

# **Bible Readings and Commentaries**

## **Book 1 of 6**

**First 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."*

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#### 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."*

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

## **B'reshit / In the Beginning**

Genesis 1:1 – 2:3 Isaiah 42:5-8 Psalm 1 Colossians 1:1-23

## **Commentary Y1-01**

Nisan 7, 5761 / Mar 31, 2001

Nisan 5, 5764 / Mar 27, 2004

בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ; <> B'reshit bara Elohim et ha-sh'maim v-et ha-eretz

*Reader 1\* Amen* <sup>1</sup> In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. <sup>2</sup> And the earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters. <sup>3</sup> Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. <sup>4</sup> And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. <sup>5</sup> And God called the light day, and the darkness He called night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day.

*Reader 2\* Amen* <sup>6</sup> Then God said, "Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." <sup>7</sup> And God made the expanse, and separated the waters which were below the expanse from the waters which were above the expanse; and it was so. <sup>8</sup> And God called the expanse heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, a second day.

*Reader 3\* Amen* <sup>9</sup> Then God said, "Let the waters below the heavens be gathered into one place, and let the dry land appear"; and it was so. <sup>10</sup> And God called the dry land earth, and the gathering of the waters He called seas; and God saw that it was good. <sup>11</sup> Then God said, "Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit after their kind, with seed in them, on the earth"; and it was so. <sup>12</sup> And the earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed after their kind, and trees bearing fruit, with seed in them, after their kind; and God saw that it was good. <sup>13</sup> And there was evening and there was morning, a third day.

*Reader 4\* Amen* <sup>14</sup> Then God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night, and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days and years; <sup>15</sup> and let them be for lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth"; and it was so. <sup>16</sup> And God made the two great lights, the greater light to govern the day, and the lesser light to govern the night; He made the stars also. <sup>17</sup> And God placed them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth, <sup>18</sup> and to govern the day and the night, and to separate the light from the darkness; and God saw that it was good. <sup>19</sup> And there was evening and there was morning, a fourth day.

*Reader 5\* Amen* <sup>20</sup> Then God said, "Let the waters teem with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth in the open expanse of the heavens." <sup>21</sup> And God created the great sea monsters, and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarmed after their kind, and every winged bird after its kind; and God saw that it was good. <sup>22</sup> And God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth." <sup>23</sup> And there was evening and there was morning, a fifth day.

*Reader 6\* Amen* <sup>24</sup> Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures after their kind: cattle and creeping things and beasts of the earth after their kind"; and it was so. <sup>25</sup> And God made the beasts of the earth after their kind, and the cattle after their kind, and everything that creeps on the ground after its kind; and God saw that it was good. <sup>26</sup> Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." <sup>27</sup> And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. <sup>28</sup> And God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves on the earth." <sup>29</sup> Then God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the surface of all the earth, and every tree which has fruit yielding seed; it shall be food for you; <sup>30</sup> and to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the sky and to every thing that moves on the earth which has life, I have given every green plant for food"; and it was so. <sup>31</sup> And God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

*Reader 7\* Amen 2:*<sup>1</sup> Thus the heavens and the earth were completed, and all their hosts. <sup>2</sup> And by the seventh day God completed His work which He had done; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. <sup>3</sup> Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.

*(The Name "Yahweh" is first used in next verse – Genesis 2:4.)*

### **Isaiah 42**

*Reader 8\* Amen* <sup>5</sup> Thus says El Yahweh, Who created the heavens and stretched them out, Who spread out the earth and its offspring, Who gives breath to the people on it, and spirit to those who walk in it, <sup>6</sup> "I am Yahweh, I have called you in righteousness, I will also hold you by the hand and watch over you, and I will appoint you as a covenant to the people, as a light to the nations, <sup>7</sup> to open blind eyes, to bring out prisoners from the dungeon, and those who dwell in darkness from the prison. <sup>8</sup> "I am Yahweh, that is My name; I will not give My glory to another, nor My praise to graven images.

### **Psalm 1 (to be sung)**

<sup>1</sup> 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! <sup>2</sup> But his delight is in the law of Yahweh, and in His law he meditates day and night. <sup>3</sup> And 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. <sup>4</sup> The wicked are not so, but they are like chaff which the wind drives away. <sup>5</sup> Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous. <sup>6</sup> For Yahweh knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.

### **Colossians 1:1-23**

*Reader 9\* Amen* <sup>1</sup> Paul, an apostle of Messiah Yeshua by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, <sup>2</sup> to the saints and faithful brethren in Messiah who are at Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father. <sup>3</sup> We give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah, praying always for you, <sup>4</sup> since we heard of your faith in Messiah Yeshua and the love which you have for all the saints; <sup>5</sup> because of the hope laid up for you in heaven, of which you previously heard in the word of truth, the gospel, <sup>6</sup> which has come to you, just as in all the world also it is constantly bearing fruit and increasing, even as it has been doing in you also since the day you heard of it and understood the grace of God in truth; <sup>7</sup> just as you learned it from Epaphras, our beloved fellow bond-servant, who is a faithful servant of Messiah on our behalf, <sup>8</sup> and he also informed us of your love in the Spirit.

*Reader 10\* Amen* <sup>9</sup> For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, <sup>10</sup> so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; <sup>11</sup> strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously <sup>12</sup> giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. <sup>13</sup> For He delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, <sup>14</sup> in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

*Reader 11\* Amen* <sup>15</sup> And He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation. <sup>16</sup> **For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities-- all things have been created by Him and for Him.** <sup>17</sup> And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. <sup>18</sup> He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; so that He Himself might come to have first place in everything. <sup>19</sup> For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fulness to dwell in Him, <sup>20</sup> and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven.

*Reader 12\* Amen* <sup>21</sup> And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds, <sup>22</sup> yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach-- <sup>23</sup> if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and

steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister.

**Commentary:**

Genesis 1:1-2:3 *"Because of the things called first, Elohim created the heavens and the earth . . ."*

Isaiah 42:5 *"Thus says El-Yahweh, He that created the heavens, and stretched them out; He that spread forth the earth, and that which comes out of it; He that gives breath to the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein: . . ."*

Psalms 1 *"Blessed is the man that walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the manner of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; but his delight is in the torah of Yahweh, and in His torah he meditates day and night."*

Colossians 1:1-23 *"For by Him (Yeshua) were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him: and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist."*

*Bereshit* is the first word of the Torah, and the title of this reading. *Bereshit* is commonly translated *In the beginning*; a literal translation is *Because of the things called "first."*

From this we understand that because of firstfruits, the heavens and earth were created. If it were not for those people (firstfruits – James 1:18) chosen to bear God’s name, the earth would not exist. If it were not for God’s people giving their first and best (firstfruits) for His service, the earth would not exist. (Note that this means tithing preceded and supercedes both Levites and Abraham.) And ultimately, if it were not for Messiah (firstfruits – 1 Cor 15:20), the heavens and earth would not exist; Paul apparently believed this, saying, “all things were created . . . for Him” -- Colossians 1:16.

This is a call to lift our eyes to God. We need to continually recognize all things as being from Him, and hence bless God for each thing He allows us to use. We should joyfully give priority to service for His kingdom. This is the basis for creation. This is the meaning of loving God with all of our heart, soul, and might, and loving our neighbor (who is created in His image).

The first word of the Torah is foundational to the whole Bible!

*Elohim* is a name of God meaning *Judge of Creation*. He judged His creation as “very good.”

Next we read of creation week.

The sages say, “End of deed, first in thought.” Before a builder starts a foundation or forms walls, he has a final house plan in mind. God spent six days creating the heavens and the earth, with the end deed being the Sabbath; but the Sabbath was the original goal, the first in thought.

In the six days of creation, a pairing may be seen. On day one, God created light and darkness; on the fourth day, He set in place the sun and moon to control the light and darkness. On the second day, God separated the waters of the oceans from the waters above the earth, placing air between; on the fifth day, He placed fish in the oceans and birds in the air. On the third day God made dry land appear, and placed vegetation within it; on the sixth day, He placed beasts on the dry land, and finally man to tend the Garden.

But the Sabbath relates to the goal before day one of creation, as a kind of firstfruit. Sabbath is not a day for us to make-up for physical rest lost during our too-busy workweek; Sabbath is to be the goal of our workweek! We are to work six days for our sustenance in order to spend the Sabbath worshipping God.

God brought forth animals “from the earth,” but He “formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the spirit of life.” Therefore, animals are seen as from the earth, but man as a combination of earthly and heavenly. Solomon refers to “the spirit of man that goes upward, and the spirit of the beast that goes downward to the earth” – Ecclesiastes 3:21.

God is “declaring the end from the beginning” – Isaiah 46:10. From the beginning – six days of creation and a Sabbath, we see the end of this world prophetically declared – six millenniums and the thousand-year reign of Messiah. It is written, “one day is with Yahweh as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day,” referring specifically to the end of this world – see 2 Peter 3:8.

On day one of creation, God differentiated between light and darkness. In the first millennial day, Adams day, man learned to differentiate good and evil. God told Adam that he would die the day he ate of the fruit of knowledge; he died before the end of his first millennial day, at age 930 – Genesis 5:4.

On the second day of creation, God separated the waters under the firmament from those above. In the second millennial day, Noah’s day, God “opened the fountains of the deep” and “the windows of heaven” and brought the waters back together to flood the earth, then separated them again forever. Noah lived most of the second millennium (from AM 1056 - 2006, 950 years – Genesis 9:29). The great flood was in the 600<sup>th</sup> year of Noah’s life, AM 1656.

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Only upon completion of the third day did God not say that it was good.  
The sages say that the angels were created on this day.

On the sixth day, after creating beasts, God said, “Ki Tov” – it is good / finished. Then He created man.  
When everything was finished, God said, “Tov M’ode” – very good. It all worked together as planned.

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On the third day of creation, God brought forth dry land and vegetation. In the third millennial day, Abraham’s day, God gave His people Canaan land with bountiful vegetation. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Moses were of this day.

On the fourth day of creation, God set the sun and moon in their places. The moon is seen by the sages as a symbol of Messiah. The fourth millennial day is the day of Messiah. (Messiah means the anointed one; men were anointed to be King of Israel, Priest of the Most High God, or Prophet of Jerusalem.) David was the forerunner Messiah King at the beginning of this day (shortly after AM 3000), and Yeshua came as the ultimate Messiah King, Priest, and Prophet near the end of this day (before AM 4000).

Interestingly, the Talmud says that Messiah should have come in the fourth millennium, but because Israel was so sinful, He would not come until the end of the sixth millennium. But He did come in the fourth, and He will also come in the end of the sixth! (This is not to imply a certain year.)

The fifth and sixth millennial days are referred to as the last days – 2 Peter 3:3.

Again, a pairing of the days may be seen. On millennial day one, Adam was brought forth; on the fourth millennial day, Yeshua – the second Adam (1 Corinthians 15:45) was brought forth. On the second day, a flood took idolatrous men from the earth; on the fifth day, the nations (Biblically symbolized as waters – Revelation 17:15) took idolatrous Israel from Canaan. On the third day, God gave His people Canaan land; on this sixth millennial day, they are being restored to that land.

The goal, the millennial Great Sabbath, is approaching; we are told to labor to enter into this Sabbath rest (Hebrews 4:11), just as we are to labor six days in order to worship on the weekly Sabbath. While the sacrifice of Yeshua settles our redemption, our faithfulness in torah-observance bears on our position in the millennial Sabbath (Matthew 25:21, 23).
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Paul said, “For I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; 2 and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea; 3 and all ate the same spiritual food; 4 and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock

which followed them; and the rock was Christ. 5 Nevertheless, with most of them God was not well-pleased; for they were laid low in the wilderness. 6 Now **these things happened as examples for us**, that we should not crave evil things, as they also craved. 7 And do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written, 'The people sat down to eat and drink, and stood up to play.' 8 Nor let us act immorally, as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in one day. 9 Nor let us try Yahweh, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the serpents. 10 Nor grumble, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer. 11 Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come." – 1 Corinthians 10:1

Consider what many have suffered – because of our needed instruction, because we are called “first”.

If we believe that evolution and man are in control, then we are denying God. We are making ourselves to be gods. We must believe that God is, and that He is the rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

אלה תולדות השמים והארץ בהבראם ביום עשות יהוה אלהים ארץ ושמים: <>

Elleh toldot hashamaim v'ha-aretz b'hi-baram b'yom asot Yahweh Elohim eretz v'shamaim.

*Reader 1\* Amen* <sup>4</sup> These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that Yahweh Elohim made earth and heavens. <sup>5</sup> Now no shrub of the field was yet in the earth, and no plant of the field had yet sprouted, for Yahweh Elohim had not sent rain upon the earth; and there was no man to cultivate the ground. <sup>6</sup> But a mist used to rise from the earth and water the whole surface of the ground.

*Reader 2\* Amen* <sup>7</sup> Then Yahweh Elohim formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being. <sup>8</sup> And Yahweh Elohim planted a garden toward the east, in Eden; and there He placed the man whom He had formed. <sup>9</sup> And out of the ground Yahweh Elohim caused to grow every tree that is pleasing to the sight and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

*Reader 3\* Amen* <sup>10</sup> Now a river flowed out of Eden to water the garden; and from there it divided and became four rivers. <sup>11</sup> The name of the first is Pishon; it flows around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. <sup>12</sup> And the gold of that land is good; the bdellium and the onyx stone are there. <sup>13</sup> And the name of the second river is Gihon; it flows around the whole land of Cush. <sup>14</sup> And the name of the third river is Tigris; it flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.

*Reader 4\* Amen* <sup>15</sup> Then Yahweh Elohim took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it. <sup>16</sup> And Yahweh Elohim commanded the man, saying, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; <sup>17</sup> but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you shall surely die."

*Reader 5\* Amen* <sup>18</sup> Then Yahweh Elohim said, "It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him." <sup>19</sup> And out of the ground Yahweh Elohim formed every beast of the field and every bird of the sky, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name. <sup>20</sup> And the man gave names to all the cattle, and to the birds of the sky, and to every beast of the field, but for Adam there was not found a helper suitable for him. <sup>21</sup> So Yahweh Elohim caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh at that place. <sup>22</sup> And Yahweh Elohim fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man. <sup>23</sup> And the man said, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." <sup>24</sup> For this cause a man shall leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they shall become one flesh. <sup>25</sup> And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

*Reader 6\* Amen 3:* <sup>1</sup> Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which Yahweh Elohim had made. And he said to the woman, "Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden'?" <sup>2</sup> And the woman said to the serpent, "From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; <sup>3</sup> but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat from it or touch it, lest you die.'" <sup>4</sup> And the serpent said to the woman, "You surely shall not die! <sup>5</sup> "For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." <sup>6</sup> When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate. <sup>7</sup> Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings. <sup>8</sup> And they heard the sound of Yahweh Elohim walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of Yahweh Elohim among the trees of the garden.



*Reader 7\* Amen* <sup>9</sup> Then Yahweh Elohim called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?" <sup>10</sup> And he said, "I heard the sound of Thee in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself." <sup>11</sup> And He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" <sup>12</sup> And the man said, "The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate." <sup>13</sup> Then Yahweh Elohim said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" And the woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." <sup>14</sup> And Yahweh Elohim said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed are you more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field; on your belly shall you go, and dust shall you eat all the days of your life; <sup>15</sup> And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel." <sup>16</sup> To the woman He said, "I will greatly multiply your pain in childbirth, in pain you shall bring forth children; yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you." <sup>17</sup> Then to Adam He said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat from it'; cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. <sup>18</sup> "Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field; <sup>19</sup> by the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, because from it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return." <sup>20</sup> Now the man called his wife's name Heva (Eve), because she was the mother of all the living. <sup>21</sup> And Yahweh Elohim made garments of skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed them.

### **Ezekiel 28:11-26**

*Reader 8\* Amen* <sup>11</sup> Again the word of Yahweh came to me saying, <sup>12</sup> "Son of man, take up a lamentation over the king of Tyre, and say to him, 'Thus says Yahweh Elohim, "You had the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. <sup>13</sup> "You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering: the ruby, the topaz, and the diamond; the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper; the lapis lazuli, the turquoise, and the emerald; and the gold, the workmanship of your settings and sockets, was in you. On the day that you were created they were prepared. <sup>14</sup> "You were the anointed cherub who covers, and I placed you there. You were on the holy mountain of God; you walked in the midst of the stones of fire. <sup>15</sup> "You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created, until unrighteousness was found in you. <sup>16</sup> "By the abundance of your trade you were internally filled with violence, and you sinned; therefore I have cast you as profane from the mountain of God. And I have destroyed you, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. <sup>17</sup> "Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom by reason of your splendor. I cast you to the ground; I put you before kings, that they may see you. <sup>18</sup> "By the multitude of your iniquities, in the unrighteousness of your trade, you profaned your sanctuaries.

*Reader 9\* Amen* Therefore I have brought fire from the midst of you; it has consumed you, and I have turned you to ashes on the earth In the eyes of all who see you. <sup>19</sup> "All who know you among the peoples are appalled at you; you have become terrified, and you will be no more." <sup>20</sup> And the word of Yahweh came to me saying, <sup>21</sup> "Son of man, set your face toward Sidon, prophesy against her, <sup>22</sup> and say, 'Thus says the Lord God, "Behold, I am against you, O Sidon, and I shall be glorified in your midst. Then they will know that I am Yahweh, when I execute judgments in her, and I shall manifest My holiness in her. <sup>23</sup> For I shall send pestilence to her and blood to her streets, and the wounded will fall in her midst by the sword upon her on every side; then they will know that I am Yahweh. <sup>24</sup> "And there will be no more for the house of Israel a prickling brier or a painful thorn from any round about them who scorned them; then they will know that I am Yahweh Elohim." <sup>25</sup> 'Thus says Yahweh Elohim, "When I gather the house of Israel from the peoples among whom they are scattered, and shall 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. <sup>26</sup> "And 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 Elohim.'"

### **Psalm 2 (to be sung)**

<sup>1</sup> Why are the nations in an uproar, and the peoples devising a vain thing? <sup>2</sup> The kings of the earth take their stand, and the rulers take counsel together against Yahweh and against His Anointed: <sup>3</sup> "Let us tear their fetters apart, and cast away their cords from us!" <sup>4</sup> He who sits in the heavens laughs, Yahweh scoffs at them. <sup>5</sup> Then He will speak to them in His anger and terrify them in His fury: <sup>6</sup> "But as for Me, I have

installed My King upon Zion, My holy mountain. <sup>7</sup> I will surely tell of the decree of Yahweh: He said to Me, 'You are My Son, today I have begotten You. <sup>8</sup> Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance, and the very ends of the earth as Your possession. <sup>9</sup> You shall break them with a rod of iron, thou shalt shatter them like earthenware.' " <sup>10</sup> Now therefore, O kings, show discernment; take warning, O judges of the earth. <sup>11</sup> Worship Yahweh with reverence, and rejoice with trembling. <sup>12</sup> Do homage to the Son, lest He become angry, and you perish in the way, for His wrath may soon be kindled. How blessed are all who take refuge in Him!

### **Romans 5:12-21**

*Reader 10\* Amen* <sup>12</sup> Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned-- <sup>13</sup> for until the Law sin was in the world; but sin is not imputed when there is no law. <sup>14</sup> Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come. <sup>15</sup> But the free gift is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Yeshua the Messiah, abound to the many. <sup>16</sup> And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned; for on the one hand the judgment arose from one transgression resulting in condemnation, but on the other hand the free gift arose from many transgressions resulting in justification.

*Reader 11\* Amen* <sup>17</sup> For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Yeshua the Messiah. <sup>18</sup> So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men. <sup>19</sup> For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous. <sup>20</sup> And the Law came in that the transgression might increase; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, <sup>21</sup> that, as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Yeshua the Messiah our Lord.

### **Commentary:**

*"These are the beginnings."* The Torah is foundational to the entire Bible, and in the first part of Genesis we can see the roots of major Biblical themes. In today's portion, we see the foundations of God's Holy Name, man's sin, baptism, and circumcision.

#### The Name

"Elohim" refers to the creator who judges His creation – He saw that it was very good. "Yahweh" refers to the Eternal who is gracious. Here we first see "Yahweh Elohim" (v.2:4, commonly translated "the Lord God"), the Eternal who is gracious with His creation that He judges. "Yahweh" is His memorial name for all generations (Exodus 3:15), and is used approximately 7,000 times throughout the Bible (see God's Holy Name). The Name "Yahweh" also indicates God's attribute of being eternal – (Hayah, Hoveh, V'yih-yeh) He was, He is, and He will be – and His attributes of omnipresence, omnipotence, and etc.

Here is the rabbinic teaching concerning the Name Yahweh: *"This is also the proper name of God. In respect for its intense holiness, it is not pronounced as it is spelled. In prayer or when reciting a complete verse of the Torah, it is pronounced Adonoy (Lord). Otherwise it is referred to as Hashem (the Name)"* [The Chumash on Genesis 2:4].

In Scripture, the Name is used approximately 7,000 times, far more than any other proper noun, and by all kinds of speakers. The command to use it is the most repeated command in the Bible, though it is not enumerated with the 613 as compiled by modern rabbinic sources. We are repeatedly commanded to *"Praise the Name Yahweh"* (Psalm 7:17, Joel 2:26, Isaiah 42:8), but *"Not use His name in vain"* (Exodus 20:7). We are to use it only with utmost respect and honor, not as a common word. [I have a hard time seeing justification for replacing the Name, when reading Scripture or blessing God, with a common word such as "Lord" or "the Name".]

Though God created trees and vegetation on the third day (v.1:11), they did not grow above ground before the end of the sixth day – when man was created (v.2:5). The sages say that crops did not come to fruition until there was man to bless His Name for them.

God took Adam's body and breathed into it the spirit of life, and Adam became a living soul (v.2:7). The body without the spirit is dead (James 2:26). "Soul" is commonly used with feelings that require the spirit to be with the body – as when a soul desires food. It seems to represent the combination of the other two.

God did not finish creating until the end of the sixth day, "Friday" (He rested from creating on the Holy Sabbath): His final creation was man – male and female (Gen 1:27, 31).

On the sixth day, God created Adam, and then placed him in the garden with instructions forbidding the Tree of Knowledge (v.2:15-17), and finally created Eve (v.2:22). Some may like to call Eve the crowning achievement of creation. Eve (*Heva*) means living (v.3:20). Adam called her "*ishah*" (woman), because she was taken from "*ish*" (man) (v.2:23).

### Sin

Man was charged with keeping Eden's garden, and was not to seek to be like God. It may be noted that "*Gan Eden*", the Garden of Eden, is also translated "Paradise" (Septuagint "*Paradisos*").

God said to Adam, "*Because you listened to . . .*" (v.23:17). Adam chose between pleasing God and pleasing the one who was offering a momentary enticement. How often do we do this? Adam was graciously given Eve, then pointed to her for an excuse for his sin (v.3:12). Eve pointed to the serpent for an excuse (v.3:13). God faulted all three. Interestingly, Adam replied (literal translation), "*I ate and will eat again*"! This seems to be an admission that he would likely do the same again in similar circumstances.

Adam and Eve glowed with the glory of God (see Eden/Paradise). Trees of the garden did not glow. When Adam and Eve sinned, they lost their glow; and perceiving their "unclothed" state, covered themselves with leaves and hid among the trees of the garden (v.3:7-8). They tried to look like trees, which did not glow.

Then God clothed them with skin (v.3:21). We often hear that this was animal skin, indicating a slain animal; but the text does not say so. Having lost their covering of light, they may have been, for the first time, covered with human skin. Some rabbinical sources suggest that they were "uncircumcised", given foreskin and hymen (circumcision, prescribed on the eighth day for a man and at marital consummation for a woman, being seen as our return to the original holy state). The latter two ideas may coincide. In any case, it was God who provided the atonement (covering).

Adam died spiritually the day he sinned (shown by his hiding from God), and he died physically on the same millennial day (he lived to 930 years, short of one millennium).

Though Eve sinned before Adam, it was through Adam that a sin nature was inherited by all mankind (Romans 5:12). Therefore, Yeshua, "the seed of the woman", did not inherit sin, having no earthly father.

Some would say that *ha-satan* (satan) was created before this week of creation. Some rabbinic sources teach that angels were created on the second day of creation. God says that all things, in heaven and earth, were created in these six days (Exodus 20:11). See Ezekiel 28:13.

In this portion, we see the promise of a redeemer: satan would bruise the heel (indicating temporary hurt/crucifixion) of the seed-of-the-woman (Messiah), then Messiah would crush the head (indicating ultimately destruction) of the serpent (satan).

### Mikvah - Baptism

The portion about the river (v.2:10-14) seems to be a parenthetical clause – its relationship to the rest of the chapter is not obvious. We see this river again in Revelation 22:1-3. The Talmud teaches that all the water in this world had as its source this river from Eden. The *Mikvah Mayim* (baptismal

water) is our primary contact with the Garden of Eden: when we immerse in it, we are born again – symbolically from the *Mem* for *Mayim*, picturing our spiritual birth by the Word of God. (This is discussed further under Mikvah/Baptism.)

Today, many Christian groups take the “New Testament” (a misnomer) to replace the “Old Testament”, and take baptism to be something new started by John the Baptist. It is commonly taken to be a “public” act, often performed at the front of a church sanctuary.

Immersion in a *mikvah* is an ordinance of the Torah. An ordinance is a symbolic act to demonstrate spiritual truth. Baptism is not a public act: clothing is not an option. John would not have baptized men in the Jordan when women were present. “The baptism of repentance for the remission of sins” (Mark 1:4, Luke 3:3) is an ordinance performed during the forty days preceding *Yom haKippurim* / the Day of the Atonements.

The title, “*These are the beginnings*”, indicates that this portion is foundational to the whole of history.

## Hen Ha-adam / Behold, the Man!

Genesis 3:22 – 4:26 Isaiah 42:8 Psalm 3 Romans 3:1-24

## Commentary Y1-03

Nisan 19, 5761 / Apr 10, 2004

*This reading is for Passover week*

*Reader 1\* Amen* <sup>22</sup> Then Yahweh God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil; and now, lest he stretch out his hand, and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever"-- <sup>23</sup> therefore Yahweh God sent him out from the garden of Eden, to cultivate the ground from which he was taken. <sup>24</sup> So He drove the man out; and at the east of the garden of Eden He stationed the cherubim, and the flaming sword which turned every direction, to guard the way to the tree of life.

*Reader 2\* Amen 4:* <sup>1</sup> Now the man had relations with his wife Eve, and she conceived and gave birth to Cain, and she said, "I have gotten a manchild with the help of Yahweh." <sup>2</sup> And again, she gave birth to his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of flocks, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. <sup>3</sup> So it came about in the course of time that Cain brought an offering to Yahweh of the fruit of the ground. <sup>4</sup> And Abel, on his part also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions.

*Reader 3\* Amen* And Yahweh had regard for Abel and for his offering; <sup>5</sup> but for Cain and for his offering He had no regard. So Cain became very angry and his countenance fell. <sup>6</sup> Then Yahweh said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? <sup>7</sup> "If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it." <sup>8</sup> And Cain told Abel his brother.

*Reader 4\* Amen* And it came about when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him. <sup>9</sup> Then Yahweh said to Cain, "Where is Abel your brother?" And he said, "I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?" <sup>10</sup> And He said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to Me from the ground. <sup>11</sup> "And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. <sup>12</sup> "When you cultivate the ground, it shall no longer yield its strength to you; you shall be a vagrant and a wanderer on the earth." <sup>13</sup> And Cain said to Yahweh, "My punishment is too great to bear! <sup>14</sup> "Behold, Thou hast driven me this day from the face of the ground; and from Thy face I shall be hidden, and I shall be a vagrant and a wanderer on the earth, and it will come about that whoever finds me will kill me." <sup>15</sup> So Yahweh said to him, "Therefore whoever kills Cain, vengeance will be taken on him sevenfold." And Yahweh appointed a sign for Cain, lest anyone finding him should slay him.

*Reader 5\* Amen* <sup>16</sup> Then Cain went out from the presence of Yahweh, and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden. <sup>17</sup> And Cain had relations with his wife and she conceived, and gave birth to Enoch; and he built a city, and called the name of the city Enoch, after the name of his son. <sup>18</sup> Now to Enoch was born Irad; and Irad became the father of Mehujael; and Mehujael became the father of Methushael; and Methushael became the father of Lamech.

*Reader 6\* Amen* <sup>19</sup> And Lamech took to himself two wives: the name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other, Zillah. <sup>20</sup> And Adah gave birth to Jabal; he was the father of those who dwell in tents and have livestock. <sup>21</sup> And his brother's name was Jubal; he was the father of all those who play the lyre and pipe. <sup>22</sup> As for Zillah, she also gave birth to Tubal-cain, the forger of all implements of bronze and iron; and the sister of Tubal-cain was Naamah. <sup>23</sup> And Lamech said to his wives, "Adah and Zillah, Listen to my voice, You wives of Lamech, Give heed to my speech, For I have killed a man for wounding me; And a boy for striking me; <sup>24</sup> If Cain is avenged sevenfold, Then Lamech seventy-sevenfold."

*Reader 7\* Amen* <sup>25</sup> And Adam had relations with his wife again; and she gave birth to a son, and named him Seth, for, she said, "God has appointed me another offspring in place of Abel; for Cain killed him." <sup>26</sup> And to Seth, to him also a son was born; and he called his name Enosh. Then men began to call upon the name of Yahweh.

### Isaiah 42:8

*Reader 8\* Amen* "I am Yahweh, that is My name; I will not give My glory to another, nor My praise to graven images.

**Psalm 3** *A Psalm of David, when he fled from Absalom his son.*

O Yahweh, how my adversaries have increased! Many are rising up against me.<sup>2</sup> Many are saying of my soul, "There is no deliverance for him in God." Selah.<sup>3</sup> But You, O Yahweh, are a shield about me, my glory, and the One who lifts my head.<sup>4</sup> I was crying to Yahweh with my voice, and He answered me from His holy mountain. Selah.<sup>5</sup> I lay down and slept; I awoke, for Yahweh sustains me.<sup>6</sup> I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people who have set themselves against me round about.<sup>7</sup> Arise, O Yahweh; save me, O my God! For You have smitten all my enemies on the cheek; You have shattered the teeth of the wicked.<sup>8</sup> Salvation belongs to Yahweh; Your blessing be upon Your people! Selah.

**Romans 3:1-24**

*Reader 9\* Amen*<sup>1</sup> Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the benefit of circumcision?<sup>2</sup> Great in every respect. First of all, that they were entrusted with the oracles of God.<sup>3</sup> What then? If some did not believe, their unbelief will not nullify the faithfulness of God, will it?<sup>4</sup> May it never be! Rather, let God be found true, though every man be found a liar, as it is written, "That You might be justified in Your words, and might prevail when You are judged."<sup>5</sup> But if our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say? The God who inflicts wrath is not unrighteous, is He? (I am speaking in human terms.)<sup>6</sup> May it never be! For otherwise how will God judge the world?<sup>7</sup> But if through my lie the truth of God abounded to His glory, why am I also still being judged as a sinner?<sup>8</sup> And why not say (as we are slanderously reported and as some affirm that we say), "Let us do evil that good may come"? Their condemnation is just.

*Reader 10\* Amen*<sup>9</sup> What then? Are we better than they? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin;<sup>10</sup> as it is written, "There is none righteous, not even one;<sup>11</sup> there is none who understands, there is none who seeks for God;<sup>12</sup> all have turned aside, together they have become useless; there is none who does good, there is not even one.<sup>13</sup> Their throat is an open grave, with their tongues they keep deceiving, the poison of asps is under their lips;<sup>14</sup> whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness;<sup>15</sup> their feet are swift to shed blood,<sup>16</sup> destruction and misery are in their paths,<sup>17</sup> and the path of peace have they not known.<sup>18</sup> There is no fear of God before their eyes."<sup>19</sup> Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, that every mouth may be closed, and all the world may become accountable to God;<sup>20</sup> because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin.<sup>21</sup> But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,<sup>22</sup> even the righteousness of God through faith in Yeshua the Messiah for all those who believe; for there is no distinction;<sup>23</sup> for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,<sup>24</sup> being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Messiah Yeshua;

**Commentary** *This reading is during Passover week.*

Last Monday evening we celebrated the Seder of the Passover Lamb, marking the beginning of the seven-day Feast of Unleavened Breads. We performed the ordinances picturing Yeshua's crucifixion.

Last Tuesday evening was the time to reap the first *ephah* (bushel) of the best of the new barley crop. On Wednesday morning, an *omer* (tith of an *ephah*) of fine flour from that first bushel would be mixed with olive oil, and waved with a lamb before Yahweh. That would be the first of fifty days of counting the *Omer*.

On this Sabbath we say:

*"Blessed are You, Yahweh our God, King of the Universe,  
Who has sanctified us by His Word, and instructed us to count the Omer.  
Today is four days of the Omer."*

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(V.3:22) "*Behold, the man has become unique among the terrestrial ones, discerning good and evil.*" Now, lest he live forever in a state of pursuing self-gratification, God banished him from Paradise where he could

eat of the Tree of Life. Man was created to glorify Yahweh, Who says, “*I am Yahweh, that is My name; I will not give My glory to another*” (Isaiah 42:8).

(V.4:1) “*Heva (Eve) conceived and gave birth to Ka-yeen (Cain).*” There are three possible translations of her statement:

- (1) Eve said, “*I have gotten a manchild with Yahweh.*” Adam and Eve were created without man’s participation, but Cain was created through a partnership of God and man.
- (2) Eve said, “*I have gotten a manchild for Yahweh.*” Cain was brought forth for the purpose of worshipping Yahweh. She could have seen this as atonement for her part in bringing death upon Adam, who now would not always be around to worship God.
- (3) Eve said, “*I have gotten a manchild – Yahweh.*” Eve was expecting Cain to be the Messiah promised in Genesis 3:15.

Then Eve gave birth to *Hevel* (Abel).

Abel was a keeper of flocks, for milk and wool. Cain was a tiller of the ground, for grain.

Abel brought the first-born of his flock (this is spring time). Abel brought the proper Passover offering, showing his faith in the promised redeemer. God showed His acceptance; perhaps by sending His fire to consume the offering (meat was not yet given to eat).

At the end of growing time, Cain brought “fruit of the ground”; he did not bring the best from the first of the harvest. God did not accept it. Grain offerings must be the first and finest, and are only acceptable from a redeemed one.

Because Abel’s offering was accepted and Cain’s was not accepted, Cain burned – he was very angry and his countenance fell. Then Yahweh said to Cain, “*If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire (one of the four desires) is to rule over you, but you must rule over it.*” Sin desires to rule over us, but we are commanded to overcome sin – by the blood of the Lamb! (Romans 12:21, 1 John 4:4, Revelation 12:11)

These are known as *The Four Desires*, because they represent the four places in Scripture where the word *teshukah* (desire) is used:

- (1) Woman desires to rule over man (Genesis 3:16), but man is commanded to rule with love.
- (2) Sin desires to rule over us (Genesis 4:7), but we are commanded to overcome it.
- (3) The rain desires to flood the earth (Psalm 65:10), but God restrains it.
- (4) Messiah desires His bride (Song of Solomon 7:10).

(V.8) Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him. Then Yahweh said to Cain, . . . “*And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand. When you cultivate the ground, it shall no longer yield its strength to you; you shall be a vagrant and a wanderer on the earth.*” And Cain said to Yahweh, “*My punishment is too great to bear! Behold, Thou hast driven me this day from the face of the ground; and from Thy face I shall be hidden, and I shall be a vagrant and a wanderer on the earth, and it will come about that whoever finds me will kill me.*” So Yahweh said to him, “*As for the killing of Cain, this vengeance will be twice of the seventh generation.*” And Yahweh appointed a sign for Cain, lest anyone finding him should slay him before his time.

(*Numbers represent generations.*) <sup>2</sup>Cain fathered <sup>3</sup>Enoch, Enoch fathered <sup>4</sup>Irada, Irada fathered <sup>5</sup>(Me-chu-Ya-el) Mehujael, Mehujael fathered <sup>6</sup>Methushael, and Methushael fathered <sup>7</sup>Lamech. Lamech took two wives: Adah, and Zillah (*Tzillah*). Zillah gave birth to <sup>8</sup>Tubal-cain (*Tuval-Kayeen* – You will be brought with Cain {to death}).

*Following is an ancient Hebrew understanding of the passage.* (V.23) And Lamech said to his wives, “listen to my cry of sorrow, you wives of Lamech, give heed to my tale of woe, for have I killed a man by my wound, (I have actually wounded myself, since my victim was my father {seventh generation}); and have I killed a boy by my bruise?” (I have actually bruised myself, since my victim was my son {and the seventh generation after Cain}). Tubal-cain is not shown to have any descendants. Abel would thus be

avenged “twice of the seventh generation”). “If vengeance upon Cain is sevenfold (by spending seven generations cursed and on death row), then upon Lamech seventy-sevenfold” – Lamech lived 777 years, until just before the great flood.

Yeshua will be avenged twice in the seventh millennium, in the Erev Shabbat (great tribulation) and the Havdallah (battle of HarMegiddo) of the Great Sabbath.

(V.25) And Adam knew his wife again; and she gave birth to a son, and named him <sup>2</sup>Seth, for, she said, "God has appointed me another offspring in place of Abel; for Cain killed him." And to Seth, to him also a son was born; and he called his name <sup>3</sup>Enosh. Then men began to call upon the name of Yahweh – see Haftarah (Isaiah 42:8). The sons of God – the righteous line of Seth, as the Melchisedek priesthood (the priesthood of the firstborn which was later replaced by the Levitical priesthood {Num 3:12}), led people to call upon the name Yahweh during this early time of idolatry. As David said, “*I was crying to Yahweh with my voice, and He answered me from His holy mountain. Selah*” (Psalm 3:4).

#### Romans

Paul tells us that the Law speaks to make the whole world accountable to God! It is to shut every mouth! It is to bring the knowledge of sin to every person – and Paul is talking to Gentiles.

Then the righteousness that comes from God, through Yeshua the Messiah, is made known, even being testified to by the Torah and Prophets. And, as David says, “*Salvation belongs to Yahweh; Your blessing be upon Your people! Selah*” (Psalm 3:8).

Paul goes on to explain that no one can be saved by the works of the Law. No one has ever had sins removed by animal sacrifices. No one has ever attained righteous standing before an Holy God by his own works of righteousness, for these works have no such value (“*they are as filthy rags*”).

Both Hebrew and Gentile can be saved from sin only by the sacrifice of Yeshua, through faith.

We need to get over the common idea that there are different rules for different people or different times. The Law was for the whole world, for all time, to define and convict of sin; the Hebrews were to be lights to the world, to convey God’s message.

There has never been any remedy for anyone’s sin, except Yeshua’s sacrifice. The old-time Passover offerings were pictures to show faith in the promised redeemer, and future offerings will be to show faith the Redeemer’s past work – a memorial. The Feasts are ordinances, which, by definition, picture spiritual truths (1 Corinthians 11:26).



*Reader 1\* Amen* <sup>1</sup> This is the Book of the Generations of Adam. In the day when God created man, He made him in the likeness of God. <sup>2</sup> He created them male and female, and He blessed them and named them Man in the day when they were created. <sup>3</sup> When Adam had lived one hundred and thirty years, he became the father of a son in his own likeness, according to his image, and named him Seth. <sup>4</sup> Then the days of Adam after he became the father of Seth were eight hundred years, and he had other sons and daughters. <sup>5</sup> So all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years, and he died.

*Reader 2\* Amen* <sup>6</sup> Seth lived one hundred and five years, and became the father of Enosh. <sup>7</sup> Then Seth lived eight hundred and seven years after he became the father of Enosh, and he had other sons and daughters. <sup>8</sup> So all the days of Seth were nine hundred and twelve years, and he died. <sup>9</sup> Enosh lived ninety years, and became the father of Kenan. <sup>10</sup> Then Enosh lived eight hundred and fifteen years after he became the father of Kenan, and he had other sons and daughters. <sup>11</sup> So all the days of Enosh were nine hundred and five years, and he died.

*Reader 3\* Amen* <sup>12</sup> Kenan lived seventy years, and became the father of Mahalalel. <sup>13</sup> Then Kenan lived eight hundred and forty years after he became the father of Mahalalel, and he had other sons and daughters. <sup>14</sup> So all the days of Kenan were nine hundred and ten years, and he died. <sup>15</sup> Mahalalel lived sixty-five years, and became the father of Jared. <sup>16</sup> Then Mahalalel lived eight hundred and thirty years after he became the father of Jared, and he had other sons and daughters. <sup>17</sup> So all the days of Mahalalel were eight hundred and ninety-five years, and he died.

*Reader 4\* Amen* <sup>18</sup> Jared lived one hundred and sixty-two years, and became the father of Enoch. <sup>19</sup> Then Jared lived eight hundred years after he became the father of Enoch, and he had other sons and daughters. <sup>20</sup> So all the days of Jared were nine hundred and sixty-two years, and he died. <sup>21</sup> Enoch lived sixty-five years, and became the father of Methuselah. <sup>22</sup> Then Enoch walked with God three hundred years after he became the father of Methuselah, and he had other sons and daughters. <sup>23</sup> So all the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty-five years. <sup>24</sup> Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.

*Reader 5\* Amen* <sup>25</sup> Methuselah lived one hundred and eighty-seven years, and became the father of Lamech. <sup>26</sup> Then Methuselah lived seven hundred and eighty-two years after he became the father of Lamech, and he had other sons and daughters. <sup>27</sup> So all the days of Methuselah were nine hundred and sixty-nine years, and he died. <sup>28</sup> Lamech lived one hundred and eighty-two years, and became the father of a son. <sup>29</sup> Now he called his name Noah, saying, "This one will give us rest from our work and from the toil of our hands arising from the ground which Yahweh has cursed." <sup>30</sup> Then Lamech lived five hundred and ninety-five years after he became the father of Noah, and he had other sons and daughters. <sup>31</sup> So all the days of Lamech were seven hundred and seventy-seven years, and he died.

*Reader 6\* Amen* <sup>32</sup> Noah was five hundred years old, and Noah became the father of Shem, Ham, and Japheth. **6:**<sup>1</sup> Now it came about, when men began to multiply on the face of the land, and daughters were born to them, <sup>2</sup> that the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves, whomever they chose. <sup>3</sup> Then Yahweh said, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, because he also is flesh; nevertheless his days shall be one hundred and twenty years." <sup>4</sup> The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men, and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown.

*Reader 7\* Amen* <sup>5</sup> Then Yahweh saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. <sup>6</sup> Yahweh was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. <sup>7</sup> Yahweh said, "I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky; for I am sorry that I have made them." <sup>8</sup> But Noah found favor in the eyes of Yahweh.

