

**The Rapture
&
Gathering of Israel**

by Claud Richmond

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Preface

The Apostle Paul writes, “we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air,¹” and “in the twinkling of an eye...this mortal must put on immortality.²” The book of Titus says:

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, ¹² instructing us to the intent that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we would live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present age; ¹³ looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ; ¹⁴ who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify for himself a people for his own possession, zealous for good works. (Titus 2:11-14)

The Rapture is the blessed hope. And the blessed hope is the resurrection of the dead in Christ. A people both living and dead, in a nano second, are transformed into immortal beings.

This is Paul’s theology. It’s distinct, yet undeniably Paul. He believed it, taught it, wrote about it, and described it in detail — a “catching away.”

This book is not a defense, nor a proof of Paul’s position. It is a quest. I’m curious as to its origin. Where did the concept come from, what is its birth, what is its genesis? I hope to gain an understanding by discovering and examining Paul’s sources.

The purpose of this book is to chronicle that search.

For this we tell you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will in no way precede those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with God’s trumpet. The dead in Christ will rise first, ¹⁷ then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air. So we will be with the Lord forever. ¹⁸ Therefore comfort one another with these words. (1 Thessalonians 4:15-18)

I write not to persuade, nor convince. I write to discover. In effect, these are my notes compiled from a variety of resources, over multiple years. You are invited to embark on this quest with me.

The Name

God’s name in Scripture is conveyed in the Hebrew as יהוה — the Hebrew letters *yod hey vav hey*. Scholars have named this the Tetragrammaton, meaning four letters — YHWH. The King James Version translates the Tetragrammaton as GOD 314 times, LORD 6,399 times, and LORD’S 111 times. Other translations like the American Standard Version use *Jehovah*, and Rotherham uses *Yahweh* in the Emphasized Bible. The Scriptures 98 and 2009 use יהוה.

When referring to the Name of God I will generally use YHWH, and use God for the Hebrew *Elohim*, and Lord or lord for the Hebrew *Adonai*; and from time to time I will use *elohim*.

Most English Bibles use Jesus, or Jesus Christ based upon the transliteration of the Greek *Ié-*

¹1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

²1 Corinthians 15:51-54

sous, or *Iésous Christos*. I prefer Yeshua, Yeshua Messiah, or Messiah Yeshua based upon the Hebrew משיח יהושע (Yeshua Mashiach, or Yeshua Messiah.)

May God richly bless you!

Chapter 1 – Biblical Basis for the Rapture

The word “Rapture” is not found in the English Bible. The popular English word used for the catching-up event (rapture) is derived from the Latin “*rapiemur*.”

When St. Jerome (347 to 419 CE) penned the Latin Vulgate he used the Latin verb *rapiemur* in I Thessalonians 4:17. *Rapiemur* comes from the Latin root verb *rapio*, meaning to carry off or to seize. Our English words rapt and rapture stem from this Latin verb. Thus, the English term “Rapture” was borrowed from the Latin Vulgate to describe what will happen at that moment based on I Thessalonians 4:17.

“...then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up (Greek - *harpazo*, Latin - *rapiemur*) together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air. So we will be with the Lord forever.” (I Thessalonians 4:17)

Rapture Passages

When researching passages for the Rapture, four prominently rise to the top:

- 1 Thessalonians Chapter 4
- 1 Corinthians Chapter 15
- Matthew Chapter 24, and
- Titus Chapter 2.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 highlights:

1. We need to not be ignorant of those that have fallen asleep.
2. We who are alive, and are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep.
3. The dead in Christ will rise first.
4. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up (Greek *harpazo*, Latin *rapiemur*) together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air.

But we don't want you to be ignorant, brothers, concerning those who have fallen asleep, so that you don't grieve like the rest, who have no hope. ¹⁴For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. ¹⁵For this we tell you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will in no way precede those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with God's trumpet. The dead in Christ will rise first, ¹⁷then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up (Greek *harpazo*, Latin *rapiemur*) together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air. So we will be with the Lord forever. ¹⁸Therefore comfort one another with these words. (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18)

1 Corinthians 15:51-54 highlights:

A mystery: we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed in an instant, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, the last trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we will

be changed.

Mortals will become immortals. The perishable body must become imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality.

Behold, I tell you a mystery. We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, ⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we will be changed. ⁵³ For this perishable body must become imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. ⁵⁴ But when this perishable body will have become imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then what is written will happen: “Death is swallowed up in victory.” (1 Corinthians 15:51-54)

Matthew 24:37-44 highlights:

If the master of the house had known what hour of the night the thief was coming, he would have watched, and would not have allowed his house to be broken into.

In those days before the flood people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the boat. They were unaware until the flood came and took them all away. It will be the same at the second coming of the Son of Man.

Two will be in the field: one will be taken and one will be left. Two will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and one will be left. We are to be always watchful; for you don't know in what hour your Lord comes.

“As the days of Noah were, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. ³⁸ For as in those days which were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ship, ³⁹ and they didn't know until the flood came, and took them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. ⁴⁰ Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken and one will be left. ⁴¹ Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and one will be left. ⁴² Watch therefore, for you don't know in what hour your Lord comes. ⁴³ But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what watch of the night the thief was coming, he would have watched, and would not have allowed his house to be broken into. ⁴⁴ Therefore also be ready, for in an hour that you don't expect, the Son of Man will come. (Matthew 24:37-44)

Titus 2:11-14 highlights:

Messiah brought salvation to all men when he appeared.

He instructs us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present age.

We are to always be looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. (Who gave himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify for Himself a people for his own possession, zealous for good works.)

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, ¹² instructing us to the intent that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we would live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present age; ¹³ looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ; ¹⁴ who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify for himself a people for his own possession, zealous for good works. (Titus 2:11-14)

Where to Start?

When I read Paul's words, "we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air,"³ and "in the twinkling of an eye...this mortal must put on immortality,"⁴ I have to ask — where did Paul come up with this stuff?

This is incredible! It's amazing! It's unimaginable!

Did he make it up? Did another man share this with him? What is his source?

We know Paul was a Pharisee, and was taught by Gamaliel, a first-century Torah teacher of the house of Hillel and a member of the Sanhedrin. We also know that Paul encountered Yeshua on the Road to Damascus, resulting in him becoming an ardent preacher in the Gospel of Messiah.

And according to Paul's epistle to the Galatians he did not receive the Gospel from man but through a revelation given to him by Yeshua Messiah when Paul was away in Arabia.⁵ He also traveled to Jerusalem three different times to meet with the Apostles of Messiah.

In 2 Corinthians Chapter 12 Paul describes a man who was "caught up to the third heaven...he was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter." I believe this is Paul talking about himself, alluding to the revelation given to him by Yeshua Messiah from the Book of Galatians.

There is one more element to consider. In 2 Timothy Paul asks for the scrolls and parchments or vellum.⁶ A.T. Robertson surmises that the books (scrolls) were probably papyrus rolls, possibly copies of Paul's letters or other books. And the "parchments" were likely copies of Old Testament books (Torah Scrolls) because parchment was more expensive than papyrus.⁷

Paul, then, was a student of Torah (Old Testament). Peter attests to this in Second Peter when he says, "Regard the patience of our Lord as salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given to him, wrote to you; ¹⁶ as also in all of his letters, speaking in them of these things. In those, there are some things that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unsettled twist, as they also do to the other Scriptures, to their own destruction."⁸

Paul did not just make it up. Nor did he learn it from another man. No. His source was Scripture and the Spirit of God. (See Appendices⁹ for more on Paul.)

³1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

⁴1 Corinthians 15:51-54

⁵Galatians 1:11-17

⁶2 Timothy 4:13

⁷Robertson, A. T. (1933). *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (2 Ti 4:13). Nashville, TN: Broadman Press.

⁸2 Peter 3:15-16

⁹Appendix A - Paul's Pedigree

Appendix B - Paul's Paradigm (Adam/Noah/Israel/The Stone

A Look at Scripture

As a Torah scholar, Paul would have been well-versed in the laws of the Torah. He would have known Scripture and the Oral Traditions of his time. He would have spent hours combing through the Torah searching for Truth.

Today is different. Few individuals spend time searching the Word. Instead, most of us allow our culture to instruct us, mold our way of thinking, and even manipulate us into conforming to the ideals of our time.

Take, for example, the classic movie “The Ten Commandments.”

It was filmed in 1956 by Cecil B. DeMille, and forever changed the way Americans understood the Exodus. Charlton Heston was a larger-than-life Moses, Yul Brynner was Rameses, Anne Baxter portrayed Nefretiri, and Edward G. Robinson played Dathan.

Most of us are familiar with the exodus story line, which centers on Moses’ mandate from God to return to Egypt to free the Hebrews from slavery. His mission — liberate Israel and lead them to the Promised Land

The film was nominated for many industry awards and received generally positive reviews after its release, but it did receive criticism for its divergence from the biblical text.

The Movie is not Accurate

Information released about the film states the movie's script was enhanced by non-biblical sources. Many of the film’s inaccuracies were, in fact, adopted by DeMille from extra-biblical ancient sources such as Josephus, the Sepher ha-Yashar, the Chronicle of Moses, and the Quran. And as would be expected, much of the script is merely fictional writing.

Ten quick examples of the non-Biblical imagery which now colors our thinking of the Exodus are:

1. Wives of kings are generally not mentioned by name in Scripture (except in the Esther story). Yet, a Queen Nefretiri, the wife of Rameses II, is one of the dominant components of the DeMille movie. The Bible mentions only Moses’s marriage with Zipporah.
2. Moses' mother is said to be Yoshebel in the movie, while Exodus 6:20 states it was Jochebed.
3. The daughter of Pharaoh is mentioned in the Bible only when she rescues baby Moses from the river. There is no reference of her going with the Israelites out of Egypt, as portrayed in the movie.
4. In the movie, Moses is shown to be a successful military commander, but that characterization comes from Josephus, not the Bible.
5. God instructed Moses to return to Egypt from Midian (Ex. 3:10), not Joshua.
6. In scripture Moses is described as being "not eloquent" in speaking (Exodus 4:10). The movie does not accurately portray this aspect of his life.
7. The movie shows only four of the 10 plagues of Egypt.
8. In the Bible God alone executes the final plague (Exodus 12) and Moses does not tell Pharaoh that his word will bring the last plague.
9. The movie shows an instant parting of the Red Sea. However, the Bible states that a strong east wind blew all night to part the waters (Exodus 14:21), thus Pharaoh’s army was kept at bay by the Lord for many hours, which is miraculous in itself.

10. Israel sang and danced praising God for the miraculous deliverance from Pharaoh and his armies (Exodus 15), The movie portrays them as simply standing in silent amazement.

Sadly, to so many, this movie is the real Exodus story. This is their basis of understanding of one of the greatest events to ever occur in human history.

Let that not be so with us. Let us not be deceived by words of men or by fanciful interpretations. Rather, may we be lovers of the truth.¹⁰ Let us emulate the believers from Berea, who “received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so.”¹¹

¹⁰Second Thessalonians 2:10

¹¹Acts 17:11

Chapter 2 – The Beginning

Whether we know it or not, everything in Scripture is “made known from the beginning.” In other words, the end of time is revealed in the beginning.

“Remember this, and show yourselves men.
Bring it to mind again, you transgressors.
⁹ Remember the former things of old:
for I am God, and there is no other.
I am God, and there is none like me.
¹⁰ I declare the end from the beginning,
and from ancient times things that are not yet done.
I say: My counsel will stand,
and I will do all that I please.” (Isaiah 46:8-10)

Therefore our starting point for this study on the “Rapture” is the beginning: Genesis 1:1

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. ² The earth was formless and empty. Darkness was on the surface of the deep and God’s Spirit was hovering over the surface of the waters.

The first sentence of Genesis in Hebrew is:

ברשית ברא אלהים את השמים ואת הארץ

Hebrew is read right to left starting on the right side of the sentence. On an actual Torah scroll the first letter would be *Bet* (ב) and would be enlarged.

A transliteration¹² of this sentence is *bərêšît bārā ’ēlōhîm ēt haššmayim vĕ ēt hā ārets*.

The *Bet* (ב) is enlarged for a reason — to draw our attention to it.

The *bet* in ancient Hebrew script is a pictogram of a tent and represents a house, or a household.

The Hebrew word for “house” is *bayit* and transliterated as *bet* (or *beth*), and means “house.” *Bayit* begins with the letter *bet*.

Many synagogues use *Beth* as part of their name: *Beth Israel*, *Beth El*, *Beth Shalom*, *Beth Immanuel*, and so on. Other Hebrew terms using *Bet* (with the “h” omitted/silent) are *Bet Yisrael* (house of Israel); *Bet Olam* (house of eternity); *Bet Lechem* (Bethlehem, House of bread); *Bet-El* (House of God); *Bet Din* (House of Justice); *Bet Tefillah* (House of prayer); *Bet Sefer* (house of book).

The association of a *bet* as meaning house or household is common and well known to students of Hebrew.

Yeshua understood this when he spoke in John 14:2-3:

“In my Father’s house are many homes (*places to abide*). If it weren’t so, I would have told you. I am going to prepare a place for you. ³ If I go and prepare a place for

¹²Transliterate: to change (letters, words, etc.) into corresponding characters of another alphabet or language.

you, I will come again, and will receive you to myself; that where I am, you may be there also. ⁴ Where I go, you know, and you know the way.”

In speaking this, Yeshua draws our attention to the house, to *Bet*, to the very first letter of Scripture. This illustrates the importance of the *Bet*. The very first concept presented to us in Scripture is that of a House, a household—God’s House or God’s Household. And Scripture concludes with a House, God’s dwelling place with His people.¹³

This theme of God’s House provides the book ends of Scripture. This is the primary/essential theme. God is building a House, a household, a family. Every other theme found in Scripture is subservient to this thought —The House.

Inside a house we find the family. It’s interesting that in Hebrew “father” is אב *ab* —spelled *alef bet*. The *alef* is a pictograph of an ox, meaning strength; *bet* is a pictograph of a tent, meaning house. Therefore *ab* (father) is the strength of the house. And “son” in Hebrew is בן *ben* — spelled *bet nun*. *Bet*, again, is a pictograph of a tent, meaning house; *nun* is a pictograph of darting fish, meaning life. Therefore, a *ben* (son) is the life of the house.

We could go on and on with other examples, but the simple point of the enlarged Hebrew *Bet* of Genesis 1 is that the house is important — so important to God that it is the first thought expressed in Scripture.

We could outline John 14:2-3 like this:

“In my Father’s house

- are many homes (places to abide).
- If it weren’t so,
- I would have told you.

I am going to prepare a place for you.

- If I go and prepare a place for you,
- I will come again,
- and will receive you to myself;
- that where I am, you may be there also.

Where I go, you know, and you know the way.”

We see how the Father’s House is directly connected to a place prepared for us, and that Yeshua is going to come again to receive us. “Receive” is *lambano* (λαμβάνω) in the Greek, and means to take or to receive.

Rotherham translates:

And <if I go, and prepare a place for you>
|Again| am I coming, and will take you home unto myself, That <where ||I|| am> ||ye
also|| may be. [John 14:3 (EMPH)]

Yeshua is coming back to take us to The House, God’s House!

Isn’t Scripture exciting!

¹³Revelation 21:1-8

Gleaning from Genesis

The first verse of Genesis is: “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.”

This simple declarative statement is filled with profound information. It is not a scientific treatise packed with hypothesis, theory, and supposition. No, it is a sparse but majestic declaration stating that in the beginning (from man’s viewpoint) God existed and He created not only the heavens, but also the earth.

Notice, just one God existed — not gods, but one God, singular. And as Creator He is owner. He owns everything — the sky, the earth, water, man, you and me — everything. And therefore He can do whatever He pleases. He is the one who establishes the rules.

