devastating than ice hail. The fifth plague will be darkness, just like in Egypt. Then there will appear three unclean spirits – like frogs; they will perform signs to deceive the world's people.

When the seventh angel pours out his bowl of judgment, a voice from the Temple will be heard saying, “It is done”. Hundred-pound hail stones will be falling, and Babylon will be destroyed. The kingdoms of this world must become the Kingdom of Messiah!

Psalm 45: “*Shoshannim*” – lillies, are symbolic of a bride, figurative of a lover's lips. According to *Metzudas Zion*, these *shoshannim* (usually translated *lilies*) are musical instruments shaped like a roses, used in accompaniment with this Psalm.

Sages say that this love song was dedicated specifically to Messiah, as well as David. “*The Midrash and commentaries relate this Psalm to several individuals described in Scripture. At first Abraham was universally ostracized for his teachings, but he was later acclaimed as the leading citizen of the world. At first David was vilified and pursued, but he was finally accepted as ruler and king. At first Messiah will be challenged, but He will ultimately become the universal sovereign.*” (Artscroll Tanach - Tehillim)

This Psalm is “*A Song of Love*” – concerning the Messiah and His Bride, as she is being delivered from Egyptian bondage. Thus it is related to today's Torah portion.

(V.2) In his preface, the Psalmist says that his *heart is stirred* (overflowing) with a *tov* / good theme, and then his tongue is the pen of a skillful scribe. This is seen as opposite to the usual poet, who fits thoughts into previously selected words and phrases. The Psalmist's heart is moved by God's Spirit to sing prophetic understandings with skillful words of beauty.

Though Yeshua was not naturally of desired beauty among men (Isaiah 53:2), here He is seen as beautiful beyond other men, His words are charming, and He is blessed for eternity! Other Scriptures also portray Him prophetically as beautiful: “*Your eyes will see the King in His beauty*” – Isaiah 33:17.

(V.4) His truth and meekness and righteousness will lead His right hand (His great power) to do wondrous things.

(V.6) His kingship is forever, and the rod of His power is righteousness. Under the Renewed Covenant, we will serve wholeheartedly in love under righteous leading.

(V.7) Nations will fall beneath Him. When He comes to reign, all of the seventy nations of this world will fall, and become the one Kingdom of Messiah. This is what we portray in the Feast of Tabernacles: during the seven days, seventy bulls are offered representing the seventy nations; then, on the Eighth Day, one bull is offered representing the Kingdom of Messiah.

(V.10-11) “*Listen, O daughter, give attention and incline your ear: forget your people and your father's house; then the King will desire your beauty. Because He is your Lord, bow down to Him.*”

Hash'kem Baboker / Rise Up Early in the Morning

Exodus 8:20 – 9:35 Isaiah 34:1-17 Psalm 46 Revelation 8:1 – 9:6

8:16 in Hebrew Bibles

Commentary Y1-50

Adar 25, 5762 / Mar 9, 2002

II Adar 1, 5765 / Mar 12, 2005

Reader 1 Amen.* ²⁰ Now Yahweh said to Moses, "Rise early in the morning and present yourself before Pharaoh, as he comes out to the water, and say to him, 'Thus says Yahweh, "Let My people go, that they may serve Me. ²¹ "For if you do not let My people go, behold, I will send **swarms of insects** on you and on your servants and on your people and into your houses; and the houses of the Egyptians will be full of swarms of insects, and also the ground on which they dwell. ²² "But on that day I will set apart the land of Goshen, where My people are living, so that no swarms of insects will be there, in order that you may know that I, Yahweh, am in the midst of the land. ²³ "I will put a division between My people and your people. Tomorrow this sign will occur.'"²⁴ Then Yahweh did so. And there came great swarms of insects into the house of Pharaoh and the houses of his servants and the land was laid waste because of the swarms of insects in all the land of Egypt. ²⁵ Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron and said, "Go, sacrifice to your God within the land."

Reader 2 Amen.* ²⁶ But Moses said, "It is not right to do so, for we will sacrifice to Yahweh our God what is an abomination to the Egyptians. If we sacrifice what is an abomination to the Egyptians before their eyes, will they not then stone us? ²⁷ "We must go a three days' journey into the wilderness and sacrifice to Yahweh our God as He commands us." ²⁸ Pharaoh said, "I will let you go, that you may sacrifice to Yahweh your God in the wilderness; only you shall not go very far away. Make supplication for me." ²⁹ Then Moses said, "Behold, I am going out from you, and I shall make supplication to Yahweh that the swarms of insects may depart from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people tomorrow; only do not let Pharaoh deal deceitfully again in not letting the people go to sacrifice to Yahweh." ³⁰ So Moses went out from Pharaoh and made supplication to Yahweh. ³¹ Yahweh did as Moses asked, and removed the swarms of insects from Pharaoh, from his servants and from his people; not one remained. ³² But Pharaoh hardened his heart this time also, and he did not let the people go.

Reader 3 Amen.* ^{9:1} Then Yahweh said to Moses, "Go to Pharaoh and speak to him, 'Thus says Yahweh, the God of the Hebrews, "Let My people go, that they may serve Me. ² "For if you refuse to let them go and continue to hold them, ³ behold, the hand of Yahweh will come with a very severe **pestilence on your livestock** which are in the field, on the horses, on the donkeys, on the camels, on the herds, and on the flocks. ⁴ "But Yahweh will make a distinction between the livestock of Israel and the livestock of Egypt, so that nothing will die of all that belongs to the sons of Israel.'"⁵ Yahweh set a definite time, saying, "Tomorrow Yahweh will do this thing in the land." ⁶ So Yahweh did this thing on the next day, and all the livestock of Egypt died; but of the livestock of the sons of Israel, not one died. ⁷ Pharaoh sent, and behold, there was not even one of the livestock of Israel dead. But the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he did not let the people go.

Reader 4 Amen.* ⁸ Then Yahweh said to Moses and Aaron, "Take for yourselves handfuls of soot from a kiln, and let Moses throw it toward the sky in the sight of Pharaoh. ⁹ "It will become fine dust over all the land of Egypt, and will become boils breaking out with sores on man and beast through all the land of Egypt." ¹⁰ So they took soot from a kiln, and stood before Pharaoh; and Moses threw it toward the sky, and it became boils breaking out with sores on man and beast. ¹¹ The magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils, for the boils were on the magicians as well as on all the Egyptians. ¹² And Yahweh hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he did not listen to them, just as Yahweh had spoken to Moses.

Reader 5 Amen.* ¹³ Then Yahweh said to Moses, "Rise up early in the morning and stand before Pharaoh and say to him, 'Thus says Yahweh, the God of the Hebrews, "Let My people go, that they may serve Me. ¹⁴ "For this time I will send all My plagues on you and your servants and your people, so that you may know that there is no one like Me in all the earth. ¹⁵ "For if by now I had put forth My hand and struck you and your people with pestilence, you would then have been cut off from the earth. ¹⁶ "But, indeed, for this reason I have allowed you to remain, in order to show you My power and in order to proclaim My name through all the earth. ¹⁷ "Still you exalt yourself against My people by not letting them go. ¹⁸ "Behold, about this time tomorrow, I will send a very heavy hail, such as has not been seen in Egypt from the day it was founded until now. ¹⁹ "Now therefore send, bring your livestock and whatever you have in the field to safety. Every man and beast that is found in the field and is not brought home, when the hail comes down on them, will die.'"²⁰ The one among the servants of Pharaoh who feared the word of Yahweh made his servants and his livestock flee into the houses; ²¹ but he who paid no regard to the word of Yahweh left his servants and his livestock in the field.

Reader 6 Amen.* ²² Now Yahweh said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand toward the sky, that **hail may fall** on all the land of Egypt, on man and on beast and on every plant of the field, throughout the land of Egypt."

²³ Moses stretched out his staff toward the sky, and Yahweh sent thunder and hail, and fire ran down to the earth. And Yahweh rained hail on the land of Egypt. ²⁴ So there was hail, and fire flashing continually in the midst of the hail, very severe, such as had not been in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. ²⁵ The hail struck all that was in the field through all the land of Egypt, both man and beast; the hail also struck every plant of the field and shattered every tree of the field. ²⁶ Only in the land of Goshen, where the sons of Israel were, there was no hail. ²⁷ Then Pharaoh sent for Moses and Aaron, and said to them, "I have sinned this time; Yahweh is the righteous one, and I and my people are the wicked ones. ²⁸ "Make supplication to Yahweh, for there has been enough of God's thunder and hail; and I will let you go, and you shall stay no longer."

Reader 7 Amen.* ²⁹ Moses said to him, "As soon as I go out of the city, I will spread out my hands to Yahweh; the thunder will cease and there will be hail no longer, that you may know that the earth is Yahweh'S. ³⁰ "But as for you and your servants, I know that you do not yet fear Yahweh God." ³¹ (Now the flax and the barley were ruined, for the barley was in the ear and the flax was in bud. ³² But the wheat and the spelt were not ruined, for they ripen late.) ³³ So Moses went out of the city from Pharaoh, and spread out his hands to Yahweh; and the thunder and the hail ceased, and rain no longer poured on the earth. ³⁴ But when Pharaoh saw that the rain and the hail and the thunder had ceased, he sinned again and hardened his heart, he and his servants. ³⁵ Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he did not let the sons of Israel go, just as Yahweh had spoken through Moses.

Isaiah 34:1-17

Reader 8 Amen.* ¹ Draw near, O nations, to hear; and listen, O peoples! Let the earth and all it contains hear, and the world and all that springs from it. ² For Yahweh's indignation is against all the nations, and His wrath against all their armies; He has utterly destroyed them, He has given them over to slaughter. ³ So their slain will be thrown out, and their corpses will give off their stench, and the mountains will be drenched with their blood. ⁴ And all the host of heaven will wear away, and the sky will be rolled up like a scroll; all their hosts will also wither away as a leaf withers from the vine, or as one withers from the fig tree. ⁵ For My sword is satiated in heaven, behold it shall descend for judgment upon Edom, and upon the people whom I have devoted to destruction.