**Isaiah 30:8-15**

*Reader 8\* Amen* <sup>8</sup> Now go, write it on a tablet before them and inscribe it on a scroll, that it may serve in the time to come as a witness forever. <sup>9</sup> For this is a rebellious people, false sons, sons who refuse to listen to the instruction of Yahweh; <sup>10</sup> who say to the seers, "You must not see visions"; and to the prophets, "You must not prophesy to us what is right, speak to us pleasant words, prophesy illusions. <sup>11</sup> "Get out of the way, turn aside from the path, let us hear no more about the Holy One of Israel." <sup>12</sup> Therefore thus says the Holy One of Israel, "Since you have rejected this word and have put your trust in oppression and guile, and have relied on them, <sup>13</sup> therefore this iniquity will be to you like a breach about to fall, a bulge in a high wall, whose collapse comes suddenly in an instant, <sup>14</sup> Whose collapse is like the smashing of a potter's jar, So ruthlessly shattered that a sherd will not be found among its pieces to take fire from a hearth or to scoop water from a cistern." <sup>15</sup> For thus Lord Yahweh, the Holy One of Israel, has said, "In repentance and rest you will be saved, in quietness and trust is your strength." But you were not willing,

**Ezekiel 38:13**

*Reader 9\* Amen* "Sheba and Dedan and the merchants of Tarshish with all its villages will say to you, 'Have you come to capture spoil? Have you assembled your company to seize plunder, to carry away silver and gold, to take away cattle and goods, to capture great spoil?'" "

**Psalm 4 (to be sung) For the choir director; on stringed instruments. A Psalm of David.**

<sup>1</sup> Answer me when I call, O God of my righteousness! You have relieved me in my distress; be gracious to me and hear my prayer. <sup>2</sup> O sons of men, how long will my honor become a reproach? How long will you love what is worthless and aim at deception? Selah. <sup>3</sup> But know that Yahweh has set apart the godly man for Himself; Yahweh hears when I call to Him. <sup>4</sup> Tremble, and do not sin; meditate in your heart upon your bed, and be still. Selah. <sup>5</sup> Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and trust in Yahweh. <sup>6</sup> Many are saying, "Who will show us any good?" Lift up the light of Your countenance upon us, O Yahweh! <sup>7</sup> You have put gladness in my heart, more than when their grain and new wine abound. <sup>8</sup> In peace I will both lie down and sleep, for You alone, O Yahweh, make me to dwell in safety.

**Matthew 23:1-39**

*Reader 10\* Amen* <sup>1</sup> Then Yeshua spoke to the crowds and to His disciples, <sup>2</sup> saying: "The scribes and the Pharisees have seated themselves in the chair of Moses; <sup>3</sup> therefore all that they tell you, do and observe, but do not do according to their deeds; for they say things and do not do them. <sup>4</sup> They tie up heavy burdens and lay them on men's shoulders, but they themselves are unwilling to move them with so much as a finger.

*Reader 11\* Amen* <sup>5</sup> But they do all their deeds to be noticed by men; for they broaden their phylacteries and lengthen the tassels of their garments. <sup>6</sup> They love the place of honor at banquets and the chief seats in the synagogues, <sup>7</sup> and respectful greetings in the market places, and being called Rabbi by men. <sup>8</sup> But do not be called Rabbi; for One is your Teacher, and you are all brothers. <sup>9</sup> Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. <sup>10</sup> Do not be called leaders; for One is your Leader, that is, Messiah. <sup>11</sup> But the greatest among you shall be your servant. <sup>12</sup> Whoever exalts himself shall be humbled; and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted.

*Reader 12\* Amen* <sup>13</sup> But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you shut off the kingdom of heaven from people; for you do not enter in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in. <sup>14</sup> Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you devour widows' houses, and for a pretense you make long prayers; therefore you will receive greater condemnation. <sup>15</sup> Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you travel around on sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves.

*Reader 13\* Amen* <sup>16</sup> Woe to you, blind guides, who say, 'Whoever swears by the temple, that is nothing; but whoever swears by the gold of the temple is obligated.' <sup>17</sup> You fools and blind men! Which is more important, the gold or the temple that sanctified the gold? <sup>18</sup> And, 'Whoever swears by the altar, that is nothing, but whoever swears by the offering on it, he is obligated.' <sup>19</sup> You blind men, which is more important, the offering, or the altar that sanctifies the offering? <sup>20</sup> Therefore, whoever swears by the altar, swears both by the altar and by everything on it. <sup>21</sup> And whoever swears by the temple, swears both by the

temple and by Him who dwells within it. <sup>22</sup> And whoever swears by heaven, swears both by the throne of God and by Him who sits upon it.

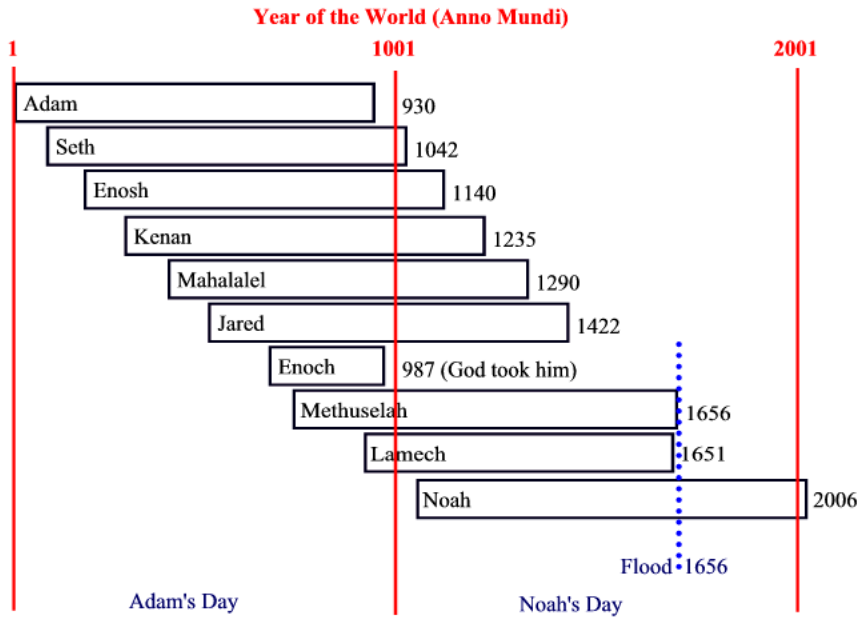
*Reader 14\* Amen* <sup>23</sup> Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cummin, and have neglected the weightier provisions of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others. <sup>24</sup> You blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel! <sup>25</sup> Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside they are full of robbery and self-indulgence. <sup>26</sup> You blind Pharisee, first clean the inside of the cup and of the dish, so that the outside of it may become clean also. <sup>27</sup> Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which on the outside appear beautiful, but inside they are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. <sup>28</sup> So you, too, outwardly appear righteous to men, but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

*Reader 15\* Amen* <sup>29</sup> Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous, <sup>30</sup> and say, 'If we had been living in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partners with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.' <sup>31</sup> So you testify against yourselves, that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. <sup>32</sup> Fill up, then, the measure of the guilt of your fathers. <sup>33</sup> You serpents, you brood of vipers, how will you escape the sentence of hell?

*Reader 16\* Amen* <sup>34</sup> Therefore, behold, I am sending you prophets and wise men and scribes; some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city, <sup>35</sup> so that upon you may fall the guilt of all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. <sup>36</sup> Truly I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation. <sup>37</sup> "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. <sup>38</sup> Behold, your house is being left to you desolate! <sup>39</sup>"For I say to you, from now on you will not see Me until you say, 'BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF YAHWEH!' "

**Commentary:**

"This is the Book of Generations" (v.5:1). It is important, for understanding Scripture, that one has a concept of the Biblical timeline.



**Timeline Key**

1	1001	2001	3001	4001	5001	6001
Adam's Day	Noah's Day	Abraham's Day	Messiah's Day		Last Days (now-5761)	Millennial Sabbath

Adam and Noah, in total time, lived about one-third of the world's history! Methuselah, the longest living man at 969 years, died just before (the sages say the day before) the great flood. Adam and Methuselah's lives spanned the entire time from creation to the flood.

(V.6:1) When men from other sons of Adam began to multiply on the earth, and daughters were born to them, the sons of the God – the priestly line of Seth, saw that the daughters of these other men were beautiful, and married them – corrupting the priestly line. Thus righteous leadership waned. Here we see the basis of negative commandments no. 158, 159, & 160 of the 613 (Lev 21:7), which apply to marriage within the substitute Levitical priesthood (Num 3:12).

“Yahweh saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (v.6:5).

Yahweh was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. And Yahweh said (speaking in terms of men), “. . . I am sorry that I have made man,” or (an alternate rendering of the Hebrew), “I am comforted in how I have made man (mortal)”. But Noah found favor (grace) in the eyes of Yahweh.

So, how have we fared since? “We have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin; as it is written, ‘There is none righteous, not even one; there is none who understands, there is none who seeks for God; all have turned aside, together they have become useless; there is none who does good, there is not even one. Their throat is an open grave, with their tongues they keep deceiving, the poison of asps is under their lips; whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness; their feet are swift to shed blood, destruction and

misery are in their paths, and the path of peace have they not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes' ” (Rom 3:9-18, from Psalm 14 & 53).

And in the Gospel portion (Matt 23) we read, “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous, and say, ‘If we had been living in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partners with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.’ Consequently you bear witness against yourselves, that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. Fill up then the measure of the guilt of your fathers. You serpents, you brood of vipers, how shall you escape the sentence of hell?” (v.29-33).

Yeshua said, “Woe to you, blind guides, who say, ‘Whoever swears by the Temple, that is nothing; but whoever swears by the gold of the Temple, he is obligated.’ You fools and blind men; which is more important, the gold, or the Temple that sanctified the gold?” (v.16-17). If the gold were placed in the hands of a merchant for the purchase of goods, it would not be sanctified (set apart for God). Only because of the sanctity of the House of God is the gold offered there set apart for God. The earthly Temple was a picture of the heavenly, from Eden; when the priests corrupted the picture, the Temple was removed from them. We see it again in Eden in The Unveiling of Yeshua the Messiah / The Revelation of Jesus Christ (Rev 21).

Herein is a common sin of leaders today. “But they do all their deeds to be noticed by men; for they broaden their phylacteries, and lengthen the *tzitzit* (tassels) on their garments. And they love the place of honor at banquets, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and respectful greetings in the market places, and being called by men, Rabbi. But do not be called Rabbi; for One is your Teacher, and you are all brothers. And do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. And do not be called leaders; for One is your Leader, that is, Christ. But the greatest among you shall be your servant. And whoever exalts himself shall be humbled; and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted” (v.5-12). The problem here is pride, a special problem for men who lead or teach. This has nothing to do with calling your natural father “Father”; it has nothing to do with using earned worldly job titles such as “Doctor” or “Officer”. It is about seeking special honor in supposed service of God, as by using a title like “Father”, “Rabbi”, or “Pastor”, or wearing special garments to so distinguish oneself.

“The scribes and the Pharisees have seated themselves in the chair of Moses” (v.1). The Biblical synagogue was not to have self-appointed officers (see Synagogue Structure). It was not to have salaried officers, and this is not contrary to 1 Timothy 5:17-18. [\[Insert article\]](#)

*"In the midst of the congregation I will praise Thee." - Psalm 22:22*

*Blow a shofar in Zion, . . . proclaim a solemn assembly,*

*. . . sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders - Joel 2:15-16*

The Hebrew *qahal* is translated variously in the Greek Septuagint as *sunagoge* and *ekklesia*. These Greek terms are subsequently translated in English Bible versions as *synagogue*, *church*, *assembly*, *congregation*, etc. The perceived distinction between the terms *synagogue* and *church* is due only to centuries of polarization of Jews and Christians.

The Temple (*Beit HaMikdosh* - lit. House of the Holy One) is the appointed place for man to meet God. It was the center for the festivals and sacrifices. It was the center for interpretation and teaching of the Torah (The place of the Sanhedrin). It was the place of origin for prophecy ("Her prophets" - Jer 8:1, 29:15-20, Zech 8:8-9, Acts 11:27, I John 4:1)

The Synagogue (*Beit HaKenesset*) is called a little sanctuary (Ezek 11:16). It functions as a local extension of the Temple. We are commanded to build a sanctuary for God (Exodus 25:8). This is interpreted as a literal, physical building as well as a spiritual place in one's heart. Psalm 74:8 refers to "synagogues (*qahal*) of appointed-places-of-God in the land."

## **The Offices of the Synagogue / Church**

The government of God's people (Israel) is to be a theocracy, with Messiah Yeshua as king. Under this, the government of the Synagogue is a representative democracy, with the congregants choosing officers from their midst. A minimum of ten "men of leisure" (men who were independently wealthy enough to be able to spend their time serving the congregation without financial remuneration) was required to qualify a town for a synagogue.

### **1. Messenger of the Congregation (Hebrew: Sheliach Tzibbur)**

**or Angel of the Church (LXX and NT Greek: Angeloi tas Ekklesias)**

Duties:

Take messages (as from the Temple) to the congregation. (See Revelation 2:1,8,12,18, 3:1,7,14)

Choose 7 men each Sabbath to read Torah portions.

Watch over readers' shoulders and correct any mistakes, hence called an Overseer. (See Acts 20:28)

Qualifications:

Mastery of Hebrew language and Torah cantillation (trup), hence called a Cantor (Hazzan).

Mastery of Hebrew blessings (required for readings), hence called Master of Prayer (Baal Tefilah).

Other qualifications found in *Shulhan Arukh* and 1 Timothy 3:1-10.

### **2. Interpreter**

Duties:

Translate Hebrew readings ("the language of angels") into the languages of the listeners ("the languages of men" of the 70 nations). (See I Cor 13:1)

### **3-4-5. Judges / Rulers (bench of 3)**

Duties:

Adjudicate moral and legal matters by Torah (See I Cor 5:12-6:5, Mark 5:22) and make halachic rulings (determination of proper way to observe Torah commands).

Matters too hard were taken to Sanhedrin at the Temple. (Deut 17:8)

Israel's religious leadership was also civil government. (King anointed by Prophet (I Sam 16:13))

Church will rule (judge) the world (millennium). (I Cor 6:2)

This life is a rehearsal! (U.S. Constitution limits government voice in church, not church voice in government.)

### **6-7-8. Pastors / Deacons (3 minimum)**

Duties:

Collect alms from the townfolk.

Determine real needs, and distribute to the poor.

### **9-10. Schoolmaster and**

**Assistant Schoolmaster (See Gal 3:24-25 )**

Duties:

Train boys for responsibility to Torah observance (bar-mitzvah).

### **The Worship Texts of the Synagogue / Church**

The synagogue of the Second Temple era had an established Scripture reading cycle. Based on covering the Torah in three years, a *parasha* was read each week. A portion of the prophets, dealing with the same subject, was also read. The Psalms, being read in numerical order, also related to the Torah subject each week. The following chart also suggests an Apostolic portion relating to each week's Torah reading. The common subject of the readings was expounded. The cycle started on the first Sabbath of Nisan, and the subjects coincided in date with major events, such as festivals.

Other Psalms were sung each Sabbath, inspired Psalms being the only songs used in public worship services.

## ***Eleh Toldot Noach / These are the Generations of Noah***

Genesis 6:9 – 7:24 Isaiah 54:9-10 Psalm 5 1 Peter 3:13-22

## **Commentary Y1-05**

Iyyar 5, 5761 / Apr 28, 2001

Iyyar 3, 5764 / Apr 24, 2004

*Reader 1\* Amen*<sup>9</sup> These are the records of the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his time; Noah walked with God.<sup>10</sup> Noah became the father of three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth.<sup>11</sup> Now the earth was corrupt in the sight of God, and the earth was filled with violence.<sup>12</sup> God looked on the earth, and behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth.<sup>13</sup> Then God said to Noah, "The end of all flesh has come before Me; for the earth is filled with violence because of them; and behold, I am about to destroy them with the earth.

*Reader 2\* Amen*<sup>14</sup> "Make for yourself an ark of gopher wood; you shall make the ark with rooms, and shall cover it inside and out with pitch.<sup>15</sup> "This is how you shall make it: the length of the ark three hundred cubits, its breadth fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits.<sup>16</sup> "You shall make a window for the ark, and finish it to a cubit from the top; and set the door of the ark in the side of it; you shall make it with lower, second, and third decks.

*Reader 3\* Amen*<sup>17</sup> "Behold, I, even I am bringing the flood of water upon the earth, to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life, from under heaven; everything that is on the earth shall perish.<sup>18</sup> "But I will establish My covenant with you; and you shall enter the ark – you and your sons and your wife, and your sons' wives with you.<sup>19</sup> "And of every living thing of all flesh, you shall bring two of every kind into the ark, to keep them alive with you; they shall be male and female.<sup>20</sup> "Of the birds after their kind, and of the animals after their kind, of every creeping thing of the ground after its kind, two of every kind will come to you to keep them alive.<sup>21</sup> "As for you, take for yourself some of all food which is edible, and gather it to yourself; and it shall be for food for you and for them."<sup>22</sup> Thus Noah did; according to all that God had commanded him, so he did.

*Reader 4\* Amen 7:*<sup>1</sup> Then Yahweh said to Noah, "Enter the ark, you and all your household, for you alone I have seen to be righteous before Me in this time.<sup>2</sup> "You shall take with you of every clean animal by sevens, a male and his female; and of the animals that are not clean two, a male and his female;<sup>3</sup> also of the birds of the sky, by sevens, male and female, to keep offspring alive on the face of all the earth.<sup>4</sup> "For after seven more days, I will send rain on the earth forty days and forty nights; and I will blot out from the face of the land every living thing that I have made."<sup>5</sup> Noah did according to all that Yahweh had commanded him.<sup>6</sup> Now Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of water came upon the earth.<sup>7</sup> Then Noah and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him entered the ark because of the water of the flood.<sup>8</sup> Of clean animals and animals that are not clean and birds and everything that creeps on the ground,<sup>9</sup> there went into the ark to Noah by twos, male and female, as God had commanded Noah.

*Reader 5\* Amen*<sup>10</sup> It came about after the seven days, that the water of the flood came upon the earth.<sup>11</sup> In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on the same day all the fountains of the great deep burst open, and the floodgates of the sky were opened.<sup>12</sup> The rain fell upon the earth for forty days and forty nights.<sup>13</sup> On the very same day Noah and Shem and Ham and Japheth, the sons of Noah, and Noah's wife and the three wives of his sons with them, entered the ark,<sup>14</sup> they and every beast after its kind, and all the cattle after their kind, and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth after its kind, and every bird after its kind, all sorts of birds.<sup>15</sup> So they went into the ark to Noah, by twos of all flesh in which was the breath of life.<sup>16</sup> Those that entered, male and female of all flesh, entered as God had commanded him; and Yahweh closed it behind him.

*Reader 6\* Amen*<sup>17</sup> Then the flood came upon the earth for forty days, and the water increased and lifted up the ark, so that it rose above the earth.<sup>18</sup> The water prevailed and increased greatly upon the earth, and the ark floated on the surface of the water.<sup>19</sup> The water prevailed more and more upon the earth, so that all the high mountains everywhere under the heavens were covered.<sup>20</sup> The water prevailed fifteen cubits higher, and the mountains were covered.



*Reader 7\* Amen* <sup>21</sup> All flesh that moved on the earth perished, birds and cattle and beasts and every swarming thing that swarms upon the earth, and all mankind; <sup>22</sup> of all that was on the dry land, all in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life, died. <sup>23</sup> Thus He blotted out every living thing that was upon the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky, and they were blotted out from the earth; and only Noah was left, together with those that were with him in the ark. <sup>24</sup> The water prevailed upon the earth one hundred and fifty days.

### **Isaiah 54:9-10**

*Reader 8\* Amen* <sup>9</sup> “For this is like the days of Noah to Me; when I swore that the waters of Noah should not flood the earth again, so I have sworn that I will not be angry with you, nor will I rebuke you. <sup>10</sup> For the mountains may be removed and the hills may shake, But My lovingkindness will not be removed from you, and My covenant of peace will not be shaken,” says Yahweh who has compassion on you.

**Psalm 5** *(to be sung) For the choir director; for flute accompaniment. A Psalm of David.*

<sup>1</sup> Give ear to my words, O Yahweh, Consider my groaning. <sup>2</sup> Heed the sound of my cry for help, my King and my God, for to You I pray. <sup>3</sup> In the morning, O Yahweh, You will hear my voice; in the morning I will order my prayer to You and eagerly watch. <sup>4</sup> For You are not a God who takes pleasure in wickedness; no evil dwells with You. <sup>5</sup> The boastful shall not stand before Your eyes; You hate all who do iniquity. <sup>6</sup> You destroy those who speak falsehood; Yahweh abhors the man of bloodshed and deceit. <sup>7</sup> But as for me, by Your abundant lovingkindness I will enter Your house, at Your holy temple I will bow in reverence for You. <sup>8</sup> O Yahweh, lead me in Your righteousness because of my foes; make Your way straight before me. <sup>9</sup> There is nothing reliable in what they say; their inward part is destruction itself. Their throat is an open grave; they flatter with their tongue. <sup>10</sup> Hold them guilty, O God; by their own devices let them fall! In the multitude of their transgressions thrust them out, for they are rebellious against You. <sup>11</sup> But let all who take refuge in You be glad, let them ever sing for joy; and may You shelter them, that those who love Your name may exult in You. <sup>12</sup> For it is You who blesses the righteous man, O Yahweh, You surround him with favor as with a shield.

### **1 Peter 3:13-22**

*Reader 9\* Amen* <sup>13</sup> Who is there to harm you if you prove zealous for what is good? <sup>14</sup> But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. And do not fear their intimidation, and do not be troubled, <sup>15</sup> but sanctify Messiah as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence; <sup>16</sup> and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Messiah will be put to shame. <sup>17</sup> For it is better, if God should will it so, that you suffer for doing what is right rather than for doing what is wrong.

*Reader 10\* Amen* <sup>18</sup> For Messiah also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit; <sup>19</sup> in which also He went and made proclamation to the spirits now in prison, <sup>20</sup> who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through the water. <sup>21</sup> Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you – not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience – through the resurrection of Yeshua the Messiah, <sup>22</sup> who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, after angels and authorities and powers had been subjected to Him.

## Commentary:

In ten generations from Adam, the world had devolved into gross immorality, such that God said that He was glad that He had made man mortal.” The generation had forfeited its right to exist. But one of the son’s of God – of the priestly line of Seth, found grace in the eyes of Yahweh. It may be noted, that people’s morality deteriorated from Adam to Noah, from Noah to Babel, from Moses to Yeshua, and in the world in our lifetimes.

Yahweh, the Gracious God, accounted Noah a “righteous man” in a corrupt society. “Noah walked with Elohim,” using God’s judgment in his manner of life. He was called “perfect in his generations,” and then he was credited with having “begotten three sons.” His righteousness was referred to as “his generations,” like offspring, and accounted greater than having sons.

(V.13) “Behold, I am about to destroy them with the earth.” Did God annihilate the earth and then create a new one? No! He destroyed wicked man, and his servant animals, and his works from the face of the earth. So, when God say the earth will again be destroyed, but by fire, and there will be a new earth – does it mean that the earth will be annihilated? The Greek for used here (2 Peter 13:2, Revelation 14:3, 21:1) for word “new,” *kainos*, means “renewed” (fresh), not something created from nothing. Hebrew *hadash* (Isaiah 65:17, 66:22) commonly means recycled – and is usually something made of existing material; it is related to *hodesh* – cycle, as in new moon, and *shamaim hadashim v’aretz hadashah* – new heavens and new earth: something entirely new is *beriah* (Numbers 16:30).

Cain asked, “Am I my brother’s keeper?” But Noah said, in essence, “I am everyone’s keeper, from the least of the animals to man.” God could have miraculously provided food for all on the ark, but Noah obeyed the responsibility (v.6:21-22).

As an example for us, Noah walked with God, though the whole world mocked him. He worked building an ark for 120 years, when no one had ever seen a flood!

Noah was told to take a pair of each kind of unclean animal, and seven pair of clean animals: since animals had not yet been given for food, clean animals are seen as representing animals acceptable for offerings, and as evidence of a pre-Mosaic knowledge of Torah.

Noah, as a type of Messiah, was a “second Adam,” the father of the remaining human race.

“Elohim” (v.6:13 – Justice) commanded Noah to build the ark, but “Yahweh” (v.7:1 – Grace) told Noah to enter.

The sons are not named in birth order. “Shem” (from “name it”) means a thinking person; “Ham” (from “heat”) means sensuous or passionate; “Japeth” (from “openness”) means seeker of beauty. All three characteristics were saved from the flood, and can be used in the service of God (Hirsch).

The world seeks a life without recognizing a creator, its own calendar that changes God’s appointed times, and a body with rights to do only its own pleasure. But we are instructed to “Walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light” (Colossians 1:10-12).

We are to learn to, as Noah, to walk using God’s judgment: “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work” (1 Timothy 3:16-17). Then we will have a fulfilled life, “And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose” (Romans 8:28).

## 1 Peter 3

(V.13) Then we can live without fear: *“Who is there to harm you if you prove zealous for what is good? Even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. And do not fear their intimidation, and do not be troubled. For it is better, if God should will it so, that you suffer for doing what is right rather than for doing what is wrong.”*

Noah’s righteousness was not of himself, and neither is ours, *“For it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure”* (Philippians 2:13).

(V.18) *“For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, in order that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit;*

(V. 19-22) *“. . . in which also He went and made proclamation to the spirits now in prison, who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through the water.*

*“And corresponding to that, baptism now saves you – not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience – through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, after angels and authorities and powers had been subjected to Him”* (See Mikvah / Baptism).

So, going into the *mikvah* and coming out in newness of life, is prefigured by Noah going into the flood and coming out in newness of life, even as Yeshua went into the grave and came out in newness of life.

*“Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, that our body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin.” – Rom 6:4-7*

We who believe are partakers of God’s Covenant, and though the earth be shaken, His lovingkindness will not be removed from us (Isaiah 54:8-9), but we shall be established – by Him – in righteousness (v.14).

## **Vayizchar Elohim et-Noach / Elohim Remembered Noah**

Genesis 8:1-14 Habakkuk 3:1-5 Psalm 6 Acts 1:1-14

## **Commentary Y1-06**

Iyyar 12, 5761 / May 5, 2001

Iyyar 10, 5764 / May 1, 2004

**Reader 1\* Amen** <sup>1</sup> But God remembered Noah and all the beasts and all the cattle that were with him in the ark; and God caused a wind to pass over the earth, and the water subsided. <sup>2</sup> Also the fountains of the deep and the floodgates of the sky were closed, and the rain from the sky was restrained; <sup>3</sup> and the water receded steadily from the earth, and at the end of one hundred and fifty days the water decreased.

**Reader 2\* Amen** <sup>4</sup> In the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, the ark rested upon the mountains of Ararat. <sup>5</sup> The water decreased steadily until the tenth month; in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains became visible. <sup>6</sup> Then it came about at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made; <sup>7</sup> and he sent out a raven, and it flew here and there until the water was dried up from the earth. <sup>8</sup> Then he sent out a dove from him, to see if the water was abated from the face of the land; <sup>9</sup> but the dove found no resting place for the sole of her foot, so she returned to him into the ark, for the water was on the surface of all the earth. Then he put out his hand and took her, and brought her into the ark to himself. <sup>10</sup> So he waited yet another seven days; and again he sent out the dove from the ark. <sup>11</sup> The dove came to him toward evening, and behold, in her beak was a freshly picked olive leaf. So Noah knew that the water was abated from the earth.

**Reader 3\* Amen** <sup>12</sup> Then he waited yet another seven days, and sent out the dove; but she did not return to him again. <sup>13</sup> Now it came about in the six hundred and first year, in the first month, on the first of the month, the water was dried up from the earth. Then Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and behold, the surface of the ground was dried up. <sup>14</sup> In the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth was dry.

### **Habakkuk 3:1-5**

**Reader 4\* Amen** <sup>1</sup> A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet, according to Shigionoth. <sup>2</sup> Yahweh, I have heard the report about You and I fear. O Yahweh, revive Your work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make it known; in wrath remember mercy. <sup>3</sup> God comes from Teman, and the Holy One from Mount Paran. Selah. His splendor covers the heavens, and the earth is full of His praise. <sup>4</sup> His radiance is like the sunlight; He has rays flashing from His hand, and there is the hiding of His power. <sup>5</sup> Before Him goes pestilence, and plague comes after Him.

### **Psalm 6 (to be sung)**

*For the choir director; with stringed instruments, upon an eight-string lyre. A Psalm of David.*

<sup>1</sup> O Yahweh, do not rebuke me in Your anger, nor chasten me in Your wrath. <sup>2</sup> Be gracious to me, O Yahweh, for I am pining away; heal me, O Yahweh, for my bones are dismayed. <sup>3</sup> And my soul is greatly dismayed; but You, O Yahweh – how long? <sup>4</sup> Return, O Yahweh, rescue my soul; save me because of Your lovingkindness. <sup>5</sup> For there is no mention of You in death; in Sheol who will give You thanks? <sup>6</sup> I am weary with my sighing; every night I make my bed swim, I dissolve my couch with my tears. <sup>7</sup> My eye has wasted away with grief; it has become old because of all my adversaries. <sup>8</sup> Depart from me, all you who do iniquity, for Yahweh has heard the voice of my weeping. <sup>9</sup> Yahweh has heard my supplication, Yahweh receives my prayer. <sup>10</sup> All my enemies will be ashamed and greatly dismayed; they shall turn back, they will suddenly be ashamed.

### **Acts 1:1-14**

**Reader 5\* Amen** <sup>1</sup> The first account I composed, Theophilus, about all that Yeshua began to do and teach, <sup>2</sup> until the day when He was taken up, after He had by the Holy Spirit given orders to the apostles whom He had chosen. <sup>3</sup> To these He also presented Himself alive, after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over a period of forty days, and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God. <sup>4</sup> And gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, "Which," He said, "you heard of from Me; <sup>5</sup> for John baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." <sup>6</sup> And so when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, "Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?" <sup>7</sup> He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority; <sup>8</sup> but you shall

receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.

*Reader 6\* Amen 9* And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. 10 And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was departing, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them; 11 and they also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Yeshua, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven." 12 Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away. 13 And when they had entered, they went up to the upper room, where they were staying; that is, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas the son of James. 14 These all with one mind were continually devoting themselves to prayer, along with the women, and Mary the mother of Yeshua, and with His brothers.

### **Commentary:**

The Prophet Habakkuk complained (ch.1) of a world of iniquity, violence, and destruction.

Yahweh replied (ch.2): judgment may tarry, but it will come. Disgrace will come to the wicked. Woe comes to him who makes his own gods! *"Yahweh is in His Holy Temple; let all the earth be silent before Him!"*

Then Habakkuk prayed in a wild, passionate song (ch.3): *"Yahweh, I have heard the report about You and I fear. . . . In wrath remember mercy. . . The Holy One comes from Mount Paran (Sinai). . . He has rays flashing from His hand . . . Before Him goes pestilence, and plague comes after Him."*

David sang (Psalm 6): *"O Yahweh, do not rebuke me in Your anger, nor chasten me in Your wrath. Be gracious to me, O Yahweh, . . . Depart from me, all you who do iniquity, for Yahweh has heard the voice of my weeping. Yahweh has heard my supplication, Yahweh receives my prayer. All my enemies will be ashamed and greatly dismayed; they shall turn back, they will suddenly be ashamed."*

As in Noah's day, the earth awaits judgment.

Today (Iyyar 10, 5764) is the Sabbath before the date that the rains of Noah's flood began.

### Months of the Year

Nisan

Iyyar 17 rain began

40 days (hot?) rain and fountains

Sivan 28 rain stopped

Flood prevailed 150 days

Tammuz

Av

Elul

Tishrei

Heshvan

Kislev 1 waters receding

Tevet 1 tops of mountains visible (Hanukkah)

40 days

Shevat 12    Noah opened window, sent out raven and dove

7 days

Shevat 19    Noah sent out dove

7 days

Shevat 26    Noah sent out dove

Adar

Nisan 1        waters gone – earth muddy (New Year)

+ 13 days to crucifixion,  
+ 3 days to resurrection,  
+ 40 days to ascension

Iyyar 27      earth dry

40 days for rain and fountains-of-the-deep to deluge the earth.  
6 months of total coverage – on sixth month water receded to mountain tops (at Hanukkah).  
5 more months for earth to become dry (on ascension day).

From Iyyar 17 to Iyyar 27, Noah was in the ark exactly one Solar year.

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Then Elohim remembered Noah – God is faithful to perform His Word in its proper time (Deuteronomy 7:9, 1 Corinthians 1:9).

Noah was a prophetic type of Yeshua.

(Gen 8:14) – “And in the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth was dry.”  
On the twenty-seventh day of Iyyar – forty-three days after Nisan 14, the Preparation of the Passover – the earth was dry.

Yeshua was crucified on Nisan 14, at the Preparation of the Passover. He rose after three days and three nights. After forty more days, on Iyyar 27, He ascended into the heavens. The “Water of Life” was gone from the earth.

Nisan 14: “Let the children of Israel also **prepare the Passover** at his appointed season. "On the fourteenth day of this month, between noon and sunset, you shall prepare it (the Passover lamb) at its appointed time; you shall prepare it according to all its statutes and according to all its ordinances.” – Numbers 9:3 (explained in Talmud: Pesachim 66a); see also Exodus 12:6. "**Preparation of the Passover sacrifices** started at noon. The daily burnt offering was slaughtered at the seventh-hour-and-a-half (1:30 PM) and offered up at the eighth-hour-and-a-half (2:30 PM), followed by the Passover sacrifice." - Mishnah: Pesachim 4:1 & 5:1. “And it was the **Preparation of the Passover**, and about the sixth hour (noon): and . . . they crucified him, and two other with him, on either side one, and Yeshua in the midst.” - John 19:14-18 “Now from the sixth hour (noon) there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour (3:00 PM).” – Matthew 27:45. “The Jews therefore, because it was the **Preparation**, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the Sabbath day, (for that Sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.” - John 19:21.

Nisan 17 is the third day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. It is three days and nights after the Passover was slain and Yeshua was placed in the heart of the earth. The end of the day (before sunset) is time for a resurrection. “For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of

the fish, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.” – Matthew 12:40. Moses had the children of Israel slay lambs on Nisan 14, and eat the Passover Feast on Nisan 15: then three days after slaying the lambs, on Nisan 17, he led God's people out of the Red Sea onto the shore - in a prophetic type of Yeshua's resurrection.

Iyyar 27: “The first account I composed, Theophilus, about all that Jesus began to do and teach, until the day when He was taken up, after He had by the Holy Spirit given orders to the apostles whom He had chosen. To these He also presented Himself alive, after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them for a period of forty days, and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God.” – Acts 1:1-3.

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Noah obeyed one-day-at-a-time.

He waited for God's command to enter the ark (v.7:1);

he waited for God to close the door (v.7:16);

he waited for God to tell him to leave (v.8:15).

“He had by the Holy Spirit given orders to the apostles whom He had chosen”.

Considering Acts 1:

(V.3-8) For these forty days (we are in the forty days between the resurrection and ascension), He presented Himself alive to the Apostles, with many convincing proofs. He taught the Apostles concerning the Kingdom of God, and told them that it was not for them to know the times for events that God had determined. He gathered them together to give them commandments:

The Apostles were the “*Sheliach Tzibbur*” (*Angels of the Church*), the messengers from Jerusalem to the churches – He told them not to leave Jerusalem;

He told them to wait for the promise of being empowered by the Holy Spirit, and then they would be witnesses to the whole world.

We will consider the ascension in three weeks, on the Sabbath preceding its date.

## ***Tze Min-Hatva / Go Out from the Ark***

Genesis 8:15 – 9:17 Isaiah 42:5-21 Psalm 7 2 Timothy 2:8-19

## **Commentary Y1-07**

Iyyar 19, 5761 / May 12, 2001

Iyyar 17, 5764 / May 8, 2004

*Reader 1\* Amen* <sup>15</sup> Then God spoke to Noah, saying, <sup>16</sup> "Go out of the ark, you and your wife and your sons and your sons' wives with you. <sup>17</sup> "Bring out with you every living thing of all flesh that is with you, birds and animals and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, that they may breed abundantly on the earth, and be fruitful and multiply on the earth." <sup>18</sup> So Noah went out, and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him. <sup>19</sup> Every beast, every creeping thing, and every bird, everything that moves on the earth, went out by their families from the ark.

*Reader 2\* Amen* <sup>20</sup> Then Noah built an altar to Yahweh, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar. <sup>21</sup> Yahweh smelled the soothing aroma; and Yahweh said to Himself, "I will never again curse the ground on account of man, for the intent of man's heart is evil from his youth; and I will never again destroy every living thing, as I have done. <sup>22</sup> "While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease."

*Reader 3\* Amen* <sup>9:1</sup> And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth. <sup>2</sup> "The fear of you and the terror of you will be on every beast of the earth and on every bird of the sky; with everything that creeps on the ground, and all the fish of the sea, into your hand they are given. <sup>3</sup> "Every moving thing that is alive shall be food for you; I give all to you, as I gave the green plant.

*Reader 4\* Amen* <sup>4</sup> "Only you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood. <sup>5</sup> "Surely I will require your lifeblood; from every beast I will require it. And from every man, from every man's brother I will require the life of man. <sup>6</sup> "Whoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed, for in the image of God He made man.

*Reader 5\* Amen* <sup>7</sup> "As for you, be fruitful and multiply; populate the earth abundantly and multiply in it." <sup>8</sup> Then God spoke to Noah and to his sons with him, saying, <sup>9</sup> "Now behold, I Myself do establish My covenant with you, and with your descendants after you; <sup>10</sup> and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the cattle, and every beast of the earth with you; of all that comes out of the ark, even every beast of the earth.

*Reader 6\* Amen* <sup>11</sup> "I establish My covenant with you; and all flesh shall never again be cut off by the water of the flood, neither shall there again be a flood to destroy the earth." <sup>12</sup> God said, "This is the sign of the covenant which I am making between Me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all successive generations; <sup>13</sup> I set My bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a sign of a covenant between Me and the earth.

*Reader 7\* Amen* <sup>14</sup> "It shall come about, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow will be seen in the cloud, <sup>15</sup> and I will remember My covenant, which is between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and never again shall the water become a flood to destroy all flesh. <sup>16</sup> "When the bow is in the cloud, then I will look upon it, to remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth." <sup>17</sup> And God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant which I have established between Me and all flesh that is on the earth."

## **Isaiah 42:5-21**

*Reader 8\* Amen* <sup>5</sup> Thus says El-Yahweh, Who created the heavens and stretched them out, Who spread out the earth and its offspring, Who gives breath to the people on it and spirit to those who walk in it, <sup>6</sup> "I am Yahweh, I have called you in righteousness, I will also hold you by the hand and watch over you, and I will appoint you as a covenant to the people, as a light to the nations, <sup>7</sup> to open blind eyes, to bring out prisoners from the dungeon and those who dwell in darkness from the prison. <sup>8</sup> "I am Yahweh, that is My name; I will not give My glory to another, nor My praise to graven images.



*Reader 9\* Amen* <sup>9</sup> "Behold, the former things have come to pass, now I declare new things; before they spring forth I proclaim them to you." <sup>10</sup> Sing to Yahweh a new song, sing His praise from the end of the earth! You who go down to the sea, and all that is in it; you islands, and those who dwell on them. <sup>11</sup> Let the wilderness and its cities lift up their voices, the settlements where Kedar inhabits. Let the inhabitants of Sela sing aloud, let them shout for joy from the tops of the mountains. <sup>12</sup> Let them give glory to Yahweh and declare His praise in the coastlands. <sup>13</sup> Yahweh will go forth like a warrior, He will arouse His zeal like a man of war. He will utter a shout, yes, He will raise a war cry. He will prevail against His enemies. <sup>14</sup> "I have kept silent for a long time, I have kept still and restrained Myself. Now like a woman in labor I will groan, I will both gasp and pant. <sup>15</sup> "I will lay waste the mountains and hills and wither all their vegetation; I will make the rivers into coastlands and dry up the ponds.

*Reader 10\* Amen* <sup>16</sup> "I will lead the blind by a way they do not know, in paths they do not know I will guide them. I will make darkness into light before them and rugged places into plains. These are the things I will do, and I will not leave them undone." <sup>17</sup> They will be turned back and be utterly put to shame, who trust in idols, who say to molten images, "You are our gods." <sup>18</sup> Hear, you deaf! And look, you blind, that you may see. <sup>19</sup> Who is blind but My servant, or so deaf as My messenger whom I send? Who is so blind as he that is at peace with Me, or so blind as the servant of Yahweh? <sup>20</sup> You have seen many things, but you do not observe them; your ears are open, but none hears. <sup>21</sup> Yahweh was pleased for His righteousness' sake to make the Torah great and glorious.

**Psalm 7** *(To be sung) A Shiggaion of David, which he sang to Yahweh concerning Cush, a Benjamite.* O Yahweh my God, in You I have taken refuge; save me from all those who pursue me, and deliver me, <sup>2</sup> or he will tear my soul like a lion, dragging me away, while there is none to deliver. <sup>3</sup> O Yahweh my God, if I have done this, if there is injustice in my hands, <sup>4</sup> if I have rewarded evil to my friend, or have plundered him who without cause was my adversary, <sup>5</sup> let the enemy pursue my soul and overtake it; and let him trample my life down to the ground and lay my glory in the dust. Selah. <sup>6</sup> Arise, O Yahweh, in Your anger; lift up Yourself against the rage of my adversaries, and arouse Yourself for me; You have appointed judgment. <sup>7</sup> Let the assembly of the peoples encompass You, and over them return on high. <sup>8</sup> Yahweh judges the peoples; vindicate me, O Yahweh, according to my righteousness and my integrity that is in me. <sup>9</sup> O let the evil of the wicked come to an end, but establish the righteous; for the righteous God tries the hearts and minds. <sup>10</sup> My shield is with God, Who saves the upright in heart. <sup>11</sup> God is a righteous judge, and a God who has indignation every day. <sup>12</sup> If a man does not repent, He will sharpen His sword; He has bent His bow and made it ready. <sup>13</sup> He has also prepared for Himself deadly weapons; He makes His arrows fiery shafts. <sup>14</sup> Behold, he travails with wickedness, and he conceives mischief and brings forth falsehood. <sup>15</sup> He has dug a pit and hollowed it out, and has fallen into the hole which he made. <sup>16</sup> His mischief will return upon his own head, and his violence will descend upon his own pate. <sup>17</sup> I will give thanks to Yahweh according to His righteousness and will sing praise to the name of Yahweh Most High.

## **II Timothy 2:8-19**

*Reader 11\* Amen* <sup>8</sup> Remember Yeshua the Messiah, risen from the dead, descendant of David, according to my gospel, <sup>9</sup> for which I suffer hardship even to imprisonment as a criminal; but the word of God is not imprisoned. <sup>10</sup> For this reason I endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen, so that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Messiah Yeshua and with it eternal glory. <sup>11</sup> It is a trustworthy statement: for if we died with Him, we will also live with Him; <sup>12</sup> if we endure, we will also reign with Him; if we deny Him, He also will deny us; <sup>13</sup> if we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself. <sup>14</sup>

*Reader 12\* Amen* Remind them of these things, and solemnly charge them in the presence of God not to wrangle about words, which is useless and leads to the ruin of the hearers. <sup>15</sup> Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth. <sup>16</sup> But avoid worldly and empty chatter, for it will lead to further ungodliness, <sup>17</sup> and their talk will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, <sup>18</sup> men who have gone astray from the truth saying that the resurrection has already taken place, and they upset the faith of some. <sup>19</sup> Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal, "The Lord knows those who are His," and, "Everyone who names the name of the Lord is to abstain from wickedness."