- “For by him all things were created, in the heavens and on the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created through him, and for him. ¹⁷He is before all things, and in him all things are held together.” (Colossians 1:16-17)
- “Behold, to Yahweh your God belongs heaven and the heaven of heavens, the earth, with all that is therein.” (Deuteronomy 10: 14)
- “... for the world is mine, and all that is in it.” (Psalms 50:12)
- “I will shake all nations. The precious things of all nations will come, and I will fill this house with glory, says Yahweh of Armies. ⁸The silver is mine, and the gold is mine,’ says Yahweh of Armies.” (Haggai 2:7-8)
- “Yours, Yahweh, is the greatness, the power, the glory, the victory, and the majesty! For all that is in the heavens and in the earth is yours. Yours is the kingdom, Yahweh, and you are exalted as head above all. ¹²Both riches and honor come from you, and you rule over all! In your hand is power and might! It is in your hand to make great, and to give strength to all!” (1 Chronicles 29:11-12)
- “Blessed be the name of God forever and ever; for wisdom and might are his. ²¹He changes the times and the seasons. He removes kings, and sets up kings. He gives wisdom to the wise, and knowledge to those who have understanding. ²²He reveals the deep and secret things. He knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with him.” (Daniel 2:20-22)

God’s Calendar

Out of chaos, waste and darkness God spoke order into existence by separating light from darkness, and then separating the sky from the water and then land. In the midst of His creating order we see Him establishing a framework for time and seasons for all of His creation, including us.

In Genesis 1:14-19 God establishes a calendar. The sun, the moon, and the stars are set in the heavens as markers to indicate— the appointed times, the *moedim* in Hebrew.

God said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs to mark seasons (moedim), days, and years; ¹⁵ and let them be for lights in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth;” and it was so. ¹⁶God made the two great lights: the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. He also made the stars. ¹⁷God set them in the expanse of the sky to give light to the earth, ¹⁸and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness. God saw that it was good. ¹⁹There was evening and there was morning, a fourth day. (Genesis 1:14-19)

Most English translations translate *moedim* as “seasons,” making English speakers think of the

seasons of the year, like spring, summer, autumn and winter; and while that is not incorrect, it is incomplete. The Hebrew word *moedim*, means appointed times. It comes from the Hebrew, יָעַד (*yaad*) meaning to appoint, assign.

Days are appointed by God

In Genesis Chapter 1 God divides the light from the day, and appoints (assigns) a period of time we call a day, יוֹם *yom* in Hebrew. He then establishes the days: Day 1, Day 2, Day 3, Day 4, Day 5, Day 6, and finally the Sabbath (the 7th Day). Sabbath, from the word *sheva* (שָׁבַע) is the word for seven in Hebrew. This forms a week.

Weeks are appointed by God

Our English word “week” is translated from the Hebrew *sha-vu-ah* and also has the root *sheva*, meaning seven. *Shavuah*¹⁴ (week) first appears in Genesis 29:27-28, “²⁷ Fulfill the week (*shavuah*) of this one, and we will give you the other also for the service which you will serve with me for seven more years.”²⁸ Jacob did so, and fulfilled her week (*shavuah*.) He gave him Rachel his daughter as wife.”

Seasons are appointed by God.

In Genesis 8:21-22 God promises not to destroy all life again, “While the earth remains, seed time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night will not cease.” And in Deuteronomy 11:14, Leviticus 26:4, and Jeremiah 5:24 God gives rain in its season, both early and latter rain, that grain might be gathered for new wine and oil. God will give both the autumn rain and the spring rain, in its season to those who preserve the appointed weeks of the harvest, and in Psalms 104:19 God created the moon for this very reason, to distinguish the seasons of the year.

Months are appointed by God

In Jeremiah 31:35, YHVH places the sun for a light by day, and the fixed order of the moon and of the stars for a light by night...YHVH of Armies is his name.

The word “month” is found in Exodus 2:2, Deuteronomy 21:13; 33:14, 1 Kings 6:37, 38; 1 Kings 8:2, 2 Kings 15:13, Job 3:6; 7:3; 29:2; 39:2; Isaiah 60:20, and Zechariah 11:8. The Hebrew word translated month is יָרַח *yerach* and, per *Strong's*, it means either month or moon. It is from an unused Hebrew root signifying a lunation, or cycle of the month.

Hebrew scripture also uses the word *chodesh* 283 times, and is translated either new moon or a month. The first usage of *chodesh* is found in Genesis 7:11 where in the 600th year of Noah's life, in the second month (*chodesh*), on the seventeenth day of the month (*chodesh*), on the same day all the fountains of the great deep burst open and the floodgates of the sky were opened.

Take note of the term “second month.” It seems from here and other passages that God numbered the months. For example in Genesis 8:4 “in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, the ark rested upon the mountains of Ararat;” in Genesis 8:5 “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;” and in Exodus 12:2 “This month (the month when the barley is *aviv*) is the begin-

¹⁴Shavuah also appears in: Exodus 34:22, Leviticus 12:5, Numbers 28:26, Deuteronomy 16:9, 10, 16, 2 Chronicles 8:13, Jeremiah 5:24, Ezekiel 45:21, Daniel 9:24, 25, 26, 27; 10:2, 3

ning of months; it is the first month of the year.”

Years are appointed by God

Genesis 1:14 assigns the “lights in the firmament of the heavens” as indicators of day and night, days, seasons (*modedim*) and years.¹⁵

The Hebrew word for “year” in Genesis 1:14 is שָׁנָה *shā-nā* and is used over 879 times in Scripture to describe a period of 12 lunar months – a year.¹⁶

Thus, without Scripture explicitly stating it, I think it is safe to say that God has created a calendar. A wonderful, massive, accurate calendar where the sun, the moon and the stars are the indicators used to mark time, nights, days, weeks, years, special (feast) days, and epochs.

Epochs are appointed by God

Epochs are events or times marking out larger periods of time characterized by distinctive elements.

The Psalmist defines an epoch this way, “⁴For a thousand years in your sight are just like yesterday when it is past, like a watch in the night.” (Psalms 90:4)

As mentioned above, the Hebrew word for “day” is יוֹם *yom* and means day, or daylight. Psalms 90:4 uses an expanded meaning, which Peter picks up on and applies it to the creation week, enlarging it to include the whole of time. In other words, Peter is saying that human history will last 6,000 years — 1,000 years for each day of creation.

Peter gives us important end time calendar information in one of his epistles, 2 Peter 3:5-10:

“But don’t forget this one thing, beloved, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. ⁹The Lord is not slow concerning his promise, as some count slowness; but is patient with us, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. ¹⁰But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.”

We must remember that Peter was a Jew, meaning he was raised in Judaism. Jewish rabbis have taught for thousands of years that, “God created the heavens and the earth in six days and on the 7th day he rested...man will have his time of reign on earth for 6,000 years and the Messiah will reign in the 7th millennium.” Peter is speaking to this in his second epistle.

A simplistic chronology of a day equaling a thousand years as tied to the creation week is as follows:

Genesis 1:3-5

- First day: Light and dividing it from darkness
- First Thousand Years – Time of Adam

Genesis 1:6-8

- Second day: The firmament or atmosphere, and separating the waters

¹⁵*shānāh* (שָׁנָה, 8141), Hebrew word signifying “year”

¹⁶(2017). *The Lexham Analytical Lexicon of the Hebrew Bible*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

- Second Thousand Years – Time of Noah and the Flood

Genesis 1:9-13

- Third day: Separating the land from the water, and making it fruitful
- Third Thousand Years – Time of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Birth of Israel as a nation, Moses, the Exodus, and the giving of Torah on Mount Sinai

Genesis 1:14-19

- Fourth day: The sun, moon, and stars
- Fourth Thousand Years – Israel Divided – Messiah Comes

Genesis 1:20-23

- Fifth day: Birds, insects, and fishes
- Fifth Thousand Years – Israel scattered among the Nations (two days)

Genesis 1:24-28

- Sixth day: Beasts of the earth, and man
- Sixth Thousand Years – Creation of a new man

Genesis 2:1-3

- Seventh Day: The Sabbath
- Seventh Thousand Year – Day of the Lord, Messiah Gathers the Nation of Israel and restores all things

Jewish rabbis understood Messiah would come on the fourth day, or the fourth millennium. This belief was based on Malachi 4:2:

“But to you who fear my name shall the sun of righteousness arise with healing in its wings. You will go out, and leap like calves of the stall.”

The “Sun of Righteousness” is a Hebraism referring to Messiah. The sun was created on the fourth day, thus Messiah would arise in the fourth millennium with healing in His wings. Wings *קנפֿתֿ* *kanaph* are a reference to the hem of His garment, or the *tzitzit*.

This belief is clearly seen in Matthew 14:34-36, Matthew 9:20, and similar accounts in the Gospels.

- When they had crossed over, they came to the land of Gennesaret. ³⁵ And when the men of that place recognized Him, they sent out into all that surrounding region, brought to Him all who were sick, ³⁶ and begged Him that they might only touch the hem of His garment. And as many as touched *it* and were made perfectly well. (Matthew 14:34-36)
- And suddenly, a woman who had a flow of blood for twelve years came from behind and touched the hem of His garment. ²¹ For she said to herself, “If only I may touch His garment, I shall be made well.” ²² But Jesus turned around, and when He saw her He said, “Be of good cheer, daughter; your faith has made you well.” And the woman was made well from that hour. (Matthew 9:20-22)

Hosea Chapter 6 ties many of these one day/thousand year concepts together:

“Come, and let us return to the LORD; For He has torn, but He will heal us; He has stricken, but He will bind us up. ² After two days He will revive us; On the third day He will raise us up, That we may live in His sight. ³ Let us know, Let us pursue the knowledge of the LORD. His going forth is established as the morning; He will come to us like the rain, Like the latter *and* former rain to the earth.” (Hosea 6:1-3)

Hosea 6:1 begins with a call to return to YHVH, “Come, and let us return to the LORD;” then adds, “He has torn, but He will heal us; He has stricken, but He will bind us up.” The phrases “He has torn... He has stricken” and “He will heal us...He will bind us up” are typical Hebraisms using parallelism.

“He has torn... He has stricken” means Israel has been scattered among the nations.

“He will heal us...He will bind us up” means Israel will be gathered and return to YHVH.

Hebrews 6:2 gives the time frame for both the scattering and the gathering of Israel.

“After two days” means the fifth day and sixth day, or the fifth and sixth millennium. “He will revive us” means Israel will be raised from the dead — a resurrection. “On the third day” means the Sabbath or the Millennial Reign of Messiah, where believers will rule and reign with the King of the Universe.

“He will raise us up, that we may live in His sight,” sounds an awful lot like:

“For this we tell you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will in no way precede those who have fallen asleep.

¹⁶For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with God’s trumpet. The dead in Christ will rise first, ¹⁷then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air. So we will be with the Lord forever. ¹⁸Therefore, comfort one another with these words.” (1 Thessalonians 4:15-18)

"Hosea 6:3 adds “Let us know, Let us pursue the knowledge of the LORD” with the purpose of knowing in a relational way. Pursue knowing God in order to live in His presence. His going forth is sure, like the dawning of morning. His coming is like the rain, like the latter *and* former rain to the earth.

The former and latter rains are coupled to the seasons, the appointed times. As we have already seen, times/seasons are assigned by God (see Deuteronomy 11:14, Leviticus 26:4, Jeremiah 5:24)

Jamieson, Fausset & Brown say this: “the rain generally is mentioned; then the two rains (Deut. 11:14) which caused the fertility of Palestine, and the absence of which was accounted the greatest calamity: "the latter rain" which falls in the latter half of February, and during March and April, just before the harvest whence it takes its name, from a root meaning "to gather"; and "the former rain," literally, "the darting rain," from the middle of October to the middle of December. As the rain fertilizes the otherwise barren land, so God's favor will restore Israel long nationally lifeless.”

Peter finishes his thought on “one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day” in 2 Peter 3:10-13 by saying:

“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. ¹¹ Therefore since all these things will be destroyed like this, what kind of people ought you to be in holy living and godliness, ¹² looking for and earnestly desiring the coming of the day of God, which will cause the burning heavens to be dissolved, and the elements will melt with fervent heat?”

Peter portrays the end of the millennial weeks with a bang. The creation, as we know it, will end with a great noise. And God's plan moves to the next phase – a new Habitation, a new House, with a “New Heaven” and a “New Earth” and Jerusalem coming down adorned as a bride; “And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.” (Revelation 21:3 NKJV)

Feasts are appointed by God

Scripture says even more about the *moedim*, the times appointed by God.

Leviticus 23 begins with YHVH speaking to Moses and saying, “Speak to the children of Israel, and tell them, ‘The set feasts of Yahweh, which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, even these are my set feasts.’”

Rotherham renders Leviticus 23:2 this way:

“Speak unto the sons of Israel, and thou shalt say unto them,
<As for the appointed seasons of Yahweh, which ye shall proclaim as holy convocations> ||
these|| are they—my appointed seasons:” (EMPH)

The Hebrew word for “feasts” in Leviticus 23:2 is *moedim* – appointed times.

Leviticus lays out, with clarity, the annual appointed times of YHVH. The first “feast” or appointed time is the Sabbath (verse 3); followed by Passover and Unleavened Bread (verses 4-8) then First-fruits (verses 9-14); Feasts of Weeks (verses 15-22); Trumpets; Atonement (verses 26-32); and ending with Tabernacles (verses 33-44.)

Leviticus 23 is a map of the annual rotation of God's appointed times. It defines the month and the day or days the feast is to occur. These are the set times that God has appointed to meet with His people.

It's important to note that these are not “Jewish” feasts. These are set times by YHVH and serve a greater purpose than espoused by Judaism. “These are the appointed feasts of the LORD...” Lev.23:4. They are set apart times for all His people to enjoy with Him.

The Hebrew for “Holy Convocations” is מִקְרָא *mikrā* and means assembly, calling, convocation, or reading. It comes from *ka-ra'* meaning something called out. These are the times that God is calling His people to Him. These are special set occasions to meet with the Almighty.

The **Feasts of the Lord** remind us of things that have happened — and of things that will happen. They tell a story.

Sabbath is the weekly reminder of the greater Sabbath, the Day of the Lord. It is a day characterized by a pouring out of divine wrath on enemies of God, and a day of divine blessing for the people of God. It is the day to turn from idols and turn to YHVH. It reminds us to seek God's mercy, call on His name, and seek refuge in the Rock. It foretells of the conclusion of the ages.

Passover is the story of redemption, Messiah, and the Passover Lamb. **Feast of Unleavened Bread** is the reminder to be set-apart for YHVH's use, and how Messiah's body would not see de-

cay in the grave.

The Feast of Firstfruits is the story of resurrection. Death could not hold Him in the grave. **The Feast of Weeks (Pentecost)** is the story of Torah, the *ketubah*, the marriage contract, the giving of the covenant to Israel at Mount Sinai; and the coming of the Holy Spirit to lead and guide us into all truth.

The Feast of Trumpets celebrates the announcement of the coming King. It reminds us to make ourselves ready, for The Day is at hand. On the **Day of Atonement** the books are opened. Both the dead and the living are judged – some to eternal life, others to eternal damnation. The feasts conclude with **The Feast of Tabernacles**. This is when Messiah gathers the Nation of Israel and restores all things. Israel will then be in the land and will rule and reign with Messiah for a thousand years. The feasts are also known as the Cycle of Righteousness.

Psalms 23:3 “He restores my soul. He guides me in the paths of righteousness for his name’s sake.” “Paths” in Hebrew is מַגָּל *magal* or *magalah*; and means an entrenchment, ruts, track. It’s the picture of a circular path, and translated “circle of the camp” in 1 Samuel 17:20; 26:5; 26:7. The Hebrew *magal* comes from אָגַל *āgōl* meaning to revolve, circular.

Yahweh is my shepherd: I shall lack nothing. ² He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. ³ He restores my soul. He guides me in the paths (cycles) of righteousness for his name’s sake. ⁴ Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me. Your rod and your staff, they comfort me. ⁵ You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil. My cup runs over. ⁶ Surely goodness and loving kindness shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in Yahweh’s house forever. (Psalm 23:1-6)

Psalms 23 begins with YHVH being our Shepherd, our Provider. Then He leads us in the Cycles of Righteousness which leads to a banquet and living in His House forever.