Reader 9 Amen.* ⁶ The sword of Yahweh is filled with blood, it is sated with fat, with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of the kidneys of rams. For Yahweh has a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Edom. ⁷ Wild oxen shall also fall with them, and young bulls with strong ones; thus their land shall be soaked with blood, and their dust become greasy with fat. ⁸ For Yahweh has a day of vengeance, a year of recompense for the cause of Zion. ⁹ And its streams shall be turned into pitch, and its loose earth into brimstone, and its land shall become burning pitch. ¹⁰ It shall not be quenched night or day; its smoke shall go up forever; from generation to generation it shall be desolate; none shall pass through it forever and ever. ¹¹ But pelican and hedgehog shall possess it, and owl and raven shall dwell in it; and He shall stretch over it the line of desolation and the plumb line of emptiness. ¹² Its nobles-- there is no one there whom they may proclaim king-- and all its princes shall be nothing.

Reader 10 Amen.* ¹³ And thorns shall come up in its fortified towers, nettles and thistles in its fortified cities; it shall also be a haunt of jackals and an abode of ostriches. ¹⁴ And the desert creatures shall meet with the wolves, the hairy goat also shall cry to its kind; yes, the night monster shall settle there and shall find herself a resting place. ¹⁵ The tree snake shall make its nest and lay eggs there, And it will hatch and gather them under its protection. Yes, the hawks shall be gathered there, every one with its kind. ¹⁶ Seek from the book of Yahweh, and read: not one of these will be missing; none will lack its mate. For His mouth has commanded, and His Spirit has gathered them. ¹⁷ And He has cast the lot for them, and His hand has divided it to them by line. They shall possess it forever; from generation to generation they shall dwell in it.

Psalm 46 *(To be sung.) For the choir director. A Psalm of the sons of Korah, set to Alamothe. A Song.*

¹ God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. ² Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change and though the mountains slip into the heart of the sea; ³ though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains quake at its swelling pride. Selah. ⁴ There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy dwelling places of the Most High. ⁵ God is in the midst of her, she will not be moved; God will help her when morning dawns. ⁶ The nations made an uproar, the kingdoms tottered; He

raised His voice, the earth melted. ⁷ Yahweh of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our stronghold. Selah. ⁸ Come, behold the works of Yahweh, Who has wrought desolations in the earth. ⁹ He makes wars to cease to the end of the earth; He breaks the bow and cuts the spear in two; He burns the chariots with fire. ¹⁰ "Cease striving and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth." ¹¹ Yahweh of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our stronghold. Selah.

Revelation 8:1 – 9:6

Reader 11 Amen.* ¹ When the Lamb broke the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. ² And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them. ³ Another angel came and stood at the altar, holding a golden censer; and much incense was given to him, so that he might add it to the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar which was before the throne. ⁴ And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up before God out of the angel's hand. ⁵ Then the angel took the censer and filled it with the fire of the altar, and threw it to the earth; and there followed peals of thunder and sounds and flashes of lightning and an earthquake. ⁶ And the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound them.

Reader 12 Amen.* ⁷ The first sounded, and there came **hail and fire, mixed with blood**, and they were thrown to the earth; and a third of the earth was burned up, and a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up. ⁸ The second angel sounded, and something like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea; and **a third of the sea became blood**, ⁹ and a third of the creatures which were in the sea and had life, died; and a third of the ships were destroyed. ¹⁰ The third angel sounded, and a great star fell from heaven, burning like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of waters. ¹¹ The name of the star is called Wormwood; and a third of the waters became wormwood, and many men died from the waters, because they were made bitter. ¹² The fourth angel sounded, and a third of the sun and a third of the moon and a third of the stars were struck, so that a third of them would be darkened and the day would not shine for a third of it, and the night in the same way. ¹³ Then I looked, and I heard an eagle flying in midheaven, saying with a loud voice, "Woe, woe, woe to those who dwell on the earth, because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound!"

Reader 13 Amen.* ^{9:1} Then the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star from heaven which had fallen to the earth; and the key of the bottomless pit was given to him. ² He opened the bottomless pit, and smoke went up out of the pit, like the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by the smoke of the pit. ³ Then out of the smoke came locusts upon the earth, and power was given them, as the scorpions of the earth have power. ⁴ They were told not to hurt the grass of the earth, nor any green thing, nor any tree, but **only the men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads**. ⁵ And they were not permitted to kill anyone, but to torment for five months; and their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it stings a man. ⁶ And in those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will long to die, and death flees from them.

Commentary:

In the midst of reading about the ten plagues that God used to deliver Israel from Egypt, let us consider the future plagues and the deliverance of God's people from this world of sin.

Before the coming Millennial Sabbath, when Yeshua will reign for a thousand years, the Erev-Shabbat fires of war will be ignited. There will be massive destruction and death on the earth before the thousand-year peace. Following the great Sabbath, the world's armies are going to be gathered against Jerusalem, but all of the armies will be destroyed. The Havdallah fire from heaven will be extinguished in their blood. Then Yeshua will dwell with us on a renewed earth for eternity.

Tribulation preceding the Sabbath:

"From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty"

– Revelation 19:15.

The Millennial Sabbath:

“Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Messiah and will reign with Him for a thousand years. When the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison, and will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together for the war; the number of them is like the sand of the seashore. And they came up on the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, and fire came down from heaven and devoured them” – Revelation 20:6-9.

The Renewed Earth:

“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them” – Revelation 21:1-3.

“Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth” – Matthew 5:5.

“The righteous will inherit the earth and dwell in it forever” – Psalm 37:29.

Isaiah 34:

(V.1) *“Sh’ma, O nations!”* Hear / obey what Yahweh has to tell you!

(V.2) *“Yahweh’s indignation is against all the nations!”* Their armies shall be destroyed, the hills drenched with blood, the corpses making a great stench. Concerning Edom, it is Yahweh’s day of vengeance, and for Zion, the year of recompense.

Present-day Jordan is where part of Edom was 3,000 years ago, south of Israel. Today, Edom is seen as representing the Roman Empire’s world-wide influence.

In Revelation 18, we read that *“Babylon the Great is fallen! . . . The kings of the earth have committed immorality with her”*. Babylon is in present-day Iraq, east of Israel. But the description of Babylon here strongly resembles Rome, and Rome has to the present perpetuated the Babylonian religious system that began with Nimrod worship.

Our country uses a Roman calendar – for years (AD 2005), months (January through December), hours of the day (midnight to midnight), and national holidays. Much of our religious culture is Roman – from Sunday observance to church hierarchy and doctrine.

God says, *“Come out of her, my people, so that you will not participate in her sins and receive of her plagues”* (v.4). In one day, Babylon will be plagued, and burned (Revelation 18:8). God says to rejoice over this (v.20)! Next we see Yeshua beginning to reign, and the Marriage supper of the Lamb (v.19:7). This is what we rehearse in the Feast of Tabernacles, the Marriage Feast – all nations falling, and becoming the Kingdom of Messiah. This places the time just prior to the beginning of the Millennial Sabbath, the last thousand years before the earth is cleansed by fire.

Edom will be burned, and no man will even pass through it. Thorns and nettles will grow there, and wild beasts and monsters will dwell in it. Yahweh will gather the animals and portion out the land to them, and it will be theirs forever (v.17).

Revelation 8:

Prior to the Millennial Sabbath, the world will see judgments reminiscent of the plagues on Egypt. John prophetically saw seven angels with seven trumpets. As each angel sounded his trumpet, a plague came upon the world. With the first five trumpets there is hail and fire mixed with blood (v.7), a third of the sea becoming blood (v.8), a third of the waters becoming deadly bitter (v.11), a third of the day being dark and a third of the night without moon or stars (v.12), and smoke ascending and bringing locusts (v.9:2-3). It will become so horrible that men will seek to die, and will not be able to die (v.6)!

Psalm 46:

For the choir director. A Psalm of the sons of Korah, set to Alamoth.

This Psalm was presented to the Temple Choir director.

It was to be sung by *alamoth* – young soprano women. The theme is “*Young maidens love You.*”

It was for the sons of Korah:

(Numbers 16) Korah and three others led 250 leaders in Israel to rebel against Moses. God caused the earth to open up and swallow Korah and his adult household and possessions. But the sons of Korah did not die (v.26:11), apparently having not been part of the rebellion.

(V.1-2) “*God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change.*” God defends us, and also strengthens us for the time of battle. “*If God be for us, who can be against us?*” – Romans 8:31. We therefore need not fear, even if we see the world being destroyed around us!

One Jewish commentary (Chazah Zion) says that this refers to the sons of Korah, who received “*refuge, strength, and help*” when they witnessed the earth opening up and swallowing their families. Another (Radak) says that this refers to “*the travails of the advent of Messiah*”.

(V.3) “*Though (earth’s) waters roar and foam, though the mountains quake at its swelling pride*” is a metaphor for the armies of the earth – Gog and Magog – roaring, then in defeat being covered with rubble.

(V.4) “*There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy dwelling places of the Most High.*” This river is seen in the Eden of old and the Eden / Paradise of the future. Yeshua will dwell in this city, when he dwells on the renewed earth with us.

“*Now a river flowed out of Eden to water the garden; and from there it divided and became four rivers*” – Genesis 2:10.

“*Then he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb, in the middle of its street. On either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.*” – Revelation 22:1-2.