## Commentary:

[*A Shiggaion – an erratic melody showing agitation.*]

“I endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Messiah Yeshua and with it eternal glory” (II Tim 2:10). Here we see Paul, in the name of Yeshua as the antitype of Noah, enduring hardship for the sake of God’s elect.

“Then God spoke to Noah, (for him) to say\*, ‘Go out of the ark’ ” (v.8:15-16). From Leviticus 1:1 (Talmud: Yoma 4a) we learn that if a man was told something by his neighbor, he may not spread the news without being told \**“L’amor”* – “Go to say it”.

“Bring out with you every living thing” (v.8:17) meant “order them out”. That they “went out by their families from the ark” (v.8:19) indicates that Noah let them out in an orderly fashion, so that they would not injure one another, and so that they would be with their own species.

Contrasting the command to enter the ark, “you shall enter the ark – you and your sons and your wife, and your sons' wives” (v.6:18), with the command to go out from the ark, “Go out of the ark – you and your wife and your sons and your sons' wives” (v.8:15), we see the basis for the rabbinic teaching that male and female were to be separated upon entering the ark, and brought together upon leaving. It is further taught that they were afraid to co-habit upon leaving the ark, “Noah went out, and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives” (v.8:18), until God commanded, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth” (v.9:1) and promised them and end to the terror, “all flesh shall never again be cut off by the water of the flood” (v.9:9).

“Then Noah built an altar to Yahweh, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar; and Yahweh smelled the soothing aroma” (v.8:20-21). Since Noah left the ark eight days before Shavuot (the Day of Firstfruits), this may be seen as a Firstfruits offering. Shavuot requires several animal offerings (Leviticus 23:18-20). These offerings are always related to “Yahweh”, the merciful God who desires life – dedicating the bearer to Godliness; they are never an appeasement to a god of nature. The remaining remnant of the world would be thus dedicated – betrothed to Messiah, if this were Shavuot.

<sup>18</sup> *“Along with the bread you shall present seven one year old male lambs without defect, and a bull of the herd and two rams; they are to be an elevation offering to Yahweh, with their grain offering and their drink offerings, an offering by fire of a soothing aroma to Yahweh. <sup>19</sup> You shall also offer one male goat for a sin offering and two male lambs one year old for a sacrifice of peace offerings. <sup>20</sup> The priest shall then wave them with the bread of the first fruits for a wave offering with two lambs before Yahweh; they are to be holy to Yahweh for the priest”* – Leviticus 23:18-20).

After Adam ate of the forbidden tree, Yahweh said to him, “cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field; by the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, because from it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return” (v.3:17-19). But here Yahweh says, “I will never again curse the ground on account of man, for the intent of man's heart is evil from his early life; and I will never again destroy every living thing, as I have done. While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease” (v.8:21-22).

As we teach that man inherits a sinful nature, so here we see that man’s heart is evil from the time he is formed in the womb. Thus David says, “In sin did my mother conceive me” (Psalm 51:5).

The earth was destroyed and renewed this once by water; it will in the future be destroyed and renewed by fire (Revelation). “Just as it happened in the days of Noah, so it shall be also in the days of the Son of Man: they were eating, they were drinking, they were marrying, they were being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. It was the same as happened in the days of Lot: they were eating, they

were drinking, they were buying, they were selling, they were planting, they were building; but on the day that Lot went out from Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. It will be just the same on the day that the Son of Man is revealed” (Luke 17:26-30).

“Every moving thing that is alive shall be food for you; I give all to you, as I gave the green plant” (v.9:3). Here God gave, for the first time, meat for food. As He gave plants (v.1:30), though some were unfit for food, so He gave animals, the details of clean and unclean being already understood by Noah. Note that meat was permitted after Noah presented an elevation offering of clean animals: grain is permitted to us only after its firstfruits are offered from each year’s crops.

Cruelty to animals was prohibited, such as eating the flesh off a live animal (v.9:4).

Capital punishment was commanded, and also taking the life of a beast that killed a man. But Yahweh gave a gracious covenant that He would not destroy all mankind or animals, signifying it with the rainbow.

“Behold, the former things have come to pass, now I declare new things; before they spring forth I proclaim them to you” (Isaiah 42:9).

“O let the evil of the wicked come to an end, but establish the righteous” (Psalm 7:9).

Noah did not leave the Ark until God told him to do so, and likewise the Apostles did not leave Jerusalem until God told them to do so. The Apostles, during the Feast of Pentecost (Firstfruits) at Jerusalem, proclaimed the Gospel in the different languages of all the nations that were represented there. This was a re-enactment of a Feast of Pentecost 1300 years earlier, when the Torah was given in the languages of all the nations that were represented at Sinai. As the Church in the Wilderness was to take the Torah from there to all the world, now the Church at Jerusalem was to take the gospel to the whole world. The church was not replaced, and the Torah was not replaced: both the messenger and the message were continuations of the original.

## **Vayikyu ben Noach / The Sons of Noah**

Genesis 9:18 – 10:32 Isaiah 49:9-13 Psalm 8 Revelation 5:1-14

## **Commentary Y1-08**

Iyyar 26, 5761 / May 19, 2001

Iyyar 24, 5764 / May 15, 2004

*Reader 1\* Amen* <sup>18</sup> Now the sons of Noah who came out of the ark were Shem and Ham and Japheth; and Ham was the father of Canaan. <sup>19</sup> These three were the sons of Noah, and from these the whole earth was populated.

*Reader 2\* Amen* <sup>20</sup> Then Noah began farming and planted a vineyard. <sup>21</sup> He drank of the wine and became drunk, and uncovered himself inside his tent. <sup>22</sup> Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brothers outside. <sup>23</sup> But Shem and Japheth took a garment and laid it upon both their shoulders and walked backward and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were turned away, so that they did not see their father's nakedness. <sup>24</sup> When Noah awoke from his wine, he knew what his youngest son had done to him. <sup>25</sup> So he said, "Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants he shall be to his brothers." <sup>26</sup> He also said, "Blessed be Yahweh, the God of Shem; and let Canaan be his servant." <sup>27</sup> "May God enlarge Japheth, and let him dwell in the tents of Shem; and let Canaan be his servant."

*Reader 3\* Amen* <sup>28</sup> Noah lived three hundred and fifty years after the flood. <sup>29</sup> So all the days of Noah were nine hundred and fifty years, and he died. <sup>10:1</sup> Now these are the records of the generations of Shem, Ham, and Japheth, the sons of Noah; and sons were born to them after the flood.

*Reader 4\* Amen* <sup>2</sup> The sons of Japheth were Gomer and Magog and Madai and Javan and Tubal and Meshech and Tiras. <sup>3</sup> The sons of Gomer were Ashkenaz and Riphath and Togarmah. <sup>4</sup> The sons of Javan were Elishah and Tarshish, Kittim and Dodanim. <sup>5</sup> From these the coastlands of the nations were separated into their lands, every one according to his language, according to their families, into their nations.

*Reader 5\* Amen* <sup>6</sup> The sons of Ham were Cush and Mizraim and Put and Canaan. <sup>7</sup> The sons of Cush were Seba and Havilah and Sabtah and Raamah and Sabteca; and the sons of Raamah were Sheba and Dedan. <sup>8</sup> Now Cush became the father of Nimrod; he became a mighty one on the earth. <sup>9</sup> He was a mighty hunter before Yahweh; therefore it is said, "Like Nimrod a mighty hunter before Yahweh." <sup>10</sup> The beginning of his kingdom was Babel and Erech and Accad and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. <sup>11</sup> From that land he went forth into Assyria, and built Nineveh and Rehoboth-Ir and Calah, <sup>12</sup> and Resen between Nineveh and Calah; that is the great city. <sup>13</sup> Mizraim became the father of Ludim and Anamim and Lehabim and Naphtuhim <sup>14</sup> and Pathrusim and Casluhim (from which came the Philistines) and Caphtorim. <sup>15</sup> Canaan became the father of Sidon, his firstborn, and Heth <sup>16</sup> and the Jebusite and the Amorite and the Girgashite <sup>17</sup> and the Hivite and the Arkite and the Sinite <sup>18</sup> and the Arvadite and the Zemarite and the Hamathite; and afterward the families of the Canaanite were spread abroad. <sup>19</sup> The territory of the Canaanite extended from Sidon as you go toward Gerar, as far as Gaza; as you go toward Sodom and Gomorrah and Admah and Zeboiim, as far as Lasha. <sup>20</sup> These are the sons of Ham, according to their families, according to their languages, by their lands, by their nations.

*Reader 6\* Amen* <sup>21</sup> Also to Shem, the father of all the children of Eber, and the older brother of Japheth, children were born. <sup>22</sup> The sons of Shem were Elam and Asshur and Arpachshad and Lud and Aram. <sup>23</sup> The sons of Aram were Uz and Hul and Gether and Mash. <sup>24</sup> Arpachshad became the father of Shelah; and Shelah became the father of Eber. <sup>25</sup> Two sons were born to Eber; the name of the one was Peleg, for in his days the earth was divided; and his brother's name was Joktan. <sup>26</sup> Joktan became the father of Almodad and Sheleph and Hazarmaveth and Jerah <sup>27</sup> and Hadoram and Uzal and Diklah <sup>28</sup> and Obal and Abimael and Sheba <sup>29</sup> and Ophir and Havilah and Jobab; all these were the sons of Joktan. <sup>30</sup> Now their settlement extended from Mesha as you go toward Sephar, the hill country of the east. <sup>31</sup> These are the sons of Shem, according to their families, according to their languages, by their lands, according to their nations.

*Reader 7\* Amen* <sup>32</sup> These are the families of the sons of Noah, according to their genealogies, by their nations; and out of these the nations were separated on the earth after the flood.

**Isaiah 49:9-13**

*Reader 8\* Amen* <sup>9</sup> Saying to those who are bound, 'Go forth,' To those who are in darkness, 'Show yourselves.' Along the roads they will feed, and their pasture will be on all bare heights. <sup>10</sup> "They will not hunger or thirst, nor will the scorching heat or sun strike them down; for He who has compassion on them will lead them and will guide them to springs of water. <sup>11</sup> "I will make all My mountains a road, and My highways will be raised up. <sup>12</sup> "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." <sup>13</sup> 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.

**Psalm 8** *(to be sung) For the choir director; on the Gittith. A Psalm of David.*

<sup>1</sup> O Yahweh, our Lord, how majestic is Your name in all the earth, Who have displayed Your splendor above the heavens! <sup>2</sup> From the mouth of infants and nursing babes You have established strength because of Your adversaries, to make the enemy and the revengeful cease. <sup>3</sup> When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained; <sup>4</sup> what is man that You take thought of him, and the son of man that You care for him? <sup>5</sup> Yet You have made him a little lower than God, and You crown him with glory and majesty! <sup>6</sup> You make him to rule over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet, <sup>7</sup> all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, <sup>8</sup> the birds of the heavens and the fish of the sea, whatever passes through the paths of the seas. <sup>9</sup> O Yahweh, our Lord, How majestic is Your name in all the earth!

**Revelation 5:1-14**

*Reader 9\* Amen* <sup>1</sup> I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a book written inside and on the back, sealed up with seven seals. <sup>2</sup> And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the book and to break its seals?" <sup>3</sup> And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the book or to look into it. <sup>4</sup> Then I began to weep greatly because no one was found worthy to open the book or to look into it; <sup>5</sup> and one of the elders said to me, "Stop weeping; behold, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome so as to open the book and its seven seals." <sup>6</sup> And I saw between the throne (with the four living creatures) and the elders a Lamb standing, as if slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent out into all the earth. <sup>7</sup> And He came and took the book out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne. <sup>8</sup> When He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each one holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

*Reader 10\* Amen* <sup>9</sup> And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. <sup>10</sup> "You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth." <sup>11</sup> Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands, <sup>12</sup> saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing." <sup>13</sup> And every created thing which is 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." <sup>14</sup> And the four living creatures kept saying, "Amen." And the elders fell down and worshiped.

*Commentary:*

(This coming Tuesday – May 18, 2004) Iyyar 27 is the date that the waters of the great flood were dried off of the earth. It is also the date of Yeshua's ascension into the heavens.

From the earlier account of Adam, we could see the destiny of the whole world – overtaken by sin. Now, from this account of Noah and his offspring, we can see a more detailed destiny of each future nation.

“Noah, the man of the earth, debased himself” (v.9:20). He became drunk, and went into the innermost part of “her tent” (*ataloh* - Midrash) – referring to his wife's tent – and was “uncovered” therein – referring to consorting with his wife (v.9:21).

Consider that this family just came out of a time of such wholesale immorality that the world was destroyed for it. Ham (from “heat”) means sensuous or passionate. Rabbinic sources contain the first two following accounts of Ham's sin; the third is my suggestion.

1. Ham committed incest with his mother while his father was drunk. This is based on the definition from Leviticus 18:8 – “You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father's wife; it is your father's nakedness.”
2. Ham castrated his father, that he should not have more sons to share the inheritance of the earth. We know that Noah had no more sons though he lived another 350 years.
3. Ham opened his mother's tent, to expose his drunken father with his mother, making sport of them. This might explain why the other brothers went in a dignified way to cover their parents: otherwise, seeing that they would have had their own tents with their wives, why would they even enter (or cover) the tent where their parents were? Besides not honoring his parents, one of Ham's basic sins here may have been thwarting or making light of God's command to Noah to “replenish the earth”. Likewise, God gave Reuben's first-born rights to another of Jacob's sons, because of Reuben's sin of “removing his father's bed” with Rachael. (v.49:4).

Ham sinned, but Canaan is cursed (v.9:25)! Ham had already been blessed by God (v.9:1), and therefore could not be cursed. Noah does not say that Canaan would be cursed, but that he already “is”, as from aforesaid – perhaps because his character was molded by following his father.

Noah died at 950 years. Abraham saw Noah, who saw Lamech, who in turn saw Adam. The traditions from Adam only passed through three generations to Abraham.

The Seventy Nations (Chapter 10):

<b>JAPETH (Europe)</b>		<b>HAM (Africa)</b>			<b>SHEM (Asia)</b>	
1. Gomer – (#8-10) 2. Magog 3. Madai 4. Javan – (#11-14) 5. Tubal 6. Meshech 7. Tiras		15. Cush – (#19-26) 16. Mizram – (#27-33) 17. Phut 18. Canaan – (#34-44)			45. Elam 46. Asshur 47. Arphachshad – (#50-53) 48. Lud 49. Aram – (#54-70)	
8. Ashkenaz 9. Riphath 10. Togarmak	11. Elishah 12. Tarshish 13. Kittim 14. Dodanim	19. Seba 20. Havila 21. Sabtah 22. Raamah – 23. Sabteca 24. Nimrod	27. Ludim 28. Anamim 29. Lehabim 30. Naphtuhim 31. Patrusim 32. Casiuhim 33. Caphtorim	34. Zidon 35. Heth 36. Jebusite 37. Amorite 38. Gargashite 39. Hivite 40. Arkite 41. Sinite 42. Avarite 43. Zemante 44. Hamathite	50. Uz 51. Hul 52. Gether 53. Mash	54. Shelah – 55. Eber – 56. Peleg 57. Joktan –
		25. Sheba 26. Dedan				58. Almodad 59. Sheleph 60. Hazarmaveth 61. Jerah 62. Hadoram 63. Uzal 64. Diklah 65. Obal 66. Abimael 67. Shebah 68. Ophir 69. Havilah 70. Jobab
				<i>Pelishtim from 31 or 32</i>		

Parallels to the Seventy Nations:

The Torah was given in the seventy languages of the seventy nations.

Seventy offerings were given at *Hag Sukkot* (Feast of Tabernacles) for the seventy nations.

The Great Sanhedrin had seventy judges.

Canaan (#18) was cursed as a “*slave of slaves*” (v.24), but that neither means that all Canaanites would be slaves, nor that Japethites and Semites would never be slaves. We do see that Canaanites generally have been mired in a culture of slavery.

Before Nimrod (#24), there were no monarchs, and no wars. He became the King of Babylon (Iraq), and then, as the “mighty hunter” of men, captured Assyria and built great cities. He is called “*the forerunner of the hypocrite who drapes himself in robes of piety in order to deceive the masses*” (R.Hirsch).

The following is not “politically correct”, but neither is it intended to put down or exalt any race.

“Shem” (from “name it”) means a thinking person; we see the trait of learning in the Semitic races. Shem populated Asia. Hebrews, who are Shemites (or Semites), are found disproportionately among inventors and discoverers, from fields of medicine to nuclear power. Their “thinking” powers are being used to try to disprove God’s Word, such as the creation account and results of sin. On the other hand, it is the Hebrews who brought us the Word of God, and who are the Torah scholars.

“Ham” (from “heat”) means sensuous or passionate, a trait for which the dark-skinned races are known. They also tend to be from hot climates. Africa today is being destroyed by the disease aids, from the misuse of sensuality. On the other hand, we may see the most passion displayed in black churches.

“Japeth” (from “openness”) means seeker of beauty; this trait is apparent in the light-skinned races. Japeth populated Europe. Japethites spend billions on cosmetics, decorative clothes, and fancy buildings, glorifying self instead of God. We should make the beauty of God’s worship take priority.

All three characteristics were given to be used in the service of God (Hirsch). All races have abused their gifts, not using them for God’s purpose and glory. We all need repentance.

*“Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.”* – Revelation 5:9.

This contrasts to a growing teaching today, that most non-Jewish believers are “Ephraimites” – from the ten so-called “lost tribes” of Israel.

Revelation 5 song:

I beheld, and I heard, the voice of many angels,  
Round about the throne, and the beasts and the elders;  
And the number of them was ten-thousand times ten-thousand,  
And thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice:  
- chorus:  
Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power,  
Unto Him that sitteth upon the throne,  
And unto the Lamb, forever, and ever,  
Worthy is the Lamb that was slain!  
- ending:  
Worthy is the Lamb that was slain!

All races, all peoples have abused their gifts, using them for their own lusts instead of God’s glory. Only Yeshua, the Lamb of God, is worthy. He has imputed His righteousness to us, and our sin to himself, that we, from all nations, might worship Him.

The “tents of Shem” refer to synagogues. The Shemites should use their gift to promote Torah study. The Hamites should promote spirited worship. The Japethites should promote beauty in the worship. The three attributes should be used together, not in disparity.

One might be a sectarian fundamentalist, and use Scripture profusely to convince others of his superior understanding. Another might be a charismatic, and dance and shout about what he claims to have gotten direct from God. Yet another might be a catholic who worships an unknown God in beautiful cathedrals.

But we should emulate David: he said that studying Torah daily was more important than eating, his heart was toward his God and he worshipped spiritedly, and he set out to establish the most meaningful worship and the most beautiful structure on earth for God – when he had no house of his own.

True worship *must* be in spirit *and* in truth (John 4:23-24). We should love Yahweh our God with all of our mind, with all of our heart, with all of our soul – that includes our understanding, our purpose, and our feelings. Let us all seek that goal.



*For the Sabbath preceding Hag Shavuot (Pentecost)*

*Reader 1\* Amen* <sup>1</sup> Now the whole earth used the same language and the same words. <sup>2</sup> It came about as they journeyed east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. <sup>3</sup> They said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks and burn them thoroughly." And they used brick for stone, and they used tar for mortar. <sup>4</sup> They said, "Come, let us build for ourselves a city, and a tower whose top will reach into heaven, and let us make for ourselves a name, otherwise we will be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth."

*Reader 2\* Amen* <sup>5</sup> Yahweh came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. <sup>6</sup> Yahweh said, "Behold, they are one people, and they all have the same language. And this is what they began to do, and now nothing which they purpose to do will be impossible for them. <sup>7</sup> "Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, so that they will not understand one another's speech."

*Reader 3\* Amen* <sup>8</sup> So Yahweh scattered them abroad from there over the face of the whole earth; and they stopped building the city. <sup>9</sup> Therefore its name was called Babel, because there Yahweh confused the language of the whole earth; and from there Yahweh scattered them abroad over the face of the whole earth.

*Reader 4\* Amen* <sup>10</sup> These are the records of the generations of Shem. Shem was one hundred years old, and became the father of Arpachshad two years after the flood; <sup>11</sup> and Shem lived five hundred years after he became the father of Arpachshad, and he had other sons and daughters. <sup>12</sup> Arpachshad lived thirty-five years, and became the father of Shelah; <sup>13</sup> and Arpachshad lived four hundred and three years after he became the father of Shelah, and he had other sons and daughters. <sup>14</sup> Shelah lived thirty years, and became the father of Eber; <sup>15</sup> and Shelah lived four hundred and three years after he became the father of Eber, and he had other sons and daughters. <sup>16</sup> Eber lived thirty-four years, and became the father of Peleg; <sup>17</sup> and Eber lived four hundred and thirty years after he became the father of Peleg, and he had other sons and daughters.

*Reader 5\* Amen* <sup>18</sup> Peleg lived thirty years, and became the father of Reu; <sup>19</sup> and Peleg lived two hundred and nine years after he became the father of Reu, and he had other sons and daughters. <sup>20</sup> Reu lived thirty-two years, and became the father of Serug; <sup>21</sup> and Reu lived two hundred and seven years after he became the father of Serug, and he had other sons and daughters. <sup>22</sup> Serug lived thirty years, and became the father of Nahor; <sup>23</sup> and Serug lived two hundred years after he became the father of Nahor, and he had other sons and daughters. <sup>24</sup> Nahor lived twenty-nine years, and became the father of Terah; <sup>25</sup> and Nahor lived one hundred and nineteen years after he became the father of Terah, and he had other sons and daughters. <sup>26</sup> Terah lived seventy years, and became the father of Abram, Nahor and Haran.

*Reader 6\* Amen* <sup>27</sup> Now these are the records of the generations of Terah. Terah became the father of Abram, Nahor and Haran; and Haran became the father of Lot. <sup>28</sup> Haran died in the presence of his father Terah in the land of his birth, in Ur of the Chaldeans. <sup>29</sup> Abram and Nahor took wives for themselves. The name of Abram's wife was Sarai; and the name of Nahor's wife was Milcah, the daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah and Iscah. <sup>30</sup> Sarai was barren; she had no child.

*Reader 7\* Amen* <sup>31</sup> Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran, his grandson, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife; and they went out together from Ur of the Chaldeans in order to enter the land of Canaan; and they went as far as Haran, and settled there. <sup>32</sup> The days of Terah were two hundred and five years; and Terah died in Haran.

### **Zephaniah 3:8-13**

*Reader 8\* Amen* <sup>8</sup> “Therefore wait for Me,” declares Yahweh, “For the day when I rise up as a witness. Indeed, My decision is to gather nations, to assemble kingdoms, to pour out on them My indignation, all My burning anger; for all the earth will be devoured by the fire of My zeal. <sup>9</sup> 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. <sup>10</sup> From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia My worshipers, My dispersed ones, will bring My offerings. <sup>11</sup> 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. <sup>12</sup> But I will leave among you a humble and lowly people, and they will take refuge in the name of Yahweh. <sup>13</sup> 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.”

No Psalm

### **1 Corinthians 14:20-33**

*Reader 9\* Amen* <sup>20</sup> Brethren, do not be children in your thinking; yet in evil be infants, but in your thinking be mature. <sup>21</sup> In the Law it is written, “By men of foreign languages and by the lips of strangers I will speak to this people, and even so they will not listen to Me,” says the Lord. <sup>22</sup> So then foreign languages are for a sign, not to those who believe but to unbelievers; but prophecy is for a sign, not to unbelievers but to those who believe. <sup>23</sup> Therefore if the whole church assembles together and all speak in foreign languages, and ungifted men or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are mad? <sup>24</sup> But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an ungifted man enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all; <sup>25</sup> the secrets of his heart are disclosed; and so he will fall on his face and worship God, declaring that God is certainly among you.

*Reader 10\* Amen* <sup>26</sup> What is the outcome then, brethren? When you assemble, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a foreign language, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification. <sup>27</sup> If anyone speaks in a foreign language, it should be by two or at the most three, and each in turn, and one must interpret; <sup>28</sup> but if there is no interpreter, he must keep silent in the church; and let him speak to himself and to God. <sup>29</sup> Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others pass judgment. <sup>30</sup> But if a revelation is made to another who is seated, the first one must keep silent. <sup>31</sup> For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all may be exhorted; <sup>32</sup> and the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets; <sup>33</sup> for God is not a God of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.

### **1 Peter 2:1-10**

*Reader 11\* Amen* <sup>1</sup> Therefore, putting aside all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander, <sup>2</sup> like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation, <sup>3</sup> if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord. <sup>4</sup> And coming to Him as to a living stone which has been rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God, <sup>5</sup> you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Yeshua the Messiah.

*Reader 12\* Amen* <sup>6</sup> For this is contained in Scripture: “Behold, I lay in Zion a choice stone, a precious corner stone, and he who believes in Him will not be disappointed.” <sup>7</sup> This precious value, then, is for you who believe; but for those who disbelieve, “The stone that the builders rejected, this became the very corner stone,” <sup>8</sup> and, “A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense”; for they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and to this doom they were also appointed. <sup>9</sup> But you are “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession,” so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; <sup>10</sup> for you once were “not a people”, but now you are “the people of God”; you had “not receive mercy”, but now you have “received mercy.”

It was the year 2006 AM (Anno Mundi – Year of the World), 340 years after the flood. Noah (who was born only 126 years after Adam died) would live ten more years, and Abraham was forty-eight. All of the nations were in the one area, and they all spoke the original Holy Language.

*“Blessed are You, Yahweh our God, King of the Universe,  
Who has sanctified us by His Word, and instructed us to count the Omer.  
Today is forty-six days of the Omer; it is six weeks and four days of the Omer.”*

**Commentary:**

The time of this reading – the Sabbath before Hag Shavuot – hints that the dispersion of Babel was a Shavuot occurrence.

Adam had known Lamech for 56 years, and Lamech had known Shem, his grandson, for 95 years. Though Abraham was the ninth generation after Shem, Shem outlived Abraham! This might give insight to Abraham’s complaint, “I have not attained the years that my fathers lived” (Genesis 47:9), though Abraham was still 45 years from his death bed when making the complaint.

The confusion of languages occurred at Babel in the year 2006 AM. Noah would live for another 10 years. Shem would live for another 152 years. Abraham was 48 years of age.

The point here is: Adam, Lamech, Shem, and Abraham all spoke the same original language.

Abraham had good opportunity to acquire much knowledge of Adam’s time and Noah’s time. Adam and Noah lived for most all of the first two millennia of the world, and Abraham knew Noah.

Last week we saw the names of the seventy nations that would be divided by languages and dispersed throughout the world. Among them were Noah’s son Shem, his grandson Shelah, and his great-grandson Peleg. In Genesis 10:25 we read, “*the name of the one was Peleg, for in his days the earth was divided.*” Peleg died at 239 years of age, in the year of the dispersion of the seventy nations from Babel. However, before Peleg’s death at Babel, he knew his great-great-great-grandson Abraham for 48 years.

God’s covenant, of which we are partakers, was with Abraham. Abraham was called a Hebrew, which means ‘From the other side’ – prior to the dispersion and confusion.

After the dispersion, Abraham had a son – Isaac, and a grandson – Jacob, and twelve great-grandsons – including Joseph. Joseph knew Hebrew – the language ‘from the other side’, as well as the language of Egypt (Genesis 42).

God had commanded the descendents of Noah to replenish the earth. But, instead, the seventy patriarchs (of the previous chapter) stayed in Iraq, and built a great city with a tower to make a name for themselves. God came, at Shavuot, and gave each clan a different language, thus causing the dispersion that He formerly commanded. Since the people’s attempted communications seemed as babbling, the place is called Babel. This is the origin of “*the languages of men and angels*” (1 Corinthians 13:1), that is the languages of the seventy nations and Hebrew (Hebrew being the language of the Angels of the Synagogues – see Synagogue/Church).

We start with one language (see [www.hebrewworld.com](http://www.hebrewworld.com)). Then God separates seventy languages (Genesis 11). Then God tells Israel, who speaks Hebrew, that He will correct them with people of foreign languages – Gentiles (Isaiah 28:11). Then God says that, in the New World, He will give people back the pure language, that they may worship Him in one accord (Zephaniah 3:9). Even before that, Yahweh says that five cities in Egypt will learn Hebrew and swear allegiance to Him (Isaiah 19:18).

About 4000 years ago was the dispersion, with languages confused at Shavuot/Pentecost. Then, about 3300 years ago, the Torah was given at Mt.Sinai, traditionally in 70 languages. Then, about 1900 years ago, again at Shavuot, the Gospel was given in many languages of the nations (Acts 2).

Paul tells us that we should grow up in our understanding of the Word of God, and think in a mature way. Only in learning sin should we remain babes. We should not slander others, nor put down others – trying to exalt ourselves. We should speak in a manner that is spiritually profitable for others.

Old English is often used today to create a mystique. "Unknown tongues" is the Old English term for "foreign languages". "Prophecy" means "expounding Torah", which sometimes includes foretelling the future. The mystique is used to perpetuate modern false doctrine: "unknown tongues" does not mean jibberish or "tongues of angels" or an unknown-to-the-speaker prayer language,

In the Synagogue, when we have people of different languages, we should not speak in a language that is not understood by all, except that we translate for them (1Cor 14:23). Translating is for the purpose of allowing outsiders to understand, or else how should they come to faith?

When one is expounding the Torah passage in Synagogue, if another knows a fuller explanation, the first should wait until the latter speaks; then the congregation may judge (1 Corinthians 14:24). There should be no situation, like today's common unbiblical "Pastor" or "Rabbi" position, where one person's teaching is the sole and final word.

When the seven readers are called on Sabbath to read the Torah portions, the overseer (Angel of the Synagogue) watches over their shoulders (thus the term "overseer") to ensure that every word is read correctly. The important thing is for Torah – God's Word – to be heard accurately. This is not to embarrass a reader: each reader's desire should be for the Torah, for the hearer, not for himself.

In our situation, when anything is read, recited, or sung in Hebrew, it should be translated into English. If we have Russian or Spanish visitors, it is proper to translate for them. If we have some hearing-impaired among us, it is proper to sign for them (even though this is speaking in hands, not tongues :-).

## ***Lech Lecha / Go Forth From***

Genesis 12:1 – 13:18 Joshua 24:3-18 Psalm 9 Hebrews 11:1-10

## **Commentary Y1-10**

Sivan 11, 5761 / May 26, 2001

Sivan 9, 5764 / May 29, 2004

*Reader 1\* Amen* <sup>1</sup> Now Yahweh said to Abram, "**Go forth from** your country, and from your relatives and from your father's house, to the land which I will show you; <sup>2</sup> and I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; and so you shall be a blessing; <sup>3</sup> 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 will be blessed."

*Reader 2\* Amen* <sup>4</sup> So Abram went forth as Yahweh had spoken to him; and Lot went with him. Now Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. <sup>5</sup> Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his nephew, and all their possessions which they had accumulated, and the persons which they had acquired in Haran, and they set out for the land of Canaan; thus they came to the land of Canaan. <sup>6</sup> Abram passed through the land as far as the site of Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. Now the Canaanite was then in the land. <sup>7</sup> Yahweh appeared to Abram and said, "To your descendants I will give this land." So he built an altar there to Yahweh who had appeared to him. <sup>8</sup> Then he proceeded from there to the mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; and there he built an altar to Yahweh and called upon the name of Yahweh. <sup>9</sup> Abram journeyed on, continuing toward the Negev.

*Reader 3\* Amen* <sup>10</sup> Now there was a famine in the land; so Abram went down to Egypt to sojourn there, for the famine was severe in the land. <sup>11</sup> It came about when he came near to Egypt, that he said to Sarai his wife, "See now, I know that you are a beautiful woman; <sup>12</sup> and when the Egyptians see you, they will say, 'This is his wife'; and they will kill me, but they will let you live. <sup>13</sup> "Please say that you are my sister so that it may go well with me because of you, and that I may live on account of you." <sup>14</sup> It came about when Abram came into Egypt, the Egyptians saw that the woman was very beautiful. <sup>15</sup> Pharaoh's officials saw her and praised her to Pharaoh; and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house. <sup>16</sup> Therefore he treated Abram well for her sake; and gave him sheep and oxen and donkeys and male and female servants and female donkeys and camels. <sup>17</sup> But Yahweh struck Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife. <sup>18</sup> Then Pharaoh called Abram and said, "What is this you have done to me? Why did you not tell me that she was your wife? <sup>19</sup> "Why did you say, 'She is my sister,' so that I took her for my wife? Now then, here is your wife, take her and go." <sup>20</sup> Pharaoh commanded his men concerning him; and they escorted him away, with his wife and all that belonged to him.

*Reader 4\* Amen* <sup>13:1</sup> So Abram went up from Egypt to the Negev, he and his wife and all that belonged to him, and Lot with him. <sup>2</sup> Now Abram was very rich in livestock, in silver and in gold. <sup>3</sup> He went on his journeys from the Negev as far as Bethel, to the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai, <sup>4</sup> to the place of the altar which he had made there formerly; and there Abram called on the name of Yahweh.

*Reader 5\* Amen* <sup>5</sup> Now Lot, who went with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents. <sup>6</sup> And the land could not sustain them while dwelling together, for their possessions were so great that they were not able to remain together. <sup>7</sup> And there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock. Now the Canaanite and the Perizzite were dwelling then in the land. <sup>8</sup> So Abram said to Lot, "Please let there be no strife between you and me, nor between my herdsmen and your herdsmen, for we are brothers. <sup>9</sup> "Is not the whole land before you? Please separate from me; if to the left, then I will go to the right; or if to the right, then I will go to the left."

*Reader 6\* Amen* <sup>10</sup> Lot lifted up his eyes and saw all the valley of the Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere – this was before Yahweh destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah – like the garden of Yahweh, like the land of Egypt as you go to Zoar. <sup>11</sup> So Lot chose for himself all the valley of the Jordan, and Lot journeyed eastward. Thus they separated from each other. <sup>12</sup> Abram settled in the land of Canaan, while Lot settled in the cities of the valley, and moved his tents as far as Sodom. <sup>13</sup> Now the men of Sodom were wicked exceedingly and sinners against Yahweh.

*Reader 7\* Amen* <sup>14</sup> Yahweh said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, "Now lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward; <sup>15</sup> for all the land

which you see, I will give it to you and to your descendants forever. <sup>16</sup> "I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth, so that if anyone can number the dust of the earth, then your descendants can also be numbered. <sup>17</sup> "Arise, walk about the land through its length and breadth; for I will give it to you." <sup>18</sup> Then Abram moved his tent and came and dwelt by the oaks of Mamre, which are in Hebron, and there he built an altar to Yahweh.

### **Joshua 24:3-18**

*Reader 8\* Amen* <sup>3</sup> "Then I took your father Abraham from beyond the River, and led him through all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his descendants and gave him Isaac. <sup>4</sup> "To Isaac I gave Jacob and Esau, and to Esau I gave Mount Seir to possess it; but Jacob and his sons went down to Egypt. <sup>5</sup> "Then I sent Moses and Aaron, and I plagued Egypt by what I did in its midst; and afterward I brought you out. <sup>6</sup> "I brought your fathers out of Egypt, and you came to the sea; and Egypt pursued your fathers with chariots and horsemen to the Red Sea. <sup>7</sup> "But when they cried out to Yahweh, He put darkness between you and the Egyptians, and brought the sea upon them and covered them; and your own eyes saw what I did in Egypt. And you lived in the wilderness for a long time.

*Reader 9\* Amen* <sup>8</sup> "Then I brought you into the land of the Amorites who lived beyond the Jordan, and they fought with you; and I gave them into your hand, and you took possession of their land when I destroyed them before you. <sup>9</sup> "Then Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, arose and fought against Israel, and he sent and summoned Balaam the son of Beor to curse you. <sup>10</sup> "But I was not willing to listen to Balaam. So he had to bless you, and I delivered you from his hand. <sup>11</sup> "You crossed the Jordan and came to Jericho; and the citizens of Jericho fought against you, and the Amorite and the Perizzite and the Canaanite and the Hittite and the Girgashite, the Hivite and the Jebusite. Thus I gave them into your hand. <sup>12</sup> "Then I sent the hornet before you and it drove out the two kings of the Amorites from before you, but not by your sword or your bow. <sup>13</sup> "I gave you a land on which you had not labored, and cities which you had not built, and you have lived in them; you are eating of vineyards and olive groves which you did not plant."

*Reader 10\* Amen* <sup>14</sup> "Now, therefore, fear Yahweh and serve Him in sincerity and truth; and put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve Yahweh. <sup>15</sup> "If it is disagreeable in your sight to serve Yahweh, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my house, we will serve Yahweh." <sup>16</sup> The people answered and said, "Far be it from us that we should forsake Yahweh to serve other gods; <sup>17</sup> for Yahweh our God is He who brought us and our fathers up out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, and who did these great signs in our sight and preserved us through all the way in which we went and among all the peoples through whose midst we passed. <sup>18</sup> "Yahweh drove out from before us all the peoples, even the Amorites who lived in the land. We also will serve Yahweh, for He is our God."

### **Psalm 9 (to be sung)**

*For the choir director; on Muth-labben. (To die for the son). A Psalm of David.*

<sup>1</sup> I will give thanks to Yahweh with all my heart; I will tell of all Your wonders. <sup>2</sup> I will be glad and exult in You; I will sing praise to Your name, O Most High. <sup>3</sup> When my enemies turn back, they stumble and perish before You. <sup>4</sup> For You have maintained my just cause; You have sat on the throne judging righteously. <sup>5</sup> You have rebuked the nations, You have destroyed the wicked; You have blotted out their name forever and ever. <sup>6</sup> The enemy has come to an end in perpetual ruins, and You have uprooted the cities; the very memory of them has perished. <sup>7</sup> But Yahweh abides forever; He has established His throne for judgment, <sup>8</sup> and He will judge the world in righteousness; He will execute judgment for the peoples with equity. <sup>9</sup> Yahweh also will be a stronghold for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble; <sup>10</sup> and those who know Your name will put their trust in You, for You, O Yahweh, have not forsaken those who seek You. <sup>11</sup> Sing praises to Yahweh, who dwells in Zion; declare among the peoples His deeds. <sup>12</sup> For He who requires blood remembers them; He does not forget the cry of the afflicted. <sup>13</sup> Be gracious to me, O Yahweh; see my affliction from those who hate me, You who lift me up from the gates of death, <sup>14</sup> that I may tell of all Your praises, that in the gates of the daughter of Zion I may rejoice in Your salvation. <sup>15</sup> The nations have sunk down in the pit which they have made; in the net which they hid, their own foot has been caught. <sup>16</sup>

Yahweh has made Himself known; He has executed judgment. In the work of his own hands the wicked is snared. (Higgaion Selah.)<sup>17</sup> The wicked will return to Sheol, Even all the nations who forget God.<sup>18</sup> For the needy will not always be forgotten, Nor the hope of the afflicted perish forever.<sup>19</sup> Arise, O Yahweh, do not let man prevail; Let the nations be judged before You.<sup>20</sup> Put them in fear, O Yahweh; Let the nations know that they are but men. Selah.

### Hebrews 11:1-10

*Reader 11\* Amen*<sup>1</sup> Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.<sup>2</sup> For by it the men of old gained approval.<sup>3</sup> By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible.<sup>4</sup> By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous, God testifying about his gifts, and through faith, though he is dead, he still speaks.<sup>5</sup> By faith Enoch was taken up so that he would not see death; “and he was not, because God took him up”; for he obtained the witness that before his being taken up he was pleasing to God.

*Reader 12\* Amen*<sup>6</sup> And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.<sup>7</sup> By faith Noah, being warned by God about things not yet seen, in reverence prepared an ark for the salvation of his household, by which he condemned the world, and became an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.<sup>8</sup> By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going.<sup>9</sup> By faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise;<sup>10</sup> for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

### Commentary:

The lineage of the Sons of God had progressed from Adam through Seth, through Noah and Shem, to Abraham. Abraham came from the other side of the dispersion of the seventy nations. Now, God would show His Covenant with man, telling Abraham to “*Go forth*” (v.12:1) and “*in you (Abraham) all the families (seventy nations) of the earth shall be blessed*” (v.12:3).

In Adam’s time there was a seed promise – a Messiah who would crush Satan. Note that this would mean a Messiah for Adam’s race.

(Genesis 3:15) *And I will put enmity between you (the serpent) and the woman, and between your seed and her seed (Yeshua); it (Yeshua) shall crush your (Satan’s) head, and you (Satan) shall bruise his (Yeshua’s) heel.* (Satan would temporarily hurt Yeshua, but Yeshua would mortally wound Satan.)

The tenth generation was Noah, who brought mankind through the great flood. He received a promise that the earth would never again be destroyed by a flood. Messiah must now come through Noah, the new father of all future generations.

(Genesis 9:8-17)<sup>8</sup> *Then God spoke to Noah and to his sons with him, saying,*<sup>9</sup> *“Now behold, I Myself do establish My covenant with you, and with your descendants after you;”*<sup>10</sup> *and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the cattle, and every beast of the earth with you; of all that comes out of the ark, even every beast of the earth.*<sup>11</sup> ***I establish My covenant with you; and all flesh shall never again be cut off by the water of the flood, neither shall there again be a flood to destroy the earth.***<sup>12</sup> *God said, “This is the sign of the covenant which I am making between Me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all successive generations;”*<sup>13</sup> *I set My bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a sign of a covenant between Me and the earth.*<sup>14</sup> *It shall come about, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow will be seen in the cloud,*<sup>15</sup> *and I will remember My covenant, which is between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and never again shall the water become a flood to destroy all flesh.*<sup>16</sup> *When the bow is in the cloud, then I will look upon it, to remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that*

*is on the earth." <sup>17</sup> And God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant which I have established between Me and all flesh that is on the earth."*

The twentieth generation was Abraham, who brought the generations of the Sons of God through the dispersion from Babel. The Messianic promise is now through Abraham.

God's covenant with Abraham is a foundational covenant: others are amplifications of parts of this covenant. This covenant is the basis for our salvation and future hope.

Abraham was promised an inheritance of (1) Land, (2) Seed, and (3) Blessings. The Promised Land was described to Abraham in Genesis 15:7-20. The promised seed was detailed to David in 2 Samuel 7:8-16 (the Davidic Covenant). The blessing promises are explained in Jeremiah 31:31-35 (the New Covenant).

The land portion of the covenant was later given in greater detail to Abraham.