This is the theme of Scripture. It begins with The House and ends with The House. The course we are to take is to follow the Cycles of Righteousness — Redemption through Messiah, being set-apart for His use, the resurrection, walking in Torah, listening for the announcement that the King is coming, facing judgment, and concluding with life forever in the House of YHVH.

The Mazzaroth

He counts the number of the stars. He calls them all by their names. ⁵ Great is our Lord, and mighty in power. His understanding is infinite. (Psalms 147:4-5)

“Can you bind the cluster of the Pleiades, or loosen the cords of Orion? ³² Can you lead the *Mazzaroth* (constellations) out in their season? Or can you guide the Bear with her cubs? ³³ Do you know the laws of the heavens? Can you establish its dominion over the earth? (Job 38:31-33)

Mazzaroth is the Hebrew transliteration of מַזָּרוֹת *Mazzārōt*. It is a Biblical Hebrew word found exclusively in the Book of Job.¹⁷ It refers to the configuration of stars, or constellations as seen from

¹⁷Job 38:32

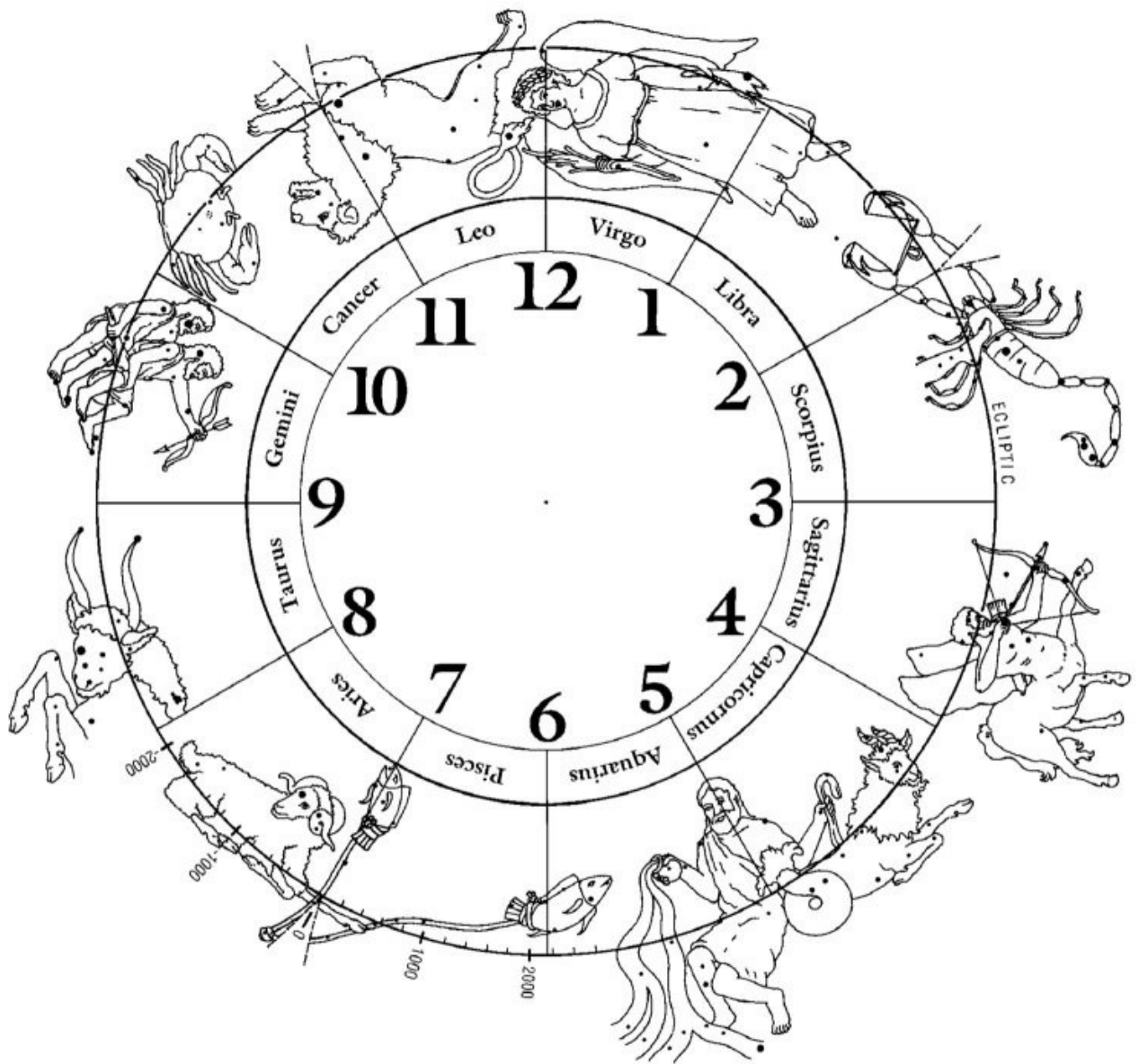
the earth. This topic should not cause alarm or apprehension. It is not to be misconstrued with the zodiac.

The *Mazzaroth* is the story of God written in the heavens, and is a large part of the signs mentioned in Genesis 1:14, “God said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs to mark seasons, days, and years.”

The main series of the forty-eight constellations found in the *Mazzaroth* form a line where the sun marks its progress through the year. This is called the Ecliptic. That line is the path of the earth around the sun, where the sun moves approximately thirty degrees every month. At the end of the twelfth month the sun appears where it started again. This is the first month. The moon and planets follow much the same path, and are seen within eight or nine degrees of the line of the sun’s course. This forms a belt, about sixteen degrees wide, extending around the entire circuit of the heavens. Half of the year this belt appears north of the equator and the other half south of the equator.

As the sun makes this annual course from east to west through the center of this belt, the moon makes twelve complete revolutions around the earth, dividing this belt into twelve parts of thirty degrees each, therefore twelve times thirty degrees equals a complete cycle. There are then, twelve equal stages in the path of the sun as it makes its annual circuit through the heavens.

In this belt there are twelve moons (months) for each stage forming the twelve signs of the *Mazzaroth*.



The Twelve Signs

Each of these stages includes a certain number of fixed stars that make up a constellation. Each constellation has its own picture or “sign” from which it is named. These constellations form the *Mazzaroth*. These signs are:

1. VIRGO, the Virgin: the figure of a young woman lying prostrate, with an ear of wheat in one hand and a branch in the other.
2. LIBRA, the Scales: the figure of a pair of balances, with one end of the beam up and the other down, as in the act of weighing. In some of the old charts , a hand or a woman appears holding the scales.
3. SCORPIO, the Scorpion: the figure of a gigantic, noxious, and deadly insect, with its tail and sting uplifted in anger, as if striking.
4. SAGITTARIUS, the Bowman: the figure of a horse with the body, arms, and head of a man — a centaur with a drawn bow and arrow pointed at the Scorpion.
5. CAPRICORNUS, the Goat: the figure of a goat sinking down as in death, with the hinder part of its body terminating in the vigorous tail of a fish.

6. AQUARIUS, the waterman: the figure of a man with a large urn, the contents of which he is pouring out in a great stream from the sky.
7. PISCES, the Fishes: the figures of two large fishes in the act of swimming, one to the northward, the other with the ecliptic.
8. ARIES, the Ram, by some nations called the Lamb: the figure of a strong sheep, with powerful curved horns, lying down in easy composure, and looking out in conscious strength over the field around it.
9. TAURUS, the Bull: the figure of the shoulders, neck, head, horns, and front feet of a powerful bull, in the attitude of rushing and pushing forward with great energy.
10. GEMINI, the Twins, or a man and woman sometimes called Adam and Eve: usually, two human figures closely united, and seated together in endeared affection. In some of the older representations the figure of this constellation consists of two goats, or kids.
11. CANCER, the Crab: the figure of a crab, in the act of taking and holding on with its strong pincer claws. In Egyptian astronomy a scabrous beetle, grasping and holding on to the ball in which its eggs are deposited, takes the place of the crab.
12. LEO, the Lion: the figure of a great rampant lion, leaping forth to rend, with his feet over the writhing body of Hydra, the Serpent, which is in the act of fleeing.

These twelve signs cover a large portion of the visible heavens, and extend around the earth, making and marking the Mazzaroth. Could it be that YHVH would use the heavenlies to speak to us in the picture language of the constellations? Has He confirmed his forever feast days in the stars which He “set in place forever and ever” (Psalm 148)? Psalm 19 also portrays the heavens as proclaiming God’s glory through the ages:

The heavens declare the glory of God. The expanse shows his handiwork. ² Day after day they pour out speech, and night after night they display knowledge. ³ There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard. ⁴ Their voice has gone out through all the earth, their words to the end of the world. In them he has set a tent for the sun, ⁵ which is as a bridegroom coming out of his room, like a strong man rejoicing to run his course. ⁶ His going out is from the end of the heavens, his circuit to its ends; There is nothing hidden from its heat. (Psalm 19:1-6)

Mazzaroth Chart – Month to Biblical Feast

Biblical Month	Mazzaroth Signs	Mazzaroth Figures	Biblical Feast
1	Aries	The Ram (or Lamb)	
2	Taurus	Taurus, the Bull	Shavout - Pentecost
3	Gemini	The Twins, or a man and woman, sometimes called Adam and Eve	
4	Cancer	The Crab	
5	Leo	The Lion	
6	Virgo	The Virgin	
7	Libra	The Scales	Trumpets, Atonement, Tabernacles

8	Scorpio	The Scorpion	
9	Sagittarius	The Archer	
10	Capricorn	The Goat	
11	Aquarius	The Water-Bearer	
12	Pisces	The Fish	

E.W. Bullinger writes in *The Witness of the Stars*:

For more than 2,500 years His people had not this Revelation written in a book as we now have it in the Bible, they were not left in ignorance and darkness as to God's purposes and counsels; nor were they without hope as to ultimate deliverance from all evil and from the Evil One.

Adam, who first heard that wondrous promise, repeated it, and gave it to his posterity as a most precious heritage--the ground of all their faith, the substance of all their hope, the object of all their desire. Seth and Enoch took it up. Enoch, we know, prophesied of the Lord's coming, saying, "Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints to execute judgment upon all" (Jude 14). How could these "holy prophets, since the world began," have recorded their prophecies better, or more effectually, or more truthfully and powerfully, than in these star-pictures and their interpretation? This becomes a certainty when we remember the words of the Holy Spirit by Zacharias (Luke 1:67-70).

And in another place Bullinger writes:

Thus we see that the Scriptures are not silent as to the great antiquity of the signs and constellations.

If we turn to history and tradition, we are at once met with the fact that the Twelve Signs are the same, both as to the meaning of their names and as to their order in all the ancient nations of the world. The Chinese, Chaldean, and Egyptian records go back to more than 2,000 years BC. Indeed, the zodiacs in the Temples of Denderah and Esneh, in Egypt, are doubtless copies of zodiacs still more ancient, which, from internal evidence, must be placed nearly 4,000 BC, when the summer solstice was in Leo.

Josephus hands down to us what he gives as the traditions of his own nation, corroborated by his reference to eight ancient Gentile authorities, whose works are lost. He says that they all assert that "God gave the antediluvians such long life that they might perfect those things which they had invented in astronomy." Cassini commences his *History of Astronomy* by saying "It is impossible to doubt that astronomy was invented from the beginning of the world; history, profane as well as sacred, testifies to this truth." Nouet, a French astronomer, infers that the Egyptian Astronomy must have arisen 5,400 BC!

Ancient Persian and Arabian traditions ascribe its invention to Adam, Seth, and Enoch. Josephus asserts that it originated in the family of Seth; and he says that the children of Seth, and especially Adam, Seth, and Enoch, that their revelation might not be lost as to the two coming judgments of

Water and Fire, made two pillars (one of brick, the other of stone), describing the whole of the predictions of the stars upon them, and in case the brick pillar should be destroyed by the flood, the stone would preserve the revelation (Book 1, Chapters 1-3).

For more on this subject please see:

- *The Gospel in the Stars* by Joseph A. Seiss
- *The Witness of the Stars* by E.W. Bullinger
- *The Heavens Declare* by William D. Banks

Chapter 3 – The Goal

In the last chapter we discovered how the Bible starts with the picture of a House, and ends in the Book of Revelation with the House of God coming down out of heaven. Scripture emphasizes the importance of the House — God’s House — with abundant repetition. The House is the bookends of Scripture.

E.W. Bullinger discusses this figure of speech in his book, *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*. He talks about the “repetition of the same word or words” (concepts) at the beginning and end of a sentence. He calls it “Encircling, Inclusio, or Cyclus” because the repetition concludes in a circle, calling our attention to the importance of the subject.

Knowing we are investigating the topic of God’s House, and now having discussed the backdrop of the sun, the moon, and the stars as heavenly indicators for the times He has appointed on His heavenly calendar, let us proceed to look into **His Goal and Purpose of Man**.

Why did God, who is so magnificent, so unsearchable, and so wonderful, make a finite creature as fragile, fickle, and feeble as man?

We begin at Genesis 1:26-28:

God said, “Let’s make man in our image, after our likeness. Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the sky, and over the livestock, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” ²⁷ God created man in his own image. In God’s image he created him; male and female he created them. ²⁸ God blessed them. God said to them, “Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it. Have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

This is a Statement of Purpose. The Hebrew word for “image” (*tselem*) means something made in the likeness of something else; as in a copy, or a replica.

So Adam “began a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth” (Gen. 5:3). In this sense Seth becomes a little Adam.

The Hebrew word for “likeness” (*demut*) as a noun means likeness, shape, or pattern; and as a verb *damah* means to be like, to resemble, be or act like.

“Image” and “likeness” in verse 26 are not two different ideas. They are two different words expressing the same thought. This is the Hebraic figure of speech called “Hendiadys” where two words are used, but only one thing, or one idea is intended. It is used for emphasis.

In John Chapter 10 the Jews pick up stones to stone Yeshua. Yeshua asked why, and they said, “We don’t stone you for a good work, but for blasphemy: because you, being a man, make yourself God.”

So Yeshua replied, “Isn’t it written in your Torah, ‘I said, you are gods?’ This Scripture called those people gods who received God’s message, and Scripture is always true. So why do you say that I speak against God because I said, ‘I am God’s Son?’” (See John 10:31ff)

In this simple dialogue, Yeshua reveals that, even though He is a man, He is God. And to add impact He quotes Psalm 82:6, "I said, "You are gods, And all of you are sons of the Most High."

John says the same thing in 1John 3:2, "Beloved, now we are children of God, and it is not yet revealed what we will be. But we know that when he is revealed, we will be like him; for we will see him just as he is."

Maybe Paul's declaration in 1 Corinthians isn't so strange after all:

Behold, I tell you a mystery. We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed,⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we will be changed.⁵³ For this perishable body must become imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality.⁵⁴ But when this perishable body will have become imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then what is written will happen: "Death is swallowed up in victory." (1 Corinthians 15:51-54)

This is the point of Genesis 1:26. The intent, the **Goal** is to create man in the likeness and image of God. And that was accomplished in Adam.

In Genesis 3:8 God's voice is heard walking in the garden. In verse 9 YHVH calls out to man. Why?

Adam Clarke suggests, "It is very likely that God used to converse with them in the garden, and that the usual time was the decline of the day, in the evening breeze."

Adam, then, was created in the likeness of God to fellowship with God, to love God.