(V.6-9) “*The nations made an uproar, the kingdoms tottered; He raised His voice, the earth melted. Yahweh of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our stronghold. Selah. Come, behold the works of Yahweh, Who has wrought desolations in the earth. He makes wars to cease to the end of the earth; He breaks the bow and cuts the spear in two; He burns the chariots with fire.*” In the Psalm, we see what the prophets tell us, that the nations will be gathered against God’s people, but He Who is Almighty will defend us and deliver us. He will put a sure and permanent end to the war.

(V.10-11) “*Cease striving and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.*” *Yahweh of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our stronghold. Selah.*” We can rest in knowing our Sovereign God. He is far higher than all the nations with their armies. He is ruling in the affairs of men, though they cannot see this. Yahweh – the commander of the armies of heaven – is our defense and strength.

Sabbath Readings and Commentaries

Studying through-the-Bible on the Temple Triennial Cycle

Leap Year – 13th Month

Congregation Beikvot HaMashiach (Followers of the Messiah)

www.messianic.ws

Shekalim / Shekels (Coins)

Exodus 30:11-16 II Kings 2:1-17 No Psalm John 2:13-25

Commentary LY-01

II Adar 8, 5765 / Mar 19, 2005

Worship – Service for Yeshua

(כִּי תִשָּׂא אֶת־רֹשׁ / *Ki Tissa et-Rosh* / When you take a census)

Reader 1 Amen.* ¹¹ Yahweh also spoke to Moses, saying, ¹² "When you take a census of the sons of Israel to number them, then each one of them shall give a ransom for himself to Yahweh, when you number them, so that there will be no plague among them when you number them. ¹³ "This is what everyone who is numbered shall give: half a shekel according to the shekel of the sanctuary (the shekel is twenty gerahs), half a shekel as a contribution to Yahweh.

Reader 2 Amen.* ¹⁴ "Everyone who is numbered, from twenty years old and over, shall give the contribution to Yahweh. ¹⁵ "The rich shall not pay more and the poor shall not pay less than the half shekel, when you give the contribution to Yahweh to make atonement for yourselves. ¹⁶ "You shall take the atonement money from the sons of Israel and shall give it for the service of the tent of meeting, that it may be a memorial for the sons of Israel before Yahweh, to make atonement for yourselves."

II Kings 2:1-17

Reader 3 Amen.* ¹ And it came about when Yahweh was about to take up Elijah by a whirlwind to heaven, that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal. ² Elijah said to Elisha, "Stay here please, for Yahweh has sent me as far as Bethel." But Elisha said, "As Yahweh lives and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So they went down to Bethel. ³ Then the sons of the prophets who were at Bethel came out to Elisha and said to him, "Do you know that Yahweh will take away your master from over you today?" And he said, "Yes, I know; be still." ⁴ Elijah said to him, "Elisha, please stay here, for Yahweh has sent me to Jericho." But he said, "As Yahweh lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So they came to Jericho. ⁵ The sons of the prophets who were at Jericho approached Elisha and said to him, "Do you know that Yahweh will take away your master from over you today?" And he answered, "Yes, I know; be still." ⁶ Then Elijah said to him, "Please stay here, for Yahweh has sent me to the Jordan." And he said, "As Yahweh lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So the two of them went on. *Reader 4* Amen.* ⁷ Now fifty men of the sons of the prophets went and stood opposite them at a distance, while the two of them stood by the Jordan. ⁸ Elijah took his mantle and folded it together and struck the waters, and they were divided here and there, so that the two of them crossed over on dry ground. ⁹ When they had crossed over, Elijah said to Elisha, "Ask what I shall do for you before I am taken from you." And Elisha said, "Please, let a double portion of your spirit be upon me." ¹⁰ He said, "You have asked a hard thing. Nevertheless, if you see me when I am taken from you, it shall be so for you; but if not, it shall not be so." ¹¹ As they were going along and talking, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire and horses of fire which separated the two of them. And Elijah went up by a whirlwind to heaven.

Reader 5 Amen.* ¹² Elisha saw it and cried out, "My father, my father, the chariots of Israel and its horsemen!" And he saw Elijah no more. Then he took hold of his own clothes and tore them in two pieces. ¹³ He also took up the mantle of Elijah that fell from him and returned and stood by the bank of the Jordan. ¹⁴ He took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him and struck the waters and said, "Where is Yahweh, the God of Elijah?" And when he also had struck the waters, they were divided here and there; and Elisha crossed over. ¹⁵ Now when the sons of the prophets who were at Jericho opposite him saw him, they said, "The spirit of Elijah rests on Elisha." And they came to meet him and bowed themselves to the ground before him. ¹⁶ They said to him, "Behold now, there are with your servants fifty strong men, please let them go and search for your master; perhaps the Spirit of Yahweh has taken him up and cast him on some mountain or into some valley." And he said, "You shall not send." ¹⁷ But when they urged him until he was ashamed, he said, "Send." They sent therefore fifty men; and they searched three days but did not find him.

[No Psalm]

John 2:13-25

Reader 6 Amen.* ¹³ The Passover of the Jews was near, and Yeshua went up to Jerusalem. ¹⁴ And He found in the temple those who were selling oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables. ¹⁵ And He made a scourge of cords, and drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen; and He poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables; ¹⁶ and to those who were selling the doves He said, "Take these things away; stop making My Father's house a place of business." ¹⁷ His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for Your House will consume me." *Reader 7* Amen.* ¹⁸ The Jews then said to Him, "What sign do You show us as your authority for doing these things?" ¹⁹ Yeshua answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." ²⁰ The Jews then said, "It took forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?" ²¹ But He was speaking of the temple of His body. ²² So when He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He said this; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had spoken. ²³ Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name, observing His signs which He was doing. ²⁴ But Yeshua, on His part, was not entrusting Himself to them, for He knew all men, ²⁵ and because He did not need anyone to testify concerning man, for He Himself knew what was in man.

Commentary:

This year there is a great proliferation of falsehood being sent, largely via e-mail and web-sites. The so-called Karaites are trying to convince Messianics that this is not a leap-year because, as they claim, the barley is already ripening.

A problem here is: the Torah never says that we are to look for the ripening barley and then make a determination of the New Year – which determines when we celebrate the Passover. The issue of the barley is not a Torah rule; it was a rule of the Sanhedrin that applied only to them! Neither we nor Karaites have any authority to make calendar decisions.

(V.12) When a census was taken, each man twenty years and older was to contribute a half-shekel silver coin: counting these dime-size coins was the only allowed method of determining the number of people. King David violated this command, making a direct head-count, for which cause a plague came upon Israel (II Samuel 24), as foretold in today's portion (v.12).

These contributions were to be used for the worship service in the Tabernacle. A collection was made annually, in this month of Adar, for the communal offerings (sacrifices) of the coming Passover season. "When you take a census" would more literally translate "When you elevate the heads . . .": the contributions are seen as worshipfully "lifting the heads" of the contributors.

Note: The words "holy" and "sanctified" are from the same Hebrew root (*Chodesh*), meaning to be distinct and set apart, or dedicated for a particular use – as for God's purpose.

"For the service of the tent of meeting" – Exodus 30:16.

"We have an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat. For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the holy place by the high priest as an offering for sin, are burned outside the camp. Therefore Yeshua also, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered outside the gate. So, let us go out to Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach. For here we do not have a lasting city, but we are seeking the city which is to come. Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His Name" – Hebrews 13:10-15.

By virtue of our very existence, we owe our lives to our creator. As those who are redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, we owe our lives to serve Him. We have no basis for being proud that God has separated us

from those who live for themselves. Rather, we need to be diligent about learning how to please Him in love, as those who are chosen by grace.

“Moreover, they (the priests) shall teach My people the difference between the holy and the profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean . . . They shall also keep My Torah, and My statutes in all My appointed feasts, and sanctify My Sabbaths” – Ezekiel 44:23-24..

God has declared the Sabbath to be holy (Genesis 2:3), and we are to make it holy. By lighting candles just before and after the Holy Sabbath, we distinguish it from the work week. Between the candle-lightings, when we are not to kindle fires (Exodus 35:3), we remember through that device to keep the time holy – dedicated to worship.

“Be ye holy, for I am holy” – Leviticus 11:44, 45, 20:26, 1 Peter 1:16.

God has declared us to be holy, and we are to be holy. When we light the Sabbath candles, before we read God’s Word, and before we sing Psalms, we say, *“Blessed are You, Yahweh our God, King of the Universe, Who has sanctified us by His Word, and instructed us . . .”* God has made us distinct from the world by His Word. Before we spend a day in worship, read or sing His inspired words, and before we fulfill other specific instructions from His Word, we recognize that by giving us these things God has distinguished us from others. We are to be set apart as holy to our God – dedicated to His service.

II Kings 2

Elijah and Elisha are examples of men that were holy: their lives were dedicated to the service of God. We do not all have the same role to fulfill in this life, but we are all created to be dedicated to the service of our savior.

Incidentally, it appears that the “mantle” (*adderet*) of Elijah that Elisha took, and used it to separate the waters of the Jordan, was his *tallit* – the cloak with *tzitzit* that symbolize the commandments of God.

John 2

(V.13) The time of the Passover sacrifice is approaching, and we would do well to cleanse our temples. (V.17) Yeshua, as prophesied, was filled with zeal for the House of the Holy One: we are also “His Temple”.

“Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If any man destroys the Temple of God, God will destroy him, for the Temple of God is holy, and that is what you are” – I Corinthians 3:16-17.

If we are to be holy, set apart, “*sanctified by His Word*”, then we must know what *His Word* is! We cannot be His servants unless we know how He wants us to serve Him.

“How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers! But his delight is in the Torah of Yahweh, and in His Torah he meditates day and night. He will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in its season and its leaf does not wither; and in whatever he does, he prospers” – Psalm 1:1-3.