[Cutting a covenant.] (Genesis 15:7-21) <sup>7</sup> *And He said to him, "I am Yahweh who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to possess it."* <sup>8</sup> *He said, "O Lord Yahweh, how may I know that I will possess it?"* <sup>9</sup> *So He said to him, "Bring Me a three year old heifer, and a three year old female goat, and a three year old ram, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon."* <sup>10</sup> *Then he brought all these to Him and cut them in two, and laid each half opposite the other; but he did not cut the birds.* <sup>11</sup> *The birds of prey came down upon the carcasses, and Abram drove them away.* <sup>12</sup> *Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, terror and great darkness fell upon him.* <sup>13</sup> *God said to Abram, "Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years.* <sup>14</sup> *"But I will also judge the nation whom they will serve, and afterward they will come out with many possessions.* <sup>15</sup> *"As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you will be buried at a good old age.* <sup>16</sup> ***"Then in the fourth generation / millennium they will return here, for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet complete."*** <sup>17</sup> *It came about when the sun had set, that it was very dark, and behold, there appeared a smoking oven and a flaming torch which passed between these pieces.* <sup>18</sup> *On that day Yahweh made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates: <sup>19</sup> the Kenite and the Kenizzite and the Kadmonite <sup>20</sup> and the Hittite and the Perizzite and the Rephaim <sup>21</sup> and the Amorite and the Canaanite and the Girgashite and the Jebusite."*

Abraham lived at the beginning of the third millennium of the world. Four millenniums later will be the Sabbath Millennium, when Yeshua will reign. That will be the ultimate fulfillment of this promise.

Moses was the twenty-sixth generation. Four-hundred-thirty years after the covenant was made with Abraham, God added instruction through Moses, in order to guide His covenant people in the narrow path.

(Galatians 3:19) *Why the Law then? It was added because of transgressions, having been ordained through angels by the agency of a mediator, until the seed would come to whom the promise had been made.*

(Exodus 20:1-20) <sup>1</sup> *Then God spoke all these words, saying,*  
[How to love Yahweh your God] <sup>2</sup> ***1*** *"I am Yahweh your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.* <sup>3</sup> ***2*** *"You shall have no other gods before Me.* <sup>4</sup> *"You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth.* <sup>5</sup> *"You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, Yahweh your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me, <sup>6</sup> but showing lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.* <sup>7</sup> ***3*** *"You shall not take the name of Yahweh your God in vain, for Yahweh will not leave him unpunished who takes His name in vain.* <sup>8</sup> ***4*** *"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.* <sup>9</sup> *"Six days you shall labor and do all your work, <sup>10</sup> but the seventh day is a Sabbath of Yahweh your God; in it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, your male or your female servant or your*



cattle or your sojourner who stays with you. <sup>11</sup> "For in six days Yahweh made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore Yahweh blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. <sup>12</sup> **5** "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be prolonged in the land which Yahweh your God gives you. [How to love your neighbor] <sup>13</sup> **6** "You shall not murder. <sup>14</sup> **7** "You shall not commit adultery. <sup>15</sup> **8** "You shall not steal. <sup>16</sup> **9** "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. <sup>17</sup> **10** "You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife or his male servant or his female servant or his ox or his donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbor."  
<sup>18</sup> All the people perceived the thunder and the lightning flashes and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, they trembled and stood at a distance. <sup>19</sup> Then they said to Moses, "Speak to us yourself and we will listen; but let not God speak to us, or we will die." <sup>20</sup> Moses said to the people, "**Do not be afraid; for God has come in order to test you, and in order that the fear of Him may remain with you, so that you may not sin.**"

David was the thirty-third generation. To him the seed portion of the covenant was expanded: David symbolized the ultimate Messiah, who would come through David's line.

(II Samuel 7:8-16) <sup>8</sup> "Now therefore, thus you shall say to My servant David, 'Thus says Yahweh of hosts, "I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, to be ruler over My people Israel. <sup>9</sup> "I have been with you wherever you have gone and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make you a great name, like the names of the great men who are on the earth. <sup>10</sup> "I will also appoint a place for My people Israel and will plant them, that they may live in their own place and not be disturbed again, nor will the wicked afflict them any more as formerly, <sup>11</sup> even from the day that I commanded judges to be over My people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. Yahweh also declares to you that Yahweh will make a house for you. <sup>12</sup> "When your days are complete and you lie down with your fathers, **I will raise up your descendant after you, who will come forth from you, and I will establish his kingdom.** <sup>13</sup> "He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. <sup>14</sup> "I will be a father to him and he will be a son to Me; when he commits iniquity, I will correct him with the rod of men and the strokes of the sons of men, <sup>15</sup> but My lovingkindness shall not depart from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. <sup>16</sup> **"Your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever."**"

The blessing portion of the covenant is called the "New Covenant". This word 'new' does not mean original, but rather renewed: God will renew His covenant by applying it in a new way – to hearts.

(Jeremiah 31:31-35) <sup>31</sup> "Behold, days are coming," declares Yahweh, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, <sup>32</sup> not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them," declares Yahweh. <sup>33</sup> "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares Yahweh, "**I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.** <sup>34</sup> "They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know Yahweh,' for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares Yahweh, "**for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.**" <sup>35</sup> Thus says Yahweh, Who gives the sun for light by day And the fixed order of the moon and the stars for light by night, Who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar; Yahweh of Hosts is His name.

Circumcision was to be performed on the eighth day (Leviticus 12:2). On the eighth millennial day – when the earth is renewed – we shall all have circumcised hearts, and our sin will be remembered no more. There will be no need for evangelization, for everyone will know God; until the end of the Sabbath Millennium, there will be evangelization (Revelation 7:14).

So how does this covenant relate to us today?

(Romans 4:1-25) **I** *What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found?* <sup>2</sup> *For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God.* <sup>3</sup> *For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness."* <sup>4</sup> *Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due.* <sup>5</sup> *But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness,* <sup>6</sup> *just as David also speaks of the blessing on the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works:* <sup>7</sup> *"Blessed are those whose lawless deeds have been forgiven, and whose sins have been covered.* <sup>8</sup> *"Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will not take into account."* <sup>9</sup> *Is this blessing then on the circumcised, or on the uncircumcised also? For we say, "Faith was credited to Abraham as righteousness."* <sup>10</sup> *How then was it credited? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised;* <sup>11</sup> *and he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while uncircumcised, so that he might be the father of all who believe without being circumcised, that righteousness might be credited to them,* <sup>12</sup> *and the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also follow in the steps of the faith of our father Abraham which he had while uncircumcised.* <sup>13</sup> **For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would be heir of the world was not through the (Mosaic) Law, but through the righteousness of faith.** <sup>14</sup> *For if those who are of the Law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise is nullified;* <sup>15</sup> *for the Law brings about wrath, but where there is no law, there also is no violation.* <sup>16</sup> **For this reason it is by faith, in order that it may be in accordance with grace, so that the promise will be guaranteed to all the descendants, not only to those who are of the Law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all,** <sup>17</sup> *(as it is written, "A father of many nations have I made you") in the presence of Him whom he believed, even God, who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist.* <sup>18</sup> *In hope against hope he believed, so that he might become a father of many nations according to that which had been spoken, "So shall your descendents be."* <sup>19</sup> *Without becoming weak in faith he contemplated his own body, now as good as dead since he was about a hundred years old, and the deadness of Sarah's womb;* <sup>20</sup> *yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God,* <sup>21</sup> *and being fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to perform.* <sup>22</sup> *Therefore "It was credited to him as righteousness".* <sup>23</sup> *Now not for his sake only was it written that it was credited to him,* <sup>24</sup> *but for our sake also, to whom it will be credited, as those who believe in Him who raised Yeshua our Lord from the dead,* <sup>25</sup> *He who was delivered over because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification.*

(Ephesians 2:12-13; 3:6) <sup>12</sup> *Remember that you (gentiles) were at that time separate from Messiah, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and **strangers to the covenants of promise**, having no hope and without God in the world.* <sup>13</sup> *But now in Messiah Yeshua you **who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Messiah.*** <sup>6</sup> *To be specific, that the **gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise** in Messiah Yeshua through the gospel.*

Psalm 9:10 is a fitting closing:

*"Those who know Your name will put their trust in You, for You, O Yahweh, have not forsaken those who seek You."*

## ***B'yamei Amraphel / In the Days of Amraphel***

Genesis 14:1-24 Isaiah 41:2-14, 1 Kings 10:9 Psalm 10 Hebrews 7:1-19

## **Commentary Y1-11**

Sivan 18, 5761 / June 9, 2001

Sivan 16, 5764 / June 5, 2004

*Reader 1\* Amen* <sup>1</sup>And it came about in the days of Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of Goiim, <sup>2</sup> that they made war with Bera king of Sodom, and with Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, and Shemeber king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar). <sup>3</sup> All these came as allies to the valley of Siddim (that is, the Salt Sea).

*Reader 2\* Amen* <sup>4</sup> Twelve years they had served Chedorlaomer, but the thirteenth year they rebelled. <sup>5</sup> In the fourteenth year Chedorlaomer and the kings that were with him, came and defeated the Rephaim in Ashteroth-karnaim and the Zuzim in Ham and the Emim in Shaveh-kiriathaim, <sup>6</sup> and the Horites in their Mount Seir, as far as El-paran, which is by the wilderness.

*Reader 3\* Amen* <sup>7</sup> Then they turned back and came to En-mishpat (that is, Kadesh), and conquered all the country of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites, who lived in Hazazon-tamar. <sup>8</sup> And the king of Sodom and the king of Gomorrah and the king of Admah and the king of Zeboiim and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar) came out; and they arrayed for battle against them in the valley of Siddim, <sup>9</sup> against Chedorlaomer king of Elam and Tidal king of Goiim and Amraphel king of Shinar and Arioch king of Ellasar-- four kings against five.

*Reader 4\* Amen* <sup>10</sup> Now the valley of Siddim was full of tar pits; and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, and they fell into them. But those who survived fled to the hill country. <sup>11</sup> Then they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah and all their food supply, and departed. <sup>12</sup> They also took Lot, Avram's nephew, and his possessions and departed, for he was living in Sodom.

*Reader 5\* Amen* <sup>13</sup> Then a fugitive came and told Avram the Hebrew. Now he was living by the oaks of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol and brother of Aner, and these were allies with Abram. <sup>14</sup> When Avram heard that his relative had been taken captive, he led out his trained men, born in his house, three hundred and eighteen, and went in pursuit as far as Dan. <sup>15</sup> He divided his forces against them by night, he and his servants, and defeated them, and pursued them as far as Hobah, which is north of Damascus. <sup>16</sup> He brought back all the goods, and also brought back his relative Lot with his possessions, and also the women, and the people.

*Reader 6\* Amen* <sup>17</sup> Then after his return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley). <sup>18</sup> And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; now he was a priest of God Most High. <sup>19</sup> He blessed him and said, "Blessed be Avram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; <sup>20</sup> And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand." He gave him a tenth of all.

*Reader 7\* Amen* <sup>21</sup> The king of Sodom said to Avram, "Give the people to me and take the goods for yourself." <sup>22</sup> Avram said to the king of Sodom, "I have sworn to Yahweh God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth, <sup>23</sup> that I will not take a thread or a sandal thong or anything that is yours, for fear you would say, 'I have made Avram rich. <sup>24</sup> "I will take nothing except what the young men have eaten, and the share of the men who went with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their share."

### **Isaiah 41:2-14**

*Reader 8\* Amen* <sup>2</sup> "Who has aroused one from the east Whom He calls in righteousness to His feet? He delivers up nations before him and subdues kings. He makes them like dust with his sword, as the wind-driven chaff with his bow. <sup>3</sup> "He pursues them, passing on in safety, by a way he had not been traversing with his feet. <sup>4</sup> "Who has performed and accomplished it, calling forth the generations from the beginning? 'I, Yahweh, am the first, and with the last. I am He.'" <sup>5</sup> The coastlands have seen and are afraid; the ends of the earth tremble; they have drawn near and have come. <sup>6</sup> Each one helps his neighbor and says to his brother, "Be strong!" <sup>7</sup> So the craftsman encourages the smelter, and he who smooths metal with the hammer encourages him who beats the anvil, saying of the soldering, "It is good"; and he fastens it with nails, so that it will not totter.

*Reader 9\* Amen* <sup>8</sup> "But you, Israel, My servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, descendant of Abraham My friend, <sup>9</sup> You whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called from its remotest parts and said to you, 'You are My servant, I have chosen you and not rejected you. <sup>10</sup> 'Do not fear, for I am with you; do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, surely I will

uphold you with My righteous right hand.' <sup>11</sup> "Behold, all those who are angered at you will be shamed and dishonored; those who contend with you will be as nothing and will perish. <sup>12</sup> "You will seek those who quarrel with you, but will not find them, those who war with you will be as nothing and non-existent. <sup>13</sup> "For I am Yahweh your God, who upholds your right hand, Who says to you, 'Do not fear, I will help you.' <sup>14</sup> "Do not fear, you worm Jacob, you men of Israel; I will help you," declares Yahweh, "and your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel.

### **1 Kings 10:9**

*Reader 10\* Amen* "Blessed be Yahweh your God who delighted in you to set you on the throne of Israel; because Yahweh loved Israel forever, therefore He made you king, to do justice and righteousness."

### **Psalm 10 (to be sung)**

1 Why dost Thou stand afar off, O Yahweh? Why dost Thou hide Thyself in times of trouble? 2 In pride the wicked hotly pursue the afflicted; let them be caught in the plots which they have devised. 3 For the wicked boasts of his heart's desire, and the greedy man curses and spurns Yahweh. 4 The wicked, in the haughtiness of his countenance, does not seek Him. All his thoughts are, "There is no God." 5 His ways prosper at all times; Thy judgments are on high, out of his sight; as for all his adversaries, he snorts at them. 6 He says to himself, "I shall not be moved; throughout all generations I shall not be in adversity." 7 His mouth is full of curses and deceit and oppression; under his tongue is mischief and wickedness. 8 He sits in the lurking places of the villages; in the hiding places he kills the innocent; his eyes stealthily watch for the unfortunate. 9 He lurks in a hiding place as a lion in his lair; he lurks to catch the afflicted; he catches the afflicted when he draws him into his net. 10 He crouches, he bows down, and the unfortunate fall by his mighty ones. 11 He says to himself, "God has forgotten; He has hidden His face; He will never see it." 12 Arise, O Yahweh; O God, lift up Thy hand. Do not forget the afflicted. 13 Why has the wicked spurned God? He has said to himself, "Thou wilt not require it." 14 Thou hast seen it, for Thou hast beheld mischief and vexation to take it into Thy hand. The unfortunate commits himself to Thee; Thou hast been the helper of the orphan. 15 Break the arm of the wicked and the evildoer, seek out his wickedness until Thou dost find none. 16 Yahweh is King forever and ever; nations have perished from His land. 17 O Yahweh, Thou hast heard the desire of the humble; Thou wilt strengthen their heart, Thou wilt incline Thine ear 18 to vindicate the orphan and the oppressed, that man who is of the earth may cause terror no more.

### **Hebrews 7:1-19**

*Reader 11\* Amen* <sup>1</sup> For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham as he was returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, <sup>2</sup> to whom also Abraham apportioned a tenth part of all the spoils, was first of all, by the translation of his name, king of righteousness, and then also king of Salem, which is king of peace. <sup>3</sup> Without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, he remains a priest perpetually. <sup>4</sup> Now observe how great this man was to whom Abraham, the patriarch, gave a tenth of the choicest spoils.

*Reader 12\* Amen* <sup>5</sup> And those indeed of the sons of Levi who receive the priest's office have commandment in the Law to collect a tenth from the people, that is, from their brethren, although these are descended from Abraham. <sup>6</sup> But the one whose genealogy is not traced from them collected a tenth from Abraham and blessed the one who had the promises. <sup>7</sup> But without any dispute the lesser is blessed by the greater. <sup>8</sup> In this case mortal men receive tithes, but in that case one receives them, of whom it is witnessed that he lives on. <sup>9</sup> And, so to speak, through Abraham even Levi, who received tithes, paid tithes, <sup>10</sup> for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him.

*Reader 13\* Amen* <sup>11</sup> Now if perfection was through the Levitical priesthood (for on the basis of it the people received the Law), what further need was there for another priest to arise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be designated according to the order of Aaron? <sup>12</sup> For when the priesthood is changed, of necessity there takes place a change of law also. <sup>13</sup> For the one concerning whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no one has officiated at the altar. <sup>14</sup> For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, a tribe with reference to which Moses spoke nothing concerning priests.

*Reader 14\* Amen* <sup>15</sup> And this is clearer still, if another priest arises according to the likeness of Melchizedek,

<sup>16</sup> who has become such not on the basis of a law of physical requirement, but according to the power of an indestructible life. <sup>17</sup> For it is attested of Him, "You are a priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek." <sup>18</sup> For, on the one hand, there is a setting aside of a former commandment because of its weakness and uselessness <sup>19</sup> (for the Law made nothing perfect), and on the other hand there is a bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God.

## Commentary:

Avram defeats terror in Iraq! The year was 2023 AM, and he was 75 years old.

Near the Persian Gulf, in today's southern Iraq, there were four nations, each having kings. They were:

Amraphel (Nimrod)	King of Shinar,
Arioch	King of Ellasar,
Tidal	King of Goiim / Nations
Chedorlaomer (a Shemite)	King of Elam,

(Chedorlaomer means 'Until the time of the Omer.')

Five cities of the plains, near the Dead Sea, served Chedorlaomer for twelve years. These five cities were represented by the names of the two predominant ones, "Sodom and Gomorrah". These cities and their kings were:

Bera	King of Sodom,
Birsha	King of Gomorrah,
Shinab	King of Admah,
Shemeber	King of Zeboiim,
(unnamed)	King of Bela (that is, Zoar)

(Bela means 'Insignificant'; it was southeast of the Dead Sea.)

These five served King Chedorlaomer until the thirteenth year, and then they rebelled.

In the fourteenth year, the kings of the four nations went to war and defeated six other nations and then the five kings of the cities of the plains. Lot and his family, who were living in Sodom, were taken captive.

Avram, upon hearing of this, took 318 of his trained servants, and went out and defeated all four nations, and safely brought back Lot with his family.

So, Chedorlaomer reigned until the time of the Omer – the title of the Ephah. Then Avram the Hebrew (v.13) – the one from the other side of the dispersion of nations – put an end to the reign of terror in Iraq, and paid the tithe of the spoil.

Tithing neither began with the Levites, nor with Avram. It is part of firstfruits – from creation: "*Because of the things called first, God created the heavens and the earth*" (see Commentary Y1-01).

Originally, the priesthood was held by the firstborn, though some, through sin, lost that birthright. God would later take the Levites for priests in place of the firstborn (Numbers 3:12). A priest's duty is to maintain God's standard of righteousness, to lead people in repentance and proper worship.

Avram would be expected to have learned the rules about tithing from his priest.

## Hebrews 7

We read in Genesis 11:17-20 that Avram paid tithes to Melchizedek. In Psalm 110:4 we read that Messiah would be a "*Priest forever after the order of Melchizedek*". Hebrews 7 uses these two Scriptures to show the legitimacy of Yeshua's priesthood.

First, we need to understand that Melchizedek is not a name. It is a title made up of two Hebrew words: *Malchi* – ruler, and *Tzedek* – righteousness. The person who rules in matters of righteousness is the priest; the person who makes rulings in matters of making peace with God is the priest.

Some Gnostic sects of the first century believed that Melchizedek was Messiah. Some of Christendom hold the view that he was a preincarnation of Messiah: Armstrongites are quite adamant about this. Some English Bible translations might, on the surface, seem to say that: KJV Hebrews 7:1-3 reads, "*For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace; without father, without*

*mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually.”*

In Hebrew understanding, when the Torah leaves something out, then there is intended significance. The writer of *Hebrews* was writing to Hebrew believers, explaining how Yeshua was High Priest, though not descended from Levi. The argument is that, since neither father, mother, genealogy, nor time of death are noted, then the silence was prefiguring the priest to come: the eternal Messiah Priest.

To be a Levitical priest, one must have an absolute traceable lineage. The *Ruler of Righteousness and Ruler of Peace* (Melchizedek) in our text was without specified father or specified mother, without traceable lineage, and without specified time of death: this was not the case with Levitical priests. Thus he prophetically pictured the coming Messiah, Who was from the beginning, and Who is eternal, though not of the order of Levi.

Halley's Bible Handbook says:

*“What is the meaning of 'without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life'? Not that it was actually so, but that it appeared so in the Old Testament Records. Levitical Priests were Priests Because of their Genealogy. But Melchizedek, Without Genealogy, was the Recognized Priest of the Human Race at that time. Hebrew tradition is that Shem, who was still alive in the days of Abraham, and, as far as is known, Oldest Living Man at the time, was Melchizedek. A mysterious, solitary picture and type, in the dim past, of the Coming Eternal Priest-King” (p. 652).*

The text says that Yeshua was not “*after the order of Aaron*” (v.12), but “*after the order* (Hebrew *Dibrah* – manner or cause for choosing) *of Melchizedek*” (v.17): “*after the order of*” indicates that Avram’s Melchizedek and Yeshua were not one and the same. And being “*made like* (Greek *aphomoiomenos*) *unto the Son of God*” (v.3) always means a distinct identity: Avram’s Melchizedek was pictured in the Torah as a prophetic likeness, for our understanding of Yeshua.

In other words: Yeshua was of the priestly order of the firstborn; He is the firstborn of every creature (Colossians 1:15).

Ancient Hebrew scholars have held that Avram’s Melchizedek was Shem. That is because Shem was in the lineage of the firstborn, and Shem was oldest of the line alive during all of Avram’s life.

While the subjects of tithing and of Melchizedek are sources of many discussions, we would like to see more careful Scripture research and less emotion-based argument.

The important point in Hebrews 7 is that Yeshua is our eternal High Priest: that means that He is the proper authority to lead us in repentance, to lead us in righteousness, to lead our worship.

*Reader 1\* Amen* <sup>1</sup> After these things the word of Yahweh came to Avram in a vision, saying, "Do not fear, Avram, I am a shield to you; Your reward shall be very great." <sup>2</sup> Avram said, "O Lord Yahweh, what will You give me, since I am childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" <sup>3</sup> And Avram said, "Since You have given no offspring to me, one born in my house is my heir."

*Reader 2\* Amen* <sup>4</sup> Then behold, the word of Yahweh came to him, saying, "This man will not be your heir; but one who will come forth from your own body, he shall be your heir." <sup>5</sup> And He took him outside and said, "Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be." <sup>6</sup> Then he believed in Yahweh; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness.

*Reader 3\* Amen* <sup>7</sup> And He said to him, "I am Yahweh who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to possess it." <sup>8</sup> He said, "O Lord Yahweh, how may I know that I will possess it?" <sup>9</sup> So He said to him, "Bring Me a three year old heifer, and a three year old female goat, and a three year old ram, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon."

*Reader 4\* Amen* <sup>10</sup> Then he brought all these to Him and cut them in two, and laid each half opposite the other; but he did not cut the birds. <sup>11</sup> The birds of prey came down upon the carcasses, and Avram drove them away. <sup>12</sup> Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Avram; and behold, terror and great darkness fell upon him.

*Reader 5\* Amen* <sup>13</sup> God said to Avram, "Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years. <sup>14</sup> "But I will also judge the nation whom they will serve, and afterward they will come out with many possessions. <sup>15</sup> "As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you will be buried at a good old age.

*Reader 6\* Amen* <sup>16</sup> "Then in the fourth generation they will return here, for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet complete." <sup>17</sup> It came about when the sun had set, that it was very dark, and behold, there appeared a smoking oven and a flaming torch which passed between these pieces.

*Reader 7\* Amen* <sup>18</sup> On that day Yahweh made a covenant with Avram, saying, "To your descendants I have given this land, From the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates: <sup>19</sup> the Kenite and the Kenizzite and the Kadmonite <sup>20</sup> and the Hittite and the Perizzite and the Rephaim <sup>21</sup> and the Amorite and the Canaanite and the Girgashite and the Jebusite."

### **Zephaniah 3:1-19**

*Reader 8\* Amen* <sup>1</sup> Woe to her who is rebellious and defiled, the tyrannical city! <sup>2</sup> She heeded no voice, she accepted no instruction. She did not trust in Yahweh, she did not draw near to her God. <sup>3</sup> Her princes within her are roaring lions, her judges are wolves at evening; they leave nothing for the morning. <sup>4</sup> Her prophets are reckless, treacherous men; her priests have profaned the sanctuary. They have done violence to the law. <sup>5</sup> Yahweh is righteous within her; He will do no injustice. Every morning He brings His justice to light; He does not fail. But the unjust knows no shame. <sup>6</sup> "I have cut off nations; their corner towers are in ruins. I have made their streets desolate, with no one passing by; their cities are laid waste, without a man, without an inhabitant. <sup>7</sup> "I said, 'Surely you will revere Me, accept instruction.' So her dwelling will not be cut off according to all that I have appointed concerning her. But they were eager to corrupt all their deeds.

*Reader 9\* Amen* <sup>8</sup> "Therefore wait for Me," declares Yahweh, "For the day when I rise up as a witness. Indeed, My decision is to gather nations, to assemble kingdoms, to pour out on them My indignation, all My burning anger; for all the earth will be devoured by the fire of My zeal. <sup>9</sup> "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. <sup>10</sup> "From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia My worshipers, My dispersed ones, will bring My offerings. <sup>11</sup> "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. <sup>12</sup> "But I will leave among you a humble and lowly people, and they will take refuge in the name of Yahweh. <sup>13</sup> "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."

*Reader 10\* Amen* <sup>14</sup> Shout for joy, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem! <sup>15</sup> Yahweh has taken away His judgments against you, He has

cleared away your enemies. The King of Israel, Yahweh, is in your midst; you will fear disaster no more. <sup>16</sup> In that day it will be said to Jerusalem: "Do not be afraid, O Zion; do not let your hands fall limp. <sup>17</sup> "Yahweh your God is in your midst, a victorious warrior. He will exult over you with joy, He will be quiet in His love, He will rejoice over you with shouts of joy. <sup>18</sup> "I will gather those who grieve about the appointed feasts – they came from you, O Zion; the reproach of exile is a burden on them. <sup>19</sup> "Behold, I am going to deal at that time with all your oppressors, I will save the lame and gather the outcast, and I will turn their shame into praise and renown In all the earth.

### **Isaiah 1:1-17**

*Reader 11\* Amen* <sup>1</sup> The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz concerning Judah and Jerusalem, which he saw during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. <sup>2</sup> Listen, O heavens, and hear, O earth; for Yahweh speaks, "Sons I have reared and brought up, but they have revolted against Me. <sup>3</sup> "An ox knows its owner, and a donkey its master's manger, but Israel does not know, My people do not understand." <sup>4</sup> Alas, sinful nation, people weighed down with iniquity, offspring of evildoers, sons who act corruptly! They have abandoned Yahweh, they have despised the Holy One of Israel, they have turned away from Him. <sup>5</sup> Where will you be stricken again, as you continue in your rebellion? The whole head is sick and the whole heart is faint. <sup>6</sup> From the sole of the foot even to the head there is nothing sound in it, only bruises, welts and raw wounds, not pressed out or bandaged, nor softened with oil. <sup>7</sup> Your land is desolate, your cities are burned with fire, your fields – strangers are devouring them in your presence; it is desolation, as overthrown by strangers. <sup>8</sup> The daughter of Zion is left like a shelter in a vineyard, like a watchman's hut in a cucumber field, like a besieged city. <sup>9</sup> Unless Yahweh of hosts had left us a few survivors, we would be like Sodom, we would be like Gomorrah.

*Reader 12\* Amen* <sup>10</sup> Hear the word of Yahweh, you rulers of Sodom; give ear to the instruction of our God, you people of Gomorrah. <sup>11</sup> "What are your multiplied sacrifices to Me?" Says Yahweh. "I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fed cattle; and I take no pleasure in the blood of bulls, lambs or goats. <sup>12</sup> "When you come to appear before Me, who requires of you this trampling of My courts? <sup>13</sup> "Bring your worthless offerings no longer, incense is an abomination to Me. New moon and Sabbath, the calling of assemblies – I cannot endure iniquity and the solemn assembly. <sup>14</sup> "I hate your new moon festivals and your appointed feasts, they have become a burden to Me; I am weary of bearing them. <sup>15</sup> "So when you spread out your hands in prayer, I will hide My eyes from you; yes, even though you multiply prayers, I will not listen. Your hands are covered with blood. <sup>16</sup> "Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your deeds from My sight. Cease to do evil, <sup>17</sup> learn to do good; seek justice, reprove the ruthless, defend the orphan, plead for the widow.

### **Psalm 11 (to be sung) For the choir director. A Psalm of David.**

<sup>1</sup> In Yahweh I take refuge; How can you say to my soul, "Flee as a bird to your mountain; <sup>2</sup> for, behold, the wicked bend the bow, they make ready their arrow upon the string to shoot in darkness at the upright in heart. <sup>3</sup> If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?" <sup>4</sup> Yahweh is in His Holy Temple; Yahweh's throne is in heaven; His eyes behold, His eyelids test the sons of men. <sup>5</sup> Yahweh tests the righteous and the wicked, and the one who loves violence His soul hates. <sup>6</sup> Upon the wicked He will rain snares; fire and brimstone and burning wind will be the portion of their cup. <sup>7</sup> For Yahweh is righteous, He loves righteousness; the upright will behold His face.

### **Romans 4:1-13**

*Reader 13\* Amen* <sup>1</sup> What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found? <sup>2</sup> For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. <sup>3</sup> For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness." <sup>4</sup> Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due. <sup>5</sup> But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness, <sup>6</sup> just as David also speaks of the blessing on the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works: <sup>7</sup> "Blessed are those whose lawless deeds have been forgiven, and whose sins have been covered. <sup>8</sup> "Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will not take into account."



*Reader 14\* Amen* <sup>9</sup> Is this blessing then on the circumcised, or on the uncircumcised also? For we say, "Faith was credited to Abraham as righteousness." <sup>10</sup> How then was it credited? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised; <sup>11</sup> and he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while uncircumcised, so that he might be the father of all who believe without being circumcised, that righteousness might be credited to them, <sup>12</sup> and the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also follow in the steps of the faith of our father Abraham which he had while uncircumcised. <sup>13</sup> For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would be heir of the world was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith.

### **Commentary:**

#### **Genesis 15**

(V.1-5) Avram had just returned from defeating four armies. God promised to be his shield: he need not fear reprisal from his enemies. God also promised him great reward: now, reward is wages. Avram had acted in Yahweh's Name, eliminating fomenters of terror, and was to be rewarded.

Then Avram replied, "*O Adonai Yahweh*" – my Master, the Gracious One. This is the first recorded time anyone called God "*Adonai*" – Lord or Master.

And Avram had a question: If he received a reward, who would inherit it? He had no children; would his servant be his heir? And God responded: no, Avram would have innumerable children (offspring).

(V.6) Avram trusted God – took Him at His Word, and that was accounted to Avram for righteousness. This imputed righteousness was not part of the wages for Avram's work; it was a gift from his Gracious God. Avram had shown faith in God when he went after the four armies, and greater faith when he trusted Yahweh's Word for the supernatural concerning having children though he and his wife were beyond childbearing. (Avram knew Noah, who had children at 500! Avram was 75, and Sarai was 65, but they never had the natural ability to bear children.)

When Avram's seed (which we are by faith) are obedient, they are like stars (v.5) – above earthly powers. But when they are disobedient, they are like dust of the earth (v.13:16, 28:14) – to be trampled (Megillah 16a).

(V.11) When the animals to symbolize the Covenant were laid out, birds of prey descended upon them, but Avram drove them away. When evil spirits / nations try to nullify the Covenant, such as by taking the Promised Land, the Covenant will remain. (The subject of taking the Land is large in the news today.)

(V.13) God foretold to Avram that his seed would be slaves in a foreign land (Egypt) for four-hundred years, but then they would be freed and have great wealth. The four-hundred years is calculated beginning thirty years later, when Isaac was born. Isaac never had the permanent home or position that his father had, and his offspring were considered aliens, even in the time they spent in the Land. The actual time in Egypt was 210 years, with the last 116 spent in the prophesied servitude, and the final 86 in harsh oppression.

(V.16) Four *generations* after the Egyptian exile, the Canaanite nations would be expelled, their 'cup of iniquity' being full. Four *millenniums* after the Egyptian exile, there will be an even greater fulfillment of this prophecy: in the final war, which begins just before the Millennial Sabbath of peace, and culminates afterward – when the nations from Babel will have their 'cup is filled to the double' (Revelation 18:6) – they will be permanently expelled.

David sums up the end in **Psalm 11:6-7**

*Upon the wicked He will rain snares; fire and brimstone and burning wind will be the portion of their cup. For Yahweh is righteous, He loves righteousness; the upright will behold His face.*

#### **Romans 4**

(V.1) *What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found?*

Abraham lived almost two-thousand years before Yeshua was born. But Abraham is used as a prime example of how we are saved: there has been no change in the method of salvation from sin!

*(V.2) For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about; but not before God.*

If we are good enough to merit eternal life, then we are better than others, and have basis for boasting before men. If we have done something that is required to compensate for our sin, then we have done something to boast about. If we have faith that is of our own doing, we have something to brag about before men!

*(V.4) Now to the one who works, his wage is not reckoned as a favor, but as what is due.* When one works, wages are his due: wages are not a favor. But for any of us, to earn eternal life is well beyond possibility.

*(V.3,5) What does the Scripture say? "And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness."*

*To the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness,*

For an unrighteous man to be accounted righteous is an unearned favor from God – grace. When we display the faith that is a gift of God (Ephesians 2:8), then we are reckoned righteous.

David lived almost one-thousand years before Yeshua's birth. He described then how one was saved.

*(V.6-8) Just as David also speaks of the blessing upon the man to whom God reckons righteousness apart from works: "Blessed are those whose lawless deeds have been forgiven, and whose sins have been covered. Blessed is the man whose sin Yahweh will not take into account."*

Paul goes on to explain to Romans that this blessing is not only for Hebrews, but also for gentiles. Circumcision is not a prior requirement, but a symbol after the fact.

*(V.9-13) Is this blessing then upon the circumcised, or upon the uncircumcised also? For we say, "Faith was reckoned to Abraham as righteousness." How then was it credited? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised; and he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while uncircumcised, so that he might be the father of all who believe without being circumcised, that righteousness might be credited to them, and the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also follow in the steps of the faith of our father Abraham which he had while uncircumcised. For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would be heir of the world was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith.*

**Isaiah 1** may need a word of explanation, as it is often misused.

Yahweh says (v.11-13), *"I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fed cattle; and I take no pleasure in the blood of bulls, lambs or goats. When you come to appear before Me, who requires of you this trampling of My courts? Bring your worthless offerings no longer, incense is an abomination to Me."*

There is no offering for intentional sin. When people intentionally live in sin, these offerings for unintentional sin are worthless! They are a farce! They are not being brought to fulfill God's intended purpose of leading the guilty out of sin. If people today studied the Biblical offerings, they would not misconstrue this to say that God had changed His mind about offerings.

God says (v.14), *"I hate your new moon festivals and your appointed feasts"*. God is not saying that He hates "His" appointed feasts, but those which the people have corrupted. This does not represent a change in God's "eternal" feasts.

God says (v.15), *"So when you spread out your hands in prayer, I will hide My eyes from you; yes, even though you multiply prayers, I will not listen."* Does this mean that God no longer desires for us to pray?

He says what it means! (V.16-17) *"Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your deeds from My sight. Cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, reprove the ruthless, defend the orphan, plead for the widow."* When we seek His righteousness, then our offerings, our feasts, and our prayers, will be acceptable. This is all about the righteousness which is of faith. *"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied"* (Matthew 5:6).

**Isaiah 1:1-17**

*Reader 11\** Amen. <sup>1</sup> These visions concerning Judah and Jerusalem came to Isaiah son of Amoz during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah-- all kings of Judah. <sup>2</sup> Hear, O heavens! Listen, O earth! This is what Yahweh says: "The children I raised and cared for have turned against me. <sup>3</sup> Even the animals-- the donkey and the ox-- know their owner and appreciate his care, but not my people Israel. No matter what I do for them, they still do not understand." <sup>4</sup> Oh, what a sinful nation they are! They are loaded down with a burden of guilt. They are evil and corrupt children who have turned away from Yahweh. They have despised the Holy One of Israel, cutting themselves off from his help. <sup>5</sup> Why do you continue to invite punishment? Must you rebel forever? Your head is injured, and your heart is sick. <sup>6</sup> You are sick from head to foot-- covered with bruises, welts, and infected wounds-- without any ointments or bandages. <sup>7</sup> Your country lies in ruins, and your cities are burned. As you watch, foreigners plunder your fields and destroy everything they see. <sup>8</sup> Jerusalem stands abandoned like a watchman's shelter in a vineyard or field after the harvest is over. It is as helpless as a city under siege. <sup>9</sup> If Yahweh Almighty had not spared a few of us, we would have been wiped out as completely as Sodom and Gomorrah.

*Reader 12\** Amen. <sup>10</sup> Listen to Yahweh, you leaders of Israel! Listen to the law of our God, people of Israel. You act just like the rulers and people of Sodom and Gomorrah. <sup>11</sup> "I am sick of your sacrifices," says Yahweh. "Don't bring me any more burnt offerings! I don't want the fat from your rams or other animals. I don't want to see the blood from your offerings of bulls and rams and goats. <sup>12</sup> Why do you keep parading through my courts with your worthless sacrifices? <sup>13</sup> The incense you bring me is a stench in my nostrils! Your celebrations of the new moon and the Sabbath day, and your special days for fasting-- even your most pious meetings-- are all sinful and false. I want nothing more to do with them. <sup>14</sup> I hate all your festivals and sacrifices. I cannot stand the sight of them! <sup>15</sup> From now on, when you lift up your hands in prayer, I will refuse to look. Even though you offer many <sup>16</sup> Wash yourselves and be clean! Let me no longer see your evil deeds. Give up your wicked ways. <sup>17</sup> Learn to do good. Seek justice. Help the oppressed. Defend the orphan. Fight for the rights of widows.

**Romans 4:1-13**

*Reader 13\** Amen. <sup>1</sup> Abraham was, humanly speaking, the founder of our Jewish nation. What were his experiences concerning this question of being saved by faith? <sup>2</sup> Was it because of his good deeds that God accepted him? If so, he would have had something to boast about. But from God's point of view Abraham had no basis at all for pride. <sup>3</sup> For the Scriptures tell us, "Abraham believed God, so God declared him to be righteous." <sup>4</sup> When people work, their wages are not a gift. Workers earn what they receive. <sup>5</sup> But people are declared righteous because of their faith, not because of their work. <sup>6</sup> King David spoke of this, describing the happiness of an undeserving sinner who is declared to be righteous: <sup>7</sup> "Oh, what joy for those whose disobedience is forgiven, whose sins are put out of sight. <sup>8</sup> Yes, what joy for those whose sin is no longer counted against them by the Lord."

*Reader 14\** Amen. <sup>9</sup> Now then, is this blessing only for the Jews, or is it for Gentiles, too? Well, what about Abraham? We have been saying he was declared righteous by God because of his faith. <sup>10</sup> But how did his faith help him? Was he declared righteous only after he had been circumcised, or was it before he was circumcised? The answer is that God accepted him first, and then he was circumcised later! <sup>11</sup> The circumcision ceremony was a sign that Abraham already had faith and that God had already accepted him and declared him to be righteous-- even before he was circumcised. So Abraham is the spiritual father of those who have faith but have not been circumcised. They are made right with God by faith. <sup>12</sup> And Abraham is also the spiritual father of those who have been circumcised, but only if they have the same kind of faith Abraham had before he was circumcised. <sup>13</sup> It is clear, then, that God's promise to give the whole earth to Abraham and his descendants was not based on obedience to God's law, but on the new relationship with God that comes by faith.

## **Saray Eshshet / Saray his Wife**

Genesis 16:1-16 Isaiah 54:1 Psalm 12 Galatians 4:21-31

## **Commentary Y1-13**

Tammuz 2, 5761 / June 23, 2001

Sivan 30, 5764 / June 19, 2004

*Reader 1\* Amen* <sup>1</sup> Now Saray, Avram's wife had borne him no children, and she had an Egyptian maid whose name was Hagar. <sup>2</sup> So Saray said to Avram, "Now behold, Yahweh has prevented me from bearing children. Please go in to my maid; perhaps I will obtain children through her." And Avram listened to the voice of Saray. <sup>3</sup> After Avram had lived ten years in the land of Canaan, Avram's wife Saray took Hagar the Egyptian, her maid, and gave her to her husband Avram as his wife.

*Reader 2\* Amen* <sup>4</sup> He went in to Hagar, and she conceived; and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her sight. <sup>5</sup> And Saray said to Avram, "May the wrong done me be upon you. I gave my maid into your arms, but when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her sight. May Yahweh judge between you and me." <sup>6</sup> But Avram said to Saray, "Behold, your maid is in your power; do to her what is good in your sight." So Saray treated her harshly, and she fled from her presence.

*Reader 3\* Amen* <sup>7</sup> Now the angel of Yahweh found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, by the spring on the way to Shur. <sup>8</sup> He said, "Hagar, Saray's maid, where have you come from and where are you going?" And she said, "I am fleeing from the presence of my mistress Saray." <sup>9</sup> Then the angel of Yahweh said to her, "Return to your mistress, and submit yourself to her authority."

*Reader 4\* Amen* <sup>10</sup> Moreover, the angel of Yahweh said to her, "I will greatly multiply your descendants so that they will be too many to count." <sup>11</sup> The angel of Yahweh said to her further, "Behold, you are with child, and you will bear a son; and you shall call his name Ishmael, Because Yahweh has given heed to your affliction. <sup>12</sup> He will be a wild donkey of a man, His hand will be against everyone, and everyone's hand will be against him; and he will live to the east of all his brothers."

*Reader 5\* Amen* <sup>13</sup> Then she called the name of Yahweh who spoke to her, "You are a God who sees"; for she said, "Have I even remained alive here after seeing Him?" <sup>14</sup> Therefore the well was called Beer-lahai-roi; behold, it is between Kadesh and Bered. <sup>15</sup> So Hagar bore Avram a son; and Avram called the name of his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael. <sup>16</sup> Avram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to him.

### **Isaiah 54:1**

*Reader 6\* Amen* "Shout for joy, O barren one, you who have borne no child; Break forth into joyful shouting and cry aloud, you who have not travailed; for the sons of the desolate one will be more numerous than the sons of the married woman," says Yahweh.

**Psalm 12** *(to be sung) For the choir director; upon an eight-stringed lyre. A Psalm of David.*

<sup>1</sup> Help, Yahweh, for the godly man ceases to be, for the faithful disappear from among the sons of men. <sup>2</sup> They speak falsehood to one another; with flattering lips and with a double heart they speak. <sup>3</sup> May Yahweh cut off all flattering lips, the tongue that speaks great things; <sup>4</sup> who have said, "With our tongue we will prevail; our lips are our own; who is lord over us?" <sup>5</sup> "Because of the devastation of the afflicted, because of the groaning of the needy, now I will arise," says Yahweh; "I will set him in the safety for which he longs." <sup>6</sup> The words of Yahweh are pure words; as silver tried in a furnace on the earth, refined seven times. <sup>7</sup> You, O Yahweh, will keep them; You will preserve him from this generation forever. <sup>8</sup> The wicked strut about on every side when vileness is exalted among the sons of men.