This is the first and greatest commandment:

Hear, Israel: Yahweh is our God. Yahweh is one.⁵ **You shall love Yahweh your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might.**⁶ These words, which I command you today, shall be on your heart;⁷ and you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise up.⁸ You shall bind them for a sign on your hand, and they shall be for frontlets between your eyes.⁹ You shall write them on the door posts of your house, and on your gates. (Deuteronomy 6:4-8)

And is repeated by Yeshua:

Jesus said to him, "You **shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.**"³⁸ This is the first and great commandment.³⁹ A second likewise is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'⁴⁰ The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments." (Matthew 22:37-40)

"Let Us" and "Like Us"

John Gill writes regarding Genesis 1:26, "And God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness,"

These words are directed not to the earth, out of which man was made, as consulting with it, and to be assisting in the formation of man, as Moses Gerundensis, and other Jewish writers, which is

wretchedly stupid; nor to the angels, as the Targum of Jonathan, Jarchi, and others, who are not of God's privy council, nor were concerned in any part of the creation, and much less in the more noble part of it: nor are the words spoken after the manner of kings, as Saadiah, using the plural number as expressive of honour and majesty; since such a way of speaking did not obtain very early, not even till the close of the Old Testament.

The “us” in Genesis 1:26 is plural, **but who is the “us”?**

To answer this question we have to answer another question posed by Yeshua Himself. It is recorded in three different places: Matthew 16:15, Mark 8:29, and Luke 9:20.

The question is. “Who do you say that I am?”

We do know from Scripture that the Word was with God at the very beginning, and that the Word was God, at the very beginning, and that the Word was made flesh (a man) and tabernacled (dwelt) amongst us. (See John 1:1, 14)

John also points out that, “All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.” (John 1:3)

Paul says the same thing in Colossians 1:15-16, “And He is the image (*representation and manifestation*) of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation. ^[16] 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.”

Yeshua then, as the Word, was at the beginning. All things came into existence by Him, and apart from Him nothing came to exist that exists. Everything was created by Him — the visible, the invisible, earthly things, and heavenly things. He is the physical representation of the invisible God.

The Father (YHVH) was also at the beginning, and actively involved in the creation. He is named in Genesis Chapter 2:4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 15, 16, 18, 19, 21, & 22; Chapter 3:1, 8, 9, 13, 14, 21, 22, & 23; Chapter 4:1, 3, 4, 6, & 9.

So the “us” is the Father and the Son.

John Chapter 17 is Yeshua’s commentary on Genesis 1:26.

In John 17:3 eternal life is defined as having an experiential relationship with the Father.

“This is eternal life, that they should know (*experience relationship with*) you, the only true God, and him whom you sent, Jesus Christ.”

In verse 11 the Prayer is that believers become One with (be like) the Father and the Son.

“I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them through your name which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are.”

Verse 16 says believers are not from this world, but separated out by God’s Word.

“They are not of the world even as I am not of the world. ¹⁷ Sanctify (separate) them in your truth. Your word is truth.”

In verses 20 and 21 it is applied to not only those in that day, but to believers who follow, based on His Word.

The Goal: To **Be One** with (be like) the Father and the Son.

“Not for these only do I pray, but for those also who will believe in me through their word, ²¹ that they may all be one; even as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that you sent me.”

And in verses 22-24 this oneness is emphasized.

“The glory which you have given me, I have given to them; **that they may be one, even as we are one**; ²³ I in them, and you in me, that they may be perfected into one; that the world may know that you sent me, and loved them, even as you loved me. ²⁴ Father, I desire that they also whom you have given me be with me where I am, that they may see my glory, which you have given me, for you loved me before the foundation of the world.”

The best explanation of this experience is given by John himself in 1 John 3:2.

“Beloved, now we are children of God, and it is not yet revealed what we will be. But we know that when he is revealed, we will be like him; for we will see him just as he is.”

The Greek for “like” in 1 John 3:2 is *homoios* (ὅμοιος), and means “resembling, such as, or the same as.”

Dominion

In Genesis 1:26 the **Goal** was to not only create man as a representation and manifestation of the Father and the Son, but also to **Share in the Authority** or ruling.

“Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the sky, and over the livestock, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

This is recapped in verse 28:

“Have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

John also conveys this in the Book of Revelation:

- He who overcomes, and he who keeps my works to the end, to him I will give authority over the nations. ²⁷ He will rule them with a rod of iron, shattering them like clay pots; as I also have received of my Father: ²⁸ and I will give him the morning star. ²⁹ He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the assemblies. (Revelation 2:26-29)
- They sang a new song, saying, “You are worthy to take the book, and to open its seals: for you were killed, and bought us for God with your blood, out of every tribe, language, people, and nation, ¹⁰ and made us kings and priests to our God, and we will reign on the earth.” (Revelation 5:9-10)
- I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, and for the word of God, and such

as didn't worship the beast nor his image, and didn't receive the mark on their forehead and on their hand. They lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. ⁵ The rest of the dead didn't live until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. ⁶ Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over these, the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and will reign with him one thousand years. (Revelation 20:4-6)

And Paul also speaks about reigning with Messiah:

- “Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the saints? ² Don't you know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world is judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? ³ Don't you know that we will judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life?” (1 Corinthians 6:1-3)
- “If we endure, we will also reign with him. If we deny him, he also will deny us.” (2 Timothy 2:12)

Be Fruitful and Multiply

Genesis 1:28 also conveys another purpose or **Goal** for Adam: **Reproducing.**

“God blessed them. God said to them, “Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth.”

In fact Adam was ordered to not only reproduce but fill the earth.

The stated goal then, is that man (Adam) was created to be a visible representation of the invisible. He was given authority over the earth, and he was to fill the earth with like kind, and he was created to rule over the earth.

This, of course, all came to an end after the fall, after access to the tree of life was terminated, and Adam was expelled from the garden.

Two Adams

It's interesting that Paul writes about two Adams:

- So also it is written, “The first man, Adam, became a living soul.” The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. (1 Corinthians 15:45)
- Therefore as sin entered into the world through one man, and death through sin; so death passed to all men, because all sinned...But the free gift isn't like the trespass. For if by the trespass of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God, and the gift by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many. (Romans 5:12-15)

The first Adam sinned and brought death to all of humanity; the second Adam, Messiah, redeemed us, removed the penalty of death and restores us to a right relationship with God.

Paul summarizes the two Adams:

“The first man is of the earth, made of dust. The second man is YHVH from heaven. ⁴⁸ As is the one made of dust, such are those who are also made of dust; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. ⁴⁹ As we have borne the image (*likeness*) of those made of dust, let's: also bear the image (*likeness*) of the heavenly. ⁵⁰ Now I say this, brothers, that flesh and blood can't inherit God's Kingdom; neither does the perishable inherit imperishable.” (1 Corinthians 15:47-50)

The New Creation

“Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old things have passed away. Behold,¹ all things have become new.” (2 Corinthians 5:17)

The new creation in Messiah is not “brand” new, it is a renewed Adam. This is the “restoration of all things” mentioned by Peter in Acts Chapter 3.

“Repent therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, so that there may come times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord,²⁰ and that he may send Christ Jesus, who was ordained for you before,²¹ whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God spoke long ago by the mouth of his holy prophets.²² For Moses indeed said to the fathers, ‘The Lord God will raise up a prophet for you from among your brothers, like me. You shall listen to him in all things whatever he says to you.’²³ It will be that every soul that will not listen to that prophet will be utterly destroyed from among the people.’²⁴ Yes, and all the prophets from Samuel and those who followed after, as many as have spoken, they also told of these days.²⁵ You are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, ‘In your offspring will all the families of the earth be blessed.’²⁶ God, having raised up his servant Jesus, sent him to you first to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your wickedness.” (Acts 3:19-26)

As believers in Messiah **our primary Goal** is: to **Become Like Yeshua**. Paul continues in this vein.

“But we all, with unveiled face seeing the glory of the Lord as in a mirror, are transformed into the same image (*then image of Messiah*) from glory to glory, even as from the Lord, the Spirit.” (2 Corinthians 3:18)

The Scriptures are clear on this topic:

- “We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, to those who are called according to his purpose.²⁹ For whom he foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.³⁰ Whom he predestined, those he also called. Whom he called, those he also justified. Whom he justified, those he also glorified.” (Romans 8:28-30)
- “Therefore I urge you, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service.² Don’t be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what is the good, well-pleasing, and perfect will of God.” (Romans 12:1-2)
- “But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, for its lusts.” (Romans 13:14)
- “For in Christ Jesus neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation.” (Galatians 6:15)
- “...that you put away, as concerning your former way of life, the old man, that grows corrupt after the lusts of deceit;²³ and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind,²⁴ and put on the new man, who in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of truth.” (Ephesians 4:22-24)
- “Don’t lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old man with his doings,¹⁰ and have put on the new man, who is being renewed in knowledge after the image of his Creator.” (Colossians 3:9-10)

The Family

In Genesis 1:28 God says, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth.”

This will be accomplished through the union of Adam and Eve.

Yahweh God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make him a helper comparable to him.”...²¹ Yahweh God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep. As the man slept, he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. ²² Yahweh God made a woman from the rib which he had taken from the man, and brought her to the man. ²³ The man said, “This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh. She will be called ‘woman,’ because she was taken out of Man.” ²⁴ Therefore a man will leave his father and his mother, and will join with his wife, and they will be one flesh. ²⁵ The man and his wife were both naked, and they were not ashamed. (Genesis 2:18-25)

Man was not designed to be alone, so God created a “she” for him. She is his helper. She adds to his completeness. She is his opposite, but at the same time she is his match. She is neither above nor below Adam. God took her from his side (rib), and thus they are partners.

The man said, “This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh.”

Ellicott writes: “Literally, this stroke or beat of the foot is keeping time. It means this time, or at last. Adam had studied the natural world, and found none that answered to his wants. But at last, on waking from his trance, he found one standing by him whom he recognized — a second self. He welcomed her joyfully, and exclaimed, “This at last is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh:” she is man’s counterpart, man’s companion; not in feeling and sense, but in flesh — in his solid uniqueness.”

A man shall leave his mother and father and cleave to his wife, and they will become one flesh. (Genesis 2:24)

In other words, by the order of God, there shall be an intimate connection formed between the man and woman. It will surpass even what is between parents and children.

And they shall be One flesh — One flesh, or as one body. There are no separate and independent rights, privileges, cares, or concerns. Each is equally interested in all things that concern the state of marriage. They are formed as One flesh, and from their union children shall be born, exactly resembling themselves as they do each other.

A man and a woman are two halves of the whole. They are more than a partnership or a team. The spouse is the other half, a soul mate. This "whole" brings new life into the world and forms the foundation for both family and social order.

This (Hebrew) *mishpachah* מִשְׁפָּחָה — is translated “species, clan, tribe, family” and is found 301 times in the Old Testament. The King James translates it “family(ies)” 290 times, “kindred” 9 times, and “kind” 2 times.

Wilson's Old Testament Word Studies groups father, house, little ones, and tribe or species under the heading of family. *Wilson's* model follows the dictionary definition of family:

1. The basic unit in society traditionally consisting of two parents rearing their children — the

traditional family

2. A Household: a group of individuals living under one roof and under one head
3. A Clan: a group of persons of common ancestry; or a Race: a people derived from a common stock

Genesis 1:28 is more than the suggestion to propagate a species. Adam, who was made in the image of God, is blessed! “And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it. Have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

His **Goal:** Adam and Eve were created to **build a family**, and by extension — **a People with a Relationship with God.**

The Body of Messiah — Brothers and Sisters

If God is your Father, then you are part of God’s family. The way God becomes your Father is through rebirth.

There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. ² This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, “Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.”

³ Jesus answered and said to him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” John 3:1–3 (NKJV)

Yeshua said to the scribe in Mark 12:28-34, “You are not far from the kingdom of God.” What He meant was the scribe was not far from conversion and entering the Family of God.

The Kingdom of God is where we recognize and submit to the rule of the Father and Son. We become part of the Kingdom by being born again. Those who are born again become sons of God. God is our Father, Yeshua is our brother, and all who enter the Family of God through God's calling are born again, and receive God's Holy Spirit. This is the Family of God.

His **Goal:** **To be One with the Family of God**

This theme is portrayed throughout the whole New Testament.

- In Matthew 12:48-50 Yeshua asks, “Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?” And stretching out his hand toward his disciples, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.”
- In Matthew 12:50 Yeshua says, For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.”
- John 1:12-13 “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.”
- John 11:52 “That He might also gather together into one the children of God who are scattered abroad.”
- Romans 8:25 “For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.”
- Romans 9:6-8 “But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For they are not all Israel who are descended from Israel; nor are they all children because they are Abraham’s descendants, but: “through Isaac your descendants will be named.” 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.”

- Galatians 3:24-29 “Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.”
- Ephesians 1:5 “He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will”
- Philippians 2:15 “so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world,”
- 1 John 2:28-29 “Now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming. If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him.”
- 1 John 3:1-3 “See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.”
- 1 John 3:10 “By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother.”
- 1 John 5:1-2 “Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and whoever loves the Father loves the child born of Him. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments.”
- Revelation 21:7 “He who overcomes will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son.”

As part of the Family of God we get to know and experience the love of God, and He gets to experience and enjoy our love for Him. As part of the Family of God we have our needs met, we have a large and loving family, and we have purpose in life with eternal meaning. Last, but not least, as a part of the family of God we have an Inheritance.

Our Inheritance — the Kingdom of God:

- Matthew 25:34 “Then the King will say to those on His right hand, ‘Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”
- 1 Thessalonians 2:12 “that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.”
- Hebrews 12:28 “Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.”
- Ephesians 1:3 “Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,”

As believers in Messiah we are blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places. These blessings are infinite and eternal. We receive them because we are God’s children. God is our (very good) Father, if we have been born again. Do we grasp this reality?

Chapter 4 – As in the Days of Noah

Adam was created in God's image and told to "be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over... every living thing." God also designed herbs and fruit-bearing trees for food. God "took Adam and put him in the Garden of Eden, to tend and keep it." So Adam was given a place to live and an occupation. Adam was warned to not eat from the "Tree of Evil Enjoyment."¹⁸ God gave Adam his helpmate, Eve, and they bore children. Adam and Eve sinned/disobeyed, and God gave the first Messianic promise foretelling the promised seed, the bruised heel, and the crushed serpent's head.

And then God said to Adam, "You are dust, and to dust you shall return," speaking of Adam's pending physical death. And then, "God made tunics of skin and clothed them," illustrating the need of a sacrifice for sin — a foreshadowing of the sacrifice of Messiah to come. Then God sent Adam and Eve out of the garden, away from the tree of life, and placed cherubim to guard the entrance of the Garden.

Adam's life, and fellowship with God, depended on Adam's respect for God's laws. There were punishments for transgressions and disobedience, and rewards for faithfulness. This was God's covenant with Adam.

The genealogy of Adam to Noah documents the lineage of the seed. Adam birthed Seth; Seth birthed Enosh; Enosh birthed Kenan; Kenan birthed Mahalalel; Mahalael birthed Jared; Jared birthed Enoch; Enoch birthed Methuselah; Methuselah birthed Lamech; and Lamech birthed Noah.

The list below, showing the meaning of the names in this lineage, is revealing:

- Adam - Man
- Seth - Appointed
- Enosh - Mortal
- Kenan - Sorrow
- Mahalalel - The Blessed God
- Jared - Shall come down
- Enoch - Teaching
- Methuselah - His death shall bring
- Lamech - The Despairing
- Noah - Rest, or comfort.

Translated into sentence form, the meaning of these names in order reads:

Man (is) appointed mortal sorrow; (but) the Blessed God shall come down teaching (that) His death shall bring (the) despairing rest or comfort.

¹⁸Literally Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil

Men Began to Call on the Name YHVH

Adam knew his wife again. She gave birth to a son, and named him Seth, saying, “for God has given me another child instead of Abel, for Cain killed him.”²⁶ A son was also born to Seth, and he named him Enosh. At that time men began to call, *chalal* – חָלַל, on Yahweh’s name. (*Gen. 4:25-26*)

In verse 26 where it reads “at that time men began...” the word “began” in Hebrew is *chalal* – חָלַל. *Chalal* means to “pollute, defile, profane, begin.”