“Those who love Your Torah have great peace, and nothing causes them to stumble” – Psalm 119:165.

Many people erroneously try to serve Him by doing whatever they think would be good, without knowing His instructions. They may be believers who are unlearned, or they may be religious but unbelievers. In any case, we are not allowed to worship based on what is naturally in us.

(V.24-25) *“But Yeshua, on His part, was not entrusting Himself to them, for He knew all men, and because He did not need anyone to testify concerning man, for He Himself knew what was in man.”*

“From Your precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way. Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path” – Psalm 119:104-105.

The first way for us to be set apart, is to know Yahweh as our God, as opposed to having a god of our own creation – a god that is whatever we think he should be. This is the first of the Ten Commandments: Yahweh is our God, and we shall have no other gods. We must learn what God says are His attributes. We must recognize that He is the creator of all things – like the beginning of The Book says. We must learn that He is in control of all of His creation, and then we will have a proper basis for prayer and worship. When we partake in His Sabbaths and Festivals, great truths about Him are regularly set before us.

The Bible begins by telling us that God is our creator, and by setting the perspective of our standing before Him.

Only when we understand that He holds all power, do we have a basis to make requests of Him. Only when we are doing His will are we told that He will hear us (I John 5:14); only when we are acting as His representatives – asking “in His Name – are we promised fulfillment of prayers (John 14:13).

His Sabbaths and Festivals are shadow pictures of Yeshua Himself (Colossians 2:16-17).

The second greatest commandment (Matthew 22:36-40), which is expanded in the last five of the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:13-17), is to love our neighbor as one who is created in the image of God.

Here we need to learn such things as how to judge righteously, and how to avoid gossip and slander. We need to understand the meaning of covetousness.

Gossip is symbolized by leaven. The words spread uncontrolled, and cannot be taken back.

Consider this saying: If you say of a teacher that he cannot sing, or of a cantor that he is ignorant, you have slandered his name. But, if you say of a teacher that he is ignorant, or of a cantor that he has no voice for singing, you have committed murder. (This is not meant to deny a proper place for righteous judgment.) Slander does not mean saying something false: it means saying something that is destructive about another’s standing.

In worship of our sacrificed savior, let us study His Word to learn where we stand before Him, and to learn how He would have us serve Him. We need to learn to keep our thoughts on things that are honorable and right and pure (Philippians 4:8). We need to learn correct motives. We need to learn what is proper to say, and when, and how: this is not what we naturally presume.

We should learn to help one another to overcome sin, and we should learn to accept correction. These are naturally difficult, contrary to our prideful natures.

“If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother” – Matthew 18:15.

In conclusion, as we approach the Passover offering, let us *“Clean out the old leaven so that you may be a new lump, just as you are in fact unleavened. For Messiah our Passover also has been sacrificed” – I Corinthians 5:7-8.*

A great Promised Land awaits us. As we go through the Festival Year, we rehearse how Yeshua redeemed us, how that He will return for us, and how that He will fulfill His promise of a new world for us where He will dwell with us eternally in righteousness.

Purim & The Fear of Yahweh

(זָכוֹר אֶת אֲשֶׁר-עָשָׂה לְךָ עַמְלֵק) / *Zachor et asher-asah lecha Amalek* / Remember what Amalek did to you)

Reader 1 Amen.* ¹⁷ "Remember what Amalek did to you along the way when you came out from Egypt, ¹⁸ how he met you along the way and attacked among you all the stragglers at your rear when you were faint and weary; and he did not fear God. ¹⁹ "Therefore it shall come about when Yahweh your God has given you rest from all your surrounding enemies, in the land which Yahweh your God gives you as an inheritance to possess, you shall blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven; you must not forget.

I Samuel 15:1-34

Reader 2 Amen.* ¹ Then Samuel said to Saul, "Yahweh sent me to anoint you as king over His people, over Israel; now therefore, listen to the words of Yahweh. ² "Thus says Yahweh of hosts, 'I will punish Amalek for what he did to Israel, how he set himself against him on the way while he was coming up from Egypt. ³ 'Now go and strike Amalek and utterly destroy all that he has, and do not spare him; but put to death both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.'"

Reader 3 Amen.* ⁴ Then Saul summoned the people and numbered them in Telaim, 200,000 foot soldiers and 10,000 men of Judah. ⁵ Saul came to the city of Amalek and set an ambush in the valley. ⁶ Saul said to the Kenites, "Go, depart, go down from among the Amalekites, so that I do not destroy you with them; for you showed kindness to all the sons of Israel when they came up from Egypt." So the Kenites departed from among the Amalekites. ⁷ So Saul defeated the Amalekites, from Havilah as you go to Shur, which is east of Egypt. ⁸ He captured Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword. ⁹ But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep, the oxen, the fatlings, the lambs, and all that was good, and were not willing to destroy them utterly; but everything despised and worthless, that they utterly destroyed.

Reader 4 Amen.* ¹⁰ Then the word of Yahweh came to Samuel, saying, ¹¹ "I regret that I have made Saul king, for he has turned back from following Me and has not carried out My commands." And Samuel was distressed and cried out to Yahweh all night. ¹² Samuel rose early in the morning to meet Saul; and it was told Samuel, saying, "Saul came to Carmel, and behold, he set up a monument for himself, then turned and proceeded on down to Gilgal." ¹³ Samuel came to Saul, and Saul said to him, "Blessed are you of Yahweh! I have carried out the command of Yahweh." ¹⁴ But Samuel said, "What then is this bleating of the sheep in my ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?" ¹⁵ Saul said, "They have brought them from the Amalekites, for the people spared the best of the sheep and oxen, to sacrifice to Yahweh your God; but the rest we have utterly destroyed."

Reader 5 Amen.* ¹⁶ Then Samuel said to Saul, "Wait, and let me tell you what Yahweh said to me last night." And he said to him, "Speak!" ¹⁷ Samuel said, "Is it not true, though you were little in your own eyes, you were made the head of the tribes of Israel? And Yahweh anointed you king over Israel, ¹⁸ and Yahweh sent you on a mission, and said, 'Go and utterly destroy the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until they are exterminated.' ¹⁹ "Why then did you not obey the voice of Yahweh, but rushed upon the spoil and did what was evil in the sight of Yahweh?" ²⁰ Then Saul said to Samuel, "I did obey the voice of Yahweh, and went on the mission on which Yahweh sent me, and have brought back Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. ²¹ "But the people took some of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the choicest of the things devoted to destruction, to sacrifice to Yahweh your God at Gilgal."

Reader 6 Amen.* ²² Samuel said, "Has Yahweh as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of Yahweh? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams. ²³ "For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of Yahweh, He has also rejected you from being king." ²⁴ Then Saul said to Samuel, "I have sinned; I have indeed transgressed the command of Yahweh and your words, because I feared the people and listened to their voice. ²⁵ "Now therefore, please pardon my sin and return with me, that I may worship Yahweh." ²⁶ But Samuel said to Saul, "I will not return with you; for you have rejected the word of Yahweh, and Yahweh has rejected you from being king over Israel." *Reader 7* Amen.* ²⁷ As Samuel turned

to go, Saul seized the edge of his robe, and it tore.²⁸ So Samuel said to him, "Yahweh has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today and has given it to your neighbor, who is better than you."²⁹ "Also the Glory of Israel will not lie or change His mind; for He is not a man that He should change His mind."³⁰ Then he said, "I have sinned; but please honor me now before the elders of my people and before Israel, and go back with me, that I may worship Yahweh your God."³¹ So Samuel went back following Saul, and Saul worshiped Yahweh.³² Then Samuel said, "Bring me Agag, the king of the Amalekites." And Agag came to him cheerfully. And Agag said, "Surely the bitterness of death is past."³³ But Samuel said, "As your sword has made women childless, so shall your mother be childless among women." And Samuel hewed Agag to pieces before Yahweh at Gilgal.³⁴ Then Samuel went to Ramah, but Saul went up to his house at Gibeah of Saul.³⁵ Samuel did not see Saul again until the day of his death; for Samuel grieved over Saul. And Yahweh regretted that He had made Saul king over Israel.

II Thessalonians 2:1-17

Reader 8 Amen.*¹ Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah and our gathering together to Him,² that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the Day of the Lord has come.³ Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction,⁴ who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the Temple of God, displaying himself as being God.⁵ Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things?

Reader 9 Amen.*⁶ And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he will be revealed.⁷ For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way.⁸ Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming;⁹ that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders,¹⁰ and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved.¹¹ For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false,¹² in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.

Reader 10 Amen.*¹³ But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth.¹⁴ It was for this He called you through our gospel, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah.¹⁵ So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught, whether by word of mouth or by letter from us.¹⁶ Now may our Lord Yeshua the Messiah Himself and God our Father, who has loved us and given us eternal comfort and good hope by grace,¹⁷ comfort and strengthen your hearts in every good work and word.

Commentary:

Purim is the Hebrew word meaning lots, as in casting lots. This is because lots were cast to determine that all Jews would be killed on Adar 13 (Esther 3:7 & 13).

Every year on Adar 14, the Book of Esther is read, and often enacted by children. Whenever the name of Esther or Mordechai is read, everyone cheers. When the name of *Haman* or one of his sons is read, it is drowned out by noisemakers or boos, because we are to banish their names. Esther 9:18 & 28 instructs us to celebrate this day.

March 25, 2005 is the date to celebrate Purim (it starts on the evening prior).

This year, AM 5765 (AD 2004-5), is a leap year with thirteen months. The twelfth month is Adar I, and this year also has an Adar II. Celebrations usually held in the twelfth month are held in the thirteenth month. Therefore, Purim is celebrated on the 14th day of Adar II (the 14th day of Adar I is called Purim Katan, meaning Little Purim).

Amalek was a grandson of Esau (Genesis 36:12).