### **Galatians 4:21-31**

*Reader 7\* Amen* <sup>21</sup> Tell me, you who want to be under law, do you not listen to the law? <sup>22</sup> For it is written that Avraham had two sons, one by the bondwoman and one by the free woman. <sup>23</sup> But the son by the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and the son by the free woman through the promise. <sup>24</sup> This is allegorically speaking, for these women are two covenants: one proceeding from Mount Sinai bearing children who are to be slaves; she is Hagar. <sup>25</sup> Now this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. <sup>26</sup> But the Jerusalem above is free; she is our mother.

*Reader 8\* Amen*<sup>27</sup> For it is written, "Rejoice, barren woman who does not bear; Break forth and shout, you who are not in labor; For more are the children of the desolate Than of the one who has a husband."<sup>28</sup> And you brethren, like Isaac, are children of promise.<sup>29</sup> But as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, so it is now also.<sup>30</sup> But what does the Scripture say? "Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be an heir with the son of the free woman."<sup>31</sup> So then, brethren, we are not children of a bondwoman, but of the free woman.

### Commentary:

In the first eleven chapters of Genesis, we have looked at the first 2000 years of Earth's history. We have seen Adam's fall, murder, idolatry, the Great Flood, and the dispersion of the nations from Babel. This is known as the era of desolation.

Today's portion begins thirty-six years into the third millennium. After twenty generations, Torah (God's instruction) was mostly being ignored. But God chose Avram to start a renewal of Torah in a fallen world.

When Avram was 75 and Saray was 65, God sent them the first of ten trials: they were to leave their home, not knowing where they were going. Now God was giving them greater promises than they might have imagined. This is a lesson for us to consider, that we should trust God when we can't see what lies ahead in our lives.

(V.15:2) Avram to God: "What can You give me seeing I go childless?"

(V.15:4) Yahweh to Avram: "One who shall come forth from your own body, he shall be your heir."

In chapter twelve we learned that Pharaoh wanted to add Saray to his harem, but as a result, he was given a disease that prevented intercourse with his wives and concubines. To appease God, he then gave Avram many gifts of animals and a maidservant – a daughter of one of his concubines – the young girl Hagar.

Midrash on v.12:16: "*The word 'maidservants' is written defectively [without the letter 'vav'], implying that he was given only one maidservant, Hagar, Pharaoh's daughter by a concubine (Pirkei d'Rabbi Eliezer: Midrash Hagadol). It may be that, as a princess, Hagar had servants of her own. All of them would have accompanied her to Sarah, thus accounting for the plural form*" - Artscroll Tanach Series: Bereishis, page 451.

Saray, Avram's wife (Chapter 16 – ten years later):

(V.16:1-3) "But Saray, Avram's wife had borne him no children" Avram was 86, Saray was 76. Hagar was now a young woman. Saray said, "Perhaps I shall be *built up* through her" (Hagar) – purposing to build up the Kingdom of God. This is exemplifying doing something "in God's Name" – fulfilling God's purpose, though in this case misguided. "Avram's wife Saray *took* Hagar" – that is, persuaded her with words. Saray gave her domain to her handmaid – she did not consider her own feelings, but acted solely for the sake of Heaven (Midrash HaGadol).

Proverbs 30:21-23 – "*Under three things the earth quakes, and under four, it cannot bear up: under a slave when he becomes king, and a fool when he is satisfied with food, under an unloved woman when she gets a husband, and a maidservant when she supplants her mistress.*"

(V.4) We may hear Hagar saying, "I am the real princess; I am the one through whom God is fulfilling His promises!" This is believed today by Arab Muslims, who claim that they are the Holy line through Ishmael.

(V.5) Saray cried to Avram, "The outrage against me is due to you!" ("You brought this on by saying I was your sister, and thereby getting this 'princess'!") "May Yahweh judge you for this!" Big boo-boo, Saray!

The last request could really cost you!

*Punishment is meted out first to the one who cries, and is more severe than for the one against whom justice is invoked (Talmud: Bava Kamma 93a). One of the things that call a man's iniquity to mind is calling for Divine Judgment on one's fellow man (Rosh Hashanah 16b). Therefore, Sarah predeceased Avraham. Matthew 7:1-4: "Do not judge lest you be judged. For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you. And why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but*

*do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' and behold, the log is in your own eye?"*

Avram replied, "She is my wife, what can I do? But you have not released her as your servant, so you may deal with her as you wish."

Gossip has it, that this was the ultimate insult: When Avraham bound Isaac on the altar, it was through Ishmael and then Hagar that Sarah was told, whereupon Sarah had a heart attack and died. We never hear any more about Sarah's life after the Binding of Isaac.

Psalm 12:5: "*Because of the devastation of the afflicted (Hagar), because of the groaning of the needy (Ishmael), now I will arise,*" says Yahweh; "*I will set him in the safety for which he longs.*" Though Hagar's despising of Saray may have resulted in God's statement that every man would be against Ishmael.

Galatians 4: Hagar corresponds to the present Jerusalem, in slavery, with Avraham trying by earthly means to fulfill God's plan. Saray corresponds to the Heavenly Jerusalem, with God's fulfillment of His promise to Avraham by a miraculous Son. Working in futility for one's own salvation is contrasted with trusting God for the promised salvation through His miraculous Son.

In other words:

The natural seed of Avraham – Hebrews / Israelites – are largely working for their salvation. In rabbinic writings, much is made of them being saved by ancestry and their own merit. Even Avraham is said to have been called because of his own merit. Thus the earthly Jerusalem is equated with Hagar and her son Ishmael, the natural seed of Avraham.

But those who are called by God's grace – unmerited favor – are related to Avraham by faith. This congregation of heavenly Jerusalem is equated with Saray and her son of promise – Isaac, the miraculous son of Avraham.

Slavery here does not refer to the faithful observing God's instruction – Torah. It refers to the faithless laboring to merit salvation. Otherwise, we read of slavery, in a negative sense, to sin (Romans 6:16), and in a positive sense, to our Savior (2 Timothy 2:24).

A thousand years after Avraham, David said (Psalm 12:1), "*Help, Yahweh, for the godly man ceases to be, for the faithful disappear from among the sons of men.*"

But Isaiah says (v.54:1), that we of the faith (Hebrew and gentile) should shout for joy: we will be more numerous than those natural descendents who stake their claim on their own merits.

## **Vayhee Avram / When Avram**

Genesis 17:1-27 Jeremiah 33:25 Psalm 13 Romans 4:10-25

## **Commentary Y1-14**

Tammuz 9, 5761 / June 30, 2001

Tammuz 7, 5764 / June 26, 2004

*Reader 1\* Amen* <sup>1</sup> Now when Avram was ninety-nine years old, Yahweh appeared to Avram and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before Me, and be blameless. <sup>2</sup> "I will establish My covenant between Me and you, and I will multiply you exceedingly." <sup>3</sup> Avram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying, <sup>4</sup> "As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, and you will be the father of a multitude of nations.

*Reader 2\* Amen* <sup>5</sup> "No longer shall your name be called Avram, but your name shall be Avraham; for I will make you the father of a multitude of nations. <sup>6</sup> "I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of you, and kings will come forth from you. <sup>7</sup> "I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you. <sup>8</sup> "I will give to you and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God."

*Reader 3\* Amen* <sup>9</sup> God said further to Avraham, "Now as for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations. <sup>10</sup> "This is My covenant, which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: every male among you shall be circumcised. <sup>11</sup> "And you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin, and it shall be the sign of the covenant between Me and you.

*Reader 4\* Amen* <sup>12</sup> "And every male among you who is eight days old shall be circumcised throughout your generations, a servant who is born in the house or who is bought with money from any foreigner, who is not of your descendants. <sup>13</sup> "A servant who is born in your house or who is bought with your money shall surely be circumcised; thus shall My covenant be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. <sup>14</sup> "But an uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant."

*Reader 5\* Amen* <sup>15</sup> Then God said to Avraham, "As for Saray your wife, you shall not call her name Saray, but Sarah shall be her name. <sup>16</sup> "I will bless her, and indeed I will give you a son by her. Then I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of peoples will come from her." <sup>17</sup> Then Avraham fell on his face and laughed, and said in his heart, "Will a child be born to a man one hundred years old? And will Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?" <sup>18</sup> And Avraham said to God, "Oh that Ishmael might live before You!"

*Reader 6\* Amen* <sup>19</sup> But God said, "No, but Sarah your wife will bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; and I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him. <sup>20</sup> "As for Ishmael, I have heard you; behold, I will bless him, and will make him fruitful and will multiply him exceedingly. He shall become the father of twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation. <sup>21</sup> "But My covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you at this season next year." <sup>22</sup> When He finished talking with him, God went up from Avraham.

*Reader 7\* Amen* <sup>23</sup> Then Avraham took Ishmael his son, and all the servants who were born in his house and all who were bought with his money, every male among the men of Avraham's household, and circumcised the flesh of their foreskin in the very same day, as God had said to him. <sup>24</sup> Now Avraham was ninety-nine years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. <sup>25</sup> And Ishmael his son was thirteen years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. <sup>26</sup> In the very same day Avraham was circumcised, and Ishmael his son. <sup>27</sup> All the men of his household, who were born in the house or bought with money from a foreigner, were circumcised with him.

### **Jeremiah 33:25-26**

*Reader 8\* Amen* <sup>25</sup> "Thus says Yahweh, 'If My covenant for day and night stand not, and the fixed patterns of heaven and earth I have not established, <sup>26</sup> then I would reject the descendants of Jacob and David My servant, not taking from his descendants rulers over the descendants of Avraham, Isaac, and Jacob. But I will restore their fortunes and will have mercy on them.' "

### **Psalm 13 (to be sung) For the choir director. A Psalm of David.**

<sup>1</sup> How long, O Yahweh? Wilt Thou forget me forever? How long wilt Thou hide Thy face from me? <sup>2</sup> How long shall I take counsel in my soul, having sorrow in my heart all the day? How long will my enemy be exalted over me? <sup>3</sup> Consider and answer me, O Yahweh, my God; enlighten my eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death, <sup>4</sup> lest my enemy say, "I have overcome him," lest my adversaries rejoice when I am shaken. <sup>5</sup> But

I have trusted in Thy lovingkindness; my heart shall rejoice in Thy salvation. <sup>6</sup> I will sing to Yahweh, because He has dealt bountifully with me.

**Romans 4:10-25**

*Reader 9\* Amen* <sup>10</sup> How then was it credited? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised; <sup>11</sup> and he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while uncircumcised, so that he might be the father of all who believe without being circumcised, that righteousness might be credited to them, <sup>12</sup> and the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also follow in the steps of the faith of our father Avraham which he had while uncircumcised.

*Reader 10\* Amen* <sup>13</sup> For the promise to Avraham or to his descendants that he would be heir of the world was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith. <sup>14</sup> For if those who are of the Law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise is nullified; <sup>15</sup> for the Law brings about wrath, but where there is no law, there also is no violation. <sup>16</sup> For this reason it is by faith, in order that it may be in accordance with grace, so that the promise will be guaranteed to all the descendants, not only to those who are of the Law, but also to those who are of the faith of Avraham, who is the father of us all, <sup>17</sup> (as it is written, "A father of many nations have I made you") in the presence of Him whom he believed, even God, who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist.

*Reader 11\* Amen* <sup>18</sup> In hope against hope he believed, so that he might become a father of many nations according to that which had been spoken, "So shall your descendants be." <sup>19</sup> Without becoming weak in faith he contemplated his own body, now as good as dead since he was about a hundred years old, and the deadness of Sarah's womb; <sup>20</sup> yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God, <sup>21</sup> and being fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to perform. <sup>22</sup> Therefore It was also credited to him as righteousness. <sup>23</sup> Now not for his sake only was it written that it was credited to him, <sup>24</sup> but for our sake also, to whom it will be credited, as those who believe in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, <sup>25</sup> He who was delivered over because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification.



## Commentary:

The year was AM 2047; Avram was 99, Saray was 89, and Ishmael was 13.

(V.1) Yahweh appeared to Avram and said to him, “*ani El Shaddai*” - I am God Almighty. Shaddai means ‘Who is Sufficient’. Yahweh is sufficient in granting mercies, and in ability to perform what He promises.

This is a most significant concept for us to take to heart: Yahweh is sufficient to grant us mercies, and He is sufficient in ability to complete His work in us! “*He who has begun a good work in us will perform it until the day of Yesua the Messiah*” – Philippians 1:6.

Talmudic stories are given as ways to remember the meanings of the names.

(V.4) Avram means ‘Exalted Father’; Avraham means ‘Father of Many Nations’.

When Avram was 85, he was walking in the desert one day, where he met some Bedouin. They asked his name, and he replied “Exalted Father (Avram)”. They asked how many children he had, and he replied, “Oh, I don’t have any children.” (Exalted Father?)

Now at 99, Avraham again was walking in the desert, and met the same Bedouin. He informed them that his name had been changed to “Father of Many Nations (Avraham).” They asked how many children he now had, and he replied, “Just one.” (Father of Many Nations?)

Because God said that Avraham should no longer be called Avram, the Talmud calls this a commandment (Berachot 13a), and we saw last week (in Galatians 4) that Paul used the name Avraham, even when referring to the period before the name change.

The Mishnah declares (Bikkurim 1:4), “*All converts are considered descendants of Avraham because the Torah calls him ‘the father of ... nations’, and therefore a convert can be called a son of Avraham.*” Accordingly, Paul says (Romans 4:16-17) that the Covenant is “*certain to all the descendants, not only to those who are of the Law, but also to those who are of the faith of Avraham, who is the father of us all, (as it is written, ‘A father of many nations have I made you’).*”

(V.15) Saray is possessive, meaning ‘My Princess; Sarah means ‘Princess’, as to the nations. God changed the name of Saray to Sarah, by removing the last letter.

The letter ‘Yod’ went complaining to the Eternal: “You have taken me from the name of that holy woman, Saray.” The Eternal replied, “I have taken you from the end of the name of a holy woman, but I will place you at the beginning of the name of a holy man”, and He changed the name of Hoshea to Yehoshua. (Hoshea means ‘Salvation’; Yehoshua, or its contraction Yeshua, means ‘Yahweh is Salvation’.)

This is another most important concept for us to understand: God’s Covenant to Avraham is the very basis of our salvation! God has rendered us – Hebrew and gentile – fit to be partakers of the Avrahamic Covenant (see Colossians 1:12), through faith.

“*And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end, that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises. For when God made the promise to Avraham, since He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, saying, ‘I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply you.’ And thus, having patiently waited, he obtained the promise*” – Hebrews 6:11-15.

(V.4-8) We are of the nations promised to Avraham. We are, through faith, partakers of the everlasting Covenant, by which Yahweh is our God. By this Covenant, we inherit a land as an everlasting possession.

*“For this reason it is by faith, in order that it may be in accordance with grace, so that the promise will be guaranteed to all the descendants, not only to those who are of the Law, but also to those who are of the faith of Avraham, who is the father of us all, (as it is written, ‘A father of many nations have I made you’) in the presence of Him whom he believed, even God, who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist” – Romans 4: 16-17.*

*“For I say that Messiah has become a servant to the circumcision on behalf of the truth of God to confirm the promises given to the fathers, and for the Gentiles to glorify God for His mercy; as it is written, ‘Therefore I will give praise to Thee among the Gentiles, And I will sing to Thy name.’ And again he says, ‘Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people.’ And again, ‘Praise Yahweh all you Gentiles, and let all the peoples praise Him.’ And again Isaiah says, ‘There shall come the root of Jesse, and He who arises to rule over the Gentiles, in Him shall the Gentiles hope’” – Romans 15:8-12*

(V.9-14) As a sign of this covenant, every male is to be circumcised. Circumcision is not a requirement in order to receive the promises, but a symbol representing that one is a partaker of the promises. Circumcision is called the removal of a ‘barrier’ (Hebrew – *orlah*), and it is symbolic of the barrier being removed from the heart so that God’s ways are accepted (Leviticus 26:41, Jeremiah 9:25, Ezekiel 44:7).

*“How then was it credited? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised; and he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while uncircumcised, so that he might be the father of all who believe without being circumcised, that righteousness might be credited to them, and the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also follow in the steps of the faith of our father Avraham which he had while uncircumcised” – Romans 4:10-12.*

*“<sup>8</sup> For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; <sup>9</sup> not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. <sup>10</sup> For we are His workmanship, created in Messiah Yeshua for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them. <sup>11</sup> Therefore remember that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called ‘Uncircumcision’ by the so-called ‘Circumcision,’ which is performed in the flesh by human hands-- <sup>12</sup> remember that you were at that time separate from Messiah, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. <sup>13</sup> But now in Messiah Yeshua you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Messiah. <sup>14</sup> For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, <sup>15</sup> by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace, <sup>16</sup> and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity. <sup>17</sup> ‘And He came and preached peace to you who were far away, and peace to those who were near;’ <sup>18</sup> for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father. <sup>19</sup> So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God’s household, <sup>20</sup> having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Messiah Yeshua Himself being the corner stone, <sup>21</sup> in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, <sup>22</sup> in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit. – Ephesians 2:8-22.*

In Colossians 2:14, we read of Yeshua *“having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us and which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.”* And in Romans 8:1-2 we read, *“There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Messiah Yeshua. For the law of the Spirit of life in Messiah Yeshua has set you free from the law of sin and of death.”* The *“Law of sin and death”* is not the Torah, it is *“The soul who sins will die”* (Ezekiel 18:4). God’s commandments are not *“against us”* or *“hostile to us;”* the rule of death is against us – this rule of death against us was consummated upon Yeshua, our substitute, on the cross, and it’s authority over us thereby annulled.

Notes:

(V.20) Ishmael's twelve "princes" - *nisiaim* (see v.25:13-16) would be transient, in contrast to Jacob's *shivatim*.

Avraham's ten trials (Avot 5:4):

2 upon leaving Haran – "get out of the land" (v.12:1), famine (v.12:10);

2 with his sons – with Isaac, with Ishmael;

2 with his wives – Sarah at Pharaoh's Palace, Sarah at Abimelech's;

1 in the war with the kings;

1 in the Covenant;

1 in circumcision;

1 in Ur of the Chaldees.

## **Vayeira Elayv / Appeared to Him**

Genesis 18:1-33 Isaiah 33:17 – 34:12 Psalm 14 Luke 8:40-56

## **Commentary Y1-15**

Tammuz 16, 5761 / July 7, 2001

Tammuz 14, 5764 / July 3, 2004

*Reader 1\* Amen* <sup>1</sup> Now Yahweh appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre, while he was sitting at the tent door in the heat of the day. <sup>2</sup> When he lifted up his eyes and looked, behold, three men were standing opposite him; and when he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them and bowed himself to the earth, <sup>3</sup> and said, "My lord, if now I have found favor in your sight, please do not pass your servant by. <sup>4</sup> "Please let a little water be brought and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree; <sup>5</sup> and I will bring a piece of bread, that you may refresh yourselves; after that you may go on, since you have visited your servant." And they said, "So do, as you have said."

*Reader 2\* Amen* <sup>6</sup> So Avraham hurried into the tent to Sarah, and said, "Quickly, prepare three measures of fine flour, knead it and make bread cakes." <sup>7</sup> Avraham also ran to the herd, and took a tender and choice calf and gave it to the servant, and he hurried to prepare it. <sup>8</sup> He took curds and milk and the calf which he had prepared, and placed it before them; and he was standing by them under the tree as they ate.

*Reader 3\* Amen* <sup>9</sup> Then they said to him, "Where is Sarah your wife?" And he said, "There, in the tent." <sup>10</sup> He said, "I will surely return to you at this time next year; and behold, Sarah your wife will have a son." And Sarah was listening at the tent door, which was behind him. <sup>11</sup> Now Avraham and Sarah were old, advanced in age; Sarah was past childbearing. <sup>12</sup> Sarah laughed to herself, saying, "After I have become old, shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?" <sup>13</sup> And Yahweh said to Avraham, "Why did Sarah laugh, saying, 'Shall I indeed bear a child, when I am so old?'" <sup>14</sup> "Is anything too difficult for Yahweh? At the appointed time I will return to you, at this time next year, and Sarah will have a son." <sup>15</sup> Sarah denied it however, saying, "I did not laugh"; for she was afraid. And He said, "No, but you did laugh."

*Reader 4\* Amen* <sup>16</sup> Then the men rose up from there, and looked down toward Sodom; and Avraham was walking with them to send them off. <sup>17</sup> Yahweh said, "Shall I hide from Avraham what I am about to do, <sup>18</sup> since Avraham will surely become a great and mighty nation, and in him all the nations of the earth will be blessed? <sup>19</sup> "For I have chosen him, so that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of Yahweh by doing righteousness and justice, so that Yahweh may bring upon Avraham what He has spoken about him."

*Reader 5\* Amen* <sup>20</sup> And Yahweh said, "The outcry of Sodom and Gomorrah is indeed great, and their sin is exceedingly grave. <sup>21</sup> "I will go down now, and see if they have done entirely according to its outcry, which has come to Me; and if not, I will know." <sup>22</sup> Then the men turned away from there and went toward Sodom, while Avraham was still standing before Yahweh.

*Reader 6\* Amen* <sup>23</sup> Avraham came near and said, "Will You indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked? <sup>24</sup> "Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city; will You indeed sweep it away and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous who are in it? <sup>25</sup> "Far be it from You to do such a thing, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous and the wicked are treated alike. Far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth deal justly?" <sup>26</sup> So Yahweh said, "If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare the whole place on their account."

*Reader 7\* Amen* <sup>27</sup> And Avraham replied, "Now behold, I have ventured to speak to Yahweh, although I am but dust and ashes. <sup>28</sup> "Suppose the fifty righteous are lacking five, will You destroy the whole city because of five?" And He said, "I will not destroy it if I find forty-five there." <sup>29</sup> He spoke to Him yet again and said, "Suppose forty are found there?" And He said, "I will not do it on account of the forty." <sup>30</sup> Then he said, "Oh may Yahweh not be angry, and I shall speak; suppose thirty are found there?" And He said, "I will not do it if I find thirty there." <sup>31</sup> And he said, "Now behold, I have ventured to speak to Yahweh; suppose twenty are found there?" And He said, "I will not destroy it on account of the twenty." <sup>32</sup> Then he said, "Oh may Yahweh not be angry, and I shall speak only this once; suppose ten are found there?" And He said, "I will not destroy it on account of the ten." <sup>33</sup> As soon as He had finished speaking to Avraham Yahweh departed, and Avraham returned to his place.

**Isaiah 33:17-34:12**

*Reader 8\* Amen* <sup>17</sup> Your eyes will see the King in His beauty; they will behold a far-distant land. <sup>18</sup> Your heart will meditate on terror: "Where is he who counts? Where is he who weighs? Where is he who counts the towers?" <sup>19</sup> You will no longer see a fierce people, a people of unintelligible speech which no one comprehends, of a stammering tongue which no one understands. <sup>20</sup> Look upon Zion, the city of our appointed feasts; your eyes will see Jerusalem, an undisturbed habitation, a tent which will not be folded; its stakes will never be pulled up, nor any of its cords be torn apart. <sup>21</sup> But there the majestic One, Yahweh, will be for us a place of rivers and wide canals on which no boat with oars will go, and on which no mighty ship will pass – <sup>22</sup> for Yahweh is our judge, Yahweh is our lawgiver, Yahweh is our king; He will save us – <sup>23</sup> your tackle hangs slack; it cannot hold the base of its mast firmly, nor spread out the sail. Then the prey of an abundant spoil will be divided; the lame will take the plunder. <sup>24</sup> And no resident will say, "I am sick"; the people who dwell there will be forgiven their iniquity.

*Reader 9\* Amen* <sup>34:1</sup> 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. <sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>3</sup> So their slain will be thrown out, and their corpses will give off their stench, and the mountains will be drenched with their blood. <sup>4</sup> 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. <sup>5</sup> 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. <sup>6</sup> 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.

*Reader 10\* Amen* <sup>7</sup> Wild oxen will also fall with them and young bulls with strong ones; thus their land will be soaked with blood, and their dust become greasy with fat. <sup>8</sup> For Yahweh has a day of vengeance, a year of recompense for the cause of Zion. <sup>9</sup> Its streams will be turned into pitch, and its loose earth into brimstone, and its land will become burning pitch. <sup>10</sup> It will not be quenched night or day; its smoke will go up forever. From generation to generation it will be desolate; none will pass through it forever and ever. <sup>11</sup> But pelican and hedgehog will possess it, and owl and raven will dwell in it; and He will stretch over it the line of desolation and the plumb line of emptiness. <sup>12</sup> Its nobles – there is no one there whom they may proclaim king-- and all its princes will be nothing.

**2 Kings 4**

**Psalm 14** *(to be sung) For the choir director. A Psalm of David.*

<sup>1</sup> The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, they have committed abominable deeds; there is no one who does good. <sup>2</sup> Yahweh has looked down from heaven upon the sons of men to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God. <sup>3</sup> They have all turned aside, together they have become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one. <sup>4</sup> Do all the workers of wickedness not know, who eat up my people as they eat bread, and do not call upon Yahweh? <sup>5</sup> There they are in great dread, for God is with the righteous generation. <sup>6</sup> You would put to shame the counsel of the afflicted, but Yahweh is his refuge. <sup>7</sup> Oh, that the salvation of Israel would come out of Zion! When Yahweh restores His captive people, Jacob will rejoice, Israel will be glad.

**Luke 8:40-56**

*Reader 11\* Amen* <sup>40</sup> And as Yeshua returned, the people welcomed Him, for they had all been waiting for Him. <sup>41</sup> And there came a man named Jairus, and he was an official of the synagogue; and he fell at Yeshua's feet, and began to implore Him to come to his house; <sup>42</sup> for he had an only daughter, about twelve years old, and she was dying. But as He went, the crowds were pressing against Him. <sup>43</sup> And a woman who had a hemorrhage for twelve years, and could not be healed by anyone, <sup>44</sup> came up behind Him and touched the *tzitzit* of His cloak, and immediately her hemorrhage stopped. <sup>45</sup> And Yeshua said, "Who is the one who touched Me?" And while they were all denying it, Peter said, "Master, the people are crowding and pressing in on You."

*Reader 12\* Amen* <sup>46</sup> But Yeshua said, "Someone did touch Me, for I was aware that power had gone out of Me." <sup>47</sup> When the woman saw that she had not escaped notice, she came trembling and fell down before

Him, and declared in the presence of all the people the reason why she had touched Him, and how she had been immediately healed.<sup>48</sup> And He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace."<sup>49</sup> While He was still speaking, someone came from the house of the synagogue official, saying, "Your daughter has died; do not trouble the Teacher anymore."<sup>50</sup> But when Yeshua heard this, He answered him, "Do not be afraid any longer; only believe, and she will be made well."<sup>51</sup> When He came to the house, He did not allow anyone to enter with Him, except Peter and John and James, and the girl's father and mother.<sup>52</sup> Now they were all weeping and lamenting for her; but He said, "Stop weeping, for she has not died, but is asleep."<sup>53</sup> And they began laughing at Him, knowing that she had died.<sup>54</sup> He, however, took her by the hand and called, saying, "Child, arise!"<sup>55</sup> And her spirit returned, and she got up immediately; and He gave orders for something to be given her to eat.<sup>56</sup> Her parents were amazed; but He instructed them to tell no one what had happened.

### Commentary:

Avraham's home was in the Plains of Mamre.

This first verse immediately follows the portion on circumcision, and transpires (traditionally) on the third day after Avraham's circumcision, when he would be in the most pain. Yahweh – the God of Mercy and Healing – appeared to him. Nowhere else in Scripture does God appear to anyone without a direct communication immediately following; the construction of the Hebrew indicates that God's primary purpose was to "appear". This verse about God appearing to Avraham when in pain is the Talmudic "basis for visiting the sick." Some see this revelation of God as a reward to Avraham for his obedience in circumcision.

It should be noted here that God's promises to Avraham were without condition; but there were rewards for subsequent obedience, and disastrous results of subsequent faithlessness.

When Yahweh appeared to him, he looked up – then he saw three angels as men. "Behold, there appeared" indicates that they were not visible coming from afar, but suddenly appeared. Throughout Scripture, we see that God sends one angel for one mission: He does not send more than one angel for a mission, and does not send an angel for more than one mission at a time. The angels (plural) ate (v. 8) and talked (v. 9), but an angel (singular) carried out each commission. One angel was to inform him of Sarah's conception (v. 14), one to overthrow Sodom (v. 19:24), and one to heal Avraham (traditional reason).

Avraham apparently asked God (My Lord – singular) to wait, while he provided hospitality to his guests! Thus the ethic teaching: greater is hospitality to wayfarers even than receiving the Divine Presence.

Here we see basic ingredients of the Passover Seder. Note that circumcision is required preceding Passover. Avraham told Sarah to *quickly* (no chametz/leaven) make *three* seahs of meal into bread discs (matzah – v. 19:3) of *fine* flour – each being *one omer* (the amount of fine flour obtained from one seah of meal). He *washed the feet* of the three men. He *himself* (not servants) prepared a *choice* animal. It had been about noon (heat of the day) when Yahweh appeared to him, "and he was standing by them under the tree as they ate."

[It may be noted: this man of whom it is said that "he observed Torah before it was written", brought "meat and milk".]

Avraham said, "I will fetch a morsel of bread", then provided a feast. "The righteous say little and do much" – Talmud: Bava Metzia 87a. The angels said, "Do so, just as you have said" – a courteous response, as if to say, "do not trouble yourself to do any more." Avraham, though old and weak from circumcision, "ran" to perform a *mitzvah* (good deed).

(V. 12) "And Sarah laughed at herself" – literally, Sarah laughed at her insides, which is taken to mean that, at eighty-nine years old, her cycle started. The angel said that at this same time – this appointed time (Passover) – next year, she would give birth.

(V. 16) The angels “gazed down” toward Sodom, from a high place in Hebron – the Plain of Mamre. “Gazed down” in Torah always refers to gazing down for the purpose of calamity (except Deut. 26:15).

(V. 17) The past-perfect tense indicates that God had long before determined to show Avraham what He was about to do. From v. 20, God tells Avraham of the destruction planned upon the five cities of the plain, referred to as Sodom and Gomorrah. While the angels went toward Sodom, Avraham questioned God. He started by asking God if He would destroy the cities if fifty righteous could be found – a prayer minion for each of the five cities. He stopped when he got to one prayer minion for all five cities: would God destroy the cities if ten righteous were found there?

(Psalm 14:2) Yahweh has looked down from heaven upon the sons of men (Sodom and Gomorrah), to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God. They have all turned aside; together they have become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one. Do all the workers of wickedness not know, who eat up my people as they eat bread, and do not call upon Yahweh?

(Luke 8:52) Now they were all weeping and lamenting for her (twelve-year-old daughter of Jairus); but He (Yeshua) said, "Stop weeping, for she has not died, but is asleep." 53 And they began laughing at Him, knowing that she had died.

We must not make light of God’s power. On the other hand, we must not be gullible toward those who use God’s name in vain, to exalt themselves spiritually by saying “God promised . . .”, when God has not spoken. Neither the angels – in the case of Avraham and Sarah, nor Yeshua – in the case of Jairus’ daughter, should have been doubted; but we need great wisdom to discern what is of God.

*Reader 1\* Amen* <sup>1</sup> Now the two angels came to Sodom in the evening as Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rose to meet them and bowed down with his face to the ground. <sup>2</sup> And he said, "Now behold, my lords, please turn aside into your servant's house, and spend the night, and wash your feet; then you may rise early and go on your way." They said however, "No, but we shall spend the night in the square." <sup>3</sup> Yet he urged them strongly, so they turned aside to him and entered his house; and he prepared a feast for them, and baked unleavened bread, and they ate.

*Reader 2\* Amen* <sup>4</sup> Before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, surrounded the house, both young and old, all the people from every quarter; <sup>5</sup> and they called to Lot and said to him, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us that we may have relations with them." <sup>6</sup> But Lot went out to them at the doorway, and shut the door behind him, <sup>7</sup> and said, "Please, my brothers, do not act wickedly. <sup>8</sup> "Now behold, I have two daughters who have not had relations with man; please let me bring them out to you, and do to them whatever you like; only do nothing to these men, inasmuch as they have come under the shelter of my roof." <sup>9</sup> But they said, "Stand aside." Furthermore, they said, "This one came in as an alien, and already he is acting like a judge; now we will treat you worse than them." So they pressed hard against Lot and came near to break the door.

*Reader 3\* Amen* <sup>10</sup> But the men reached out their hands and brought Lot into the house with them, and shut the door. <sup>11</sup> They struck the men who were at the doorway of the house with blindness, both small and great, so that they wearied themselves trying to find the doorway. <sup>12</sup> Then the two men said to Lot, "Whom else have you here? A son-in-law, and your sons, and your daughters, and whomever you have in the city, bring them out of the place; <sup>13</sup> for we are about to destroy this place, because their outcry has become so great before Yahweh that Yahweh has sent us to destroy it." <sup>14</sup> Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, who were to marry his daughters, and said, "Up, get out of this place, for Yahweh will destroy the city." But he appeared to his sons-in-law to be jesting.

*Reader 4\* Amen* <sup>15</sup> When morning dawned, the angels urged Lot, saying, "Up, take your wife and your two daughters who are here, or you will be swept away in the punishment of the city." <sup>16</sup> But he hesitated. So the men seized his hand and the hand of his wife and the hands of his two daughters, for the compassion of Yahweh was upon him; and they brought him out, and put him outside the city. <sup>17</sup> When they had brought them outside, one said, "Escape for your life! Do not look behind you, and do not stay anywhere in the valley; escape to the mountains, or you will be swept away." <sup>18</sup> But Lot said to them, "Oh no, my lords! <sup>19</sup> "Now behold, your servant has found favor in your sight, and you have magnified your lovingkindness, which you have shown me by saving my life; but I cannot escape to the mountains, for the disaster will overtake me and I will die;

*Reader 5\* Amen* <sup>20</sup> now behold, this town is near enough to flee to, and it is small. Please, let me escape there (is it not small?) that my life may be saved." <sup>21</sup> He said to him, "Behold, I grant you this request also, not to overthrow the town of which you have spoken. <sup>22</sup> "Hurry, escape there, for I cannot do anything until you arrive there." Therefore the name of the town was called Zoar. <sup>23</sup> The sun had risen over the earth when Lot came to Zoar. <sup>24</sup> Then Yahweh rained on Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from Yahweh out of heaven, <sup>25</sup> and He overthrew those cities, and all the valley, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground. <sup>26</sup> But his wife, from behind him, looked back, and she became a pillar of salt.

*Reader 6\* Amen* <sup>27</sup> Now Avraham arose early in the morning and went to the place where he had stood before Yahweh; <sup>28</sup> and he looked down toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the valley, and he saw, and behold, the smoke of the land ascended like the smoke of a furnace. <sup>29</sup> Thus it came about, when God destroyed the cities of the valley, that God remembered Avraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when He overthrew the cities in which Lot lived. <sup>30</sup> Lot went up from Zoar, and stayed in the mountains, and his two daughters with him; for he was afraid to stay in Zoar; and he stayed in a cave, he and his two daughters.

*Reader 7\* Amen* <sup>31</sup> Then the firstborn said to the younger, "Our father is old, and there is not a man on earth to come in to us after the manner of the earth. <sup>32</sup> "Come, let us make our father drink wine, and let us lie with him that we may preserve our family through our father." <sup>33</sup> So they made their father drink wine that night, and the firstborn went in and lay with her father; and he did not know when she lay down or when she arose. <sup>34</sup> On the following day, the firstborn said to the younger, "Behold, I lay last night with my father; let us make him drink wine tonight also; then you go in and lie with him, that we may preserve our



family through our father."<sup>35</sup> So they made their father drink wine that night also, and the younger arose and lay with him; and he did not know when she lay down or when she arose.<sup>36</sup> Thus both the daughters of Lot were with child by their father.<sup>37</sup> The firstborn bore a son, and called his name Moab; he is the father of the Moabites to this day.<sup>38</sup> As for the younger, she also bore a son, and called his name Ben-ammi; he is the father of the sons of Ammon to this day.

### **Isaiah 17:14 - 18:7**

*Reader 8\* Amen*<sup>14</sup> At evening time, behold, there is terror! Before morning they are no more. Such will be the portion of those who plunder us and the lot of those who pillage us.<sup>18:1</sup> Alas, oh land of whirring wings which lies beyond the rivers of Cush,<sup>2</sup> which sends envoys by the sea, even in papyrus vessels on the surface of the waters. Go, swift messengers, to a nation tall and smooth, to a people feared far and wide, a powerful and oppressive nation whose land the rivers divide.<sup>3</sup> All you inhabitants of the world and dwellers on earth, as soon as a standard is raised on the mountains, you will see it, and as soon as the trumpet is blown, you will hear it.

*Reader 9\* Amen*<sup>4</sup> For thus Yahweh has told me, "I will look from My dwelling place quietly like dazzling heat in the sunshine, like a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest."<sup>5</sup> For before the harvest, as soon as the bud blossoms and the flower becomes a ripening grape, then He will cut off the sprigs with pruning knives and remove and cut away the spreading branches.<sup>6</sup> They will be left together for mountain birds of prey, and for the beasts of the earth; and the birds of prey will spend the summer feeding on them, and all the beasts of the earth will spend harvest time on them.<sup>7</sup> At that time a gift of homage will be brought to Yahweh of hosts from a people tall and smooth, even from a people feared far and wide, a powerful and oppressive nation, whose land the rivers divide – to the place of the name of Yahweh of hosts, even Mount Zion.

### **Psalm 15 (to be sung) A Psalm of David**

<sup>1</sup> O Yahweh, who may abide in Your tent? Who may dwell on Your holy hill? <sup>2</sup> He who walks with integrity, and works righteousness, and speaks truth in his heart. <sup>3</sup> He does not slander with his tongue, nor does evil to his neighbor, nor takes up a reproach against his friend; <sup>4</sup> in whose eyes a reprobate is despised, but who honors those who fear Yahweh; he swears to his own hurt and does not change; <sup>5</sup> he does not put out his money at interest, nor does he take a bribe against the innocent. He who does these things will never be shaken.

### **Luke 17:20-37**

*Reader 10\* Amen*<sup>20</sup> Now having been questioned by the Pharisees as to when the kingdom of God was coming, He answered them and said, "The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed; <sup>21</sup> nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or, 'There it is!' For behold, the kingdom of God is in your midst." <sup>22</sup> And He said to the disciples, "The days will come when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it. <sup>23</sup> "They will say to you, 'Look there! Look here!' Do not go away, and do not run after them. <sup>24</sup> "For just like the lightning, when it flashes out of one part of the sky, shines to the other part of the sky, so will the Son of Man be in His day. <sup>25</sup> "But first He must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation. <sup>26</sup> "And just as it happened in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: <sup>27</sup> they were eating, they were drinking, they were marrying, they were being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all.

*Reader 11\* Amen*<sup>28</sup> "It was the same as happened in the days of Lot: they were eating, they were drinking, they were buying, they were selling, they were planting, they were building; <sup>29</sup> but on the day that Lot went out from Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. <sup>30</sup> "It will be just the same on the day that the Son of Man is revealed. <sup>31</sup> "On that day, the one who is on the housetop and whose goods are in the house must not go down to take them out; and likewise the one who is in the field must not turn back. <sup>32</sup> "Remember Lot's wife. <sup>33</sup> "Whoever seeks to keep his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it. <sup>34</sup> "I tell you, on that night there will be two in one bed; one will be taken and the other will be left. <sup>35</sup> "There will be two women grinding at the same place; one will be taken and the other will be left. <sup>36</sup> "Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other will be left." <sup>37</sup> And answering they said to Him, "Where, Lord?" And He said to them, "Where the body is, there also the vultures will be gathered."

## Commentary:

(V.1) Then came the two angels to Sodom – one for each mission: one to destroy Sodom and one to save Lot. They got from Hebron to Sodom (50 miles S-SE) very quickly – by evening! They met Lot at the gates to the city, where elders and judges sit. Note that Lot was an outsider, yet spending his time in the place of judgment.

Lot saw the angels as men, evidenced by his feeding them (v.3), and the men of the city called them men (v.5). The angels came appearing as men, saying, “. . . *We shall spend the night in the square*”, to test how the men of Sodom would treat them. Yet Lot urged them strongly, so they turned aside – they did not go through the dangerous streets of the city, but took a less noticeable route to Lot’s house, and entered with him.

Lot prepared a feast for them, and baked unleavened bread: as when Avraham served them earlier in the day, it was still the Feast of Unleavened Breads – God’s time for deliverance.

(V.4) Before they lay down, all the men of Sodom surrounded the house (not just disreputable rabble, but representative citizens), to confront this “outsider-judge” who would defy their social order; and they called to Lot and said to him, “*Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us that we may have relations with them.*” This is not only sexual sin, but terroristic coercion, opposite to God’s hospitality laws. [See Isaiah 1:10, 3:9, 13:19, Jeremiah 49:18, Ezekiel 16:46-57, Amos 4:11, Lamentations 4:6.]

(V.6) But Lot went out to them and shut the door, and said, “*Now behold, I have two daughters who have not had relations with man; please let me bring them out to you, and do to them whatever you like; only do nothing to these men, inasmuch as they have come under the shelter of my roof.*” But their response was, “*Stand aside.*” “Usually a man will fight to the death for the honor of his wife and daughters, to slay or be slain, yet this man offers his daughters to be dishonored!” – (Tanchuma).

Furthermore, they accused Lot, as a sojourner, of acting like their judge, and said; “*now we will treat you worse than them.*” So they pressed against Lot until the door was about to break. But the angels reached out and brought Lot into the house with them, and they struck the Sodomites with blindness, so that they wearied themselves trying to find the doorway: these people were so adamant, that they would not stop when struck blind! They were so fixed on the path of sin that their doom was sealed and announced. [Literally, the Sodomites accused Lot of being “judge of the judgments”, meaning he was judging their laws to be wrong: whence it is taken that Sodom had laws against hospitality – to keep all their wealth for themselves. Thus visitors were made to “pay” for entering.]

(V.12) Then the angels said to Lot, “. . . *Your son-in-law, and your sons, and your daughters, and whomever you have in the city, bring them out of the place; for we are about to destroy this place.*” And Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, to whom his daughters were betrothed, and said, “*Up, get out of this place, for Yahweh will destroy the city.*” But he appeared to his sons-in-law to be jesting. In the morning dawned, the angels urged Lot, saying, “*Up, take your wife and your two daughters, who are here, lest you be swept away in the punishment of the city.*” BUT LOT HESITATED. So the men seized his hand and the hand of his wife and the hands of his two daughters, for the compassion of Yahweh was upon him; and they brought him out, and put him outside the city. And it came about when they had brought them outside, that one said, “*Escape for your life! Do not look behind you, and do not stay anywhere in the valley; escape to the mountains, lest you be swept away.*” BUT LOT SAID TO THEM, “*OH NO, my lords! . . . I cannot escape to the mountains, lest the disaster overtake me and I die; now behold, this town (Zoar, the smallest of “the five cities of the plain” called “Sodom and Gomorrah”) is near enough to flee to, and it is small. Please, let me escape there (is it not insignificant?) that my life may be saved.*” And the angel said to him, “*Behold, I grant you this request also, not to overthrow the town of which you have spoken. Hurry, escape there, for I cannot do anything until you arrive there.*”

How often do we “hesitate”, or say to God’s instruction, “Oh, no! I’d like to do this instead!”