Concerning the name “Enosh” Chuck Missler writes: “Seth’s son was called Enosh, which means “mortal,” “frail,” or “miserable.” It is from the Hebrew root *anash*: “to be incurable”; used of a wound, grief, woe, sickness, or wickedness. (It was in the days of Enosh that **men began to defile** the name of the Living God.)¹⁹

Enosh, from the verbal root נָשָׂא also means “to sigh.”²⁰

When used as an adjective, עָנוֹשׁ (*ěnošh*), Klein’s *Etymological Dictionary of the Hebrew Language* states it means “severe, incurable, mortal”; but as a noun it means “people, mankind.”

Holladay’s Hebrew Lexicon gives the definition as “incurable, calamitous; mostly poetic when used for men, person.”

Jeremiah 17:9 translates (עָנוֹשׁ’ *ěnošh*) as desperately wicked.

- The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked (עָנוֹשׁ’ *ěnošh*); Who can know it? (NKJV)
- Jeremiah 17:16 translates (עָנוֹשׁ’ *ěnošh*) as woeful.
- As for me, I have not hurried away from *being* a shepherd *who* follows You, Nor have I desired the woeful (עָנוֹשׁ’ *ěnošh*) day; You know what came out of my lips; It was right there before You. (NKJV)
- Isaiah 17:11 translates (עָנוֹשׁ’ *ěnošh*) as desperate.
- In the day you will make your plant to grow, And in the morning you will make your seed to flourish; But the harvest will be a heap of ruins In the day of grief and desperate (עָנוֹשׁ’ *ěnošh*) sorrow. (NKJV)

Matthew Henry’s Concise Commentary on “At that time men began to call on Yahweh’s name. ” (*Genesis 4:25-26*): Then began the distinction between professors and profane, which has been kept up ever since, and will be, while the world stands.

Matthew Poole’s Commentary on “At that time men began (*chalal* – חָלַל) to call on Yahweh’s name. ” (*Genesis 4:26*): Then began men to profane the name, i.e. the worship, of the Lord, by idolatry or superstition.

The Targum Onkelos translates: “And to Sheth also was born a son, and he called his name Enosh. Then in his days the sons of men desisted [חָלַל] (or forbore) from praying in the name of the Lord,” (*Genesis 4:26*).

¹⁹“Footprints of Messiah” by Chuck Messler, December 1, 2018

<https://www.khouse.org/articles/2018/1344/>

²⁰Analytical Hebrew Lexicon

The Targum Jonathan is similar, but amplifies it even more:

“And to Sheth also was born a son, and he called his name Enosh. That was the generation in whose days they began to err [למטע], and to make themselves idols, and surnamed their idols by the name of the Word of the Lord,” (Genesis 4:26, *Targum Jonathan*).

Chuck Missler adds a footnote²¹: “Genesis 4:26 is often mistranslated. *Targum of Onkelos*: “... desisted from praying in the name”; *Targum of Jonathan*: “surnamed their idols in the name...”; Kimchi, Rashi, and other ancient Jewish commentators agree. Jerome indicated that this was the opinion of many Jews of his day. Maimonides, *Commentary on the Mishna* (a constituent part of the Talmud), A.D. 1168, ascribes the origin of idolatry to the days of Enosh.”

If Genesis 4:26 is understood as “A son was also born to Seth, and he named him Enosh (meaning woeful, sighing, or miserable) at the time when men began profaning Yahweh’s name,” then the following history makes sense. The end started here.

This is the line drawn in the sand by God. At the time of Enosh, men turned against God. This antagonism leads us into Noah’s day where God destroys the earth because of man’s violence.

And Noah Found Grace

God saw the wickedness of mankind and determined to literally wash mankind from the face of the earth. Noah, however, found favor in God’s eyes. God instructed Noah to build an ark for preparation of the inevitable and catastrophic flood. It would destroy every living thing on earth.

Noah was told to bring into the ark two of all living creatures, both male and female, and seven pairs of all the clean animals. He was also told to gather food, take it with him to feed himself, his family, and the animals. And Noah did all that God commanded him to do.

Noah, his family, and animals entered the ark. Rain fell for forty days and forty nights and the water sources of the deep opened up. Waters flooded the earth for a hundred and fifty days. All flesh living on the earth died, including birds, livestock, animals, creeping things, and all mankind. As the waters receded, the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat. Noah and his family waited another eight months for the surface of the earth to dry.

After a year, God invited Noah to come out of the ark. Noah built an altar and worshiped YHVH with burnt offerings from some of the clean animals. God was pleased with the offerings and promised never again to destroy all the living creatures as he had just done with water. And God established a covenant with Noah: “Never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth,” and as a sign of this covenant God set a rainbow in the clouds.

The Days of Noah Likened to the Coming of Messiah

“As the days of Noah were, so will be the coming (Greek, *parousia*) of the Son of Man.”³⁸ For as in those days which were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ship,³⁹ and they didn’t know (ἐγνώσαν, “agnostic”) until the flood came, and took them all away, so will be the coming (*parousia*) of the Son of Man. (Matthew 24:37–39)

²¹“The Gospel in Genesis” by Chuck Missler, February 1, 1996 <https://www.khouse.org/articles/1996/44/>

He said to the disciples, "The days will come, when you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it. ²³ They will tell you, 'Look, here!' or 'Look, there!' Don't go away, nor follow after them, ²⁴ for as the lightning, when it flashes out of the one part under the sky, shines to the other part under the sky; so will the Son of Man be in his day. ²⁵ But first, he must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation. ²⁶ As it was in the days of Noah, even so will it be also in the days of the Son of Man. ²⁷ They ate, they drank, they married, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ship, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. ²⁸ Likewise, even as it was in the days of Lot: they ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; ²⁹ but in the day that Lot went out from Sodom, it rained fire and sulfur from the sky, and destroyed them all. ³⁰ It will be the same way in the day that the Son of Man is revealed (Greek, *apokalupt*). (Luke 17:22–30)

What were the Days of Noah like?

According to Yeshua, the people were asleep, blind, and didn't know (agnostic) what was coming. They went about their daily business unmindful to the surrounding reality. For ten consecutive generations -- from Adam to Noah -- people grew more and more oblivious to reality and truth. Their days were filled with eating and drinking, romantic intrigue, marriage, buying and selling. They "forgot" God.

This spiritual blindness led to moral decay, corruption, brutality and violence. Of Noah's generation it is written:

"Yahweh saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart was continually only evil. ⁶Yahweh was sorry that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him in his heart... ¹¹ The earth was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence." (Genesis 6:5-6, 11)

Jewish Rabbis understand the word "corruption" (*shachat*) as a reference to sexual immorality and "violence" (*chamas*) as a reference to theft and robbery. The Jewish sages understand the word *chamas* as "lawlessness, the denial of Torah, and living without the fear of God." Spiritually dead people are not cognizant of God, oblivious to the reality of God. They act like animals...much like we see today.

"As the days of Noah were, so will be the coming (*parousia*) of the Son of Man. ³⁸ For as in those days which were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ship, ³⁹ and they didn't know (*egnosan*, "agnostic") until the flood came, and took them all away, so will be the coming (*parousia*) of the Son of Man. (Matthew 24:37–39)

He said to the disciples, "The days will come, when you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it. ²³ They will tell you, 'Look, here!' or 'Look, there!' Don't go away, nor follow after them, ²⁴ for as the lightning, when it flashes out of the one part under the sky, shines to the other part under the sky; so will the Son of Man be in his day. ²⁵ But first, he must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation. ²⁶ As it was in the days of Noah, even so will it be also in the days of the Son of Man. ²⁷ They ate, they drank, they married, they were given in

marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ship, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. ²⁸ Likewise, even as it was in the days of Lot: they ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; ²⁹ but in the day that Lot went out from Sodom, it rained fire and sulfur from the sky, and destroyed them all. ³⁰ It will be the same way in the day that the Son of Man is revealed (*apokalyptetai*). (Luke 17:22–30)

There are two Greek words that grab my attention. The first is *parousia* (translated “coming”) from Matthew 24: 37 & 39.

Parousia (Παρουσία) is found in:

- Matthew 24:3, 27, 37, 39
- 1 Corinthians 15:23; 16:17
- 2 Corinthians 7:6, 7; 10:10
- Philippians 1:26; 2:12
- 1 Thessalonians 2:19; 3:13; 4:15; 5:23
- 2 Thessalonians 2:1; 2:8, 9
- James 5:7, 8
- 2 Peter 1:16; 3:4, 12
- 1 John 2:28

There are 24 occurrences of *parousia* (Παρουσία) in the Greek New Testament and in all but one instance it is translated “coming.” Only once is it translated as “presence,” and that is in Philippians 2:12, “So then, my beloved, even as you have always obeyed, not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.”

The majority of the time *parousia* is translated as “coming,” it refers to the “coming” or “presence” of Yeshua.

- the sign of Your “coming,” and of the end
- so will the “coming” of the Son be
- For the “coming” of the Son of Man
- who are Christ’s at His “coming”
- of our Lord Jesus at His “coming”
- and Father at the “coming” of our Lord
- until the “coming” of the Lord,
- without blame at the “coming” of our Lord
- with regard to the “coming” of our Lord
- by the appearance of His “coming”
- [that is], the one whose “coming” is in accord
- until the “coming” of the Lord
- your hearts, for the “coming” of the Lord
- to you the power and “coming” of our Lord
- is the promise of His “coming”? For [ever] since
- for and hastening the “coming” of the day
- away from Him in shame at His “coming”

This list is from the writings of Peter, Paul, James and John.

J. Stuart Russell wrote a book entitled *The Parousia* which focuses entirely on one word – “*parousia*.” In the preface of his 500 page book he writes:

“No attentive reader of the New Testament can fail to be struck with the prominence given by the evangelist and the apostles to the *Parousia*, or ‘coming of the Lord.’ That event is the great theme of the New Testament prophecy. There is scarcely a single book, from the Gospel of St. Matthew to the Apocalypse of St. John, in which it is not set forth as the glorious promise of God and the blessed hope of the church. It was frequently and solemnly predicted by our Lord; it was incessantly kept before the eyes of the early Christians by the apostles; and was firmly believed and eagerly expected by the churches of the primitive age.”

Titus writes about it in Titus Chapter 2:13 where he says ‘looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.” And Paul expressly uses *parousia* in 1 Thessalonians 4:15, “For this we tell you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming (*parousia*) of the Lord, will in no way precede those who have fallen asleep.” This coming or *parousia* is inextricably connected to “then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds,” 1 Thessalonians 4:17.

Liddell and Scott define *parousia* as: “presence” (as in the presence of a person); or “arrival” (as in the arrival of a royal or official.) Thus the “coming of Yeshua” is His arrival. It is that point in time we will stand in His “presence.” This is when we will be changed. This is when the perishable body becomes imperishable; this is when the mortal puts on immortality.²² This is what John spoke of when he said:

“But we know that when he is revealed, we will be like him; for we will see him just as he is. ³ Everyone who has this hope set on him purifies himself, even as he is pure.” (1 John 3:2-3)

The Days of Noah and the *parousia* or Coming of Yeshua are linked — “As the days of Noah were, so will be the coming (*parousia*) of the Son of Man.”

The indicators announcing this wondrous event include: wars, famines, pestilences, persecutions, false messiahs and false religious systems. And all of these signs will increase in intensity as the time draws nearer. It will culminate in tribulation like the world has never seen, nor ever shall see again. Yeshua’s Presence will appear rapidly, unexpectedly, suddenly. He will come in the clouds with the hosts of heaven. This is the miracle Peter, Paul, James, and John spoke of, this is the blessed hope.

The second Greek word that grabs my attention is *apokalupt* (translated “revealed”) from Luke 22:30, a parallel passage to Matthew 24.

“It will be the same way in the day that the Son of Man is revealed.” (*apokalyptetai*). (Luke 17:22–30)

ἀποκαλύπτεται from ἀποκαλύπτω (*apokalupto*) is a Greek verb meaning to “uncover, reveal, bring to light.” *Apokaluptois* is also the root for Ἀποκάλυψις (*apokalupsis*)

²²See 1 Corinthians 15:51-54

meaning “uncovering, revealing, or revelation.” *Apokalupsis* is Greek for “Apocalypse” — “The Book of Revelation.”

This ties the Days of Noah, the *Parousia* or Coming of Yeshua, the Blessed Hope, the Rapture, and the “change from mortality into immortality” into the Book of Revelation. All of these labels are speaking of the **same event**.

Chapter 5 – After the Flood.... Tracking God’s People Forward

Progressing forward in time from Noah, we see the phrase “This is the genealogy of ...” or “This is the history of ...” which forms a repeating pattern in Genesis. This pattern leads to a series of sub-sets for:

- Adam’s family line (Genesis 5:1)
- Noah’s family line (Genesis 6:9)
- The nations that stemmed from Noah’s sons (Genesis 10:1)
- Abraham’s family (Genesis 11:27)
- Ishmael’s family (Genesis 25:12)
- Isaac’s family (Genesis 25:19)
- Esau’s family (Genesis 36:1)
- And finally, Jacob’s family (Genesis 37:2)

This repeating pattern ends with the introduction of the House of Abraham (his family) including Jacob (renamed Israel).

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are the patriarchs of Israel. Jacob’s sons and grandsons are the twelve tribes of Israel.

Abraham believes God, and does what YHVH asks of him. The faith of Abraham may be summed up in one Hebrew word –*Shema*. Shema means “hear and do.” This is the faith of Abraham: he heard God and did what he was told. This is what’s meant by, “And he (Abraham) believed in YHVH, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.” (Genesis 15:6)

Abraham’s faithfulness is counted as righteous. We are Abraham’s children if we possess and exhibit that same faithfulness.

Even as Abraham “believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness.”

⁷Know therefore that those who are of faith, the same are children of Abraham. ⁸The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the Good News beforehand to Abraham, saying, “In you all the nations will be blessed.” ⁹So then, those who are of faith are blessed with the faithful Abraham. (Galatians 3:6-9)

YHVH and Israel

The first eleven chapters of Genesis tell the story of creation, from Adam to Noah to the flood. Noah and his family are the only survivors. Noah’s sons become the fathers of the nations. The remainder of Genesis (Chapters 12 through 50) is the story of Abraham.

Abram left Ur of the Chaldees and his family to journey to the land of Canaan. YHVH promised to bless Abram, and all the nations through him. Abram believed YHVH and though he was old and childless, Abraham was blessed with a promised son, Isaac.

Isaac lived in Canaan and had twin sons: Jacob and Esau. Jacob grew up, and bought the blessing from Esau for a pot of beans. Esau felt swindled and planned to kill his brother, so Jacob fled from Esau to live with his uncle Laban.

Jacob married, had thirteen children, and lived with Laban for 20 years. YHVH called Jacob back to Canaan, but on his return he encountered the Messenger of YHVH. Jacob wrestled with Him all night. When the Messenger realized that he could not overpower Jacob, He touched Jacob's hip socket and wounded him. YHVH asked him his name. Jacob answered, "Jacob."

YHVH appeared before Jacob again, blessed him, and said, "Your name is Jacob. Your name shall not be Jacob any more, but your name will be Israel...I am God Almighty. Be fruitful and multiply. A nation and a company of nations will be from you, and kings will come out of your body. The land which I gave to Abraham and Isaac, I will give it to you, and to your offspring after you I will give the land."

Jacob's favorite son was Joseph. Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery, and he became a prisoner in Egypt. Pharaoh called Joseph out of prison to interpret his dream. Joseph does so, and is released from prison and made second in command of all Egypt. Joseph's interpretation of the dream warned Pharaoh of a terrible famine to come.

The famine reached Canaan, and Joseph's brothers came to Egypt to buy food. Joseph and his brothers reconciled, and Joseph (with Pharaoh's blessing) made provision for his brothers to move to Egypt until the famine was over.