During the exodus from Egypt, Amalek attacked Israel.

⁸ Then Amalek came and fought against Israel at Rephidim. ⁹ So Moses said to Joshua, "Choose men for us and go out, fight against Amalek. Tomorrow I will station myself on the top of the hill with the staff of God in my hand." ¹⁰ Joshua did as Moses told him, and fought against Amalek; and Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. ¹¹ So it came about when Moses held his hand up, that Israel prevailed, and when he let his hand down, Amalek prevailed. ¹² But Moses' hands were heavy. Then they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it; and Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on one side and one on the other. Thus his hands were steady until the sun set. ¹³ So Joshua overwhelmed Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword. ¹⁴ Then Yahweh said to Moses, "Write this in a book as a memorial and recite it to Joshua, that **I will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven.**" ¹⁵ Moses built an altar and named it Yahweh-Nissi (Yahweh is My Banner); ¹⁶ and he said, "Yahweh has sworn; Yahweh will have war against Amalek from generation to generation" – Ex6odus 17:8-1.

Yahweh commanded Israel to annihilate the Amalekites when they came to rest in the Promised Land. ¹⁷ "Remember what Amalek did to you along the way when you came out from Egypt, ¹⁸ how he met you along the way and attacked among you all the stragglers at your rear when you were faint and weary; and he did not fear God. ¹⁹ "Therefore it shall come about when Yahweh your God has given you rest from all your surrounding enemies, in the land which Yahweh your God gives you as an inheritance to possess, you shall blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven; you must not forget – Deuteronomy 25:17-19.

When Israel was settled in the Promised Land, Yahweh ordered King Saul to carry out His previous command.

¹ Then Samuel said to Saul, "Yahweh sent me to anoint you as king over His people, over Israel; now therefore, listen to the words of Yahweh. ² "Thus says Yahweh of hosts, 'I will punish Amalek for what he did to Israel, how he set himself against him on the way while he was coming up from Egypt. ³ 'Now go and strike Amalek and utterly destroy all that he has, and do not spare him; but put to death both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey'" – I Samuel 15:1-34.

But King Saul disobeyed. He put his own judgment ahead of God's. In the immediate, Saul lost his kingship.

⁹ But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep, the oxen, the fatlings, the lambs, and all that was good, and were not willing to destroy them utterly; but everything despised and worthless, that they utterly destroyed – I Samuel 15:9.

In the long term, King Saul's decision to spare King Agag meant that Agag would have a son whose descendants would seek to annihilate Israel.

¹⁰ Then the king took his signet ring from his hand and gave it to Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the enemy of the Jews. ¹¹ The king said to Haman, "The silver is yours, and the people also, to do with them as you please" – Esther 3:10-11.

 In a parallel story, David showed mercy to Saul's descendant Shimei. Shimei cursed David and threw stones at him, but afterwards repented. David spared his life.

⁵ When King David came to Bahurim, behold, there came out from there a man of the family of the house of Saul whose name was Shimei, the son of Gera; he came out cursing continually as he came. . . ¹³ So David and his men went on the way; and Shimei went along on the hillside parallel with him and as he went he cursed and cast stones and threw dust at him. . .
 And Shimei the son of Gera fell down before the king as he was about to cross the Jordan. ¹⁹ So he said to the king, "Let not my lord consider me guilty, nor remember what your servant did wrong on the day when my lord the king came out from Jerusalem, so that the king would take it to heart. ²⁰ "For your servant knows that I have sinned; therefore behold, I have come today, the first of all the house of Joseph to go down to meet my lord the king." ²¹ But Abishai the son of Zeruiah said, "Should not Shimei be put to death for this, because he

cursed Yahweh's anointed?"²² David then said, "What have I to do with you, O sons of Zeruiah, that you should this day be an adversary to me? Should any man be put to death in Israel today? For do I not know that I am king over Israel today?"²³ The king said to Shimei, "You shall not die." Thus the king swore to him – II Samuel 19:5-23.

From Saul, through Shimei, descended Mordecai and Esther.

⁵ Now there was at the citadel in Susa a Jew whose name was Mordecai, the son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, a Benjamite, ⁶ who had been taken into exile from Jerusalem with the captives who had been exiled with Jeconiah king of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had exiled. ⁷ He was bringing up Hadassah, that is Esther, his uncle's daughter, for she had no father or mother. Now the young lady was beautiful of form and face, and when her father and her mother died, Mordecai took her as his own daughter – Esther 2:5-7.

While the statuesque (1 Samuel 9:2) King Saul put his own thoughts ahead of God's, and disobeyed God's command to kill King Agag. As a result, the wicked Haman came on the scene attempting to destroy Israel. But King David showed mercy to a repentant Shimei, a descendant of Saul, and the result was the young woman Esther, who was used to eliminate Haman. And now we celebrate Purim, remembering the results of a proud man's disobedience, and a young woman's faithfulness.

II Thessalonians 2

God's declaration of intent to destroy Amalek is reminiscent of the coming Day of Yahweh.

The Day of Yahweh (*Yom Yahweh* – commonly translated *The Day of the LORD*) is foretold in many passages of Scripture. [Greek: I Thess 5:2, II Pet 3:10 *hamera kuriou*; Rev 1:10 *kuriakai hamera*] The wicked are going to be destroyed from the earth.

⁶ Wail, for the Day of Yahweh is near! It will come as destruction from the Almighty. ⁷ Therefore all hands will fall limp, and every man's heart will melt. ⁸ They will be terrified, pains and anguish will take hold of them; they will writhe like a woman in labor, they will look at one another in astonishment, their faces aflame. ⁹ Behold, the Day of Yahweh is coming, cruel, with fury and burning anger, to make the land a desolation; and He will exterminate its sinners from it. ¹⁰ For the stars of heaven and their constellations will not flash forth their light; the sun will be dark when it rises and the moon will not shed its light. ¹¹ Thus I will punish the world for its evil and the wicked for their iniquity; I will also put an end to the arrogance of the proud and abase the haughtiness of the ruthless. ¹² I will make mortal man scarcer than pure gold and mankind than the gold of Ophir. ¹³ Therefore I will make the heavens tremble, and the earth will be shaken from its place at the fury of Yahweh of hosts in the day of His burning anger – Isaiah 13:6-13.

³ "For the day is near, even the Day of Yahweh is near; it will be a day of clouds, a time of doom for the nations – Ezekiel 30:3.

¹ Blow a trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm on My holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the Day of Yahweh is coming; surely it is near, ² a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness. As the dawn is spread over the mountains, so there is a great and mighty people; there has never been anything like it, nor will there be again after it to the years of many generations. ³ A fire consumes before them and behind them a flame burns. The land is like the garden of Eden before them but a desolate wilderness behind them, and nothing at all escapes them. ⁴ Their appearance is like the appearance of horses; and like war horses, so they run. ⁵ With a noise as of chariots they leap on the tops of the mountains, like the crackling of a flame of fire consuming the stubble, like a mighty people arranged for battle. ⁶ Before them the people are in anguish; all faces turn pale. ⁷ They run like mighty men, they climb the wall like soldiers; and they each march in line, nor do they deviate from their paths. ⁸ They do not crowd each other, they march

everyone in his path; when they burst through the defenses, they do not break ranks.⁹ They rush on the city, they run on the wall; they climb into the houses, they enter through the windows like a thief.¹⁰ Before them the earth quakes, the heavens tremble, the sun and the moon grow dark and the stars lose their brightness.¹¹ Yahweh utters His voice before His army; surely His camp is very great, for strong is he who carries out His Word. The Day of Yahweh is indeed great and very awesome, and who can endure it?¹² "Yet even now," declares Yahweh, "Return to Me with all your heart, and with fasting, weeping and mourning;¹³ and rend your heart and not your garments." Now return to Yahweh your God, for He is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, abounding in lovingkindness and relenting of evil – Joel 2:1-13.

¹⁵ "For the Day of Yahweh draws near on all the nations. As you have done, it will be done to you. Your dealings will return on your own head.¹⁶ "Because just as you drank on My holy mountain, all the nations will drink continually. They will drink and swallow and become as if they had never existed.¹⁷ "But on Mount Zion there will be those who escape, and it will be holy. And the house of Jacob will possess their possessions – Obadiah 1:15-17.

While the righteous may look forward to the Great Sabbath, the prophet Amos warned the self-righteous that for them it would come as a day of calamity – not something to anticipate joyfully.

¹⁸ Alas, you who are longing for the Day of Yahweh, for what purpose will the Day of Yahweh be to you? It will be darkness and not light;¹⁹ as when a man flees from a lion And a bear meets him, or goes home, leans his hand against the wall And a snake bites him.²⁰ Will not the Day of Yahweh be darkness instead of light, even gloom with no brightness in it?²¹ I hate, I reject your festivals, nor do I delight in your solemn assemblies – Amos 5:18-21.

Now we must understand, that evil is going to come. Deception will be very strong, as even now we see its beginnings in such things as evolution and individual rights to be evil.

But God has chosen us to believe the truth (II Thessalonians 2:13). Therefore, we have no basis to be proud, but owe all glory to Him.

As for the righteous – believers, God is longsuffering toward us, and will bring each one to repentance.

^{1:1} To those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Yeshua the Messiah (This is not applied to all people.):

*^{3:9} The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient **toward you**, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.¹⁰ But the Day of Yahweh will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.¹¹ Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness,¹² looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat!¹³ But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.¹⁴ Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless – II Peter 1:1, 3:9-13.*

We need not fear evil. We must set our priorities on serving God in love, and trust Him that, as He says, everything will work for our ultimate good – even calamities.