Abraham had an attitude problem: he would put his wife in danger to save his own skin. Lot had a greater problem: he outright offered his daughters.

But Abraham and Sarah worked together for God: they wanted children to build God's kingdom, when God said, "move for My sake", they left home; they both worked to serve wayfarers. Lot had a dysfunctional family: Lot alone invited wayfarers under his part of the roof, and prepared a meal; his wife was not party to the service; when God said, "move to save your life", Lot hesitated, then said, "Oh, no", and his wife looked back.

(V.23) In the morning when Lot came to Zoar, Yahweh rained brimstone and fire from heaven on all the valley with it's four cities (leaving out Zoar), killing all the inhabitants and plant life. But Lot's wife, from behind him, looked back; and she became a pillar of salt.

When God calls us out from a life of serving the desires of this world, we are not to longingly look back!

Isaiah 17:14

*"At evening time, behold, there is terror! Before morning they are no more. Such will be the portion of those who plunder us, and the lot of those who pillage us."*

(V.30) And Lot, being afraid that Zoar would also be destroyed, in spite of the angel's assurance, went up and stayed in the mountains, and his two daughters with him; and he stayed in a cave, with his two daughters. Lots two daughters thought that the rest of the earth was destroyed, and there could never be mates for them, and man would therefore perish from the earth. So these two inexperienced young ladies hatched a plan to preserve mankind: they got their father too drunk to know what was going on, then both raped him on consecutive nights. Lest one think that conception is happenstance, they both conceived on their first attempt (conception on one attempt being very rare). The first-born bore a son, and called his name Moab (mo-Av: Of-his-father); he is the father of the Moabites. The younger also bore a son, and called his name Ben-ammi (Son-of-my-people); he is the father of the sons of Ammon.

When we have faith in an all-powerful God, we wait for His provision, not making rash judgments contrary to God's word, and actions that lead to disaster.

(Going back to V. 27) Abraham arose early in the morning and went to the place where he had stood before Yahweh; and he looked down toward five cities of the plain, and he saw the smoke of the land ascending. Thus it came about, when God destroyed the cities of the valley, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow.

As with Lot, so with us: we are saved by God's remembering his covenant with Abraham.

Luke 17:28

*"It was the same as happened in the days of Lot: they were eating, they were drinking, they were buying, they were selling, they were planting, they were building; but on the day that Lot went out from Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. It will be just the same on the day that the Son of Man is revealed. On that day, let not the one who is on the housetop and whose goods are in the house go down to take them away; and likewise let not the one who is in the field turn back. Remember Lot's wife. Whoever seeks to keep his life shall lose it, and whoever loses his life shall preserve it."*

Is buying, selling, planting, building, marrying – is this sin? Yes, if it is not to serve God. To have our heart set on the creation, rather than on the creator – this is sin; everything the person of this world does is sin. "Remember Lot's wife": let us "set our hearts on things above" – (Colossians 3:2). If we seek to keep this world's way of life, we lose eternal life (not as "falling from grace", but displaying that we are not of the faith). We, too, may face this test when Yeshua returns.

2 Peter 2:4-10

For if God . . . turned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly; and delivered just Lot, vexed with the

filthy conversation of the wicked: the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished: but chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities.

Psalm 15:1

Who may dwell on Your holy hill? . . .

When we live whole-heartedly by God's standard of righteousness, when we hold Him in awe above all things on earth, when we seek His way and trust everything to His care, then we can live completely at peace, regardless of circumstances. And then also we are prepared, for the Great Sabbath, to dwell with Him in righteousness.

We can be like Lot, greedy for the riches of the low life, and end up with a dysfunctional family; or we can be like Avraham, living on high ground, preparing for life in with God in Zion.

*Reader 1\* Amen* <sup>1</sup> Now Avraham journeyed from there toward the land of the Negev, and settled between Kadesh and Shur; then he sojourned in Gerar.

*Reader 2\* Amen* <sup>2</sup> Avraham said of Sarah his wife, "She is my sister." So Abimelech king of Gerar sent and took Sarah. <sup>3</sup> But God came to Abimelech in a dream of the night, and said to him, "Behold, you are a dead man because of the woman whom you have taken, for she is married." <sup>4</sup> Now Abimelech had not come near her; and he said, "Lord, will You slay a nation, even though blameless?" <sup>5</sup> "Did he not himself say to me, 'She is my sister'?" And she herself said, 'He is my brother.' In the integrity of my heart and the innocence of my hands I have done this."

*Reader 3\* Amen* <sup>6</sup> Then God said to him in the dream, "Yes, I know that in the integrity of your heart you have done this, and I also kept you from sinning against Me; therefore I did not let you touch her. <sup>7</sup> "Now therefore, restore the man's wife, for he is a prophet, and he will pray for you and you will live. But if you do not restore her, know that you shall surely die, you and all who are yours."

*Reader 4\* Amen* <sup>8</sup> So Abimelech arose early in the morning and called all his servants and told all these things in their hearing; and the men were greatly frightened. <sup>9</sup> Then Abimelech called Avraham and said to him, "What have you done to us? And how have I sinned against you, that you have brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin? You have done to me things that ought not to be done." <sup>10</sup> And Abimelech said to Avraham, "What have you encountered, that you have done this thing?"

*Reader 5\* Amen* <sup>11</sup> Avraham said, "Because I thought, surely there is no fear of God in this place, and they will kill me because of my wife. <sup>12</sup> "Besides, she actually is my sister, the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother, and she became my wife; <sup>13</sup> and it came about, when God caused me to wander from my father's house, that I said to her, 'This is the kindness which you will show to me: everywhere we go, say of me, "He is my brother.'""

*Reader 6\* Amen* <sup>14</sup> Abimelech then took sheep and oxen and male and female servants, and gave them to Avraham, and restored his wife Sarah to him. <sup>15</sup> Abimelech said, "Behold, my land is before you; settle wherever you please." <sup>16</sup> To Sarah he said, "Behold, I have given your brother a thousand pieces of silver; behold, it is your vindication before all who are with you, and before all men you are cleared."

*Reader 7\* Amen* <sup>17</sup> Avraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech and his wife and his maids, so that they bore children. <sup>18</sup> For Yahweh had closed fast all the wombs of the household of Abimelech because of Sarah, Avraham's wife.

**Isaiah 61:9-10**

*Reader 8\* Amen* <sup>9</sup> Then their offspring will be known among the nations, and their descendants in the midst of the peoples. All who see them will recognize them because they are the offspring whom Yahweh has blessed. <sup>10</sup> I will rejoice greatly in Yahweh, my soul will exult in my God; for He has clothed me with garments of salvation, He has wrapped me with a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

**Psalm 16** (to be sung) *A Mikhtam of David.*

Hear a just cause, O Yahweh, give heed to my cry; give ear to my prayer, which is not from deceitful lips. <sup>2</sup> Let my judgment come forth from Your presence; let Your eyes look with equity. <sup>3</sup> You have tried my heart; You have visited me by night; You have tested me and You find nothing; I have purposed that my mouth will not transgress. <sup>4</sup> As for the deeds of men, by the word of Your lips I have kept from the paths of the violent. <sup>5</sup> My steps have held fast to Your paths. My feet have not slipped. <sup>6</sup> I have called upon You, for You will answer me, O God; incline Your ear to me, hear my speech. <sup>7</sup> Wondrously show Your lovingkindness, O Savior of those who take refuge at Your right hand From those who rise up against them. <sup>8</sup> Keep me as the apple of the eye; hide me in the shadow of Your wings <sup>9</sup> from the wicked who despoil me, my deadly enemies who surround me. <sup>10</sup> They have closed their unfeeling heart, with their mouth they speak proudly. <sup>11</sup> They have now surrounded us in our steps; they set their eyes to cast us down to the ground. <sup>12</sup> He is like a lion that is eager to tear, and as a young lion lurking in hiding places. <sup>13</sup> Arise, O Yahweh, confront him, bring him low; deliver my soul from the wicked with Your sword, <sup>14</sup> From men with Your hand, O Yahweh, from men of the world, whose portion is in this life, and whose belly You fill

with Your treasure; they are satisfied with children, and leave their abundance to their babes.<sup>15</sup> As for me, I shall behold Your face in righteousness; I will be satisfied with Your likeness when I awake.

**Galatians 3:15-29**

*Reader 9\* Amen*<sup>15</sup> Brethren, I speak in terms of human relations: even though it is only a man's covenant, yet when it has been ratified, no one sets it aside or adds conditions to it.<sup>16</sup> Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, "And to seeds," as referring to many, but rather to one, "And to your seed," that is, Messiah.<sup>17</sup> What I am saying is this: the Law, which came four hundred and thirty years later, does not invalidate a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify the promise.<sup>18</sup> For if the inheritance is based on law, it is no longer based on a promise; but God has granted it to Abraham by means of a promise.

*Reader 10\* Amen*<sup>19</sup> Why the Law then? It was added because of transgressions, having been ordained through angels by the agency of a mediator, until the seed would come to whom the promise had been made.<sup>20</sup> Now a mediator is not for one party only; whereas God is only one.<sup>21</sup> Is the Law then contrary to the promises of God? May it never be! For if a law had been given which was able to impart life, then righteousness would indeed have been based on law.<sup>22</sup> But the Scripture has shut up everyone under sin, so that the promise by faith in Yeshua the Messiah might be given to those who believe.<sup>23</sup> But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed.<sup>24</sup>

*Reader 11\* Amen* Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Messiah, so that we may be justified by faith.<sup>25</sup> But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.<sup>26</sup> For you are all sons of God through faith in Messiah Yeshua.<sup>27</sup> For all of you who were baptized into Messiah have clothed yourselves with Messiah.<sup>28</sup> There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Messiah Yeshua.<sup>29</sup> And if you belong to Messiah, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise.

## Commentary:

(V. 1) “Avraham journeyed from there toward the land of the Negev, and settled between Kadesh and Shur; then he sojourned in Gerar.” Avraham, having twice previously gone to rescue Lot, is now moving farther from him. He is also, in a sense, staking claim to another part of the Promised Land (‘Palestine’ – the area of the Philistines).

(V. 3) God speaks to the heathen only at night.

(V. 5) Abimelech said, “In the integrity of my heart and the innocence of my hands I have done this.” God answered, “Yes, I know that in the integrity of your heart you have done this,” but his ‘hands’ were not innocent (the sages say, because he had kidnapped Sarah).

Abimelech made full restitution to Avraham and sought forgiveness. He did not make gifts to Sarah, which, had they been given, could have been interpreted as payment for prostitution: thus their integrity was portrayed.

Sarah’s promised offspring was in God’s mind, and Sarah was kept pure. (Isaiah 61:9-10) “*All who see them will recognize them because they are the offspring whom Yahweh has blessed. I will rejoice greatly in Yahweh, my soul will exult in my God; for He has clothed me with garments of salvation, He has wrapped me with a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.*” As David said (Psalm 16:1), “*Preserve me, O God, for I take refuge in Thee.*”

Let us consider the doctrine of forgiveness. Forgiveness is needed because of sin. We need forgiveness from God and we need forgiveness from man.

‘Torah’ comes from a root meaning to flow or shoot. Torah is instruction – how to glorify God. It instructs us how to love Yahweh and our neighbor who is created in His image.

‘Sin’ (Hebrew - *chata*) means to miss. Sin is missing the goal of glorifying God, missing the purpose for which we are created and sustained by God. Doing our own thing is sin, and sin requires repentance – which means turning around toward God.

Those who live only for their own selfish desires, and do not repent, are called ‘wicked’ (Hebrew - *raah*), which means ‘good for nothing.’ They do not go by the Creator’s instructions for living, and they do not fulfill their designed purpose. They are destined to be ‘taken’ in judgment (Matthew 24:32-51).

There are conditions for forgiveness: repentance and request. God does not just simply forget our sins, and we are not instructed to just forget sins others commit against us: these are common religious teachings, but they are not Biblical. (This is not about being bitter, or holding a grudge.)

We are also required to be truthful witnesses about many kinds of observed sins, and we are not permitted to ignore them. Our witness is to be to judges (proper authorities), and we are forbidden to slander (which is defaming another, regardless of whether or not the statements are true).

Yeshua was so named because He came to save His people from their sins (Matthew 1:21). Sin means missing the mark of glorifying our creator. ‘His people’, the firstfruits, are the reason for the word’s existence (Colossians 1:16, James 1:18; see commentary on Genesis 1:1).

Our goal should be to have God be glorified in the entire world, which requires getting rid of sin – that which does not glorify God – in the world.

The first part of our goal should be to glorify God ourselves, which requires overcoming sin in our own lives. Then we are to help our brethren overcome sin. Then we are to seek the salvation of others.

There is intentional sin, and there is unintentional sin – which may be discovered after being committed. Both are contrary to glorifying God. While Abimelech’s sin was unintentional – it was done with integrity of his heart, it was still contrary to God’s design – his hands were not innocent, and repentance was required.

Last Sabbath afternoon, we studied the Prophet Haggai. His name means ‘My Feast.’ On the first day of the sixth month (Elul 1), Yahweh said, “Consider your ways!” (v.5 & 7). This is the first day of the forty days of repentance that culminates with Yom haKippurim – the Day of the Atonements (on Tishrei 10). These are forty days specifically set aside to consider our ways. They are the period of time when ‘the baptism of repentance for remission of sins’ (Mark 1:4) is undertaken each year. This is the season when John the baptizer was preaching repentance at the Jordan River (Matthew 3:1-8).

The Day of the Atonements is for the purification of the Bride of Messiah – it is for believers, all of whom need repentance. It is the only day on which the Torah requires us to fast. It is an annual requirement to help us remember our position, and keep a proper attitude toward God and our neighbor.

(V. 7 & 14) Forgiveness – Forgiving a brother is based upon repentance:

(Luke 17:3) *“Be on your guard! If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. 4 And if he sins against you seven times a day, and returns to you seven times, saying, ‘I repent,’ forgive him.”*

Repentance may require restitution, depending upon the sin.

(Matt. 18:21) *“Then Peter came and said to Him, ‘Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?’ 22 Yeshua said to him, ‘I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven. 23 For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a certain king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. 24 And when he had begun to settle them, there was brought to him one who owed him ten thousand talents. 25 But since he did not have the means to repay, his master commanded him to be sold, along with his wife and children and all that he had, and repayment to be made. 26 The slave therefore falling down, prostrated himself before him, saying, “Have patience with me, and I will repay you everything.” 27 And the master of that slave felt compassion and released him and forgave him the debt. 28 But that slave went out and found one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and he seized him and began to choke him, saying, “Pay back what you owe.” 29 So his fellow slave fell down and began to entreat him, saying, “Have patience with me and I will repay you.” 30 He was unwilling however, but went and threw him in prison until he should pay back what was owed. 31 So when his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were deeply grieved and came and reported to their master all that had happened. 32 Then summoning him, his master said to him, “You wicked slave, I forgave you all that debt because you entreated me. 33 Should you not also have had mercy on your fellow slave, even as I had mercy on you?” 34 And his lord, moved with anger, handed him over to the torturers until he should repay all that was owed him. 35 So shall My heavenly Father also do to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart.’”* Repentance must be from the heart. That is, saying that we repent, without serious intent, is meaningless.

Required repentance: (Exodus 22:1) *“If a man steals an ox or a sheep, and slaughters it or sells it, he shall pay five oxen for the ox and four sheep for the sheep. 2 If the thief is caught while breaking in, and is struck so that he dies, there will be no bloodguiltiness on his account. 3 But if the sun has risen on him, there will be bloodguiltiness on his account. He shall surely make restitution; if he owns nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft. 4 If what he stole is actually found alive in his possession, whether an ox or a donkey or a sheep, he shall pay double.”*

(Luke 19:8) *“And Zaccheus stopped and said to Yahweh, ‘Behold, Lord, half of my possessions I will give to the poor, and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will give back four times as much.’”*

(Matthew 18:15-17) When we see a believer caught up in a sin, we are to go to him to seek his repentance. If he will not hear us, we are to take one or two witnesses.

This does not mean that we are to tell others about the sin, and take them along: that would be slander. It means to take others whom we know to have witnessed the sin.

If he will not hear two or three witnesses, then the matter is to be taken to the judges of the synagogue.



If he will not hear the judges, then he is to be considered as a wicked one – one who does not seek to follow God, not a believer.

(1 Timothy 5:19-20) An elder is not to be accused before the judges unless there are two or three witnesses. Then an elder who refuses to repent of his sin is to be rebuked by the judges before the entire congregation.

God's forgiveness of sin is shown by repentance:

(Acts 2:38) "*And Peter said to them, 'Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Yeshua the Messiah because of the forgiveness of your sins . . .'*"

Forgiveness requires asking:

*"Even if a man pay the required five-fold compensation (for sustained injury, pain, medical care, loss of working time, and humiliation), he is not forgiven until asking for a pardon"* – Bava Kamma 92a.

For believers: (1 John 1:9) "*If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*"

Paul explains to us (in Galatians 3) that the commandments, which were given 430 years after the Covenant, were added because of sin. Those who were recipients of God's grace needed further instruction to overcome sin and learn to love Yahweh and neighbor.

We need the perspective that David had (Psalm 16:7-11), "*I will bless Yahweh who has counseled me; indeed, my mind instructs me in the night. I have set Yahweh continually before me; because He is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices; my flesh also will dwell securely. For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol; neither will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay. You will make known to me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy; in Your right hand there are pleasures forever.*"

Torah: To flow or shoot: instruct

Sin: Cha-ta – to miss  
Sha-gah: to stray, mistake  
A-von: perversity  
A-sham: guilt

Wicked: Ra-ah / Ka-kos – good for nothing  
Ra-shah – to condemn, make trouble  
Zim-mah / Po-ne-ros – a bad plan or purpose

## **V'Yahweh Paqad / Yahweeh had Visited**

Genesis 21:1-34 1 Samuel 2:21-28 (no Psalm) Matthew 1:18-25

## **Commentary Y1-18**

Av 8, 5761 / July 28, 2001

Av 6, 5764 / July 24, 2004

*Reader 1\* Amen* <sup>1</sup> Then Yahweh took note of Sarah as He had said, and Yahweh did for Sarah as He had promised. <sup>2</sup> So Sarah conceived and bore a son to Avraham in his old age, at the appointed time of which God had spoken to him. <sup>3</sup> Avraham called the name of his son who was born to him, whom Sarah bore to him, Isaac. <sup>4</sup> Then Avraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him.

*Reader 2\* Amen* <sup>5</sup> Now Avraham was one hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. <sup>6</sup> Sarah said, "God has made laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh with me." <sup>7</sup> And she said, "Who would have said to Avraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age." <sup>8</sup> The child grew and was weaned, and Avraham made a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned.

*Reader 3\* Amen* <sup>9</sup> Now Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Avraham, mocking. <sup>10</sup> Therefore she said to Avraham, "Drive out this maid and her son, for the son of this maid shall not be an heir with my son Isaac." <sup>11</sup> The matter distressed Avraham greatly because of his son. <sup>12</sup> But God said to Avraham, "Do not be distressed because of the lad and your maid; whatever Sarah tells you, listen to her, for through Isaac your descendants shall be named. <sup>13</sup> "And of the son of the maid I will make a nation also, because he is your descendant."

*Reader 4\* Amen* <sup>14</sup> So Avraham rose early in the morning and took bread and a skin of water and gave them to Hagar, putting them on her shoulder, and gave her the boy, and sent her away. And she departed and wandered about in the wilderness of Beersheba. <sup>15</sup> When the water in the skin was used up, she left the boy under one of the bushes. <sup>16</sup> Then she went and sat down opposite him, about a bowshot away, for she said, "Do not let me see the boy die." And she sat opposite him, and lifted up her voice and wept.

*Reader 5\* Amen* <sup>17</sup> God heard the lad crying; and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her, "What is the matter with you, Hagar? Do not fear, for God has heard the voice of the lad where he is. <sup>18</sup> "Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him by the hand, for I will make a great nation of him." <sup>19</sup> Then God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water; and she went and filled the skin with water and gave the lad a drink. <sup>20</sup> God was with the lad, and he grew; and he lived in the wilderness and became an archer. <sup>21</sup> He lived in the wilderness of Paran, and his mother took a wife for him from the land of Egypt.

*Reader 6\* Amen* <sup>22</sup> Now it came about at that time that Abimelech and Phicol, the commander of his army, spoke to Avraham, saying, "God is with you in all that you do; <sup>23</sup> now therefore, swear to me here by God that you will not deal falsely with me or with my offspring or with my posterity, but according to the kindness that I have shown to you, you shall show to me and to the land in which you have sojourned." <sup>24</sup> Avraham said, "I swear it."

*Reader 7\* Amen* <sup>25</sup> But Avraham complained to Abimelech because of the well of water which the servants of Abimelech had seized. <sup>26</sup> And Abimelech said, "I do not know who has done this thing; you did not tell me, nor did I hear of it until today." <sup>27</sup> Avraham took sheep and oxen and gave them to Abimelech, and the two of them made a covenant. <sup>28</sup> Then Avraham set seven ewe lambs of the flock by themselves. <sup>29</sup> Abimelech said to Avraham, "What do these seven ewe lambs mean, which you have set by themselves?" <sup>30</sup> He said, "You shall take these seven ewe lambs from my hand so that it may be a witness to me, that I dug this well." <sup>31</sup> Therefore he called that place Beersheba, because there the two of them took an oath. <sup>32</sup> So they made a covenant at Beersheba; and Abimelech and Phicol, the commander of his army, arose and returned to the land of the Philistines. <sup>33</sup> Avraham planted a tamarisk tree at Beersheba, and there he called on the name of Yahweh, the Everlasting God. <sup>34</sup> And Avraham sojourned in the land of the Philistines for many days.

### **1 Samuel 2:21-28**

*Reader 8\* Amen* <sup>21</sup> Yahweh visited Hannah; and she conceived and gave birth to three sons and two daughters. And the boy Samuel grew before Yahweh. <sup>22</sup> Now Eli was very old; and he heard all that his

sons were doing to all Israel, and how they lay with the women who served at the doorway of the tent of meeting. <sup>23</sup> He said to them, "Why do you do such things, the evil things that I hear from all these people? <sup>24</sup> "No, my sons; for the report is not good which I hear Yahweh's people circulating. <sup>25</sup> "If one man sins against another, God will mediate for him; but if a man sins against Yahweh, who can intercede for him?" But they would not listen to the voice of their father, for Yahweh desired to put them to death.

*Reader 9\* Amen* <sup>26</sup> Now the boy Samuel was growing in stature and in favor both with Yahweh and with men. <sup>27</sup> Then a man of God came to Eli and said to him, "Thus says Yahweh, 'Did I not indeed reveal Myself to the house of your father when they were in Egypt in bondage to Pharaoh's house? <sup>28</sup> 'Did I not choose them from all the tribes of Israel to be My priests, to go up to My altar, to burn incense, to carry an ephod before Me; and did I not give to the house of your father all the fire offerings of the sons of Israel?"

**[No Psalm]**

**Matthew 1:18-25**

*Reader 10\* Amen* <sup>18</sup> Now the birth of Yeshua the Messiah was as follows: when His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup> And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her away secretly. <sup>20</sup> But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup> "She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Yeshua, for He will save His people from their sins."

*Reader 11\* Amen* <sup>22</sup> Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: <sup>23</sup> "*Behold, the virgin shall be with child and shall bear a son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,*" which translated means, "God With Us." <sup>24</sup> And Joseph awoke from his sleep and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took Mary as his wife, <sup>25</sup> but kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he called His name Yeshua.

## Commentary:

The “three interpretations of Torah” follow (the literal, the prophetic, and the spiritual).

The literal interpretation – the historic narrative surrounding of the birth of Yitzchak:

Avraham prayed for Abimelech, because his kingdom’s women could not bear children. “*If someone prays for mercy on behalf of another when he himself needs that very same thing, he is answered first*” (Talmud: Bava Kamma 92a).

(V.1) Yahweh had visited (*pluperfect – past action with continuing consequence*) Sarah, before He visited Abimelech’s wives to stop them from bearing; He had restored Sarah’s youth, so that she was even desired for a King’s harem. Now Yahweh did for Sarah as He had promised. Sarah was the princess – of nations, not Sarai – Avram’s princess, or Hagar – the Egyptian princess. So Sarah conceived and, at 90, bore a son to Avraham – the Father of Many Nations, who was 100 – at the appointed time (Passover) of which God had spoken to him. And Avraham called the name of his son who was born to “him” (certifying no other), whom “Sarah” (not Hagar or any other) bore to him, “Yitzchak” (Isaac) / Laughter. And Sarah said, “God has made laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh with me,” which contrasts to her laughter of unbelief when the angel brought God’s promise.

(V.4) Then Avraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him. Avraham had circumcised himself before Yitzchak’s conception. So Avraham, the Hebrew – from the other side of the dispersion, was symbolically made like Adam before the fall, and his promised son carried the same symbol.

(V.7) And Sarah said, “Who would have said to Avraham that Sarah would nurse children? 8 And the child grew (indicating Sarah’s ability to nurse sufficiently when over 90), and was weaned (traditionally at 2 years old); and Avraham made a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned.

(V.9) Now Sarah saw the “son of Hagar the Egyptian” mocking. The word *metzacheq* – mocking, is used to represent three cardinal sins: idolatry (Exodus 32:6), adultery (Exodus 39:17), and murder (2 Samuel 2:14). Ishmael had become so corrupt that he was detrimental to the family’s spiritual future, and he had to be sent away.

Ishmael was following in his mother’s footsteps: Hagar had previously mocked Sarah, and she still had Egypt (symbolizing sin) in her heart. Her son Ishmael was not inclining to God’s ways, though Avraham did not want to give up on him yet. But Sarah said to Avraham, “Drive out this maid and her son, for the son of this maid shall not be an heir with my son Isaac.” Though it was Sarai’s idea for an uncircumcised Avram to have a son by Hagar, she now saw that Yitzchak alone was to inherit the (Malchi-Tzedik) priesthood of the firstborn. The matter distressed Avraham greatly, so Elohim said to him, “Do not be distressed because of the lad and your maid; whatever Sarah tells you, listen to her, for through Yitzchak your descendants shall be named. But of the son of the maid I will make a nation also, because he is your descendant.” Yitzchak was the son of God’s promise, destined to the priesthood. This was not just about sibling rivalry; Sarah was a prophetess, and though previously she had the right motive – to build the Kingdom of God, in giving Hagar to Avraham – she had the wrong perspective – lacking faith in God’s ways. So, “Elohim,” the Judge, corrected Avraham. Paul affirms this in Galatians 4:30.

(V.14) Avraham again wasted no time fulfilling God’s commandment: he awoke early to perform the task. Avraham gave sufficient bread and water to Hagar, and sent her and the boy away. But she became lost in the wilderness of Beersheva, on her way back to Egypt. (When previously running away, she had found her way and come to a well.) When the water in the skin was used up, she left the boy under one of the bushes. Then she went and sat down about a bowshot away, for she said, “Do not let me see the boy die,” and she wept.

(V.17) Rather than comfort her supposed dying son, she acted according to her own ‘discomfort’. Therefore, though we read that Hagar was crying, God heard the boy’s cry. The angel of God called to Hagar from heaven, telling her not to fear, to lift up the boy, for He would make a great nation of him, and

God showed her a well. Note that God called himself “Elohim” here rather than “Yahweh”. God was acting in *justice* toward Ishmael, rather than *grace*. According to the Midrash (Rosh HaShannah 16b), the angels pleaded with God to not perform a miracle for Ishmael, because in the future his offspring would persecute and murder Isaac’s descendants; but God would judge Ishmael only according to his present deeds, not his future.

(V.21) And Ishmael lived in the wilderness of Paran; and his mother took a wife for him from the land of Egypt. This is the beginning of the Arab nations. Though Avraham found *grace* in Yahweh, he also found *consequences*, and suffered for his unbelief – the child by Hagar troubles Israel to this day.

(V.22) Abimelech and Phicol, the commander of his army, spoke to Avraham, saying, "God is with you in all that you do; 23 now therefore, swear to me here by God that you will not deal falsely with me, or with my offspring (children), or with my posterity (grandchildren); but according to the kindness that I have shown to you, you shall show to me, and to the land in which you have sojourned." 24 And Avraham said, "I swear it." This was binding to the third generation. It was contrary to God’s promise that Avraham’s seed would inherit the land, and it caused future problems.

25 But Avraham complained to Abimelech because of the well of water which the servants of Abimelech had seized. 26 And Abimelech said, "I do not know who has done this thing; neither did you tell me, nor did I hear of it until today." 27 And Avraham took sheep and oxen, and gave them to Abimelech; and the two of them made a covenant. 28 Then Avraham set seven ewe lambs of the flock by themselves. 29 And Abimelech said to Avraham, "What do these seven ewe lambs mean, which you have set by themselves?" 30 And he said, "You shall take these seven ewe lambs from my hand in order that it may be a witness to me, that I dug this well." 31 Therefore he called that place Beersheba; because there the two of them took an oath. 32 So they made a covenant at Beersheba; and Abimelech and Phicol, the commander of his army, arose and returned to the land of the Philistines. 33 And Avraham planted a tamarisk tree at Beersheba, and there he called on the name of “Yahweh El Olam” (Yahweh – God Everlasting).

The seven ewe lambs represented the seven-oath alliance, and the well was named the ‘Well of the Seven’. The Philistines observed these oaths until the days of Samson, then they began to attack Israel (according to Sotah 7a); this was questioned by congregants, referring to Genesis 26:15.

(V.34) And Avraham sojourned in the land of the Philistines (Palestine) for many days. Note that he did not settle, but rather he sojourned. This time is reckoned as part of the four-hundred years which referred to Israel as ‘aliens in a land not their own’.

The prophetic interpretation – the representation of the birth of Yeshua:

Avraham and Isaac representing our Heavenly Father and Yeshua

<p>Of our Father Avraham . . . . .</p> <p>An angel (Yahweh) told Avraham: Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant for his seed after him. (Gen 17:19)</p> <p>Now Avraham and Sarah were old (99 and 90 years respectively), and Sarah was past childbearing. And Sarah laughed to herself, saying: since I have become old, shall I have pleasure (childbearing), my lord being old also? (Gen 18:11-12)</p> <p>Avraham circumcised his son Isaac at eight days old, as God had commanded him. (Gen 21:4)</p> <p>Avraham saddled his donkey . . . . . and took Isaac his son, and went three days before seeing the place of sacrifice, Mt. Moriah. (Gen 22:3)</p> <p>Avraham took the wood for the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son . . . . . and the two of them walked together. (Gen 22:6)</p> <p>Avraham bound his son Isaac, and laid him on the wood of the altar. (Gen 22:9)</p> <p>"God will provide Himself the Lamb." (Gen 22:8)</p>	<p>Of our Heavenly Father . . . . .</p> <p>An angel told Joseph: Miryam will bear a son, and you shall call His name Yeshua; for it is He who will save His people from their sins. (Matt 1:20-21)</p> <p>Miryam said to the angel: How can this be, since I am a virgin? The angel answered: The Holy Spirit shall come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the Holy Offspring shall be called the Son of God. (Luke 1:34-35)</p> <p>Eight days were completed before His circumcision; and He was named Yeshua, as the angel commanded. (Luke 2:21)</p> <p>God prepared a donkey, which Yeshua rode to Jerusalem, going there three days before being arrested to be sacrificed on the Mount of Olives in view of Mt. Moriah (Matt 21:2-11) (at a place called Calvary and Golgotha).</p> <p>Yeshua went out, bearing His own cross. (John 19:17) "I am not alone, because the Father is with me." (John 16:32)</p> <p>They crucified Him (bound to a wood cross). (John 19:18)</p> <p>"Behold the Lamb of God . . ." (John 1:29)</p>
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The spiritual interpretation:

God will fulfill His promises, but for wrong actions does not negate the consequences that are long-term, even for those chosen by God.

We see this in the case of David, a man after God's own heart (Acts 13:22). God said (2 Samuel 12:9-10), "*Why have you despised the word of Yahweh by doing evil in His sight? You have struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword, have taken his wife to be your wife, and have killed him with the sword of the sons of Ammon. Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised Me and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife*".

We see it in the case of Solomon, who multiplied wives against God's instruction, and they led him into idolatry. (1 Kings 11:11) "*So Yahweh said to Solomon, 'Because you have done this, and you have not kept My covenant and My statutes, which I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom from you, and will give it to your servant'.*"

The three interpretations of this Torah portion are:

- (1) Literal – the historic narrative surrounding of the birth of Yitzchak.

- (2) Prophetic – the representation of the birth of Yeshua.
- (3) Spiritual – Yahweh fulfills His promises, but for wrong actions gives consequences that are long-term.

**The Akeidah (Binding of Isaac)**

*Reader 1\* Amen* <sup>1</sup> Now it came about after these things, that Elohim tested Avraham, and said to him, "Avraham!" And he said, "Here I am." <sup>2</sup> He said, "Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you." <sup>3</sup> So Avraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him and Isaac his son; and he split wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him.

*Reader 2\* Amen* <sup>4</sup> On the third day Avraham raised his eyes and saw the place from a distance. <sup>5</sup> Avraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey, and I and the lad will go over there; and we will worship and return to you." <sup>6</sup> Avraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son, and he took in his hand the fire and the knife. So the two of them walked on together.

*Reader 3\* Amen* <sup>7</sup> Isaac spoke to Avraham his father and said, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." And he said, "Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" <sup>8</sup> Avraham said, "God will provide for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." So the two of them walked on together. <sup>9</sup> Then they came to the place of which God had told him; and Avraham built the altar there and arranged the wood, and bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood.

*Reader 4\* Amen* <sup>10</sup> Avraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. <sup>11</sup> But the angel of Yahweh called to him from heaven and said, "Avraham, Avraham!" And he said, "Here I am." <sup>12</sup> He said, "Do not stretch out your hand against the lad, and do nothing to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me."

*Reader 5\* Amen* <sup>13</sup> Then Avraham raised his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him a ram caught in the thicket by his horns; and Avraham went and took the ram and offered him up for a burnt offering in the place of his son. <sup>14</sup> Avraham called the name of that place 'Yahweh Yireh,' as it is said to this day, "In the mount of Yahweh it will be provided."

*Reader 6\* Amen* <sup>15</sup> Then the angel of Yahweh called to Avraham a second time from heaven, <sup>16</sup> and said, "By Myself I have sworn, declares Yahweh, because you have done this thing and have not withheld your son, your only son, <sup>17</sup> indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies. <sup>18</sup> "In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice."

*Reader 7\* Amen* <sup>19</sup> So Avraham returned to his young men, and they arose and went together to Beersheba; and Avraham lived at Beersheba. <sup>20</sup> Now it came about after these things, that it was told Avraham, saying, "Behold, Milcah also has borne children to your brother Nahor: <sup>21</sup> Uz his firstborn and Buz his brother and Kemuel the father of Aram <sup>22</sup> and Chesed and Hazo and Pildash and Jidlaph and Bethuel." <sup>23</sup> Bethuel became the father of Rebekah; these eight Milcah bore to Nahor, Avraham's brother. <sup>24</sup> His concubine, whose name was Reumah, also bore Tebah and Gaham and Tahash and Maacah.

**Isaiah 33:7-22**

*Reader 8\* Amen* <sup>7</sup> Behold, their brave men cry in the streets, the ambassadors of peace weep bitterly. <sup>8</sup> The highways are desolate, the traveler has ceased, he has broken the covenant, he has despised the cities, he has no regard for man. <sup>9</sup> The land mourns and pines away, Lebanon is shamed and withers; Sharon is like a desert plain, and Bashan and Carmel lose their foliage. <sup>10</sup> "Now I will arise," says Yahweh, "Now I will be exalted, now I will be lifted up. <sup>11</sup> "You have conceived chaff, you will give birth to stubble; My breath will consume you like a fire. <sup>12</sup> "The peoples will be burned to lime, like cut thorns which are burned in the fire.

*Reader 9\* Amen* <sup>13</sup> "You who are far away, hear what I have done; and you who are near, acknowledge My might." <sup>14</sup> Sinners in Zion are terrified; trembling has seized the godless. "Who among us can live with the consuming fire? Who among us can live with continual burning?" <sup>15</sup> He who walks righteously and speaks with sincerity, he who rejects unjust gain and shakes his hands so that they hold no bribe; he who stops his ears from hearing about bloodshed and shuts his eyes from looking upon evil; <sup>16</sup> he will dwell on the heights, his refuge will be the impregnable rock; his bread will be given him, his water will be sure. <sup>17</sup> Your eyes will see the King in His beauty; they will behold a far-distant land.

*Reader 10\* Amen* <sup>18</sup> Your heart will meditate on terror: "Where is he who counts? Where is he who weighs? Where is he who counts the towers?" <sup>19</sup> You will no longer see a fierce people, a people of



unintelligible speech which no one comprehends, of a stammering tongue which no one understands.<sup>20</sup> Look upon Zion, the city of our appointed feasts; your eyes will see Jerusalem, an undisturbed habitation, a tent which will not be folded; its stakes will never be pulled up, nor any of its cords be torn apart.<sup>21</sup> But there the majestic One, Yahweh, will be for us a place of rivers and wide canals on which no boat with oars will go, and on which no mighty ship will pass--<sup>22</sup> For Yahweh is our judge, Yahweh is our lawgiver, Yahweh is our king; He will save us--

**Psalm 17** *(To be sung.) A Prayer of David.*

<sup>1</sup> Hear a just cause, O Yahweh, give heed to my cry; give ear to my prayer, which is not from deceitful lips.  
<sup>2</sup> Let my judgment come forth from Your presence; let Your eyes look with equity.<sup>3</sup> You have tried my heart; You have visited me by night; You have tested me and You find nothing; I have purposed that my mouth will not transgress.<sup>4</sup> As for the deeds of men, by the word of Your lips I have kept from the paths of the violent.<sup>5</sup> My steps have held fast to Your paths. My feet have not slipped.<sup>6</sup> I have called upon You, for You will answer me, O God; incline Your ear to me, hear my speech.<sup>7</sup> Wondrously show Your lovingkindness, O Savior of those who take refuge at Your right hand from those who rise up against them.  
<sup>8</sup> Keep me as the apple of the eye; hide me in the shadow of Your wings<sup>9</sup> From the wicked who despoil me, my deadly enemies who surround me.<sup>10</sup> They have closed their unfeeling heart, with their mouth they speak proudly.<sup>11</sup> They have now surrounded us in our steps; they set their eyes to cast us down to the ground.<sup>12</sup> He is like a lion that is eager to tear, and as a young lion lurking in hiding places.<sup>13</sup> Arise, O Yahweh, confront him, bring him low; deliver my soul from the wicked with Your sword,<sup>14</sup> From men with Your hand, O Yahweh, from men of the world, whose portion is in this life, and whose belly You fill with Your treasure; they are satisfied with children, and leave their abundance to their babes.<sup>15</sup> As for me, I shall behold Your face in righteousness; I will be satisfied with Your likeness when I awake.

**Mark 11**

*Reader 11\* Amen. (King)*<sup>1</sup> As they approached Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany, near the Mount of Olives, He sent two of His disciples,<sup>2</sup> and said to them, "Go into the village opposite you, and immediately as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, on which no one yet has ever sat; untie it and bring it here."<sup>3</sup> "If anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' you say, 'The Lord has need of it'; and immediately he will send it back here."<sup>4</sup> They went away and found a colt tied at the door, outside in the street; and they untied it.<sup>5</sup> Some of the bystanders were saying to them, "What are you doing, untying the colt?"<sup>6</sup> They spoke to them just as Jesus had told them, and they gave them permission.<sup>7</sup> They brought the colt to Jesus and put their coats on it; and He sat on it.<sup>8</sup> And many spread their coats in the road, and others spread leafy branches which they had cut from the fields.<sup>9</sup> Those who went in front and those who followed were shouting: "Hosanna! Blessed is He Who comes in the Name of Yahweh.<sup>10</sup> Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David; Hosanna in the highest!"<sup>11</sup> Yeshua entered Jerusalem and came into the temple; and after looking around at everything, He left for Bethany with the twelve, since it was already late.

*Reader 12\* Amen. (Priest)*<sup>12</sup> On the next day, when they had left Bethany, He became hungry.<sup>13</sup> Seeing at a distance a fig tree in leaf, He went to see if perhaps He would find anything on it; and when He came to it, He found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs.<sup>14</sup> He said to it, "May no one ever eat fruit from you again!" And His disciples were listening.<sup>15</sup> Then they came to Jerusalem. And He entered the temple and began to drive out those who were buying and selling in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who were selling doves;<sup>16</sup> and He would not permit anyone to carry merchandise through the temple.<sup>17</sup> And He began to teach and say to them, "Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations'? But you have made it a 'robber's den'."<sup>18</sup> The chief priests and the scribes heard this, and began seeking how to destroy Him; for they were afraid of Him, for the whole crowd was astonished at His teaching.<sup>19</sup> When evening came, they would go out of the city.

*Reader 13\* Amen. (Prophet)*<sup>20</sup> As they were passing by in the morning, they saw the fig tree withered from the roots up.<sup>21</sup> Being reminded, Peter said to Him, "Rabbi, look, the fig tree which You cursed has withered."<sup>22</sup> And Yeshua answered saying to them, "Have faith in God.<sup>23</sup> Truly I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be taken up and cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says is going to happen, it will be granted him.<sup>24</sup> Therefore I say to you, all things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they will be granted you.<sup>25</sup> Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father who is in heaven will also forgive you

your transgressions. <sup>26</sup> But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father who is in heaven forgive your transgressions.” <sup>27</sup> They came again to Jerusalem. And as He was walking in the temple, the chief priests and the scribes and the elders came to Him, <sup>28</sup> and began saying to Him, “By what authority are You doing these things, or who gave You this authority to do these things?” <sup>29</sup> And Yeshua said to them, “I will ask you one question, and you answer Me, and then I will tell you by what authority I do these things. <sup>30</sup> Was the baptism of John from heaven, or from men? Answer Me.” <sup>31</sup> They began reasoning among themselves, saying, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ He will say, ‘Then why did you not believe him?’” <sup>32</sup> “But shall we say, ‘From men?’”-- they were afraid of the people, for everyone considered John to have been a real prophet. <sup>33</sup> Answering Yeshua, they said, “We do not know.” And Yeshua said to them, “Nor will I tell you by what authority I do these things.”

### **John 19:16-17**

*Reader 14\* Amen.* So he then delivered Him to them to be crucified. 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.

### **Commentary:**

The Akeidah (Binding of Isaac) is historically known as one of the most important parts of the Torah, warranting extra study. The ram that was caught by its horns is recognized as a forerunner of the Passover (lamb). Note: In this narrative, Avraham is 137 years old, Sarah is 127 (based on her subsequent death in the following chapter), Yitzchak is 37; picture a 137 year old man taking his 37 year old son to be offered on an altar. Comparing to Yitzchak, Yeshua was at least 33 when crucified.