The Book of Genesis ends with Joseph saying, "As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to save many people alive, as is happening today. Now therefore don't be afraid. I will provide for you and your little ones...I am dying, but God will surely visit you, and bring you up out of this land to the land which he swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob." Joseph died at the age of one hundred ten years old.

Moses and the Exodus

Joseph died, as did all his brothers, and all that generation. ⁷ The children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and grew exceedingly mighty; and the land was filled with them.

Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who didn't know Joseph. ⁹ He said to his people, "Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we. ¹⁰ Come, let's deal wisely with them, lest they multiply, and it happen that when any war breaks out, they also join themselves to our enemies, and fight against us, and escape out of the land." ¹¹ Therefore they set taskmasters over them to afflict them with their burdens. They built storage cities for Pharaoh: Pithom and Rameses. ¹² But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and the more they spread out. They started to dread the children of Israel. ¹³ The Egyptians ruthlessly made the children of Israel serve, ¹⁴ and they made their lives bitter with hard service, in mortar and in brick, and in all kinds of service in the field, all their service, in which they ruthlessly made them serve. (Exodus 1:6-14)

The Book of Exodus moves the story from Egypt to Mount Sinai. YHVH delivers Israel out of slavery and brings them to Mt. Sinai to make them into a nation where He would personally rule.

It begins in Egypt where seventy people, over 400 years, grew to a population that threatened

Pharaoh. Pharaoh, because of this threat, ordered every Israelite baby boy to be thrown into the Nile River.

Moses was one of those threatened infants. His mother placed him in a basket on the river to be spared from this fate. Pharaoh's daughter found him and raised him as her own. He grew up and learned of the oppression of his countrymen, killed an Israelite-beating Egyptian, and fled Egypt in fear for his life. Later, in Midian he married a daughter of Jethro, became a shepherd, and met YHVH in a burning bush. It was there that Moses was commissioned by YHVH to deliver the nation of Israel from the hands of Pharaoh.

YHVH through Moses frees Israel from the hand of Pharaoh by demonstrating that He is greater than the gods of Egypt. Pharaoh's stubbornness, and the ten plagues delivered by the hand of Moses destroy the nation of Egypt. By the breath of YHVH the Red Sea is parted, Israel walks to safety, and the army of Egypt is drowned in the receding waters.

In Exodus we read:

In the third month after the children of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt, on that same day they came into the wilderness of Sinai. ² When they had departed from Rephidim, and had come to the wilderness of Sinai, they encamped in the wilderness; and there Israel encamped before the mountain.

Moses went up to God, and Yahweh called to him out of the mountain, saying, "This is what you shall tell the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: ⁴ 'You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you to myself. ⁵ Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice, and keep my covenant, then you shall be my own possession from among all peoples; for all the earth is mine; ⁶ and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation.' These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel.

Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and set before them all these words which Yahweh commanded him. ⁸ All the people answered together, and said, "All that Yahweh has spoken we will do." (Exodus 19:1-8)

Fifty days after coming out of Egypt, YHVH brought Israel to Mount Sinai to covenant with His people and give them *Torah* תורה (Heb., meaning "instruction").

On the third day, when it was morning, there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud on the mountain, and the sound of an exceedingly loud trumpet; and all the people who were in the camp trembled. ¹⁷ Moses led the people out of the camp to meet God; and they stood at the lower part of the mountain. ¹⁸ All of Mount Sinai smoked, because Yahweh descended on it in fire; and its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked greatly. ¹⁹ When the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him by a voice. (Exodus 19:16-19)

YHVH came down from heaven to meet with His people. They were terrified. Mount Sinai was engulfed in smoke, fire, and lightening. The air was filled with thunder and trumpet blasts. Israel was warned not to approach lest they die, they were too frightened to listen, much less approach the

Almighty.

Moses takes on the role of mediator, going up and down the mountain, receiving the *Torah* from God.

Israel will remain here for quite some time. The next 22 chapters of Exodus, all of Leviticus, and the first 10 chapters of Numbers are spent at the foot of the mountain.

In Exodus 24 we read:

Moses came and told the people all Yahweh's words, and all the ordinances; and all the people answered with one voice, and said, "All the words which Yahweh has spoken we will do."

Moses wrote all Yahweh's words, and rose up early in the morning, and built an altar at the foot of the mountain, and twelve pillars for the twelve tribes of Israel. ⁵ He sent young men of the children of Israel, who offered burnt offerings and sacrificed peace offerings of cattle to Yahweh. ⁶ Moses took half of the blood and put it in basins, and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. ⁷ He took the book of the covenant and read it in the hearing of the people, and they said, "All that Yahweh has spoken we will do, and be obedient." (Exodus 24:3-7)

In the remainder of the chapter Israel formally agrees to the terms of the covenant. As a part of the covenant, blood is sprinkled on the people and a feast is held. Following this time, Moses and the elders climb the mountain and eat a meal in the presence of YHVH. Moses, alone however, continues up the mountain entering the glory of God's presence. He remains there for 40 days and 40 nights while Israel waits below.

The Renewal of the Covenant

The Book of Deuteronomy reports the transition from the first generation of Israelites, who died in the wilderness, to the second generation, who will enter and possess the promised land under Joshua. This is the generation that embraces the covenant. This is the generation that enters into covenant relationship with God. This is the **renewal** of the covenant:

Today Yahweh your God commands you to do these statutes and ordinances. You shall therefore keep and do them with all your heart and with all your soul. ¹⁷ You have declared today that Yahweh is your God, and that you would walk in his ways, and keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his ordinances, and listen to his voice. ¹⁸ Yahweh has declared today that you are a people for his own possession, as he has promised you, and that you should keep all his commandments. ¹⁹ He will make you high above all nations that he has made, in praise, in name, and in honor; and that you may be a holy people to Yahweh your God, as he has spoken. (Deuteronomy 26:16-19).

Israel renews the covenant by declaring that YHVH is their God, that they will walk in all His ways, keep His statutes, His commandments, His ordinances, and listen to His voice.

YHVH, in return, declares Israel as a people for His own possession, and if they keep all His commandments He will elevate them above all nations. Israel will be a set-apart people to YHVH.

Moses called to all Israel, and said to them: Your eyes have seen all that Yahweh did in the land of Egypt to Pharaoh, and to all his servants, and to all his land; ³ the great trials which your eyes saw, the signs, and those great wonders. ⁴ But Yahweh has not given you a heart to know, eyes to see, and ears to hear, to this day. ⁵ I have led you forty years in the wilderness. Your clothes have not grown old on you, and your shoes have not grown old on your feet. ⁶ You have not eaten bread, neither have you drunk wine or strong drink; that you may know that I am Yahweh your God. ⁷ When you came to this place, Sihon the king of Heshbon, and Og the king of Bashan, came out against us to battle, and we struck them. ⁸ We took their land, and gave it for an inheritance to the Reubenites, and to the Gadites, and to the half-tribe of the Manassites. ⁹ Therefore keep the words of this covenant and do them, that you may prosper in all that you do. ¹⁰ All of you stand today in the presence of Yahweh your God; your heads, your tribes, your elders, and your officers, even all the men of Israel, ¹¹ your little ones, your wives, and the foreigners who are in the middle of your camps, from the one who cuts your wood to the one who draws your water; ¹² that you may enter into the covenant of Yahweh your God, and into his oath, which Yahweh your God makes with you today; ¹³ that he may establish you today as his people, and that he may be your God, as he spoke to you, and as he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. ¹⁴ Neither do I make this covenant and this oath with you only, ¹⁵ but with those who stand here with us today before Yahweh our God, and also with those who are not here with us today. (Deuteronomy 29:2-15)

Moses then reminds Israel, that they saw what YHVH did to Pharaoh in Egypt. Israel witnessed the great trials, the signs, and wonders from the Exodus; and they witnessed all the miracles in their forty years of wandering through the wilderness. And, even though Israel has experienced and witnessed all these wonders, to this day they still do not understand the significance of all these events.

These all stood in the presence of YHVH: their heads, their tribes, their elders, their officers, all of Israel including their little ones, their wives, and the foreigners. They all stood before YHVH to enter into covenant with Him, that He may establish them as His people as He swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

And not only that, this covenant is not exclusively for the people that stood there that day, but it also is to those who stand “afar off” and are not there with them on that day. Meaning – this covenant renewal embraces future generations, including our generation. Therefore what they do or fail to do will affect not only their present generation but also those not yet born.

The Warning:

For you know how we lived in the land of Egypt, and how we came through the middle of the nations through which you passed; ¹⁷ and you have seen their abominations, and their idols, wood and stone, silver and gold, which were among them); ¹⁸ lest there should be among you man, woman, family, or tribe whose heart turns away today from Yahweh our God, to go to serve the gods of those nations; lest there should be among you a root that produces bitter poison; ¹⁹ and it happens, when he hears the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, “I shall have peace, though I walk in the stubbornness of my heart, to destroy the moist with the dry.” ²⁰ Yahweh will not pardon him, but then Yahweh’s anger and his jealousy will smoke against that man, and all the curse that is written in this book

will fall on him, and Yahweh will blot out his name from under the sky. ²¹ Yahweh will set him apart for evil out of all the tribes of Israel, according to all the curses of the covenant that is written in this book of the law. (Deuteronomy 29:16-21)

Israel has seen the abominations, and the idols that turn their hearts away from YHVH to serve other gods (who are not gods.) This idolatrous root might take hold through a single person who thinks they are safe from judgment, but this root has the potential of growing into a greater apostasy that brings forth judgment. All of Israel would suffer, and the responsible person for such idolatry cannot escape the consequences of sin. No sin is unknown before the omniscient YHVH.

Judgments Will Fall on a Future Generation

Moses further warns Israel — and their children forever:

The generation to come, your children who will rise up after you, and the foreigner who will come from a far land, will say, when they see the plagues of that land, and the sicknesses with which Yahweh has made it sick; ²³ and that all of its land is sulfur, salt, and burning, that it is not sown, doesn't produce, nor does any grass grow in it, like the overthrow of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim, which Yahweh overthrew in his anger, and in his wrath; ²⁴ even all the nations will say, "Why has Yahweh done thus to this land? What does the heat of this great anger mean?"

Then men will say, "Because they abandoned the covenant of Yahweh, the God of their fathers, which he made with them when he brought them out of the land of Egypt, ²⁶ and went and served other gods, and worshiped them, gods that they didn't know, and that he had not given to them. ²⁷ Therefore Yahweh's anger burned against this land, to bring on it all the curses that are written in this book. ²⁸ Yahweh rooted them out of their land in anger, in wrath, and in great indignation, and thrust them into another land, as it is today." ²⁹ The secret things belong to Yahweh our God; but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law. (Deuteronomy 29:22-29)

Because of the sin, judgment will fall not only on the one who introduced idolatry but to the whole nation. Israel will be swept away into infidelity. A future judgment will be so severe that it is compared to the judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah. This future judgment refers to the devastation of the Assyrian and Babylonian invasions.

The devastation will be so complete that nations will ask why. The answer is: **Israel Abandoned the Covenant**. Israel played the part of a harlot and sought other gods. Because of this unfaithfulness, YHVH's anger will uproot them and cast them into exile. They will bow to their captors.

Israel Scattered Among the Nations

It shall happen, when all these things have come on you, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before you, and you shall call them to mind among all the nations, where Yahweh your God has driven you, ² and return to Yahweh your God, and obey his voice according to all that I command **you** today, you **and your children**, with

all your heart, and with all your soul; ³ that then Yahweh your God will release you from captivity, have compassion on you, and will return and gather you from all the peoples where Yahweh your God has scattered you. (Deuteronomy 30:1-3)

This is going to happen! All of these! The blessings and the curses! Israel will remember, when they find themselves among the nations, where YHVH scattered them. Then Israel (and her "sons") will return to YHVH and obey Him, with all their heart and soul. And they will do everything God has instructed them to do. That is when YHVH will have compassion on Israel and gather Israel from wherever He has scattered them.

This is a foretelling of what is to come.

It's about 1406 B.C. on our timeline of tracking God's People. Israel has nearly completed their 40-year wilderness wandering and they are encamped in the land of Moab east of the Jordan River. Joshua is commissioned as leader, Moses will pass away, and Israel will enter the Promised Land. Saul will become king, then David, and then Solomon.

In 930 B.C. the kingdom will split into the northern and southern sections.

In 740 B.C. Tilgathpilneser, King of Assyria, carries away the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh. This is the beginning of the scattering of Israel as foretold in Deuteronomy Chapter 30.

In 722 B.C., ten to twenty years after the initial deportations, the ruling city of the Northern Kingdom of Israel, is taken by Sargon II after a three-year siege started by Shalmaneser V.

Nearly 700 years have passed since YHVH, through Moses, has spoken to Israel. Why has this happened? **Israel forgot** what was said. She sinned, she was unfaithful.

It was so because the children of Israel had sinned against Yahweh their God, who brought them up out of the land of Egypt from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and had feared other gods, ⁸ and walked in the statutes of the nations whom Yahweh cast out from before the children of Israel, and of the kings of Israel, which they made. ⁹ The children of Israel secretly did things that were not right against Yahweh their God; and they built high places for themselves in all their cities, from the tower of the watchmen to the fortified city; ¹⁰ and they set up for themselves pillars and Asherah poles on every high hill, and under every green tree; ¹¹ and there they burned incense in all the high places, as the nations whom Yahweh carried away before them did; and they did wicked things to provoke Yahweh to anger; ¹² and they served idols, of which Yahweh had said to them, "You shall not do this thing." (2 Kings 17:7-12)

2 Kings Chapter 17 enumerates the specific issues: idolatry, loss of nonconformity, practicing hypocrisy, worshiping pagan idols, engaging in wickedness, mocking the prophets, and dabbling with the occult.

Today the Northern Kingdom - Israel is known as the "Lost Ten Tribes."

The captivity of the Southern Kingdom - Judah, a/k/a the "Babylonian Exile," came in three waves.