Clean & Unclean

(זֹאת חֻקַּת הַתּוֹרָה אֲשֶׁר־צִוָּה יְהוָה) /

Zot huqat haTorah asher tzavah Yahweh / This is the statute of the Torah that Yahweh commanded)

Reader 1 Amen.* ¹ Then Yahweh spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, ² "This is the statute of the law which Yahweh has commanded, saying, 'Speak to the sons of Israel that they bring you an unblemished red heifer in which is no defect and on which a yoke has never been placed. ³ 'You shall give it to Eleazar the priest, and it shall be brought outside the camp and be slaughtered in his presence.

Reader 2 Amen.* ⁴ 'Next Eleazar the priest shall take some of its blood with his finger and sprinkle some of its blood toward the front of the tent of meeting seven times. ⁵ 'Then the heifer shall be burned in his sight; its hide and its flesh and its blood, with its refuse, shall be burned. ⁶ 'The priest shall take cedar wood and hyssop and scarlet material and cast it into the midst of the burning heifer.

Reader 3 Amen.* ⁷ 'The priest shall then wash his clothes and bathe his body in water, and afterward come into the camp, but the priest shall be unclean until evening. ⁸ 'The one who burns it shall also wash his clothes in water and bathe his body in water, and shall be unclean until evening. ⁹ 'Now a man who is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer and deposit them outside the camp in a clean place, and the congregation of the sons of Israel shall keep it as water to remove impurity; it is purification from sin. ¹⁰ 'The one who gathers the ashes of the heifer shall wash his clothes and be unclean until evening; and it shall be a perpetual statute to the sons of Israel and to the alien who sojourns among them.

Reader 4 Amen.* ¹¹ 'The one who touches the corpse of any person shall be unclean for seven days. ¹² 'That one shall purify himself from uncleanness with the water on the third day and on the seventh day, and then he will be clean; but if he does not purify himself on the third day and on the seventh day, he will not be clean. ¹³ 'Anyone who touches a corpse, the body of a man who has died, and does not purify himself, defiles the tabernacle of Yahweh; and that person shall be cut off from Israel. Because the water for impurity was not sprinkled on him, he shall be unclean; his uncleanness is still on him.

Reader 5 Amen.* ¹⁴ 'This is the law when a man dies in a tent: everyone who comes into the tent and everyone who is in the tent shall be unclean for seven days. ¹⁵ 'Every open vessel, which has no covering tied down on it, shall be unclean. ¹⁶ 'Also, anyone who in the open field touches one who has been slain with a sword or who has died naturally, or a human bone or a grave, shall be unclean for seven days.

Reader 6 Amen.* ¹⁷ 'Then for the unclean person they shall take some of the ashes of the burnt purification from sin and flowing water shall be added to them in a vessel. ¹⁸ 'A clean person shall take hyssop and dip it in the water, and sprinkle it on the tent and on all the furnishings and on the persons who were there, and on the one who touched the bone or the one slain or the one dying naturally or the grave. ¹⁹ 'Then the clean person shall sprinkle on the unclean on the third day and on the seventh day; and on the seventh day he shall purify him from uncleanness, and he shall wash his clothes and bathe himself in water and shall be clean by evening.

Reader 7 Amen.* ²⁰ 'But the man who is unclean and does not purify himself from uncleanness, that person shall be cut off from the midst of the assembly, because he has defiled the sanctuary of Yahweh; the water for impurity has not been sprinkled on him, he is unclean. ²¹ 'So it shall be a perpetual statute for them. And he who sprinkles the water for impurity shall wash his clothes, and he who touches the water for impurity shall be unclean until evening. ²² 'Furthermore, anything that the unclean person touches shall be unclean; and the person who touches it shall be unclean until evening.'"

Ezekiel 36:16-38

Reader 8 Amen.* ¹⁶ Then the word of Yahweh came to me saying, ¹⁷ "Son of man, when the house of Israel was living in their own land, they defiled it by their ways and their deeds; their way before Me was like the uncleanness of a woman in her impurity. ¹⁸ "Therefore I poured out My wrath on them for the blood which they had shed on the land, because they had defiled it with their idols. ¹⁹ "Also I scattered them among the nations and they were dispersed throughout the lands. According to their ways and their deeds I judged them.

Reader 9 Amen.* ²⁰ "When they came to the nations where they went, they profaned My holy name, because it was said of them, 'These are the people of Yahweh; yet they have come out of His land.' ²¹ "But I had concern for My holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the nations where they went. ²² "Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'Thus says Lord Yahweh, "It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for My holy Name, which you have profaned among the nations where you went. ²³ "I will vindicate the holiness of My great Name which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst. Then the nations will know that I am Yahweh," declares Lord Yahweh, "when I prove Myself holy among you in their sight. ²⁴ "For I will take you from the nations, gather you from all the lands and bring you into your own land. ²⁵ "Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols.

Reader 10 Amen.* ²⁶ "Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ "I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances. ²⁸ "You will live in the land that I gave to your forefathers; so you will be My people, and I will be your God. ²⁹ "Moreover, I will save you from all your uncleanness; and I will call for the grain and multiply it, and I will not bring a famine on you. ³⁰ "I will multiply the fruit of the tree and the produce of the field, so that you will not receive again the disgrace of famine among the nations.

Reader 11 Amen.* ³¹ "Then you will remember your evil ways and your deeds that were not good, and you will loathe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and your abominations. ³² "I am not doing this for your sake," declares Lord Yahweh, "let it be known to you. Be ashamed and confounded for your ways, O house of Israel!" ³³ "Thus says Lord Yahweh, "On the day that I cleanse you from all your iniquities, I will cause the cities to be inhabited, and the waste places will be rebuilt. ³⁴ "The desolate land will be cultivated instead of being a desolation in the sight of everyone who passes by. ³⁵ "They will say, 'This desolate land has become like the garden of Eden; and the waste, desolate and ruined cities are fortified and inhabited.' ³⁶ "Then the nations that are left round about you will know that I, Yahweh, have rebuilt the ruined places and planted that which was desolate; I, Yahweh, have spoken and will do it." ³⁷ "Thus says Lord Yahweh, "This also I will let the house of Israel ask Me to do for them: I will increase their men like a flock. ³⁸ "Like the flock for sacrifices, like the flock at Jerusalem during her appointed feasts, so will the waste cities be filled with flocks of men. Then they will know that I am Yahweh.""

I John 1:1-10

Reader 12 Amen.* ¹ What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life-- ² and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us-- ³ what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Yeshua the Messiah. ⁴ These things we write, so that our joy may be made complete. ⁵ This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. ⁶ If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; ⁷ but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Yeshua His Son cleanses us from all sin. ⁸ If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰ If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.

Notes:

We should be using up foods with bread-leavens (barley, oats, rye, spelt, and wheat breads / cakes).

The Passover Seder is three weeks from tonight. That Sunday will be a Holy Day – a Sabbath.

Monday will be the First Day of the Omer, when we start counting.

The following Saturday is the Seventh Day of Unleavened Bread – a Holy Day; but then this year it is already a Sabbath.

Pentecost / the Day of Firstfruits will be a Holy Day after six weeks later, on a Monday (We can meet Sunday night).

So, the Holy Days are Sunday April 24, the Sabbath of May 1, and Monday June 13. We start counting fifty days on Monday April 25 (or Sunday night).

Commentary:

A note of interest from an Orthodox Rabbinic viewpoint:

“The key thing to remember, in all this mythological murk, is that no religious Jew is allowed to set foot on the Temple Mount, for fear of desecrating the sacred ground. In any case, the Temple can only be reconstructed when the Messiah returns to save his people, and, so far, no Messiah, and no Third Temple. But not all Israelis are willing to assume such a passive stance, tradition or no tradition. Ever since Israel came into possession of old Jerusalem, in 1967, a fanatical group of Israeli nationalists have tried to kick-start the eschatological machinery, plotting the destruction of the Muslim shrines and busily constructing the various ritual objects for use in the rebuilt Temple. These Israeli nutballs have forged a natural alliance with our Christian nutballs, who have their own theological rationale for hurrying Apocalypse along. They are dispensationalists, who believe - among other things - that the colonization of the Holy Land by the children of Israel signals the second coming of Christ: the efforts of these "Christian Zionists" account for the uncritical support for Israel among many "born again" Christian conservatives.

Okay, so now we get to the part about the red heifer: it turns out that, although no religious Jew is allowed on the Temple Mount, there's a loophole - it's okay if he or she is first purified in the ashes of a pure red heifer. These creatures are exceedingly rare. One was born a couple of years ago, in Israel, but it soon began sprouting white hairs on its tail and was deemed insufficiently pure by the rabbinical authorities. Ah, but science found a way around the fickleness of God's creation, and through the modern miracle of genetic engineering - and funding provided by "Christian Zionists" in America - a red heifer has been bred, and pronounced pure.”

– Historical Review Press – Jewish Studies.

We have studied Judgments (*Mishpatim*), Ordinances (*Edot*), and Statutes (*Hukim*), the three categories of Torah commandments. Statutes are the category of which it is said, their reason is not obvious, but they bond God and man. The Statute of the Red Heifer is considered, by the sages, to be beyond human reasoning, as Solomon said, *“I said I would be wise, but it is far from me”*.

The Midrash on this portion notes a paradox: one who has become defiled (a *niddah*) is purified by the ashes of the red heifer, but one preparing the ashes becomes defiled thereby. It further notes Job 14:4, *“Who can draw a pure thing out of an impure one? Is it not the One God?”*

This paradox pictures a greater one: a sinner is purified through the crucifixion of Yeshua, but one involved with preparing His crucifixion – such as Judas – becomes condemned as a sinner. So God draws a pure thing (a purified sinner) out of an impure (the crucifixion). Because it is far above our understanding, God gives us many kinds of pictures, called ordinances (such as baptism and the Passover).