Avraham was asked to sacrifice his only son – the son long promised and awaited, who was miraculously conceived, born when Avraham was 100 and Sarah was 90, and destined to fulfill Avraham’s name: “Father of Many Nations.” Avraham could only do this because he had finally learned to trust that God could and would fulfill His promise, even if by raising Yitzchak from the dead. When approaching the place of sacrifice, Avraham told his attendants, “We will return”!

Note that the year was about AM 2095. Yeshua was crucified somewhere around the year AM 4000. Isaac’s prophetic picture was about 2000 years before Yeshua’s fulfillment.

Torah tells us that Avraham saddled a donkey for taking Yitzchak to Mount Zion (in Moriah); Mark tells us how God miraculously provided a donkey for Yeshua to ride to the Mount Zion (the Temple Mount). Talmud teaches, “How did they know the site of the Altar?” (the Holy of Holies in the Temple) . . . “They saw Isaac’s ashes lying in that place (i.e.: the ashes of the substitute ram)” – Kodashim: Zebachim 62a. As the ashes of the ram were counted as the ashes of Yitzchak, so the death of Yeshua represented our death for sin: we are told to consider ourselves dead to sin but alive to God – Romans 6:11.

The Midrash states that the original name of the place was Shalem (named by its King Shem – Malchi-Tzedek); Avraham here names it Yahweh-Yireh (Yahweh sees to it): the present combination name is Yerushalem.

Torah tells us that Yitzchak made a three-day trip to the place of sacrifice; Yeshua made the trip for three days to the Temple grounds – on successive days as Messiah King, Priest, and Prophet. As only a King could on a never-ridden donkey, He went to the Temple on a Sabbath, while people strew a carpet of palm leaves in His path and greeted Him as “King of Israel who comes in the name of Yahweh.” As a priest must and only a priest could, he fulfilled His priestly duty of cleansing the Temple. As Prophet, He taught with the authority that only Messiah could.

Torah tells us that Yitzchak walked with his father to the place of sacrifice; John 16:32 tells us that Yeshua walked with His Father.

Torah tells us that Yitzchak carried the wood on which he was to be bound for sacrifice – the Midrash says, “Like the one who carries on his own shoulder the stake upon which he is to be executed”! Two thousand

years later, the Apostle John writes (John 19:17) that Yeshua carried the wooden cross on which He was to be bound for sacrifice (for part of the trip Simon carried it – Matthew 27:32).

When Yeshua was crucified, this was part of an overwhelming volume of prophecy by which everyone should have recognized who He was.

Today's lesson is about walking with God, not "doing what seems right in our eyes," and not referring to our own thoughts as something "God said," but learning what God says. Avraham came through many trials before learning to trust God so explicitly. How many have suffered for an example to us!

The relationship of the Haftarah:

Romans 12:1 [NLT] And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice – the kind He will accept. When you think of what He has done for you, is this too much to ask? 2 Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will know what God wants you to do, and you will know how good and pleasing and perfect His will really is.

Isaiah 33:14-15 – Who among us can live with the consuming fire? Who among us can live with continual burning? He who walks righteously, and speaks with sincerity . . .

Psalm 17:3, 15 – Thou hast tried my heart; Thou hast visited me by night; Thou hast tested me and dost find nothing; . . . As for me, I shall behold Thy face in righteousness; I will be satisfied with Thy likeness when I awake.

The three concurrent interpretations of this week's Seder are:

1. Literal – the historic narrative surrounding of the binding of Yitzchak (Isaac): Yitzchak rode a donkey three days to a mountain of Moriah, then walked with his father, carrying the wood for himself to be sacrificed upon.
2. Prophetic – the representation of the crucifixion of Yeshua: Yeshua rode a donkey, going for three days to a mountain of Moriah, being presented as King, Priest, and Prophet; then walked with His Father, carrying the cross for Himself to be sacrificed upon.
3. Spiritual – aspects of walking with God in the Spirit: Is He your Prophet (from whose word you learn), your Priest (to whom you confess daily), and your King (to whom you subject your life)? Are you a living sacrifice to God? *{Discuss these aspects of walking with God.}*

## **Chayey Sarah / Lifetime of Sarah**

Genesis 23:1-20 1 Kings 1:1 Psalm 18 Acts 7:1-18

## **Commentary Y1-20**

Av 22, 5761 / Aug 11, 2001

Av 20, 5764 / Aug 7, 2004

*Reader 1\* Amen*<sup>1</sup> Now Sarah's lifetime was one hundred years, twenty years, and seven years; these were the years of the life of Sarah.<sup>2</sup> Sarah died in Kiriath-arba (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan; and Avraham went in to mourn for Sarah and to weep for her.

*Reader 2\* Amen*<sup>3</sup> Then Avraham rose from before his dead, and spoke to the sons of Heth, saying,<sup>4</sup> "I am a stranger and a sojourner among you; give me a burial site among you that I may bury my dead out of my sight."<sup>5</sup> The sons of Heth answered Avraham, saying to him,<sup>6</sup> "Hear us, my lord, you are a mighty prince among us; bury your dead in the choicest of our graves; none of us will refuse you his grave for burying your dead."

*Reader 3\* Amen*<sup>7</sup> So Avraham rose and bowed to the people of the land, the sons of Heth.<sup>8</sup> And he spoke with them, saying, "If it is your wish for me to bury my dead out of my sight, hear me, and approach Ephron the son of Zohar for me,<sup>9</sup> that he may give me the cave of Machpelah which he owns, which is at the end of his field; for the full price let him give it to me in your presence for a burial site."

*Reader 4\* Amen*<sup>10</sup> Now Ephron was sitting among the sons of Heth; and Ephron the Hittite answered Avraham in the hearing of the sons of Heth; even of all who went in at the gate of his city, saying,<sup>11</sup> "No, my lord, hear me; I give you the field, and I give you the cave that is in it. In the presence of the sons of my people I give it to you; bury your dead."

*Reader 5\* Amen*<sup>12</sup> And Avraham bowed before the people of the land.<sup>13</sup> He spoke to Ephron in the hearing of the people of the land, saying, "If you will only please listen to me; I will give the price of the field, accept it from me that I may bury my dead there."

*Reader 6\* Amen*<sup>14</sup> Then Ephron answered Avraham, saying to him,<sup>15</sup> "My lord, listen to me; a piece of land worth four hundred shekels of silver, what is that between me and you? So bury your dead."<sup>16</sup> Avraham listened to Ephron; and Avraham weighed out for Ephron the silver which he had named in the hearing of the sons of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver, commercial standard.

*Reader 7\* Amen*<sup>17</sup> So Ephron's field, which was in Machpelah, which faced Mamre, the field and cave which was in it, and all the trees which were in the field, that were within all the confines of its border, were deeded over<sup>18</sup> to Avraham for a possession in the presence of the sons of Heth, before all who went in at the gate of his city.<sup>19</sup> After this, Avraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field at Machpelah facing Mamre (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan.<sup>20</sup> So the field and the cave that is in it, were deeded over to Avraham for a burial site by the sons of Heth.

### **1 Kings 1:1**

*Reader 8\* Amen*<sup>1</sup> Now King David was old, advanced in age; and they covered him with clothes, but he could not keep warm.

**Psalm 18** *(To be sung.) For the choir director. A Psalm of David the servant of Yahweh, who spoke to Yahweh the words of this song in the day that Yahweh delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul. And he said:*

<sup>1</sup> "I love You, O Yahweh, my strength."<sup>2</sup> Yahweh is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge; my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.<sup>3</sup> I call upon Yahweh, who is worthy to be praised, and I am saved from my enemies.<sup>4</sup> The cords of death encompassed me, and the torrents of ungodliness terrified me.<sup>5</sup> The cords of Sheol surrounded me; the snares of death confronted me.<sup>6</sup> In my distress I called upon Yahweh, and cried to my God for help; He heard my voice out of His temple, and my cry for help before Him came into His ears.<sup>7</sup> Then the earth shook and quaked; and the foundations of the mountains were trembling and were shaken, because He was angry.<sup>8</sup> Smoke went up out of His nostrils, and fire from His mouth devoured; coals were kindled by it.<sup>9</sup> He bowed the heavens also, and came down with thick darkness under His feet.<sup>10</sup> He rode upon a cherub and flew; and He sped upon the wings of the wind.<sup>11</sup> He made darkness His hiding place, His canopy around Him, Darkness of waters, thick clouds of the skies.<sup>12</sup> From the brightness before Him passed His thick clouds, hailstones and coals of fire.<sup>13</sup> Yahweh also thundered in the heavens, and the Most High uttered His voice, hailstones and coals of fire.<sup>14</sup> He sent out His arrows, and scattered them, and lightning flashes in abundance, and routed them.<sup>15</sup> Then the channels of water appeared, and the foundations of the world were laid bare At Your rebuke, O Yahweh, at the blast of the breath of Your nostrils.<sup>16</sup> He sent from on high, He

took me; He drew me out of many waters. <sup>17</sup> He delivered me from my strong enemy, and from those who hated me, for they were too mighty for me. <sup>18</sup> They confronted me in the day of my calamity, but Yahweh was my stay. <sup>19</sup> He brought me forth also into a broad place; He rescued me, because He delighted in me. <sup>20</sup> Yahweh has rewarded me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands He has recompensed me. <sup>21</sup> For I have kept the ways of Yahweh, and have not wickedly departed from my God. <sup>22</sup> For all His ordinances were before me, and I did not put away His statutes from me. <sup>23</sup> I was also blameless with Him, and I kept myself from my iniquity. <sup>24</sup> Therefore Yahweh has recompensed me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands in His eyes. <sup>25</sup> With the kind You show Yourself kind; with the blameless You show Yourself blameless; <sup>26</sup> with the pure You show Yourself pure, and with the crooked You show Yourself astute. <sup>27</sup> For You save an afflicted people, but haughty eyes You abase. <sup>28</sup> For You light my lamp; Yahweh my God illumines my darkness. <sup>29</sup> For by You I can run upon a troop; and by my God I can leap over a wall. <sup>30</sup> As for God, His way is blameless; the word of Yahweh is tried; He is a shield to all who take refuge in Him. <sup>31</sup> For who is God, but Yahweh? And who is a rock, except our God, <sup>32</sup> The God who girds me with strength and makes my way blameless? <sup>33</sup> He makes my feet like hinds' feet, and sets me upon my high places. <sup>34</sup> He trains my hands for battle, so that my arms can bend a bow of bronze. <sup>35</sup> You have also given me the shield of Your salvation, and Your right hand upholds me; and Your gentleness makes me great. <sup>36</sup> You enlarge my steps under me, and my feet have not slipped. <sup>37</sup> I pursued my enemies and overtook them, and I did not turn back until they were consumed. <sup>38</sup> I shattered them, so that they were not able to rise; they fell under my feet. <sup>39</sup> For You have girded me with strength for battle; You have subdued under me those who rose up against me. <sup>40</sup> You have also made my enemies turn their backs to me, and I destroyed those who hated me. <sup>41</sup> They cried for help, but there was none to save, even to Yahweh, but He did not answer them. <sup>42</sup> Then I beat them fine as the dust before the wind; I emptied them out as the mire of the streets. <sup>43</sup> You have delivered me from the contentions of the people; You have placed me as head of the nations; a people whom I have not known serve me. <sup>44</sup> As soon as they hear, they obey me; foreigners submit to me. <sup>45</sup> Foreigners fade away, and come trembling out of their fortresses. <sup>46</sup> Yahweh lives, and blessed be my rock; and exalted be the God of my salvation, <sup>47</sup> The God who executes vengeance for me, and subdues peoples under me. <sup>48</sup> He delivers me from my enemies; surely You lift me above those who rise up against me; You rescue me from the violent man. <sup>49</sup> Therefore I will give thanks to You among the nations, O Yahweh, and I will sing praises to Your name. <sup>50</sup> He gives great deliverance to His king, and shows lovingkindness to His anointed, to David and his descendants forever.

### **Acts 7:1-18**

*Reader 9\* Amen* <sup>1</sup> And the high priest said, "Are these things so?" <sup>2</sup> And Stephen said, "Hear me, brethren and fathers! The God of glory appeared to our father Avraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran, <sup>3</sup> and said to him, 'Depart from your country and your relatives, and come into the land that I will show you.' <sup>4</sup> "Then he departed from the land of the Chaldeans, and settled in Haran. And from there, after his father died, God removed him into this country in which you are now living. <sup>5</sup> "And 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 offspring after him.

*Reader 10\* Amen* <sup>6</sup> "But God spoke to this effect, that his offspring would be aliens in a foreign land, and that they would be enslaved and mistreated for four hundred years. <sup>7</sup> "And whatever nation to which they shall be in bondage I Myself will judge,' said God, 'and after that they will come out and serve Me in this place.' <sup>8</sup> "And He gave him the covenant of circumcision; and so Avraham 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. <sup>9</sup> "And the patriarchs became jealous of Joseph and sold him into Egypt. And yet God was with him, <sup>10</sup> 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.

*Reader 11\* Amen* <sup>11</sup> "Now a famine came over all Egypt and Canaan, and great affliction with it; and our fathers could find no food. <sup>12</sup> "But when Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, he sent our fathers there the first time. <sup>13</sup> "And on the second visit Joseph made himself known to his brothers, and Joseph's family was disclosed to Pharaoh. <sup>14</sup> "And Joseph sent word and invited Jacob his father and all his relatives to come to him, seventy-five persons in all. <sup>15</sup> "And Jacob went down to Egypt and there passed away, he and our fathers. <sup>16</sup> "And from there they were removed to Shechem, and laid in the tomb which Avraham had purchased for a sum of money from the sons of Hamor in Shechem. <sup>17</sup> "But as the time of the promise was approaching which God had assured to Avraham, the people increased and multiplied in Egypt, <sup>18</sup> until there arose another king over Egypt who knew nothing about Joseph.

## Commentary:

The Sages teach that the narrative of Sarah's death immediately follows the *Akeidah* (binding of Isaac), because she died upon hearing of the event. This also explains why Avraham and Isaac were not present at her death. Avraham came to eulogize his beloved wife, who was named as Princess of all mankind (Sarah).

Four-hundred shekels was an inflated price for the burial plot, but Avraham insisted and paid it, and there should be no dispute of ownership. The Sages say, "The righteous say little and do much, but the wicked promise much and do not perform even a little." Ephron publicly stated that he had given (free) the whole field, then suggested an exorbitant price for just the cave.

At this point, the Torah (v.16) spells Ephron with a *vav* omitted, indicating that he was diminished by the act.

The cave of Machpelah is the burial site of Avraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca, and Jacob and Leah. The name "Machpelah" means "double," possibly representing the couples buried there. It is also traditionally known as the burial place of Adam and Eve. In AD 2000, after many people were killed through Arab-Israeli conflict, the area was given to "Palestinian" control, and the tomb structure where Jews had a seminary was immediately desecrated and destroyed (despite a formal agreement that this would not happen).

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**The following is mainly based on the Psalm** (*Consider Avraham, David, and Yeshua*).

Psalm 18:43-46 – You have delivered me from the contentions of the people; You have placed me as head of the nations; a people whom I have not known serve me. As soon as they hear, they obey me; foreigners submit to me. Foreigners fade away, and come trembling out of their fortresses. Yahweh lives, and blessed be my rock; and exalted be the God (*Elohim*) of my salvation.

## Law-Grace:

In Torah, God is called "Elohim" – the God who is the Creator of all, and sits as Judge of His creation ("Elohim saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good" – Genesis 1:31). He is also called "Yahweh" – the Eternal who is Gracious ("Noah found grace in the eyes of the Yahweh" – Genesis 5:8); this name of the Eternal Gracious One is used approximately 7,000 times in the Bible!

Torah uses these names in combination: "Yahweh Elohim" (often translated the LORD our God) – the Eternal, who is our Creator and Judge, is the Gracious One who reigns over the entire universe. This is the God we bless for providing for us ("Blessed are You, Yahweh Elohim, ruler of the universe, who created . . ."). This is the God who, by grace (while totally undeserved by us), became our Salvation: "Yeshua" means "Yahweh is Salvation" – "You shall call his name Yeshua: for He shall save His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21).

We are to love "Yahweh Elohim" with all our hearts, and we are to love our neighbors as ourselves; these are the two great commandments, on which all other commandments hang (Deuteronomy 6:5 / Leviticus 19:18 and Matthew 22:37). Of the Ten Commandments, the first five hang on loving God, and the last five hang on loving our neighbor. With the detailed commandments that hang on and elaborate upon these, there are six-hundred-thirteen in the Torah.

These commandments were given to show us how we should have walked in the Spirit without them (Galatians 3:19). Yeshua said that He did not come to abrogate them (Matthew 5:17). John said that "love" is keeping His commandments (1 John 5:3, 2 John 1:6). The word "legalism" is never\* found in the Bible, but "lawlessness" is condemned throughout (see 1 John 3:4). [\*A few loose translations insert it.]

We cannot be saved, even partly, by keeping, or trying to keep, commandments. But, if we are believers in Yeshua, walking in God's instruction is the natural, necessary result (James 1:20, Galatians 5:16).

Torah:

Deuteronomy 11:1 – You shall love Yahweh your God, and keep His worship: His statutes, and His judgments (*hukim* and *mishpatim*, least to greatest), performing His commandments (*mitzvot*), always.

Prophets:

Isaiah 24:5-6 – The earth is also polluted by its inhabitants, for they transgressed Torah, violated statutes (*hukim*), and broke the everlasting covenant (*brit*). Therefore, a curse devours the earth, and those who live in it are held guilty. Therefore, the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men are left.

Psalms:

18:21-23 – [*Consider applications to Avraham, David, Yeshua, and us.*] For I have kept the ways of Yahweh, and have not wickedly departed from my God. For all His judgments (*mishpatim* – the moral laws) were before me, and I did not put away His statutes (*hukim* – the commands that are not intuitive) from me (greatest to least). I was also blameless with Him (including the intermediate *edot* – rituals and festivals).

105:7-10 – He is Yahweh Elohim; His judgments (*mishpatim*) are in all the earth. He has remembered His covenant (*brit*) forever, the Word which He commanded to a thousand generations, the covenant which He made with Avraham, and His oath to Isaac. Then He confirmed it to Jacob for a statute (*huk*), to Israel as an everlasting covenant.

119:160 – The sum of Your Word is truth, and every one of Your righteous judgments (*mishpatim*) is everlasting.

Apostolic:

Yeshua / Matthew 5:17-19 – Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say to you, till heaven and earth shall pass away, one yod or one serif shall by no means pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whoever shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. [Note that our position in eternity (not our salvation) is dependent upon performing and teaching His *mitzvot* – from *mishpatim* to *hukim* (the least).]

Paul / Galatians 6:1 Brethren, even if a man is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, lest you too be tempted.

John / 1 John 3: 4 – Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; for sin is lawlessness (Gr. *anomia* – against Torah ways).

2 John 1:6 – For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.

### **Examples / Difficulties:**

Colossians 2:16-17 – Therefore let no man condemn you in regard to food or drink or for observing a Festival or a New Moon or a Sabbath day – for these are a prophetic shadow of things to come, Messiah Himself being the body (casting the shadow). This passage is commonly turned on its head, used to condemn us for observing Biblical Festivals and Sabbath!

If Paul (1 Corinthians 7:18) meant that circumcision should no longer be done, then he contradicted his words by his actions (Acts 16:3)! There is a need to study the context of Paul's teaching.

The Epistle to the Hebrews does not say that Torah changed. It shows a change in the priesthood – from the substitute Levitical priesthood (Numbers 3:12), back to the original Malchi-tzedek priesthood-of-the-firstborn.

Colossians 2:14 does not say that God's Law was nailed to the cross: it is not His commandments that are referred to as "against us" or "hostile toward us" (they are "not grievous"); it is the "rule of death" that is against us and hostile toward us – "the soul that sinneth, it shall die!" It is this rule of death that was consummated against Yeshua upon the cross, and its dominion over us was annulled. Torah was not annulled, but the penalty of death against us was consummated upon our substitute – the very one

prophetically pictured and afterwards memorialized by sacrificial offerings (which are only temporarily suspended because of the lack of a physical Temple).

If sacrificial offerings are not still proper memorials of Yeshua (as the Passover in Luke 22:19), then why did the Apostle Paul offer them at the Temple long after the crucifixion (Acts 21:26), and why will they be offered in the future Millennium by God's direction (Ezekiel 46:1-7)?

**Conclusion:**

Psalm 139:23-24 – Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me and know my anxious thoughts; and see if there be any hurtful way in me, and lead me in the everlasting way.



## V'Avraham Zaqen / Now Avraham was Old

Genesis 24:1-41 Isaiah 51:1-2 Psalm 19 Ephesians 5:15-33

## Commentary Y1-21

Av 29, 5761 / Aug 18, 2001

Av 27, 5764 / Aug 14, 2004

*Reader 1\* Amen* <sup>1</sup> Now Avraham was old, advanced in age; and Yahweh had blessed Avraham in every way. <sup>2</sup> Avraham said to his servant, the oldest of his household, who had charge of all that he owned, "Please place your hand under my thigh, <sup>3</sup> and I will make you swear by Yahweh, the God of heaven and the God of earth, that you shall not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I live, <sup>4</sup> but you will go to my country and to my relatives, and take a wife for my son Isaac." <sup>5</sup> The servant said to him, "Suppose the woman is not willing to follow me to this land; should I take your son back to the land from where you came?" <sup>6</sup> Then Avraham said to him, "Beware that you do not take my son back there! <sup>7</sup> "Yahweh, the God of heaven, who took me from my father's house and from the land of my birth, and who spoke to me and who swore to me, saying, 'To your descendants I will give this land,' He will send His angel before you, and you will take a wife for my son from there. <sup>8</sup> "But if the woman is not willing to follow you, then you will be free from this my oath; only do not take my son back there."

*Reader 2\* Amen* <sup>9</sup> So the servant placed his hand under the thigh of Avraham his master, and swore to him concerning this matter. <sup>10</sup> Then the servant took ten camels from the camels of his master, and set out with a variety of good things of his master's in his hand; and he arose and went to Mesopotamia, to the city of Nahor. <sup>11</sup> He made the camels kneel down outside the city by the well of water at evening time, the time when women go out to draw water. <sup>12</sup> He said, "O Yahweh, the God of my master Avraham, please grant me success today, and show lovingkindness to my master Avraham. <sup>13</sup> "Behold, I am standing by the spring, and the daughters of the men of the city are coming out to draw water; <sup>14</sup> now may it be that the girl to whom I say, 'Please let down your jar so that I may drink,' and who answers, 'Drink, and I will water your camels also' -- may she be the one whom You have appointed for Your servant Isaac; and by this I will know that You have shown lovingkindness to my master."

*Reader 3\* Amen* <sup>15</sup> Before he had finished speaking, behold, Rebekah who was born to Bethuel the son of Milcah, the wife of Avraham's brother Nahor, came out with her jar on her shoulder. <sup>16</sup> The girl was very beautiful, a virgin, and no man had had relations with her; and she went down to the spring and filled her jar and came up. <sup>17</sup> Then the servant ran to meet her, and said, "Please let me drink a little water from your jar." <sup>18</sup> She said, "Drink, my lord"; and she quickly lowered her jar to her hand, and gave him a drink. <sup>19</sup> Now when she had finished giving him a drink, she said, "I will draw also for your camels until they have finished drinking." <sup>20</sup> So she quickly emptied her jar into the trough, and ran back to the well to draw, and she drew for all his camels.

*Reader 4\* Amen* <sup>21</sup> Meanwhile, the man was gazing at her in silence, to know whether Yahweh had made his journey successful or not. <sup>22</sup> When the camels had finished drinking, the man took a gold ring weighing a half-shekel and two bracelets for her wrists weighing ten shekels in gold, <sup>23</sup> and said, "Whose daughter are you? Please tell me, is there room for us to lodge in your father's house?" <sup>24</sup> She said to him, "I am the daughter of Bethuel, the son of Milcah, whom she bore to Nahor." <sup>25</sup> Again she said to him, "We have plenty of both straw and feed, and room to lodge in."

*Reader 5\* Amen* <sup>26</sup> Then the man bowed low and worshiped Yahweh. <sup>27</sup> He said, "Blessed be Yahweh, the God of my master Avraham, who has not forsaken His lovingkindness and His truth toward my master; as for me, Yahweh has guided me in the way to the house of my master's brothers." <sup>28</sup> Then the girl ran and told her mother's household about these things. <sup>29</sup> Now Rebekah had a brother whose name was Laban; and Laban ran outside to the man at the spring. <sup>30</sup> When he saw the ring and the bracelets on his sister's wrists, and when he heard the words of Rebekah his sister, saying, "This is what the man said to me," he went to the man; and behold, he was standing by the camels at the spring. <sup>31</sup> And he said, "Come in, blessed of Yahweh! Why do you stand outside since I have prepared the house, and a place for the camels?"

*Reader 6\* Amen* <sup>32</sup> So the man entered the house. Then Laban unloaded the camels, and he gave straw and feed to the camels, and water to wash his feet and the feet of the men who were with him. <sup>33</sup> But when *food* was set before him to eat, he said, "I will not eat until I have told my business." And he said, "Speak on." <sup>34</sup> So he said, "I am Avraham's servant. <sup>35</sup> "Yahweh has greatly blessed my master, so that he has become rich; and He has given him flocks and herds, and silver and gold, and servants and maids, and camels and donkeys. <sup>36</sup> "Now Sarah my master's wife bore a son to my master in her old age, and he has given him all that he has. <sup>37</sup> "My master made me swear, saying, 'You shall not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I live; <sup>38</sup> but you shall go to my father's house and to my relatives, and take a wife for my son.'

*Reader 7\* Amen* <sup>39</sup> "I said to my master, 'Suppose the woman does not follow me.' <sup>40</sup> "He said to me, 'Yahweh, before whom I have walked, will send His angel with you to make your journey successful, and you will take a wife for my son from my relatives and from my father's house; <sup>41</sup> then you will be free from my oath, when you come to my relatives; and if they do not give her to you, you will be free from my oath.'

### **Isaiah 51:1-2**

*Reader 8\* Amen* <sup>1</sup> "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. <sup>2</sup> "Look to Avraham 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."

### **Psalm 19** *(To be sung.) For the choir director. A Psalm of David.*

<sup>1</sup> The heavens are telling of the glory of God; and their expanse is declaring the work of His hands. <sup>2</sup> Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. <sup>3</sup> There is no speech, nor are there words; their voice is not heard. <sup>4</sup> Their line has gone out through all the earth, and their utterances to the end of the world. In them He has placed a tent for the sun, <sup>5</sup> Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber; it rejoices as a strong man to run his course. <sup>6</sup> Its rising is from one end of the heavens, and its circuit to the other end of them; and there is nothing hidden from its heat. <sup>7</sup> The law of Yahweh is perfect, restoring the soul; the testimony of Yahweh is sure, making wise the simple. <sup>8</sup> The precepts of Yahweh are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of Yahweh is pure, enlightening the eyes. <sup>9</sup> The fear of Yahweh is clean, enduring forever; the judgments of Yahweh are true; they are righteous altogether. <sup>10</sup> They are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb. <sup>11</sup> Moreover, by them Your servant is warned; in keeping them there is great reward. <sup>12</sup> Who can discern his errors? Acquit me of hidden faults. <sup>13</sup> Also keep back Your servant from presumptuous sins; let them not rule over me; then I will be blameless, and I shall be acquitted of great transgression. <sup>14</sup> Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O Yahweh, my rock and my Redeemer.

### **Ephesians 5:15-33**

*Reader 9\* Amen* <sup>15</sup> Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, <sup>16</sup> making the most of your time, because the days are evil. <sup>17</sup> So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. <sup>18</sup> And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit, <sup>19</sup> speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; <sup>20</sup> always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah to God, even the Father;

*Reader 10\* Amen* <sup>21</sup> and be subject to one another in the fear of Messiah. <sup>22</sup> Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. <sup>23</sup> For the husband is the head of the wife, as Messiah also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. <sup>24</sup> But as the church is subject to Messiah, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything. <sup>25</sup> Husbands, love your wives, just as Messiah also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, <sup>26</sup> so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, <sup>27</sup> that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.

*Reader 11\* Amen* <sup>28</sup> So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; <sup>29</sup> for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Messiah also does the church, <sup>30</sup> because we are members of His body. <sup>31</sup> "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." <sup>32</sup> This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Messiah and the church. <sup>33</sup> Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must see to it that she respects her husband.

## Commentary:

Avraham is now old – 140 years, Sarah died three years ago, and Yitzchak is forty. Avraham – the Father of Many Nations – has no grandchildren by his son of promise.

Sixty years earlier, Eliezer had been Avraham's most trusted servant (v.15:2). Now Eliezer is the elder of Avraham's household (v.2). His job now is to find a suitable wife for Yitzchak, a worthy successor to Sarah to be the matriarch of the promised great family. Eliezer is sent to the birthplace of Avraham and Sarah, to seek a wife from their family.

Avraham did not expect to live much longer. Through Yitzchak the land was to be populated. Avraham did not want Yitzchak to leave the Promised Land to find a wife, nor to marry a morally degenerate Canaanite. Therefore, in case Avraham did not live until Eliezer returned, He required Eliezer to swear, by the sign of the Covenant – his circumcision, that his instructions would be fulfilled.

(V.10) Avraham sent with Eliezer a will, to show prospective in-laws that all of his wealth went to Yitzchak. Eliezer was not looking for a wealthy girl with servants, but one who would be drawing her own water. Rivqa fulfilled his character test, agreeing not only to give him water, but freely offering water for his camels as well. (V.20) Rivqa would run to fulfill a mitzvah, displaying a character like Avraham's. Eliezer gave Rivqa two bracelets, weighing ten shekels: this is seen as representing the two stone tablets with the Ten Commandments.

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(Eph. 5:15-17) *“Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men, but as wise, making the most of your time, because these are days of wasteful toil. So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.”* Avraham was 140 years old. He was uncertain of living much longer (though he lived another 35 years). He had learned to trust and walk with God.

Having the promise of becoming the “father of many nations” through Yitzchak (Isaac), he (prophetically portraying our Heavenly Father) would now seek a wife for his only son (portraying Yeshua). Being old, he did not go himself, but sent his servant Eliezer (representing Moses) to find a willing bride (the church in the wilderness). (Eph. 5:32) *“This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Messiah and the church.”*

(Eph. 5:18-19) *“ . . . be filled with the Spirit, 19 speaking to one another in “Psalms and Hymns and Spiritual Songs”, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord”. “Psalms” refers to Book 1 (Psalms 1-41) and Book 2 (Psalms 42-72); “Hymns” refers to Book 3 (Psalms 73-89); “Spiritual Songs” refers to Book 4 (Psalms 90-106) and Book 5 (Psalms 107-150). We are instructed to be filled with the Holy Spirit, and with God's inspired Psalms (all 5 books) – singing them in our hearts, and even speaking to others in their words. This is repeated in Colossians 3:16, which says that we should teach and admonish in their words. It was not until the fourth century AD that songs other than the inspired Psalms were used in worship services (except in the most liberal/unorthodox groups). Being “filled with the Spirit” would seem to relate to using God's inspired words/songs.*

(Eph. 5:20) *“Always giving thanks for all things – in the name of our Lord Messiah Yeshua to God, even the Father”.* (Genesis 24:26-27) *“Then the man bowed low and worshiped Yahweh. And he said, ‘Blessed be Yahweh, the God of my master Avraham, who has not forsaken His lovingkindness and His truth toward my master; as for me, Yahweh has guided me in the way to the house of my master's brothers.’”* We see how Eliezer gave thanks – “Blessed be Yahweh . . .”

We bless God for His provision, rather than blessing what He provides. Saying a blessing over something (such as food or drink) is pronouncing God's Name over it: “Blessed are You, ‘ - - ’ our God, King of the Universe, who (created fruit, gave us Torah, etc.).”

Therefore the rabbis teach that after saying a blessing, we should immediately use that thing, so that the pronouncing of His Name is not in vain. "You shall not use the Name of Yahweh your God in vain" (Exodus 20:7).

We are instructed, by both Biblical command (Matthew 6:9) and Biblical example, to pray only to our Heavenly Father.

All prayer is to be for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven. We are instructed to pray "in the Name of Yeshua" (John 14 :13), that is, as His ambassador or representative. We should ask our Father for those things that Yeshua would want in order to enable our service for Him, not things to "consume on our lusts" (James 4:3). Such prayer changes our perspectives and attitudes about life.

Praying in the name of Yeshua excludes praying to Yeshua (Jesus), since we thereby represent Yeshua praying (to the Father).

We are instructed (Luke 11:13) to ask Our Father for the Ruach HaKodesh (Spirit of the Holy One). Never does the Bible indicate prayer to the Holy Spirit.

What kinds of things should we "Bless Yahweh" for? [Next lesson: Blessing.]

(Eph. 5:21) "*And be subject to one another in the fear of Messiah.*" We are not to "rule" over one another; we are to work together, under Yeshua, realizing how "undone" we are before Him, our speech being unclean at best. This is a reason to speak (and sing) "His Words," and that with care. Paul goes on to explain that this is true in the church, and in the home (marriage) that typifies Messiah and the church.

(Eph. 5:27 & 31-32) "*. . . that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she should be holy and blameless.*" "*For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh: this mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Messiah and the church.*"

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Notes:

Rebecca is referred to as a *nara* (girl), a defective spelling of *Narah* (maiden), indicating that she was not fully developed (under 13), until Deuteronomy 22:19.

Avraham	1948-2123	100 at birth of Yitzchak	
Yitzchak	2048-2228	Yitzchak 40, Rebecca 14 at marriage	[or 40 and 3]
		Yitzchak 60, Rebecca 34 at birth of Yaacov	[or 60 and 23]
Yaacov	2108-2255	Yaacov 84 when he married Leah and Rachel	

*(Eliezar to Rivqah's family:)*

*Reader 1\* Amen* <sup>42</sup> "So I came today to the spring, and said, 'O Yahweh, the God of my master Avraham, if now You will make my journey on which I go successful; <sup>43</sup> behold, I am standing by the spring, and may it be that the maiden who comes out to draw, and to whom I say, "Please let me drink a little water from your jar"; <sup>44</sup> and she will say to me, "You drink, and I will draw for your camels also"; let her be the woman whom Yahweh has appointed for my master's son.'

*Reader 2\* Amen* <sup>45</sup> "Before I had finished speaking in my heart, behold, Rivqah came out with her jar on her shoulder, and went down to the spring and drew, and I said to her, 'Please let me drink.' <sup>46</sup> "She quickly lowered her jar from her shoulder, and said, 'Drink, and I will water your camels also'; so I drank, and she watered the camels also. <sup>47</sup> "Then I asked her, and said, 'Whose daughter are you?' And she said, 'The daughter of Bethuel, Nahor's son, whom Milcah bore to him'; and I put the ring on her nose, and the bracelets on her wrists. <sup>48</sup> "And I bowed low and worshiped Yahweh, and blessed Yahweh, the God of my master Avraham, who had guided me in the right way to take the daughter of my master's kinsman for his son.

*Reader 3\* Amen* <sup>49</sup> "So now if you are going to deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me; and if not, let me know, that I may turn to the right hand or the left." <sup>50</sup> Then Laban and Bethuel replied, "The matter comes from Yahweh; so we cannot speak to you bad or good. <sup>51</sup> "Here is Rivqah before you, take her and go, and let her be the wife of your master's son, as Yahweh has spoken."

*Reader 4\* Amen* <sup>52</sup> When Avraham's servant heard their words, he bowed himself to the ground before Yahweh. <sup>53</sup> The servant brought out articles of silver and articles of gold, and garments, and gave them to Rivqah; he also gave precious things to her brother and to her mother. <sup>54</sup> Then he and the men who were with him ate and drank and spent the night.

*Reader 5\* Amen* When they arose in the morning, he said, "Send me away to my master." <sup>55</sup> But her brother and her mother said, "Let the girl stay with us a few days, say ten; afterward she may go." <sup>56</sup> He said to them, "Do not delay me, since Yahweh has prospered my way. Send me away that I may go to my master." <sup>57</sup> And they said, "We will call the girl and consult her wishes." <sup>58</sup> Then they called Rivqah and said to her, "Will you go with this man?" And she said, "I will go."

*Reader 6\* Amen* <sup>59</sup> Thus they sent away their sister Rivqah and her nurse with Avraham's servant and his men. <sup>60</sup> They blessed Rivqah and said to her, "May you, our sister, Become thousands of ten thousands, And may your descendants possess The gate of those who hate them." <sup>61</sup> Then Rivqah arose with her maids, and they mounted the camels and followed the man. So the servant took Rivqah and departed.

*Reader 7\* Amen* <sup>62</sup> Now Yitzchak had come from going to Beer-lahai-roi; for he was living in the Negev. <sup>63</sup> Yitzchak went out to meditate in the field toward evening; and he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, camels were coming. <sup>64</sup> Rivqah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Yitzchak she dismounted from the camel. <sup>65</sup> She said to the servant, "Who is that man walking in the field to meet us?" And the servant said, "He is my master." Then she took her veil and covered herself. <sup>66</sup> The servant told Yitzchak all the things that he had done. <sup>67</sup> Then Yitzchak brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and he took Rivqah, and she became his wife, and he loved her; thus Yitzchak was comforted after his mother's death.

### **Isaiah 12:3-14:2**

*Reader 8\* Amen* <sup>3</sup> Therefore you will joyously draw water from the springs of salvation. <sup>4</sup> And in that day you will say, "Give thanks to Yahweh, call on His name. Make known His deeds among the peoples; make them remember that His name is exalted." <sup>5</sup> Praise Yahweh in song, for He has done excellent things; let this be known throughout the earth. <sup>6</sup> Cry aloud and shout for joy, O inhabitant of Zion, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.

<sup>13:1</sup> The oracle concerning Babylon which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw. <sup>2</sup> Lift up a standard on the bare hill, raise your voice to them, wave the hand that they may enter the doors of the nobles. <sup>3</sup> I have commanded My consecrated ones, I have even called My mighty warriors, My proudly exulting ones, to execute My anger. <sup>4</sup> A sound of tumult on the mountains, like that of many people! A sound of the uproar of kingdoms, of nations gathered together! Yahweh of hosts is mustering the army for battle. <sup>5</sup> They are coming from a far country, from the farthest horizons, Yahweh and His instruments of indignation, to destroy the whole

land. <sup>6</sup> Wail, for the **day of Yahweh** is near! It will come as destruction from the Almighty. <sup>7</sup> Therefore all hands will fall limp, and every man's heart will melt. <sup>8</sup> 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. <sup>9</sup> 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.

*Reader 9\* Amen* <sup>10</sup> 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. <sup>11</sup> 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. <sup>12</sup> I will make mortal man scarcer than pure gold and mankind than the gold of Ophir. <sup>13</sup> 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. <sup>14</sup> And it will be that like a hunted gazelle, or like sheep with none to gather them, they will each turn to his own people, and each one flee to his own land. <sup>15</sup> Anyone who is found will be thrust through, and anyone who is captured will fall by the sword. <sup>16</sup> Their little ones also will be dashed to pieces before their eyes; their houses will be plundered and their wives ravished. <sup>17</sup> Behold, I am going to stir up the Medes against them, who will not value silver or take pleasure in gold. <sup>18</sup> And their bows will mow down the young men, they will not even have compassion on the fruit of the womb, nor will they pity children. <sup>19</sup> And Babylon, the beauty of kingdoms, the glory of the Chaldeans' pride, will be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. <sup>20</sup> It will never be inhabited or lived in from generation to generation; nor will the Arab pitch his tent there, nor will shepherds make their flocks lie down there. <sup>21</sup> But desert creatures will lie down there, and their houses will be full of owls; ostriches also will live there, and shaggy goats will frolic there. <sup>22</sup> Hyenas will howl in their fortified towers and jackals in their luxurious palaces. Her fateful time also will soon come and her days will not be prolonged.

<sup>14:1</sup> When Yahweh will have compassion on Jacob and again choose Israel, and settle them in their own land, then strangers will join them and attach themselves to the house of Jacob. <sup>2</sup> The peoples will take them along and bring them to their place, and the house of Israel will possess them as an inheritance in the land of Yahweh as male servants and female servants; and they will take their captors captive and will rule over their oppressors.

**Psalm 20** *(To be sung.) For the choir director. A Psalm of David*

<sup>1</sup> May Yahweh answer you in the day of trouble! May the name of the God of Jacob set you securely on high! <sup>2</sup> May He send you help from the sanctuary and support you from Zion! <sup>3</sup> May He remember all your meal offerings and find your burnt offering acceptable! Selah. <sup>4</sup> May He grant you your heart's desire and fulfill all your counsel! <sup>5</sup> We will sing for joy over your victory, and in the name of our God we will set up our banners. May Yahweh fulfill all your petitions. <sup>6</sup> Now I know that Yahweh saves His anointed; He will answer him from His holy heaven with the saving strength of His right hand. <sup>7</sup> Some boast in chariots and some in horses, but we will boast in the name of Yahweh, our God. <sup>8</sup> They have bowed down and fallen, but we have risen and stood upright. <sup>9</sup> Save, O Yahweh; may the King answer us in the day we call.

**James 4:13-17**

<sup>13</sup> Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit." <sup>14</sup> Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. <sup>15</sup> Instead, you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that." <sup>16</sup> But as it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil. <sup>17</sup> Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin.

## Commentary:

Avraham (representing the Heavenly Father) has sent Eliezar (representing Moses) to seek a bride for Yitzchak (representing Yeshua). The prospective bride, Rivqah, represents the church.

The church (Heb. *qahal*) was in the wilderness (Acts 7:38). Yeshua said that He would build it up, and it would never die out (Matthew 16:18). It was established long before Yeshua's time on earth, and it never died out to be restarted by some recent prophet: there are several large denominations today that were started by false prophets claiming to have authority to start a new church, in contradiction to Yeshua's statement.

The church must be qualified for marriage to Messiah.

From last *Tuesday* night (Elul 1) until Yom haKippurim are 40 special days of repentance – as when John was baptizing with “the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.” These days are for focusing on:

- (1) *Te-shu-vah*’ – Repentance,
- (2) *Te-fil-lah*’ – Prayer,
- (3) *Tze-da-kah*’ – Charity, and (from *Tzaddik* – literally means righteousness.)
- (4) *Te-hil-lim*’ – singing Psalms.

We are approaching a time of rehearsals for that which God has told us is coming. It is at once a solemn, awesome, and joyful time.

These rehearsals are for those who have been redeemed by the Passover Lamb, and who have subsequently been betrothed to Messiah as Firstfruits – as rehearsed at Pentecost.

At the coming Day of Trumpeting (*rehearsed on September 16 in 2004*), believers will rejoice in hearing the shout of the archangel, God's trump of the shofar, and the return of Yeshua. But for the world of sin, it will be the beginning of the end.