In 607 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon besieged Jerusalem, and carried away Daniel, his friends, and others. (See Kings 24:1, Jeremiah.25:1, Daniel 1:1-7)

The second invasion and captivity was in 597 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar II, the Chaldean king of Babylon in Mesopotamia attacked Judah, captured Jerusalem and deported more Jews to Babylon. Jehoiachin (king of Judah,) his family, almost 10,000 prominent Jewish citizens, including the wealthy, the priests, and the craftsmen were also forced to relocate to Babylon. Among these were Ezekiel and one of the ancestors of Mordicai, the cousin of Esther. (See 2 Kings 24:10-16; Ezekiel 1:1-2; Esther .2:5-6)

In 587 B.C. Jerusalem was conquered. Its walls, palaces, and the temple were destroyed; and the inhabitants were carried away. This was the third invasion. This was the end of the Southern Kingdom – Judah. (See 2 Kings 24:18; 24:1-27; 2 Chronicles 36:11-21; Jeremiah 52:1-11)

The scattering of Israel is confirmed by many Scriptures:

- Then the LORD will scatter you among all peoples, from one end of the earth to the other, and there you shall serve other gods, which neither you nor your fathers have known--wood and stone. (Deuteronomy 28:64 NKJV)
- I will scatter you among the nations and draw out a sword after you; your land shall be desolate and your cities waste. (Leviticus 26:33 NKJV)
- And the LORD will scatter you among the peoples, and you will be left few in number among the nations where the LORD will drive you. (Deuteronomy 4:27 NKJV)
- To overthrow their descendants among the nations, And to scatter them in the lands. (Psalm 106:27 NKJV)
- I will scatter them also among the Gentiles, whom neither they nor their fathers have known. And I will send a sword after them until I have consumed them." (Jeremiah 9:16 NKJV)
- Then they shall know that I am the LORD, when I scatter them among the nations and disperse them throughout the countries. (Ezekiel 12:15 NKJV)
- Also I raised My hand in an oath to those in the wilderness, that I would scatter them among the Gentiles and disperse them throughout the countries... (Ezekiel 20:23 NKJV)
- I will scatter you among the nations, disperse you throughout the countries, and remove your filthiness completely from you. (Ezekiel 22:15 NKJV)
- I will sow them among the peoples, And they shall remember Me in far countries; They shall live, together with their children, And they shall return. (Zechariah 10:9 NKJV)
- Therefore I will scatter them like stubble that passes away by the wind of the wilderness. (Jeremiah 13:24 NKJV)
- Therefore fathers shall eat *their* sons in your midst, and sons shall eat their fathers; and I will execute judgments among you, and all of you who remain I will scatter to all the winds. (Ezekiel 5:10 NKJV)
- I will scatter them as with an east wind before the enemy; I will show them the back and not the face in the day of their calamity." (Jeremiah 18:17 NKJV)
- I will scatter to every wind all who *are* around him to help him, and all his troops; and I will draw out the sword after them. (Ezekiel 12:14 NKJV)
- For the LORD will strike Israel, as a reed is shaken in the water. He will uproot Israel from this good land which He gave to their fathers, and will scatter them beyond the River, because they have made their wooden images, provoking the LORD to anger. (1 Kings 14:15 NKJV)
- Remember, I pray, the word that You commanded Your servant Moses, saying, 'If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the nations;' (Nehemiah 1:8 NKJV)

- The face of the LORD scattered them; He no longer regards them. *The people* do not respect the priests nor show favor to the elders. (Lamentations 4:16 NKJV)
- You have given us up like sheep *intended* for food, and have scattered us among the nations. (Psalm 44:11 NKJV)
- So I scattered them among the nations, and they were dispersed throughout the countries; I judged them according to their ways and their deeds. (Ezekiel 36:19 NKJV)
- But I scattered them with a whirlwind among all the nations which they had not known. Thus the land became desolate after them, so that no one passed through or returned; for they made the pleasant land desolate. (Zechariah 7:14 NKJV)
- "Up, up! Flee from the land of the north," says the LORD; "for I have spread you abroad like the four winds of heaven," says the LORD. (Zechariah 2:6 NKJV)
- 'For I *am* with you,' says the LORD, 'to save you; Though I make a full end of all nations where I have scattered you, Yet I will not make a complete end of you. But I will correct you in justice, And will not let you go altogether unpunished.' (Jeremiah 30:11 NKJV)
- Therefore say, Thus says the Lord GOD: "Although I have cast them far off among the Gentiles, and although I have scattered them among the countries, yet I shall be a little sanctuary for them in the countries where they have gone." (Ezekiel 11:16 NKJV)

The final phase of Israel's scattering among the nations does not begin until 70 A.D.

Yeshua foretold of this during His earthly ministry:

As he went out of the temple, one of his disciples said to him, "Teacher, see what kind of stones and what kind of buildings!" ² Jesus said to him, "Do you see these great buildings? There will not be left here one stone on another, which will not be thrown down." ³ As he sat on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked him privately, ⁴ "Tell us, when will these things be? What is the sign that these things are all about to be fulfilled?" (Mark 13:1-3)

The final phase of the scattering comes in two waves – the first, through the 70A.D. destruction of the temple by the Romans; and the second, in 132 A.D. through the Bar Kokhba Rebellion.

The Jewish Wars began in 66 A.D. They were a direct revolt by the Jews against Rome's authority. Titus with his Roman legions arrived at the outermost northern Wall of Jerusalem at the time of Passover, 70 A.D. The siege began with the Romans building embankments of earthen work and the placement of battering rams.

The Roman army numbered 30,000. The Jewish army numbered 24,000. And according to Tacitus there were 600,000 visitors crowding the streets of Jerusalem for the Passover. After five months the walls were shattered, the Temple was burned, and the city left in ruins. All that remained were Herod's three towers at the northwest corner of the city. These served as a memorial to the massive strength of Jerusalem's fortifications brought down by Titus of Rome.

The Jewish captives were taken to Caesarea by the legions of Rome. Over one million Jews were killed; 95,000 captives were held as prisoners. Josephus was among them. According to Eusebius, the Christians saw the might of the Roman army and, through prophetic warning, fled to Pella.

The Bar Kokhba revolt was led by Simeon Bar Kokhba in response to Emperor Hadrian's outlawing of circumcision and the forced Hellenization of all Jews in the empire. Bar Kokhba defeated

Roman forces garrisoned in Jerusalem, and established an independent Jewish state for about two years. His victories against the Romans led to many hailing Bar Kokhba as the Messiah who would restore the kingdom to Israel. However, Emperor Hadrian ordered six legions of soldiers into the area along with auxiliaries and reinforcements from other legions. Bar Kokhba was killed, the rebellion was crushed, and many Jews were slaughtered.

After the revolt, Jews were barred from Jerusalem. The Jews began to be persecuted in a way as never before, starting the final dispersion of the Jews.

The nation of Israel inside the land ceased to exist, and would not be heard from until 1948 and the ratifying of the Balfour Declaration.

Chapter 6 – The Gathering of Israel

The beginning of Deuteronomy, Chapter 30:1-3, foretells of the **scattering** of Israel among all the nations. It also foretells of the **return** and **gathering** from all the nations where they have been scattered. Deuteronomy 30 verse 4 adds this:

If your outcasts are in the uttermost parts of the heavens, from there Yahweh your God will gather you, and from there he will bring you back.

This is the basis for Paul's thought:

For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.¹⁷ Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 (NKJV)

The dead shall be resurrected first, and then those that remain alive shall be gathered up²³ with other believers, in the clouds, to meet YHVH.

The resurrection, i.e. living with and being with YHVH, is expressed many times in Scripture:

- "Oh, that You would hide me in the grave, That You would conceal me until Your wrath is past, that You would appoint me a set time, and remember me!"¹⁴ If a man dies, shall he live again? All the days of my hard service I will wait, until my change comes." Job 14:13-14 (NKJV)
- For I know *that* my Redeemer lives, And He shall stand at last on the earth;²⁶ And after my skin is destroyed, this I know, That in my flesh I shall see God.²⁷ Whom I shall see for myself, And my eyes shall behold, and not another. *How* my heart yearns within me! Job 19:25-27 (NKJV)
- For I am hard pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ (*in heaven,*) *which is* far better Philippians 1:23 (NKJV)
- And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise." Luke 23:43 (NKJV)
- And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, *there* you may be also. John 14:3 (NKJV)
- We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord. 2 Corinthians 5:8 (NKJV)
- Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, "Write: 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.'" "Yes," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them." Revelation 14:13 (NKJV)
- As for me, I will see Your face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake in Your likeness. Psalm 17:15 (NKJV)
- You will guide me with Your counsel, And afterward receive me to glory.²⁵ Whom have I in heaven *but You?* And *there is* none upon earth *that* I desire besides You.²⁶ My flesh and my heart fail; *But God is* the strength of my heart and my portion forever. Psalm 73:24-26 (NKJV)

²³"After that, we who are still alive will be gathered up with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And we will be with the Lord forever." 1 Thessalonians 4:17 (New Century Version)

- And I said to him, "Sir, you know." So he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.¹⁵ Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne will dwell among them.¹⁶ They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat;¹⁷ for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes." Revelation 7:14-17 (NKJV)

Deuteronomy Chapter 30 continues, explaining in more detail what will occur:

Yahweh your God will bring you into the land which your fathers possessed, and you will possess it. He will do you good, and increase your numbers more than your fathers. ⁶ Yahweh your God will circumcise your heart, and the heart of your offspring, to love Yahweh your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, that you may live. ⁷ Yahweh your God will put all these curses on your enemies, and on those who hate you, who persecuted you. ⁸ You shall return and obey Yahweh's voice, and do all his commandments which I command you today. ⁹ Yahweh your God will make you plenteous in all the work of your hand, in the fruit of your body, in the fruit of your livestock, and in the fruit of your ground, for good; for Yahweh will again rejoice over you for good, as he rejoiced over your fathers; ¹⁰ if you will obey Yahweh your God's voice, to keep his commandments and his statutes which are written in this book of the law; if you turn to Yahweh your God with all your heart, and with all your soul. (Deuteronomy 30:5-10)

After the resurrection and the gathering, all Israel will be placed in the "Land of Israel." Their numbers will increase and be greater than ever before. Their hearts and the hearts of their children will be circumcised. Israel will love YHVH with all their heart and soul. They do as He says. They will follow His instructions. They will prosper in all that they do, including the work of their hands, their offspring, their livestock, and the fruit of their ground. YHVH will rejoice over them.

The apostles understood this. That's why they asked:

"Lord, are you now restoring the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6)

And Yeshua answered:

"It isn't for you to know times or seasons which the Father has set within his own authority. ⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you. You will be witnesses to me in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the earth." (Acts 1:7-8)

Perhaps the apostles remembered Yeshua's words:

"Behold, I have told you beforehand...He will send out his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together his chosen ones from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other." (Matthew 24:25-31)

Even Caiaphas, the illegitimate High Priest, understood that YHVH had scattered Israel and would gathered them together as one people:

Caiaphas said, “You know nothing at all,⁵⁰ nor do you consider that it is advantageous for us that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation not perish.”⁵¹ Now he didn’t say this of himself, but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation,⁵² and not for the nation only, but that he might also gather together into one the children of God who are scattered abroad.” (John 11:50-52)

And Isaiah repeats the same message – Israel will be assembled and the dispersed of Judah will be gathered:

It will happen in that day that the Lord will set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant that is left of his people from Assyria, from Egypt, from Pathros, from Cush, from Elam, from Shinar, from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea.¹² He will set up a banner for the nations, and will assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.¹³ The envy also of Ephraim will depart, and those who persecute Judah will be cut off. Ephraim won’t envy Judah, and Judah won’t persecute Ephraim. (Isaiah 11:11-13)

And Jeremiah writes, “I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places where I have driven you.”

For I know the thoughts that I think toward you,” says Yahweh, “thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you hope and a future.¹² You shall call on me, and you shall go and pray to me, and I will listen to you.¹³ You shall seek me, and find me, when you search for me with all your heart.¹⁴ I will be found by you,” says Yahweh, “and I will turn again your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places where I have driven you, says Yahweh. I will bring you again to the place from where I caused you to be carried away captive.” (Jeremiah 29:11-14)

And according to Ezekiel, Israel will find acceptance and be brought back from the places they have been scattered.

I will accept you as a pleasant aroma when I bring you out from the peoples and gather you out of the countries in which you have been scattered. I will be sanctified in you in the sight of the nations.⁴² You will know that I am Yahweh when I bring you into the land of Israel, into the country which I swore to give to your fathers.⁴³ There you will remember your ways, and all your deeds in which you have polluted yourselves. Then you will loathe yourselves in your own sight for all your evils that you have committed.⁴⁴ You will know that I am Yahweh, when I have dealt with you for my name’s sake, not according to your evil ways, nor according to your corrupt doings, you House of Israel,” says the Lord Yahweh.’ ” (Ezekiel 20:41-44)

A Key in the Timeline of the Gathering of Israel: *Times of the Gentiles*

Paul writes in Romans 11:25-27:

For I don’t desire you to be ignorant, brothers, of this mystery, so that you won’t be wise in your own conceits, that a partial hardening has happened to Israel, until the

fullness of the Gentiles has come in,²⁶ and so all Israel will be saved. Even as it is written, 'There will come out of Zion the Deliverer, and he will turn away ungodliness from Jacob.'²⁷ This is my covenant with them, when I will take away their sins.'

The phrase “the fullness of the Gentiles” is unique to Paul. And the only other phrase within the New Testament that is even remotely similar is found in Luke 21:25 – “until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.”

In Romans 11, Paul talks about a mystery regarding the hard heartedness of Israel until “the fullness of the Gentiles.” The mystery, I believe, is that Judah can not see Yeshua as Messiah — and conversely, modern believers can not see Torah in Messiah. Both are blind in so much as Yeshua is Messiah, and Yeshua is the living Torah. But that is a subject for another time. The point is that this blindness will be eradicated once the time of the Gentiles is fulfilled.

Luke shows another side. He says, “Jerusalem will be trampled down, until “the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.”

In context, Luke is speaking of the destruction of Jerusalem which spearheaded the scattering of Israel. That happened in 70 A.D., and was finalized in the Bar Kokhba Rebellion around 132 A.D.

Since that time, and to this day, Jerusalem has not become the City of Our King. But this will all change when the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

To answer the question of **When** or **What** is the “**fullness of the Gentiles**” we need to turn to Genesis, and the story of Joseph.

Now when Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand on the head of Ephraim, it displeased him; so he took hold of his father's hand to remove it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's head.¹⁸ And Joseph said to his father, “Not so, my father, for this one *is* the firstborn; put your right hand on his head.”

But his father refused and said, “I know, my son, I know. He also shall become a people, and he also shall be great; but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his descendants shall become a multitude of nations.”

So he blessed them that day, saying, “By you Israel will bless, saying, ‘May God make you as Ephraim and as Manasseh!’ ” And thus he set Ephraim before Manasseh. (Genesis 48:17-20)

Jacob is on his death bed and is blessing Joseph's sons. Jacob crosses his arm showing he intends to give the firstborn blessing to Ephraim and not Manasseh. Joseph tries to correct Jacob, but Jacob refuses the correction and says that Ephraim and his descendants “will become a multitude of nations.”

The Hebrew for a “multitude of nations” is *m'loh ha goyim* or “fullness of nations – fullness of the gentiles.”

This passage in Genesis is a foretelling of the **gathering of both houses of Israel**. Israel, when

speaking of the Northern Kingdom, is also known as “Ephraim.” Israel is comprised of two houses – Ephraim and Judah, or the House of Israel and the House of Judah.

Ephraim (and his descendants), therefore will become drawn out of the nations; because Israel, the Northern Kingdom, was scattered among the nations. This is a massive event! This is yet to happen.

Ezekiel adds some important information:

Yahweh’s word came again to me, saying, ¹⁶“You, son of man, take one stick, and write on it, ‘For Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions.’ Then take another stick, and write on it, ‘For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the House of Israel his companions.’ ¹⁷ Then join them for yourself to one another into one stick, that they may become one in your hand. (Ezekiel 37:15-17)

YHVH instructs Ezekiel to take two sticks and write “Judah” on one, to represent Judah (2 tribes); and to write “Joseph” on the other, to represent Ephraim (10 tribes). **Together Judah and Ephraim** are called the “House of Israel” because, once they are combined in the hand of YHVH, that is what they will be – the whole House of Israel.

Ezekiel uses this term in the preceding verses of Chapter 37:

Then He said to me, “Son of man, these bones are the whole House of Israel. They indeed say, ‘Our bones are dry, our hope is lost, and we ourselves are cut off!’”

¹² Therefore prophesy and say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD: “Behold, O My people, I will open your graves and cause you to come up from your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel.” ¹³ Then you shall know that I am the LORD, when I have opened your graves, O My people, and brought you up from your graves. ¹⁴ I will put My Spirit in you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken *it* and performed *it*,” says the LORD.’” (Ezekiel 37:11-14)

The dry bones of the whole House of Israel will be raised up in the last days. This is the **Resurrection** Paul speaks of in 1 Thessalonians:

For this we tell you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will in no way precede those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with God’s trumpet. The dead in Christ will rise first, ¹⁷ then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air. So we will be with the Lord forever. ¹⁸ Therefore comfort one another with these words. (1 Thessalonians 4:15-18)

Israel (the dry bones of Ezekiel 37,) both the Dead (the resurrected) and the Living will be caught up to YHVH. Both Judah and Ephraim will be gathered from the farthest corners of the earth to become one in His hand. “That they may be one, even as we are one”²⁴.”

And this is why Paul says in Roman 11:26, “and so shall all Israel will be saved.”