It may be noted here, that preparation of the ashes is one of several acts required by Torah, which nevertheless makes one unclean. Thus we see that becoming defiled does not indicate one has sinned, but defilement always relates to a result of the fall – such as death, disease, or unfulfilled reproductive cycles.

Yeshua did not die because of a sin He committed, but because of results of the fall of Adam. *“For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Messiah all shall be made alive”* - 1 Corinthians 15:21-22.

Numbers 19 (v.16-19), *“Anyone who . . . touches . . . a grave, shall be unclean for seven days. . . . on the seventh day he shall purify him from uncleanness, and he shall wash his clothes and bathe himself in water and shall be clean by evening.”* ‘Washing one’s clothes and bathing in water’ is a reference to immersion in a *mikvah* – Biblical baptism. Being *“clean by evening”* means on the eighth day.

Now, Yeshua was baptized, even though John the baptizer questioned why Yeshua should have such a need: *“I have need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?”* – Matthew 3:14. So then, in order to fulfill all Torah (Matthew 3:15, 5:17), should He not be baptized seven days after leaving the grave? While we are not specifically told that He was ‘untouchable’ until a seventh day baptism, Mary was told to stop touching Him on the first day (John 20:17), but Thomas was told to touch Him on the eighth day (John 20:27). Why is a special point being made of this eighth day? Also, ascending from the *mikvah* represents ascending to Eden / Paradise: this is especially represented by being baptized in the Jordan River – Jordan meaning “Descender from Eden”. So, in instructing Mary to stop touching Him, Yeshua said (v.17), *“for I have not yet ascended to the Father”*.

Paul (1 Corinthians 15:29) speaks of being “baptized for the dead” – according to some English translations. A better rendering would be “baptized because of death”. This may refer to today’s subject, the baptism on the seventh day after dealing with a dead body. Paul is speaking of resurrection, and its relationship to baptism. Since baptism – specifically coming up from the *mikvah* – symbolizes resurrection (Romans 6:4), if a dead body could not be resurrected, what would be the significance of the ritual: why would we picture “newness of life” after dealing with the results of the fall?

Furthermore, being clean on the eighth day symbolizes our being holy – fit for the “eighth day assembly” (Leviticus 23:36) of the saints in Paradise. That requires our cleansing from sin here, prior to resurrection.

Sadducees did not believe in resurrection. Therefore, Yeshua said to them (Matthew 22:29-32), *“You are mistaken, not understanding the Scriptures, or the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. But regarding the resurrection of the dead, have you not read that which was spoken to you by God, saying, ‘I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’? He is not the God of the dead but of the living.”* Therefore, we are to purify ourselves, showing that we are alive to God in holiness, and dead to sin.

A certain man wanted to take care of things of this life before following Yeshua (Matthew 8:21-22): that is the meaning of his Hebraism, *“Let me first go and bury my dead father.”* Yeshua responded, *“Let the dead bury the dead. You follow Me.”* In other words, “Let the spiritually dead care for the things of this world.” We should care for following Yeshua – being holy.

I John 1

If we think that we do not sin, we are deceived (v.8), and need to learn God’s Word (v.10). We need to confess our sins (v.9) – and that means specifics, which means that we need to learn from God’s Word just what sin is. Then, as symbolized by the water of the ashes of the red heifer, Yeshua cleanses us from all sin. Purity is a requirement for entering God’s Holy Place.

“Who shall ascend into the hill of Yahweh? or who shall stand in his Holy Place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who has not lifted up his soul to vanity, nor sworn deceitfully”

– Psalm 24:3-4.

“. . . and nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life” – Revelation 21:27.

Yeshua is our Passover Lamb, that was slain for us to be cleansed (Revelation 13:8)!

Tonight at Havdallah is Rosh Hodesh Nisan - the beginning of the Festival Year**The New Year for Festivals**

(Hahodesh hazeh lahem rosh hadashim risho hu lahem lehodshey Hashanah – This month shall be the beginning of months for you; it is to be the first month of the year to you.)

Reader 1 Amen.* ¹ Now Yahweh said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, ² "This month shall be the beginning of months for you; it is to be the first month of the year to you.

Reader 2 Amen.* ³ "Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying, 'On the tenth of this month they are each one to take a lamb for themselves, according to their fathers' households, a lamb for each household. ⁴ 'Now if the household is too small for a lamb, then he and his neighbor nearest to his house are to take one according to the number of persons in them; according to what each man should eat, you are to divide the lamb. ⁵ 'Your lamb shall be an unblemished male a year old; you may take it from the sheep or from the goats.

Reader 3 Amen.* ⁶ 'You shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month, then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel is to kill it at twilight. ⁷ 'Moreover, they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. ⁸ 'They shall eat the flesh that same night, roasted with fire, and they shall eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs.

Reader 4 Amen.* ⁹ 'Do not eat any of it raw or boiled at all with water, but rather roasted with fire, both its head and its legs along with its entrails. ¹⁰ 'And you shall not leave any of it over until morning, but whatever is left of it until morning, you shall burn with fire. ¹¹ 'Now you shall eat it in this manner: with your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it in haste-- it is Yahweh's Passover.

Reader 5 Amen.* ¹² 'For I will go through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments-- I am Yahweh. ¹³ 'The blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live; and when I see the blood I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt. ¹⁴ 'Now this day will be a memorial to you, and you shall celebrate it as a feast to Yahweh; throughout your generations you are to celebrate it as a permanent ordinance.

Reader 6 Amen.* ¹⁵ 'Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, but on the first day you shall remove leaven from your houses; for whoever eats anything leavened from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel. ¹⁶ 'On the first day you shall have a holy assembly, and another holy assembly on the seventh day; no work at all shall be done on them, except what must be eaten by every person, that alone may be prepared by you. ¹⁷ 'You shall also observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread, for on this very day I brought your hosts out of the land of Egypt; therefore you shall observe this day throughout your generations as a permanent ordinance.

Reader 7 Amen.* ¹⁸ 'In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at evening, you shall eat unleavened bread, until the twenty-first day of the month at evening. ¹⁹ 'Seven days there shall be no leaven found in your houses; for whoever eats what is leavened, that person shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he is an alien or a native of the land. ²⁰ 'You shall not eat anything leavened; in all your dwellings you shall eat unleavened bread.'"

Ezekiel 45:16 – 46:18

Reader 8 Amen.* ¹⁶ "All the people of the land shall give to this offering for the prince in Israel. ¹⁷ "It shall be the prince's part to provide the elevation offerings, the grain offerings and the drink offerings, at the Feasts, on the heads-of-the-months, and on the Sabbaths, at all the appointed feasts of the house of Israel; he shall provide the sin offering, the grain offering, the elevation offering and the peace offerings, to make atonement for the house of Israel." ¹⁸ "Thus says Lord Yahweh, "In the first month, on the first of the month, you shall take a young bull without blemish and cleanse the sanctuary. ¹⁹ "The priest shall take some of the blood from the sin offering and put it on the door posts of the house, on the four corners of the ledge of the altar and on the posts of the gate of the inner court. ²⁰ "Thus you shall do on the seventh day of the month for everyone who goes astray or is naive; so you shall make atonement for the house.

Reader 9 Amen.* ²¹ "In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month, you shall sacrifice the Passover, having a feast of seven days; unleavened bread shall be eaten. ²² "On that day the prince shall provide for himself and all the people of the land a bull for a sin offering. ²³ "During the seven days of the feast he shall provide as a burnt offering to Yahweh seven bulls and seven rams without blemish on every day of the seven days, and a male goat daily for a sin offering. ²⁴ "He shall provide as a grain offering an ephah with a bull, an ephah with a ram and a hin of oil with an ephah. ²⁵ "In the seventh month, on the fifteenth day of the month, at the feast, he shall provide like this, seven days for the sin offering, the elevation offering, the grain offering and the oil."

Reader 10 Amen.* ^{46:1} "Thus says Lord Yahweh, "The gate of the inner court facing east shall be shut the six working days; but it shall be opened on the sabbath day and opened on the day of the new moon. ² "The prince shall enter by way of the porch of the gate from outside and stand by the post of the gate. Then the priests shall provide his elevation offering and his peace offerings, and he shall worship at the threshold of the gate and then go out; but the gate shall not be shut until the evening. ³ "The people of the land shall also worship at the doorway of that gate before Yahweh on the Sabbaths and on the heads-of-the-months. ⁴ "The elevation offering which the prince shall offer to Yahweh on the Sabbath day shall be six lambs without blemish and a ram without blemish; ⁵ and the grain offering shall be an ephah with the ram, and the grain offering with the lambs as much as he is able to give, and a hin of oil with an ephah.

Reader 11 Amen.* ⁶ "On the day of the head-of-the-month he shall offer a young bull without blemish, also six lambs and a ram, which shall be without blemish. ⁷ "And he shall provide a grain offering, an ephah with the bull and an ephah with the ram, and with the lambs as much as he is able, and a hin of oil with an ephah. ⁸ "When the prince enters, he shall go in by way of the porch of the gate and go out by the same way. ⁹ "But when the people of the land come before Yahweh at the appointed feasts, he who enters by way of the north gate to worship shall go out by way of the south gate. And he who enters by way of the south gate shall go out by way of the north gate. No one shall return by way of the gate by which he entered but shall go straight out. ¹⁰ "When they go in, the prince shall go in among them; and when they go out, he shall go out.

Reader 12 Amen.* ¹¹ "At the festivals and the appointed feasts the grain offering shall be an ephah with a bull and an ephah with a ram, and with the lambs as much as one is able to give, and a hin of oil with an ephah. ¹² "When the prince provides a freewill offering, an elevation offering, or peace offerings as a freewill offering to Yahweh, the gate facing east shall be opened for him. And he shall provide his elevation offering and his peace offerings as he does on the Sabbath day. Then he shall go out, and the gate shall be shut after he goes out. ¹³ "And you shall provide a lamb a year old without blemish for a burnt offering to Yahweh daily; morning by morning you shall provide it. ¹⁴ "Also you shall provide a grain offering with it morning by morning, a sixth of an ephah and a third of a hin of oil to moisten the fine flour, a grain offering to Yahweh continually by a perpetual ordinance. ¹⁵ "Thus they shall provide the lamb, the grain offering and the oil, morning by morning, for a continual elevation offering."