The Day of the Atonements (*September 25 in 2004*) is a solemn day of repentance, when we consider the various kinds of sin that we are to be overcoming. There does not seem to be overwhelming acceptance of the need of believers to repent, but that is a continual requirement in order to make the Bride fit for the wedding (Ephesians 5:27). Some go so far as to say that this repentance is for unbelieving Israel, but it is for believers! John scolded unbelievers who came to be baptized at this time, but did not have the fruits of faith (Luke 3:7-9).

The seven-day Feast of Tabernacles (*September 30 – October 6 in 2004*) is a rehearsal for the Marriage of the Lamb (Revelation 19:7): while believers will be rejoicing, the world around will be collapsing – all seventy nations will be falling, and Yeshua will become King of all the earth.

It may be noted that there are no “good” nations, though all are not equal: all will fall, but there will be varying judgments upon each (Isaiah 13, Zephaniah 3:8, Revelation 19:15). As examples, the five cities of the plains (called Sodom and Gomorrah) were destroyed with fire and brimstone; Ninevah repented and was granted a reprieve, but then went back to sin and was destroyed by an army.

Yeshua came to “save His people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21). In Temple times (and before), sin offerings were for the purpose of overcoming sin – for bringing repentance. Repentance means turning from our ways of sin – turning toward God. This is a time for believers to consider what God calls sin, and to repent.

Isaiah:

(V.13:4) “*Yahweh of Hosts is mustering the army for battle.*” Note that Isaiah does not say “Elohim of Hosts” – the Judging God of Armies; it is the Gracious and Merciful God of Armies who is gathering warriors to battle.

Babylon will wail, for the “Day of Yahweh” is near (v.1, 6). Yahweh will exterminate sinners from the land (v.9). No Arab will dwell in Iraq (v.20), or at least not in the city of Babylon; consider this in light of the current war. Also, no Arab will dwell in Damascus, the capitol of Syria, where terrorism is presently staged against Israel (Isaiah 17:1)!

The God of Grace and Mercy will have compassion on Israel (v.14:1), and give them the land promised to Avraham.

It is by grace and mercy that the righteous will be established in the earth, and sinners will be taken away. This is solemn, and awesome, and joyous! But for sinners, it is to be dreaded (v.13:9).

We should consider seriously the daily prayer (the Shemoneh Esrei):

*“Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors, for we have erred; pardon us, our King, for we have willfully sinned – for You pardon and forgive. Blessed are You, Yahweh, Who forgives abundantly through Yeshua.”*

*“Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Bring us back, our Father, to Your Torah; and bring us near, our King, to Your service; and influence us to return in perfect repentance before You. Blessed are You, Yahweh, Who desires repentance.”*

*“He who overcomes will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son”* (Revelation 21:7).

**Psalm 20:**

(V.7-8) *“Some boast in chariots and some in horses, but we will boast in the name Yahweh, our God. They have bowed down and fallen, but we have risen and stood upright.”*

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Genesis 24:26-27 *Then the man bowed low and worshiped Yahweh. He said, “Blessed be Yahweh, the God of my master Avraham, who has not forsaken His lovingkindness and His truth toward my master; as for me, Yahweh has guided me in the way to the house of my master's brothers.”*

V.52 *When Avraham's servant heard their words, he bowed himself to the ground before Yahweh.*

Isaiah 12:4-6 *And in that day you will say, “Give thanks to Yahweh, call on His name. Make known His deeds among the peoples; make them remember that His name is exalted.” Praise Yahweh in song, for He has done excellent things; let this be known throughout the earth. Cry aloud and shout for joy, O inhabitant of Zion, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.*

Psalm 20:5 *May Yahweh fulfill all your petitions.*

James 4:15 *You ought to say, “If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that.”*

See TEFILLAH / PRAYER.



*Reader 1\* Amen* <sup>1</sup> So again Avraham took a wife, whose name was Keturah. <sup>2</sup> She bore to him Zimran and Jokshan and Medan and Midian and Ishbak and Shuah. <sup>3</sup> Jokshan became the father of Sheba and Dedan. And the sons of Dedan were Asshurim and Letushim and Leummim. <sup>4</sup> The sons of Midian were Ephah and Epher and Hanoch and Abida and Eldaah. All these were the sons of Keturah. <sup>5</sup> Now Avraham gave all that he had to Yitzchak; <sup>6</sup> but to the sons of his concubines, Avraham gave gifts while he was still living, and sent them away from his son Yitzchak eastward, to the land of the east.

*Reader 2\* Amen* <sup>7</sup> These are all the years of Avraham's life that he lived, one hundred and seventy-five years. <sup>8</sup> Avraham breathed his last and died in a ripe old age, an old man and satisfied with life; and he was gathered to his people. <sup>9</sup> Then his sons Yitzchak and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah, in the field of Ephron the son of Zohar the Hittite, facing Mamre, <sup>10</sup> the field which Avraham purchased from the sons of Heth; there Avraham was buried with Sarah his wife. <sup>11</sup> It came about after the death of Avraham, that God blessed his son Yitzchak; and Yitzchak lived by Beer-lahai-roi.

*Reader 3\* Amen* <sup>12</sup> Now these are the records of the generations of Ishmael, Avraham's son, whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah's maid, bore to Avraham; <sup>13</sup> and these are the names of the sons of Ishmael, by their names, in the order of their birth: Nebaioth, the firstborn of Ishmael, and Kedar and Adbeel and Mibsam <sup>14</sup> and Mishma and Dumah and Massa, <sup>15</sup> Hadad and Tema, Jetur, Naphish and Kedemah. <sup>16</sup> These are the sons of Ishmael and these are their names, by their villages, and by their camps; twelve princes according to their tribes. <sup>17</sup> These are the years of the life of Ishmael, one hundred and thirty-seven years; and he breathed his last and died, and was gathered to his people. <sup>18</sup> They settled from Havilah to Shur which is east of Egypt as one goes toward Assyria; he settled in defiance of all his relatives.

**[V'eloh toldot (These are the generations)]**

*Reader 4\* Amen* <sup>19</sup> Now these are the records of the generations of Yitzchak, Avraham's son: Avraham became the father of Yitzchak; <sup>20</sup> and Yitzchak was forty years old when he took Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel the Aramean of Paddan-aram, the sister of Laban the Aramean, to be his wife. <sup>21</sup> Yitzchak prayed to Yahweh on behalf of his wife, because she was barren; and Yahweh answered him and Rebekah his wife conceived. <sup>22</sup> But the children struggled together within her; and she said, "If it is so, why then am I this way?" So she went to inquire of Yahweh. <sup>23</sup> Yahweh said to her, "Two nations are in your womb; And two peoples will be separated from your body; And one people shall be stronger than the other; And the older shall serve the younger." <sup>24</sup> When her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in her womb. <sup>25</sup> Now the first came forth red, all over like a hairy garment; and they named him Esau. <sup>26</sup> Afterward his brother came forth with his hand holding on to Esau's heel, so his name was called Jacob; and Yitzchak was sixty years old when she gave birth to them.

*Reader 5\* Amen* <sup>27</sup> When the boys grew up, Esau became a skillful hunter, a man of the field, but Jacob was a peaceful man, living in tents. <sup>28</sup> Now Yitzchak loved Esau, because he had a taste for game, but Rebekah loved Jacob. <sup>29</sup> When Jacob had cooked stew, Esau came in from the field and he was famished; <sup>30</sup> and Esau said to Jacob, "Please let me have a swallow of that red stuff there, for I am famished." Therefore his name was called Edom. <sup>31</sup> But Jacob said, "First sell me your birthright."

<sup>32</sup> Esau said, "Behold, I am about to die; so of what use then is the birthright to me?" <sup>33</sup> And Jacob said, "First swear to me"; so he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob. <sup>34</sup> Then Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil stew; and he ate and drank, and rose and went on his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright.

*Reader 6\* Amen* <sup>26:1</sup> Now there was a famine in the land, besides the previous famine that had occurred in the days of Avraham. So Yitzchak went to Gerar, to Abimelech king of the Philistines. <sup>2</sup> Yahweh appeared to him and said, "Do not go down to Egypt; stay in the land of which I shall tell you. <sup>3</sup> "Sojourn in this land and I will be with you and bless you, for to you and to your descendants I will give all these lands, and I will establish the oath which I swore to your father Avraham. <sup>4</sup> "I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven, and will give your descendants all these lands; and by your descendants all the nations of the earth shall be blessed; <sup>5</sup> because Avraham obeyed Me and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes and My laws." <sup>6</sup> So Yitzchak lived in Gerar.

*Reader 7\* Amen* <sup>7</sup> When the men of the place asked about his wife, he said, "She is my sister," for he was afraid to say, "my wife," thinking, "the men of the place might kill me on account of Rebekah, for she is beautiful." <sup>8</sup> It came about, when he had been there a long time, that Abimelech king of the Philistines looked out through a window, and saw, and behold, Yitzchak was caressing his wife Rebekah. <sup>9</sup> Then

Abimelech called Yitzchak and said, "Behold, certainly she is your wife! How then did you say, 'She is my sister'?" And Yitzchak said to him, "Because I said, 'I might die on account of her.'" <sup>10</sup> Abimelech said, "What is this you have done to us? One of the people might easily have lain with your wife, and you would have brought guilt upon us." <sup>11</sup> So Abimelech charged all the people, saying, "He who touches this man or his wife shall surely be put to death."

### **Isaiah 65:23 – 66:8**

*Reader 8\* Amen* <sup>23</sup> "They will not labor in vain, or bear children for calamity; for they are the offspring of those blessed by Yahweh, and their descendants with them. <sup>24</sup> "It will also come to pass that before they call, I will answer; and while they are still speaking, I will hear. <sup>25</sup> "The wolf and the lamb will graze together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox; and dust will be the serpent's food. They will do no evil or harm in all My holy mountain," says Yahweh.

*Reader 9\* Amen* <sup>66:1</sup> Thus says Yahweh, "Heaven is My throne and the earth is My footstool. Where then is a house you could build for Me? And where is a place that I may rest? <sup>2</sup> "For My hand made all these things, thus all these things came into being," declares Yahweh. "But to this one I will look, to him who is humble and contrite of spirit, and who trembles at My word. <sup>3</sup> "But he who kills an ox is like one who slays a man; he who sacrifices a lamb is like the one who breaks a dog's neck; he who offers a grain offering is like one who offers swine's blood; he who burns incense is like the one who blesses an idol. As they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delights in their abominations, <sup>4</sup> so I will choose their punishments and will bring on them what they dread. Because I called, but no one answered; I spoke, but they did not listen. And they did evil in My sight and chose that in which I did not delight."

*Reader 10\* Amen* <sup>5</sup> Hear the word of Yahweh, you who tremble at His word: "Your brothers who hate you, who exclude you for My name's sake, have said, 'Let Yahweh be glorified, that we may see your joy.' But they will be put to shame. <sup>6</sup> "A voice of uproar from the city, a voice from the temple, the voice of Yahweh who is rendering recompense to His enemies. <sup>7</sup> "Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she gave birth to a boy. <sup>8</sup> "Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such things? Can a land be born in one day? Can a nation be brought forth all at once? As soon as Zion travailed, she also brought forth her sons.

*no Psalm*

### **Hebrews 12:14-29**

*Reader 11\* Amen* <sup>14</sup> Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord. <sup>15</sup> See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled; <sup>16</sup> that there be no immoral or godless person like Esau, who sold his own birthright for a single meal. <sup>17</sup> For you know that even afterwards, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought for it with tears. <sup>18</sup> For you have not come to a mountain that can be touched and to a blazing fire, and to darkness and gloom and whirlwind, <sup>19</sup> and to the blast of a trumpet and the sound of words which sound was such that those who heard begged that no further word be spoken to them. <sup>20</sup> For they could not bear the command, "If even a beast touches the mountain, it will be stoned." <sup>21</sup> And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, "I am full of fear and trembling."

*Reader 12\* Amen* <sup>22</sup> But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, <sup>23</sup> to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, <sup>24</sup> and to Yeshua, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel. <sup>25</sup> See to it that you do not refuse Him who is speaking. For if those did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape who turn away from Him who warns from heaven. <sup>26</sup> And His voice shook the earth then, but now He has promised, saying, "Yet once more I will shake not only the earth, but also the heavens." <sup>27</sup> This expression, "Yet once more," denotes the removing of those things which can be shaken, as of created things, so that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. <sup>28</sup> Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe; <sup>29</sup> for our God is a consuming fire.

## Commentary:

At the age of 140, Avraham had provided for the marriage of Yitzchak. The narrative will focus next on Yitzchak. The last 35 years of Avraham's life, and the generations of Ishmael, will be quickly summarized.

*Keturah* is Aramaic for restrained. The sages say that Avraham remarried Hagar, who remained chaste during her separation, and was thus called Keturah. Their subsequent children were "sent away" (v.6), after receiving gifts from their father. Ishmael, however, was present to participate in Avraham's funeral (v.9), and his sons became chiefs of twelve nations according to God's promise (v.17:20).

Avraham gave all that he had to Yitzchak, according to the will that he had sent with Eliezar in seeking a bride for Yitzchak (v.24:10). Yitzchak stayed in the Promised Land and inherited the priesthood.

### Setting:

Avraham is 175 years old and has just died.

Isaac is 75 years old, Rebecca is 49 years old.

Jacob and Esau are 15 years old. 48 years in the future Jacob will receive the blessing.

For Avraham's funeral attendants, Jacob, the keeper at home/farm, was making the traditional funeral meal – lentil stew. Esau was out pursuing his trapping/deceiving. Jacob wanted to lead the family in spiritual ways, while Esau wanted to gulp a meal and get back to his sinful life.

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(V. 23) Yahweh said to Rebecca, "Two nations are in your womb; and two peoples shall be separated from your body; and one people shall be stronger than the other; and the elder shall serve the younger."

(V.29-34) And when Jacob had cooked (red lentil) stew, Esau came in from the field and he was famished; 30 and Esau said to Jacob, "Please pour down me some of that red . . . red stuff there, for I am famished." Therefore his name was called Edom. 31 But Jacob said, "First sell me your birthright." And Esau said, "Behold, I am about to die; so of what use then is the birthright to me?" And Jacob said, "First swear to me"; so he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob. Then Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil stew; and he ate and drank, and rose and went on his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright.

"The elder (Esau) shall serve the younger (Jacob)."

According to *Midrash Or HaAfeilah*, this prophecy shall be fulfilled in the days of Messiah: "When Jacob later addressing Esau referred to himself as 'your servant Jacob' (v. 32:5), God said to him, 'not only have you profaned the holy (by referring to yourself as his *servant* and addressing him as *my lord Esau*), but additionally you thereby disregard My promise that *the elder shall serve the younger*. By your life! Your own words shall materialize: Esau will dominate you in this world, but you will dominate him in the world to come.' " Although Esau's forces will be mightier and emerge triumphant in his quest for material strength, ultimately it will be seen that Esau's victories will have paved the way for Jacob's final triumph. The representative of strength will not be destroyed, but will submit to a new realization that spiritual principles are superior. – *Artscroll Tanach*

The birthright was the priesthood-of-the-firstborn (and secondly material inheritance). It cannot be sold or purchased, but Esau lost the position by sin and disregard for spirituality.

[*Discuss holy and profane.*]

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The Hebrew word for twins (v. 24) means two alike, but here it is spelled defectively, indicating that Jacob and Esau were not alike. God said of them, even before they were born, "Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated."

Note: This is a Bible topic, not an "Old Testament" or "New Testament" issue. God did not divide His Word into two sets of books, one to supersede the other. The "New Covenant" is defined in Jeremiah 31: see commentary <u>Y1-10</u> .
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The subject of God's sovereignty is not well accepted, even in religious circles. Objectors usually ignore the Scriptures and base argument on feelings. But the Scriptures are overwhelming on the subject, and objections are anticipated and answered.

*The king's heart is like channels of water in the hand of Yahweh; He turns it wherever He wishes* (Proverbs 21:1). There are many examples, throughout the Bible, of how God is sovereign over rulers: the Pharaohs (Genesis 40, Exodus 4:21) and Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 4:35) are prime ones.

*"All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, but He 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). We do not have the standing to even question God's doings!

While it is popular (though unbiblical) to say that God hates sin but loves the sinner, David said of God: *"You hate all workers of iniquity"* (Psalm 5:5).

Now, let us look at the examples of Jacob and Esau.

### **Malachi 1:1**

*The oracle of the word of Yahweh to Israel through Malachi. 2 "I have loved you," says Yahweh. But you say, "How hast Thou loved us?" "Was not Esau Jacob's brother?" declares Yahweh. "Yet I have loved Jacob; 3 but I have hated Esau, and I have made his mountains a desolation, and appointed his inheritance for the jackals of the wilderness." 4 Though Edom says, "We have been beaten down, but we will return and build up the ruins"; thus says Yahweh of hosts, "They may build, but I will tear down; and men will call them the wicked territory, and the people toward whom Yahweh is indignant forever." 5 And your eyes will see this and you will say, "Yahweh be magnified beyond the border of Israel!"*

### **Romans 9:8**

*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 a 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, in order that God's purpose according to His choice might 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. 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?*

Paul, using the examples of Jacob and Esau, shows that God raises up whomsoever He wills: some to serve Him, some to be destroyed. So (from those who think that God should be under man's rules, and that responsibility necessitates "free" will) Paul anticipates the question of God being unfair: How then can God find fault? For who has resisted His will? Paul answers: O worm of a man, who do you think you are to find fault with God?

In Hebrews, we read that Esau was a godless person. He would give up spiritual position for food. We are warned to not be like that.

God has raised us up for a greater-than-imaginable promised future: we owe the greatest possible respect!

## **Vayizraf Yitzchak / And Isaac Sowed**

Genesis 26:12-35 Isaiah 62:8 Psalm 21 Luke 16:1-15

## **Commentary Y1-24**

Elul 20, 5761 / Sept 8, 2001

Elul 18, 5764 / Sept 4, 2004

*Reader 1\* Amen* <sup>12</sup> Now Yitzchak sowed in that land and reaped in the same year a hundredfold. And Yahweh blessed him, <sup>13</sup> and the man became rich, and continued to grow richer until he became very wealthy; <sup>14</sup> for he had possessions of flocks and herds and a great household, so that the Philistines envied him. <sup>15</sup> Now all the wells which his father's servants had dug in the days of Abraham his father, the Philistines stopped up by filling them with earth.

*Reader 2\* Amen* <sup>16</sup> Then Abimelech said to Yitzchak, "Go away from us, for you are too powerful for us." <sup>17</sup> And Yitzchak departed from there and camped in the valley of Gerar, and settled there. <sup>18</sup> Then Yitzchak dug again the wells of water which had been dug in the days of his father Abraham, for the Philistines had stopped them up after the death of Abraham; and he gave them the same names which his father had given them.

*Reader 3\* Amen* <sup>19</sup> But when Yitzchak's servants dug in the valley and found there a well of flowing water, <sup>20</sup> the herdsmen of Gerar quarreled with the herdsmen of Yitzchak, saying, "The water is ours!" So he named the well Esek, because they contended with him. <sup>21</sup> Then they dug another well, and they quarreled over it too, so he named it Sitnah.

*Reader 4\* Amen* <sup>22</sup> He moved away from there and dug another well, and they did not quarrel over it; so he named it Rehoboth, for he said, "At last Yahweh has made room for us, and we will be fruitful in the land." <sup>23</sup> Then he went up from there to Beersheba. <sup>24</sup> Yahweh appeared to him the same night and said, "I am the God of your father Abraham; Do not fear, for I am with you. I will bless you, and multiply your descendants, For the sake of My servant Abraham." <sup>25</sup> So he built an altar there and called upon the name of Yahweh, and pitched his tent there; and there Yitzchak's servants dug a well.

*Reader 5\* Amen* <sup>26</sup> Then Abimelech came to him from Gerar with his adviser Ahuzzath and Phicol the commander of his army. <sup>27</sup> Yitzchak said to them, "Why have you come to me, since you hate me and have sent me away from you?" <sup>28</sup> They said, "We see plainly that Yahweh has been with you; so we said, 'Let there now be an oath between us, even between you and us, and let us make a covenant with you, <sup>29</sup> that you will do us no harm, just as we have not touched you and have done to you nothing but good and have sent you away in peace. You are now the blessed of Yahweh.'"

*Reader 6\* Amen* <sup>30</sup> Then he made them a feast, and they ate and drank. <sup>31</sup> In the morning they arose early and exchanged oaths; then Yitzchak sent them away and they departed from him in peace. <sup>32</sup> Now it came about on the same day, that Yitzchak's servants came in and told him about the well which they had dug, and said to him, "We have found water." <sup>33</sup> So he called it Shibah; therefore the name of the city is Beersheba to this day.

*Reader 7\* Amen* <sup>34</sup> When Esau was forty years old he married Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Basemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite; <sup>35</sup> and they brought grief to Yitzchak and Rebekah.

### **Isaiah 62:8**

*Reader 8\* Amen* Yahweh has sworn by His right hand and by His strong arm, "I will never again give your grain as food for your enemies; nor will foreigners drink your new wine, for which you have labored."

### **Psalm 21 (To be sung) For the choir director. A Psalm of David.**

<sup>1</sup> O Yahweh, in Your strength the king will be glad, and in Your salvation how greatly he will rejoice! <sup>2</sup> You have given him his heart's desire, and You have not withheld the request of his lips. Selah. <sup>3</sup> For You meet him with the blessings of good things; You set a crown of fine gold on his head. <sup>4</sup> He asked life of You, You gave it to him, length of days forever and ever. <sup>5</sup> His glory is great through Your salvation, splendor and majesty You place upon him. <sup>6</sup> For You make him most blessed forever; You make him joyful with gladness in Your presence. <sup>7</sup> For the king trusts in Yahweh, and through the lovingkindness of the Most High he will not be shaken. <sup>8</sup> Your hand will find out all your enemies; Your right hand will find out those who hate you. <sup>9</sup> You will make them as a fiery oven in the time of your anger; Yahweh will swallow them up in His wrath, and fire will devour them. <sup>10</sup> Their offspring You will destroy from the earth, and their descendants from among the sons of men. <sup>11</sup> Though they intended evil against You and devised a plot, they will not succeed. <sup>12</sup> For You will make them turn their back; You will aim with Your bowstrings at their faces. <sup>13</sup> Be exalted, O Yahweh, in Your strength; we will sing and praise Your power.

### **Luke 16:1-15**

*Reader 9\* Amen* <sup>1</sup> Now He (Yeshua) was also saying to the disciples, "There was a rich man who had a manager, and this manager was reported to him as squandering his possessions. <sup>2</sup> "And he called him and said to him, 'What is this I hear about you? Give an accounting of your management, for you can no longer be manager.' <sup>3</sup> "The manager said to himself, 'What shall I do, since my master is taking the management away from me? I am not strong enough to dig; I am ashamed to beg. <sup>4</sup> 'I know what I shall do, so that when I am removed from the management people will welcome me into their homes.' <sup>5</sup> "And he summoned each one of his master's debtors, and he began saying to the first, 'How much do you owe my master?' <sup>6</sup> "And he said, 'A hundred measures of oil.' And he said to him, 'Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.' <sup>7</sup> "Then he said to another, 'And how much do you owe?' And he said, 'A hundred measures of wheat.' He said to him, 'Take your bill, and write eighty.' <sup>8</sup> "And his master praised the unrighteous manager because he had acted shrewdly; for the sons of this age are more shrewd in relation to their own kind than the sons of light.

*Reader 10\* Amen* <sup>9</sup> "And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by means of the wealth of unrighteousness, so that when it fails, they will receive you into the eternal dwellings. <sup>10</sup> "He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much. <sup>11</sup> "Therefore if you have not been faithful in the use of unrighteous wealth, who will entrust the true riches to you? <sup>12</sup> "And if you have not been faithful in the use of that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own? <sup>13</sup> "No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth. <sup>14</sup> Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, were listening to all these things and were scoffing at Him. <sup>15</sup> And He said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of men, but God knows your hearts; for that which is highly esteemed among men is detestable in the sight of God.

### **Commentary:**

Isaac stayed in the Promised Land, and “kept the garden.” He faithfully fulfilled his priesthood, so that others knew of Yahweh through him. God made him great, even in the eyes of other nations. It is the man Isaac, not the land or crops, with whom the blessing is associated.

In a relatively unfertile area, and in an unfavorable year for agriculture, he reaped an hundredfold. “A blessing is not found in that which is weighed, measured, or counted” (Bava Metzia 42a), but it was estimated on account of tithes.

(V. 13) “The man became rich, and continued to grow richer until he became very wealthy” – God adding as Isaac showed he could properly handle increased wealth. Isaac’s wealth became so great that, (a Midrash says) the Philistines declared, “Rather the manure of Isaac’s mules than Abimelech’s gold.” [James 5:3 – Your gold and your silver have rusted; and their rust will be a witness against you and will consume your flesh like fire. It is for the last days that you have stored up your treasure!]

The Philistines, in their jealousy, filled up the wells that Avraham had dug; thus they broke the covenant they had made with Avraham (v. 21:27). Isaac redug the wells, and gave them the same names that his father had given them. In God’s purpose, the wells provided water for Avraham, but not for the jealous Philistines, and then again for Isaac. The next wells, for which the Philistines fought, he named “Esek,” meaning protest, and “Sitnah” (related to “satan”) meaning enmity; Isaac left the area after this contest. He dug another well, calling it “Rechovot” – spaciousness, saying “At last Yahweh has made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land.”

The first well, Esek, is seen to represent the First Temple, which signifies contention with the nations who finally destroyed it. The second well, Sitnah, is seen to represent the Second Temple, with the greater enmity of the nations that destroyed it and sent Israel into exile. The third well, Rechovot, is seen to represent the Third Temple, which will be free of contention; God will enlarge our borders, and we will be fruitful in the land.

Out of fear, Isaac went up to the more central part of the Promised Land, Beer Sheba, where he was born, and where Avraham had made the covenant with Abimelech. There God appeared to him, saying, “I am the God of your father Abraham; do not fear, for I am with you. I will bless you, and multiply your descendants, for the sake of My servant Abraham.” Around Gerar, after Isaac moved away, “the wells dried up and the trees bore no fruit” (Targum Yonasan), so Abimelech came to Isaac, recognizing that Yahweh was with him, to reaffirm the covenant.

The theme, of following God and then being blessed in material ways, is exemplified by Isaac (in the Torah portion), by Moses (in Hebrews 11, below), by the people of future Jerusalem (in the Isaiah portion), and by David and Yeshua (in today’s Psalm).

In the Torah portion, we note that Isaac was spiritually inclined, while Esau was worldly minded. Isaac wanted to promote worship of Yahweh (he desired the priesthood), and was blessed in minding the farm. Esau was concerned with this world, and married idol-worshipping wives (v.34).

In Hebrews 11, we read of Moses rejecting a role in the Pharaoh’s house of riches, in order to have a part with the Children of God. That meant forgoing some temporal pleasures of sin, and enduring some hardships, because the future was so much more important.

Today’s Psalm (21:10) reiterates that the wicked – David’s enemies – are going to be destroyed from earth. Ultimately, this Psalm is about Yeshua.

But, what about believers? What will the righteous be doing, that they should be desiring and preparing for today?

In either case, we will not be sitting in front of a TV or movie screen watching shows that glorify sin, or attending ball games where their entrance fees make gross salaries for proud sinners to knock a ball around. We will not be climbing the ladder of corporate success, or showing off in our sport boats or cars.

We will not be strutting religious titles to make a name and money for themselves, and we won’t be acting spiritual by claiming that God showed us things that God never thought of.

But the righteous will remain forever (Psalm 37:11, Matthew 5:5), and delight in peace. They will not be floating on clouds, but living safely in houses (), and tending gardens growing the best of foods (). They will not be celebrating pagan holidays, or just fulfilling requirements of being “in church”, but will be enjoying God’s Sabbaths and memorial Feasts, and worshipping wholeheartedly.

So, how many really desire to walk with God, in righteousness, rather than live like sinful worldlings? How many really want to be overcomers now, and walk with Yeshua in Eden of the future?

(Hebrews 11:24) By faith Moses opted to serve God, rather than be rich under a worldly king. He had respect for the promised eternal future, rather than fleeting pleasure.

We are building an eternal house for ourselves (). What kind of house are we building? We can use gold, silver, and precious stones – meaning things that will last, or we can use wood, hay, and stubble – meaning things that will be destroyed.

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(9/6/2001 News) CHRISTIANITY has almost been vanquished in Britain, Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O’Connor told a gathering of priests yesterday.

“A tacit atheism prevails. Death is assumed to be the end of life. Our concentration on the here-and-now renders a thought of eternity irrelevant.”

“It does seem in our countries in Britain today, especially in England and Wales, that Christianity, as a sort of backdrop to people’s lives and moral decisions — and to the Government, the social life of the country — has now almost been vanquished.”

Increasing numbers of people now gain their “glimpses of the transcendent” from involvement in music, New Age movements and green issues. “I could go on about this and talk also about the rise in New Age and occult practices and the search being made by young people for something in which, or someone in whom, they can place their complete trust.”

People were seeking transient happiness in alcohol, drugs, pornography and recreational sex, the Cardinal said.

“There is indifference to Christian values and to the Church among many young people and, indeed, not only the young. You see quite a demoralized society, one where the only good is what I want, the only rights are my own, and the only life with any meaning or value is the life I want for myself.”

“There are many today who think that to believe in God is to limit one’s freedom.”

Yeshua said (Luke 16:9), “And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by means of the mammon of unrighteousness; that when it fails, they may receive you into the eternal dwellings.”

In other words, use your time and ability and money, of this life, to buy riches for your future with Yeshua. Spend your worldly provision with a priority on the eternal.

Ephesians 1:18

*I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints . . .*

Romans 9: 23-24

*. . . that 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.*

Hebrews 11:24-28

*24 By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; 25 choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin; 26 considering the reproach of Messiah greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward. 27 By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured, as seeing Him who is unseen. 28 By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of the blood, so that he who destroyed the first-born might not touch them.*

Isaac sowed.



**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).

*Reader 1\* Amen* <sup>1</sup> Now it came about, when Isaac was old and his eyes were too dim to see, that he called his older son Esau and said to him, "My son." And he said to him, "Here I am." <sup>2</sup> Isaac said, "Behold now, I am old and I do not know the day of my death." <sup>3</sup> "Now then, please take your gear, your quiver and your bow, and go out to the field and hunt game for me; <sup>4</sup> and prepare a savory dish for me such as I love, and bring it to me that I may eat, so that my soul may bless you before I die."

*Reader 2\* Amen* <sup>5</sup> Rebekah was listening while Isaac spoke to his son Esau. So when Esau went to the field to hunt for game to bring home, <sup>6</sup> Rebekah said to her son Jacob, "Behold, I heard your father speak to your brother Esau, saying, <sup>7</sup> 'Bring me some game and prepare a savory dish for me, that I may eat, and bless you in the presence of Yahweh before my death.'

*Reader 3\* Amen* <sup>8</sup> "Now therefore, my son, listen to me as I command you. <sup>9</sup> "Go now to the flock and bring me two choice young goats from there, that I may prepare them as a savory dish for your father, such as he loves. <sup>10</sup> "Then you shall bring it to your father, that he may eat, so that he may bless you before his death." <sup>11</sup> Jacob answered his mother Rebekah, "Behold, Esau my brother is a hairy man and I am a smooth man. <sup>12</sup> "Perhaps my father will feel me, then I will be as a deceiver in his sight, and I will bring upon myself a curse and not a blessing." <sup>13</sup> But his mother said to him, "Your curse be on me, my son; only obey my voice, and go, get them for me."

*Reader 4\* Amen* <sup>14</sup> So he went and got them, and brought them to his mother; and his mother made savory food such as his father loved. <sup>15</sup> Then Rebekah took the best garments of Esau her elder son, which were with her in the house, and put them on Jacob her younger son. <sup>16</sup> And she put the skins of the young goats on his hands and on the smooth part of his neck. <sup>17</sup> She also gave the savory food and the bread, which she had made, to her son Jacob.

*Reader 5\* Amen* <sup>18</sup> Then he came to his father and said, "My father." And he said, "Here I am. Who are you, my son?" <sup>19</sup> Jacob said to his father, "I am Esau your firstborn; I have done as you told me. Get up, please, sit and eat of my game, that you may bless me." <sup>20</sup> Isaac said to his son, "How is it that you have it so quickly, my son?" And he said, "Because Yahweh your God caused it to happen to me." <sup>21</sup> Then Isaac said to Jacob, "Please come close, that I may feel you, my son, whether you are really my son Esau or not." <sup>22</sup> So Jacob came close to Isaac his father, and he felt him and said, "The voice is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau."

*Reader 6\* Amen* <sup>23</sup> He did not recognize him, because his hands were hairy like his brother Esau's hands; so he blessed him. <sup>24</sup> And he said, "Are you really my son Esau?" And he said, "I am." <sup>25</sup> So he said, "Bring it to me, and I will eat of my son's game, that I may bless you." And he brought it to him, and he ate; he also brought him wine and he drank.

*Reader 7\* Amen* <sup>26</sup> Then his father Isaac said to him, "Please come close and kiss me, my son." <sup>27</sup> So he came close and kissed him; and when he smelled the smell of his garments, he blessed him and said, "See, the smell of my son is like the smell of a field which Yahweh has blessed; <sup>28</sup> Now may God give you of the dew of heaven, and of the fatness of the earth, and an abundance of grain and new wine; <sup>29</sup> may peoples serve you, and nations bow down to you; be master of your brothers, and may your mother's sons bow down to you. Cursed be those who curse you, and blessed be those who bless you."

### **Isaiah 43:3-6**

*Reader 8\* Amen* <sup>3</sup> "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. <sup>4</sup> "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. <sup>5</sup> "Do not fear, for I am with you; I will bring your offspring from the east, and gather you from the west. <sup>6</sup> "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,

### **Psalm 22** *(To be sung.) For the choir director; upon Aijeleth Hashshahar. A Psalm of David.*

<sup>1</sup> My God, my God, why have You forsaken me? Far from my deliverance are the words of my groaning. <sup>2</sup> O my God, I cry by day, but You do not answer; and by night, but I have no rest. <sup>3</sup> Yet You are holy, O You who are enthroned upon the praises of Israel. <sup>4</sup> In You our fathers trusted; they trusted and You delivered them. <sup>5</sup> To You they cried out and were delivered; in You they trusted and were not disappointed. <sup>6</sup> But I am a worm and not a man, a reproach of men and despised by the people. <sup>7</sup> All who see me sneer at me; they separate with the lip, they wag the head, saying, <sup>8</sup> "Commit yourself to Yahweh; let Him deliver him; let Him rescue him, because He delights in him." <sup>9</sup> Yet You are He who brought me forth from the womb; You made me trust when upon my mother's breasts. <sup>10</sup> Upon You I was cast from birth; You have been my God from my mother's womb. <sup>11</sup> Be not far from me, for trouble is near; for there is none to help. <sup>12</sup> Many bulls have surrounded me; strong bulls of Bashan have encircled me. <sup>13</sup> They open wide their mouth at me, as a ravening and a roaring lion. <sup>14</sup> I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; My heart is like wax; it is melted within me. <sup>15</sup> My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue cleaves to my jaws; and You lay me in the dust of death. <sup>16</sup> For dogs have surrounded me; a band of evildoers has encompassed me; they pierced my hands and my feet. <sup>17</sup> I can count all my bones. They look, they stare at me; <sup>18</sup> they divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots. <sup>19</sup> But You, O Yahweh, be not far off; O You my help, hasten to my assistance. <sup>20</sup> Deliver my soul from the sword, my only life from the power of the dog. <sup>21</sup> Save me from the lion's mouth; from the horns of the wild oxen You answer me. <sup>22</sup> I will tell of Your name to my brethren; in the midst of the assembly I will praise You. <sup>23</sup> You who fear Yahweh, praise Him; all you descendants of Jacob, glorify Him, and stand in awe of Him, all you descendants of Israel. <sup>24</sup> For He has not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; nor has He hidden His face from him; but when he cried to Him for help, He heard. <sup>25</sup> From You comes my praise in the great assembly; I shall pay my vows before those who fear Him. <sup>26</sup> The afflicted will eat and be satisfied; those who seek Him will praise Yahweh. Let your heart live forever! <sup>27</sup> All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to Yahweh, and all the families of the nations will worship before You. <sup>28</sup> For the kingdom is Yahweh's and He rules over the nations. <sup>29</sup> All the prosperous of the earth will eat and worship, all those who go down to the dust will bow before Him, even he who cannot keep his soul alive. <sup>30</sup> Posterity will serve Him; it will be told of Yahweh to the coming generation. <sup>31</sup> They will come and will declare His righteousness to a people who will be born, that He has performed it.

### **Hebrews 11:20**

*Reader 9\* Amen* <sup>20</sup> By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau, even regarding things to come.

## Commentary:

On this Sabbath before Yom Teruah – the rehearsal for the return of Yeshua, the subject is the son coming to receive the blessing. Why is the Psalm about the crucifixion? When Yeshua returns, we will see Him with the marks of crucifixion!

Genesis 27:

Isaac was 123 years old – the year was AM 2171. His eyes were dim – in God’s providence so that he would not give Esau the blessing. Though his thoughts were on dying, he actually lived another 57 years.

According to the Midrash, there are seven things hidden from even the greatest prophets: (1) the day of one’s death, (2) the time of Messiah’s arrival, (3) when Edom (the current dominant power) will fall, (4) the depth of the Torah, (5) the source of wealth, (6) the thoughts of other people, and (7) the sex of a pregnant woman’s child.

Isaac sought Esau’s game in order to be in a joyful state in giving the blessing. We are to be joyful givers – blessing must come from the soul.

An ancient teaching says that Isaac conferred the blessing on Passover, when the treasure houses of heaven are open for blessing. The first goat is seen as the Passover sacrifice, and the second for the delicacy (v. 10). This would be in keeping with the inclusion of Psalm 22, which concerns the crucifixion at Passover time.

Rebecca had received the prophecy that the elder was to serve the younger, therefore she set out to prevent Isaac from subverting it. This is not to imply that the end justified the means – lying. God will fulfill His promises to us without us having to sin to bring them to pass.

Jacob was concerned about the means of receiving the blessing. But Rebecca allayed his fears with this idea: the blessing was of God’s intent, and Isaac was only the conduit – thus Isaac’s intent was irrelevant. However, for this deception Jacob paid heavily: he hid for years out of fear of his brother.

In English translations it appears clear that Jacob lied. However, in the Hebrew, we can see that Jacob chose his words very carefully, deceiving without technically lying: “It (is) I who bring this to you; Esau (is) your firstborn.” His other statements are similarly ambiguous. Still, deceiving one’s father is considered akin to idolatry. (Based on the first five commandments, through “Honor father and mother,” falling under loving God; the last five fall under loving your neighbor.)

“The voice is Jacob’s, but the hands are Esau’s hands.” Jacob’s voice showed his strength to be spiritual, but Esau’s hands showed his strength to be in the physical realm. When our voice is strong in prayer and Torah teaching, then “Esau” (Edom/Rome) will have no power over us.

Here’s a wow:

Isaac’s blessing is in contrast to the curse in Genesis 3:18 [thorns and thistles / abundant grain and wine; by the sweat of your brow / peoples will serve you; dust you are (humiliation) / be a lord]. “In blessing Jacob, it was Isaac’s intention to annul the curse placed upon Adam after his sin, and thereby to restore the world to its former beauty” – Artscroll Tanach, based on Zohar. Remember, Isaac himself was a prophetic type of the Passover sacrifice (Yeshua) that would annul the curse for sin.

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Genesis 27 and Psalm 22 – Isaac had been bound to the wood for sacrifice, as a prophetic type of Yeshua. The Philistines had surrounded him and struggled with him over wells. Now he was dying,

Psalm 22 – original title: *My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?*

And about the ninth hour Yeshua cried out with a loud voice, saying, “Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?” that is, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” – Matt 27:46, Mark

15:34. Yeshua was crying from the cross, "Psalm 22! Psalm 22 is being fulfilled before your eyes!"

*Far from my deliverance are the words of my groaning. <sup>2</sup> O my God, I cry by day, but You do not answer; and by night, but I have no rest. <sup>3</sup> Yet You are holy, O You who are enthroned upon the praises of Israel. <sup>4</sup> In You our fathers trusted; they trusted and You delivered them. <sup>5</sup> To You they cried out and were delivered; in You they trusted and were not disappointed. <sup>6</sup> But I am a worm and not a man, a reproach of men and despised by the people. <sup>7</sup> All who see me sneer at me; they separate with the lip, they wag the head, saying, <sup>8</sup> "Commit yourself to Yahweh; let Him deliver him; let Him rescue him, because He delights in him."*

"He saved others; He cannot save Himself. He is the King of Israel; let Him now come down from the cross, and we shall believe in Him. 43 "He trusts in God; let Him deliver Him now, if He takes pleasure in Him; for He said, 'I am the Son of God' " – Matt 17:42.

*<sup>9</sup> Yet You are He who brought me forth from the womb; You made me trust when upon my mother's breasts. <sup>10</sup> Upon You I was cast from birth; You have been my God from my mother's womb. <sup>11</sup> Be not far from me, for trouble is near; for there is none to help. <sup>12</sup> Many bulls have surrounded me; strong bulls of Bashan have encircled me. <sup>13</sup> They open wide their mouth at me, as a ravening and a roaring lion. <sup>14</sup> I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; My heart is like wax; it is melted within me. <sup>15</sup> My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue cleaves to my jaws; and You lay me in the dust of death (Yeshua's burial). <sup>16</sup> For dogs (gentiles) have surrounded me; a band of evildoers has encompassed me; they pierced my hands and my feet.*

And He said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? "See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." And when He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet. – Luke 24: 38-40.

*<sup>17</sup> I can count all my bones. They look, they stare at me; <sup>18</sup> they divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots.*

And when they had crucified Him, they divided up His garments among themselves, casting lots for them, to decide what each should take. – Matt 27:35. Mark 15:24.

*<sup>19</sup> But You, O Yahweh, be not far off; O You my help, hasten to my assistance. <sup>20</sup> Deliver my soul from the sword, my only life from the power of the dog. <sup>21</sup> Save me from the lion's mouth; from the horns of the wild oxen You answer me. <sup>22</sup> I will tell of Your name to my brethren; in the midst of the assembly I will praise You. <sup>23</sup> You who fear Yahweh, praise Him; all you descendants of Jacob, glorify Him, and stand in awe of Him, all you descendants of Israel. <sup>24</sup> For He has not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; nor has He hidden His face from him; but when he cried to Him for help, He heard. <sup>25</sup> From You comes my praise in the great assembly; I shall pay my vows before those who fear Him. <sup>26</sup> The afflicted will eat and be satisfied; those who seek Him will praise Yahweh. Let your heart live forever! <sup>27</sup> All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to Yahweh, and all the families of the nations will worship before You. <sup>28</sup> For the kingdom is Yahweh's and He rules over the nations. <sup>29</sup> All the prosperous of the earth will eat and worship, all those who go down to the dust will bow before Him, even he who cannot keep his soul alive. <sup>30</sup> Posterity will serve Him; it will be told of Yahweh to the coming generation. <sup>31</sup> They will come and will declare His righteousness to a people who will be born, that He has performed it.*