Reader 13 Amen.* ¹⁶ "Thus says Lord Yahweh, "If the prince gives a gift out of his inheritance to any of his sons, it shall belong to his sons; it is their possession by inheritance. ¹⁷ "But if he gives a gift from his inheritance to one of his servants, it shall be his until the year of liberty; then it shall return to the prince. His inheritance shall be only his sons'; it shall belong to them. ¹⁸ "The prince shall not take from the people's inheritance, thrusting them out of their possession; he shall give his sons inheritance from his own possession so that My people will not be scattered, anyone from his possession."""

Colossians 2:1 – 3:7

Reader 13 Amen.* ¹ For I want you to know how great a struggle I have on your behalf and for those who are at Laodicea, and for all those who have not personally seen my face, ² that their hearts may be encouraged, having been knit together in love, and attaining to all the wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding, resulting in a true knowledge of God's mystery, that is, Messiah Himself, ³ in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. ⁴ I say this so that no one will delude you with persuasive argument. ⁵ For even though I am absent in body, nevertheless I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good discipline and the stability of your faith in Messiah. ⁶ Therefore as you have received Messiah Yeshua the Lord, so walk in Him, ⁷ having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed, and overflowing with gratitude.

Reader 14 Amen.* ⁸ See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Messiah. ⁹ For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, ¹⁰ and in Him you have been made

complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority;¹¹ and in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Messiah;¹² having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.¹³ When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions,¹⁴ having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.¹⁵ When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him.

Reader 15 Amen.*¹⁶ Therefore no one is to act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a head-of-the-month celebration or a Sabbath day--¹⁷ things which are a mere shadow of what is to come, the body casting the shadow being Messiah.¹⁸ Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize by delighting in self-abasement and the worship of the angels, taking his stand on visions he has seen, inflated without cause by his fleshly mind,¹⁹ and not holding fast to the head, from whom the entire body, being supplied and held together by the joints and ligaments, grows with a growth which is from God.²⁰ If you have died with Messiah to the elementary principles of the world, why, as if you were living in the world, do you submit yourself to decrees, such as,²¹ "Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch!"²² (which all refer to things destined to perish with use)-- in accordance with the commandments and teachings of men?²³ These are matters which have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body, but are of no value against fleshly indulgence.

Reader 16 Amen.*^{3:1} Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.² Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth.³ For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.⁴ When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.⁵ Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry.⁶ For it is because of these things that the wrath of God will come upon the sons of disobedience,⁷ and in them you also once walked, when you were living in them.

Commentary:

Exodus 12

Verse 2 is the song we sing for Rosh Hodesh (New Moon): "*Hahodesh hazeh lahem rosh hadashim risho hu lahem lehodshey Hashanah*" – "*This month shall be the beginning of months for you; it is to be the first month of the year to you.*" As tonight we start the New Year for Festivals, let us consider the next three months – the major events of which we partake. It would be good for everyone here to understand these Scriptures that confuse so many.

On the tenth day of this coming month, a lamb was to be chosen for each family.

On the fourteenth day, between noon and sunset, it was to be slain and roasted. Common translations of Leviticus 23:5 and Numbers 9:3 cause much confusion:

"In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at twilight is the LORD's passover"

– Lev 23:5 NASB.

"In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month, at twilight, there shall be a passover offering to the LORD" – Lev 23:5 JPS.

It was the day for preparation / offering of the passover – which is a lamb, not a Feast day. The preparation / offering was performed "*between the evenings*" (literal from Hebrew) – that is between noon and sunset, not "at twilight".

That evening, which is the fifteenth, is our Passover Seder. That means the order of service for eating the passover – the lamb – at the beginning of the seven-day Feast of Unleavened Breads.

"They shall eat the flesh that same night, roasted with fire, and they shall eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs" – Exodus 12:8.

For the seven days of this Feast, no bread-leaven may be found with us (a negative command). Eating of unleavened breads is required (a positive command).

“Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, but on the first day you shall remove leaven from your houses; for whoever eats anything leavened from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel” – Exodus 12:15.

The first day and seventh day are Holy Days – a Sunday and a Sabbath this year. We will have the required worship services on Saturday night – the Passover Seder, and on the following Sabbath, together with our weekly service.

“On the first day you shall have a holy assembly, and another holy assembly on the seventh day; no work at all shall be done on them, except what must be eaten by every person, that alone may be prepared by you” – Exodus 12:16.

On the sixteenth day of this month, we start counting the days. For fifty days we count, until Pentecost, which means fiftieth. It is the beginning of the grain harvest, when the first *ephah* of the first grain – barley – was made into one *omer* of fine flour, mixed with oil, and upon a lamb was waved “before Yahweh”. This is the second day of the Feast of Unleavened Breads.

Another subject of widespread confusion exists here:

“Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, ‘When you enter the land which I am going to give to you and reap its harvest, then you shall bring in the sheaf of the first fruits of your harvest to the priest. He shall wave the sheaf before the LORD for you to be accepted; on the day after the sabbath the priest shall wave it’ ” – Leviticus 23:10-11 NASB.

There is no word for “sheaf” here: the word is *omer*. There is no word for “first fruits” here: the word is *beginning* (Hebrew *reshit*). It is an *omer* of the *beginning* of the grain harvest. No sheaf of anything was ever waved at the Temple, and no second “feast” exists here in the midst of the Feast of Unleavened Breads.

The fiftieth day (which is the sixth day of the third month) is the Day of the Firstfruits (Yom haBikkurim), a Holy Day – a Monday this year. It is also called the Feast of Weeks (Hag Shavuot), as it follows the counting of seven weeks.

Ezekiel 45:16 – 46:18

This prophecy concerns a Holy Temple of the future – God’s calendar of celebrating Sabbaths, New Moons, and Feasts with their Holy Days, during the millennial reign of Messiah.

45:17 *“And it shall be the prince’s part to provide the (burnt) elevation offerings, the grain offerings, and the libations, at the feasts, on the new moons, and on the Sabbaths: at all the appointed times . . .”*

46:3 *“The people of the land shall also worship at the doorway of that gate (the eastern gate of the inner court) before Yahweh on the Sabbaths and on the new moons.”*

Colossians 2

This passage is often misused because of traditional preconceptions. We must not pit one Scripture against another, but place precept upon precept. Paul is contrasting “man’s religion” against Torah instruction.

(V.8) *“See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Messiah.”*

This is a warning against man’s deceptive philosophies and inventions (including Pagan celebrations?).

God’s appointed times are not “tradition of men.” Through the Holy Days, Yeshua is shown to be Messiah.

(V.11-15) Paul is writing to Gentiles (Colossians):

“When you were dead in transgressions (of the Torah), and you were uncircumcised in your flesh . . .”

When you had a “*certificate of debt*” decreed

“You were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands”, the work of the Holy Spirit on the heart.

Yeshua took the death decree by being nailed on a

“against” you,

cross. This was not to abolish the Torah (Matthew 5:17) – which is God’s eternal instruction for man – but rather confirms that it applied to us!

Here are some of the things that are “according to Messiah” (v.8).

(V.16) Both Jew and Gentile would condemn us for observing Sabbaths, New Moons, and Festivals. But, Paul says, “*Let no one condemn you . . . for observing a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day . . .*”. Using a common translation “judge” instead of “condemn”, some twist this verse say that we shouldn’t let anyone tell us whether or not to do these things – all the while they are using it to say that we shouldn’t do them! One popular translation actually adds the word “not”, saying that we should let no one condemn us for “not” doing these things! But, Gentiles need accept no condemnation from Jew or Gentile for keeping God’s appointments. Why?

(V.17) Because – and here is a comparison – Sabbaths and festivals “*are a shadow of that which is to come*”, but “*Messiah is the substance/body*” to come – that which is casting the shadow. In observing Sabbaths and festivals, we see a shadow picture of Yeshua: we learn about what He is doing for us! Some translations make a mockery of God’s shadow pictures, calling them such things as “mere” shadows, implying that they have no present value. It is commonly taught that, being fulfilled (they are not), these ordinances are also abolished (contrary to Yeshua’s words).

Here are some of the things that are “empty deception”, and “tradition of men” (v.8).

(V.18-19) “*Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize by*

*delighting in self-abasement
and the worship of the messengers,
taking his stand on visions he has seen,
inflated without cause by his fleshly mind,*

Today we see, on every side, people who are “star-struck” with the messengers, and those who take their own intuition to be the Holy Spirit – putting it above the study of God’s Word.

not holding fast to the head, from whom the entire body, being supplied and held together by the joints and ligaments, grows with a growth which is from God.”

We are commanded to be part of a regular assembly (Hebrews 10:25), working together with others to learn obedience.

Paul’s conclusion:

(V.20-23) “*If you have died with Messiah, . . . why do you submit yourself to . . . self-made religion . . . of no value against fleshly indulgence?”*

(V.3:1-5) “*If then you have been raised up with Messiah, . . . set your mind on things above. . . consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry.”*

Psalm 99

The three Feasts and their seven annual Holy Days fall under the commandment category called ordinances.

(V.6-8) “*Moses and Aaron were among His priests, and Samuel was among those who called on His name; they called upon Yahweh, and He answered them. He spoke to them in the pillar of cloud; they kept His ordinances (edot), and the statute (huk) that He gave them. O Yahweh our God, Thou didst answer them . . .*”