²⁴John 17:22

For I don't desire you to be ignorant, brothers of this mystery, so that you won't be wise in your own conceits, that a partial hardening has happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in, ²⁶ and so all Israel will be saved. Even as it is written,

"There will come out of Zion the Deliverer, and he will turn away ungodliness from Jacob. ²⁷ This is my covenant with them, when I will take away their sins." (Romans 11:25-27)

As with most things, context is everything. In some contexts the House of Israel is speaking of the whole house, meaning both Judah and Ephraim; and in other instances the House of Israel is only speaking of the "lost ten tribes" or the Northern Kingdom which is also known as "Ephraim."

The New Covenant with the House of Israel and the House of Judah

Confusion abounds about the New Covenant. Some use the term "New Covenant" to mean the books written by the apostles, meaning Matthew through Revelation.

Some say that the "Old Covenant" has been done away with, and is superseded by a "New Covenant." The "proof" text offered is Hebrews 8:8-13:

"Behold, the days come," says the Lord, "that I will make a new covenant with the House of Israel and with the House of Judah; ⁹ not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; for they didn't continue in my covenant, and I disregarded them," says the Lord. ¹⁰ "For this is the covenant that I will make with the House of Israel. After those days," says the Lord; "I will put my laws into their mind, I will also write them on their heart. I will be their God, and they will be my people." ¹¹ They will not teach every man his fellow citizen, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for all will know me, from their least to their greatest.

For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness. I will remember their sins and lawless deeds no more." ¹³ In that he says, "A new covenant," he has made the first old. But that which is becoming old and grows aged is near to vanishing away.

At first glance that understanding might appear correct for the passage does say, "I will make a new covenant," and the first "is becoming old and...near to vanishing away."

Looking closer we see Hebrews 8:8-12 is a direct quote of Jeremiah 31:31-34:

"Behold, the days come," says Yahweh, "that I will make a new covenant with the House of Israel, and with the House of Judah: ³² not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which covenant of mine they broke, although I was a husband to them," says Yahweh. ³³ "But this is the covenant that I will make with the House of Israel after those days," says Yahweh: "I will put my law in their inward parts, and I will write it in their heart. I will be their God, and they shall be my people." ³⁴ They will no longer each teach his neighbor, and every man teach his brother, saying, 'Know Yahweh;' for they will all know me, from their least to their greatest," says Yahweh: "for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

(Jeremiah 31:31-34)

The word “new” in Jeremiah 31:8 is *chadash* (חדש), meaning “**to renew**.” It does not mean new as in brand new, but rather **renewed** or **refreshed**. It is the same word used for the “new” moon. The new moon is not reconstructed into new rock every time it orbits the earth. By “new” moon it means we see the moon in a **renewed** light.

Regarding this word, *Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* states:

chadash (2318 ,חדש), “**to renew**.” This verb occurs in post-Mosaic literature (with the exception of Job 10:17). The root is found in all the Semitic languages with the same sense; usually the radicals are *h-d-th*. The first appearance of *chadash* in the Bible is in 1 Sam. 11:14: “Then said Samuel to the people, Come, and let us go to Gilgal, and renew the kingdom there.”

Strong’s defines *chadash* as primitive root; to be new in the sense “to rebuild,” and the King James translates it as “renew or repair.”

The *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* defines *chadash* as renew, repair, restore; and illustrates its usage in Scripture:

chādash is used in the sense of “repair” or “rebuild” referring to cities (Isaiah 61:4), the temple (2 Chron. 24:4, 12), and the altar (2 Chron. 15:8). It is also used figuratively. Under Samuel the kingdom was renewed at Gilgal (1 Samuel 11:14). David wanted a right spirit, equivalent to a clean heart, renewed within him (Psalm 51:10 [H 12]). The prophet asked for renewal as of old (Lament. 5:21). God renews the face of the ground, that is, gives it new life (Psalm 104:30), and he renews one’s youth (Psalm 103:5). Job complained that God was bringing new witnesses against him (Job 10:17). (Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament)

Jeremiah 31:31, therefore, is **not** presenting a brand new covenant **but rather** a **renewed** or **re-stored covenant**.

To qualify the point Jeremiah continues:

Yahweh, who gives the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, who stirs up the sea, so that its waves roar; Yahweh of Armies is his name, says: ³⁶“If these ordinances depart from before me,” says Yahweh, “then the offspring of Israel also will cease from being a nation before me forever.” ³⁷Yahweh says: “If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, then I will also cast off all the offspring of Israel for all that they have done,” says Yahweh. (Jeremiah 31:35-37)

To underscore the **permanence** of Israel and the Covenant, **YHVH compares Israel’s existence to the heavens and the earth** – it as sure as YHVH’s appointment of the sun, the moon, and the stars (Gen. 1:14–19.) Israel is His chosen people. It would take a feat as massive as making His decrees vanish. YHVH’s power is displayed in the creation of the universe. He exercises that same

power in the preservation of Israel as a nation.

Scripture is abundantly clear on this point:

- "Thus says the LORD: 'If you can break My covenant with the day and My covenant with the night, so that there will not be day and night in their season, Jeremiah 33:20 (NKJV)
- For the mountains shall depart and the hills be removed, But My kindness shall not depart from you, Nor shall My covenant of peace be removed," Says the LORD, who has mercy on you. Isaiah 54:10 (NKJV)
- "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.¹⁸ For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is brought to fullness (Greek, *pleroo*).¹⁹ Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:17-19)^{25 26}
- Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away. Matthew 24:35, Mark 13:31, and Luke 21:33 (NKJV)
- And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one tittle of the law to fail (become null and void.) Luke 16:17 (NKJV)
- The grass withers, the flower fades, But the word of our God stands forever." Isaiah 40:8 (NKJV)
- But the word of the LORD endures forever." Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you. 1 Peter 1:25 (NKJV)
- See also Psalms 148:6 "He set them (sun, moon, stars, heavens) in place forever and ever."

Hebrews 8:8 uses the Greek word *kainos* for "new."

- *A.T. Robertson* defines *kainos* as "fresh"
- *Liddell and Scott* defines *kainos* as "fresh"
- *Vines* defines *kainos* as "new" like that which is unaccustomed or unused, not "new" in time, recent, but "new" as to form or quality, of different nature from what is contrasted as old.

Therefore — the author of Hebrews is not changing the meaning of Jeremiah 31:31. He is quoting it. The covenant stands — it is everlasting, it is unchanging, and Israel is YHWH's chosen people.

²⁵Think not that I am come to weaken, or destroy the Torah, or the *neviim*: I have not come to weaken, or destroy, but to completely reveal it in its intended fullness. 18 For truly I say to you, Until the current *shemayim* and earth pass away, not one *yud*, or one *nekudah* shall by any means pass from the Torah, until all be fulfilled. 19 Whoever therefore shall break, or weaken one of the least Torah commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the *malchut ha shemayim*: but whoever shall do and teach the commands, the same shall be called great in the *malchut ha shemayim*. Matt 5:17-20 (The Restoration Scriptures)

²⁶Do not suppose that, if I have appeared, that was with the intention of abolishing the teaching of the law and the prophets. I have made my appearance not to abolish it, but to give full expression to it. Indeed, I can give you solemn assurance of this: it is not till heaven and earth are removed that anything shall be removed from the law, be it but one letter, but one flourish. What is necessary first of all is that all its purposes should be accomplished. And so, whoever seeks to do away with one of the Torah's commandments, even though it may be counted among those of the least significance, and teaches others to do the same, that person will be of least significance in the kingdom of heaven. But he who keeps the commandments, and teaches them, will be established to stand high in the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:17-20) [God's New Covenant – A New Testament Translation - Heinz W. Cassirer]

Scripture Connects the New (Renewed) Covenant to the Church

Scripture states – “I will make a new covenant with the House of Israel and with the House of Judah” (Hebrew 8:8-13 and Jeremiah 31:31-37)

The New Covenant is expressly for the House of Israel (the Northern Kingdom) and the House of Judah (the Southern Kingdom). This is clear and incontrovertible. There is no ambiguity – the New Covenant is with the House of Israel and the House of Judah. Nowhere is it recorded in Scripture that God made a covenant with “the church.”

What this means, then, is: if one wishes to participate in the new Covenant they must be a part of either the House of Israel or the House of Judah. It does not mean one has to convert to Judaism.

A Bit About Judaism...

Around the 1st century CE (Common Era) several small Jewish sects existed — the Pharisees, Sadducees, Zealots, Essenes, and Christians. After the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE, these sects seemed to vanish. Christianity, however, survived by separating from Judaism and becoming a separate entity.

The Pharisees of the first century, however, did survive in the form of Rabbinic Judaism. Today it is known simply as “Judaism.” Judaism or “Rabbinic Judaism” is built on the outgrowth of rabbis as leaders who, gradually over time replaced the Levitical priestly system with a system of study in Torah (both written and oral) and daily prayer.

Judaism is based on the belief that Moses received God’s Torah in two forms: the Written Torah (the Pentateuch) and the Oral Torah (an oral explanation transmitted to the people through Moses).

This oral tradition was compiled in a written form known as Talmud and developed into two works. The older collection of writings is called the Jerusalem Talmud (created around the 4th century in Galilee), and the second work is the Babylonian Talmud (created around 500 CE). *Talmud*, when used without qualification, generally refers to the Babylonian Talmud.

When Yeshua and Paul walked upon the earth the written Talmud did not exist, but Oral Tradition or Oral Torah did. The gospels and Paul’s writings both record the conflict that existed between these oral traditions and the written Torah. This is why both Yeshua and Paul warned us against following the traditions of men.

How does this relate?

Yeshua warned us, “Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees²⁷.”

In Matthew Chapter 16 the Pharisees (joined by the Sadducees) asked Yeshua for a sign to prove He was Messiah, even though Yeshua had already healed many forms of disease and sickness, and shown a plethora of other miracles. In essence, Yeshua was a walking, talking, living billboard — but the Pharisees could not see/hear this witness because of their theology, their Judaism. Yeshua rebuked them and said, “An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and there will

²⁷See Matthew 16:6; Mark 8:15; Luke 12:1; Matthew 23:2-7; 1 Corinthians 5:6-8; and Galatians 5:9

be no sign given to it, except the sign of the prophet Jonah.”

Matthew continues the story. Yeshua left the Pharisees, departed, and meets the disciples on the other side of the lake. The disciples had forgotten to bring the bread with them, then Yeshua said, “Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.”

This perplexed the disciples, and they discussed amongst themselves, “We brought no bread?”

Then Yeshua said, “How is it that you don’t understand that I wasn’t speaking to you about bread? Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.”

The leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees is the pungent, sour fermenting of the Word of God as viewed through their oral traditions. These same oral traditions today are known as *The Talmud*. The Pharisees and the Sadducees rejected Yeshua as Messiah, even as today *The Talmud* rejects Yeshua as Messiah. The warning in Revelation 22:18-19 is pertinent.

“For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; ¹⁹ and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book.” (NKJV)²⁸

Matthew continues with Yeshua asking, “Who do men say that I am?”

The disciples answered, “Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others, Jeremiah, or some other prophet.”

Then Yeshua asked, “And who do you say that I am?”

Peter, without hesitation, said, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the Living God!”

Yeshua answered, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar Jonah, because flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven, and you, Peter, on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it.” (See Matthew Chapter 16)

Peter, in the Greek, means “stone or pebble.” *Rock*, in the Greek, means “a massive rock, a boulder.” So when Yeshua says He will build His church (congregation) on the *Rock*, He is not speaking of Peter. The foundation is Yeshua. He is the Messiah. He is the Son of God.

“For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” 1 Corinthians 3:11 (NKJV)

The Greek word in Scripture normally translated “Church” is *ekklesia*. It means “assembly or congregation.” The word Church comes from the Greek *kyriake oikia* or, *kyriakon doma* and means “the Lord’s house, or “belonging to the Lord.” The word Church is not an accurate translation of any word used by Messiah or His Apostles. It is a word Roman Catholicism substituted in place of *ekklesia*.

²⁸See also: Deuteronomy 4:2

”You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.” (NKJV)

The corresponding Hebrew word for *ekklesia* is *qahal* or *kahal*.

The first place *qahal* or *kahal* is found in Scripture is Genesis 28:4 —

Then Isaac called Jacob and blessed him, and charged him, and said to him: "You shall not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan. ² Arise, go to Padan Aram, to the house of Bethuel your mother's father; and take yourself a wife from there of the daughters of Laban your mother's brother. ³ "May God Almighty bless you, And make you fruitful and multiply you, That you may be an assembly (*qahal* or *kahal*) of peoples; ⁴ And give you the blessing of Abraham, To you and your descendants with you, That you may inherit the land In which you are a stranger, Which God gave to Abraham." Genesis 28:1-4 (NKJV)

Here Isaac gives the blessing for Jacob (Israel) to become a *qahal* or *kahal*, "an assembly of people."

The second place the word *qahal* or *kahal* is found is Genesis 35:11 —

Then God appeared to Jacob again, when he came from Padan Aram, and blessed him. ¹⁰ And God said to him, "Your name *is* Jacob; your name shall not be called Jacob anymore, but Israel shall be your name." So He called his name Israel. ¹¹ Also God said to him: "I *am* God Almighty. Be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company (*qahal* or *kahal*) of nations shall proceed from you, and kings shall come from your body. Genesis 35:9-11 (NKJV)

Here YHVH calls for Jacob (Israel) to become a *qahal* or *kahal*.

The third place *qahal* or *kahal* is found in Scripture is Genesis 48:4 —

Now it came to pass after these things that Joseph was told, "Indeed your father *is* sick"; and he took with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. ² And Jacob was told, "Look, your son Joseph is coming to you"; and Israel strengthened himself and sat up on the bed. ³ Then Jacob said to Joseph: "God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan and blessed me, ⁴ and said to me, 'Behold, I will make you fruitful and multiply you, and I will make of you a multitude (*qahal* or *kahal*) of people, and give this land to your descendants after you *as* an everlasting possession.' Genesis 48:1-4 (NKJV)

Here Jacob (Israel) reminds Joseph that YHVH will make Israel (the nation) a *qahal* or *kahal*.

Qahal or *kahal* is also found numerous other places in the Pentateuch (first five books of the Bible). See Exodus 12:6; 16:3; Leviticus 4:13,14, 21; 16:17, 16:33; Numbers 10:7; 14:5; 15:15; 16:3, 33, 47; 19:20; 20:4, 6, 10, 12; 22:4; Deuteronomy 5:22; 9:10; 10:4; 18:16; 23:1, 3, 8; 31:30.

Just as a side note: *ekklesia* is used many times throughout the Septuagint to translate the Hebrew word *qahal* (or *kahal*).

Conclusion: **Israel is the *qahal*, the *ekklesia*, the church.** The church belongs to YHVH and is His dwelling place. It is neither a building nor a denomination. The church is not Rome, nor any entity other than the Whole House of Israel.

Paul understood this:

Therefore remember that once you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called “uncircumcision” by that which is called “circumcision,” (in the flesh, made by hands); ¹² that you were at that time separate from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of the promise, having no hope and without God in the world. ¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off are made near in the blood of Christ. (Ephesians 2:11-13)

Those in Messiah, who once were Gentiles (or from the nations,) are now citizens of Israel.

Paul explains how this works in Galatians:

Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his offspring. He doesn't say, “To descendants,” as of many, but as of one, “To your offspring,” which is Messiah. ¹⁷ Now I say this: A covenant confirmed beforehand by God in Messiah, the Torah, which came four hundred thirty years after, does not annul, so as to make the promise of no effect. ¹⁸ For if the inheritance is of the Torah, it is no more of promise; but God has granted it to Abraham by promise.

Then why is there Torah? It was added because of transgressions, until the offspring should come to whom the promise has been made. It was ordained through messengers by the hand of a mediator. ²⁰ Now a mediator is not between one, but God is one. ²¹ Is Torah then against the promises of God? Certainly not! For if there had been an instruction given which could make alive, most certainly righteousness would have been of Torah. ²² But the Scripture imprisoned all things under sin that the promise by faith in Yeshua Messiah might be given to those who believe.

But before faith came, we were kept in custody under Torah, confined for the faith which should afterwards be revealed. ²⁴ So that Torah has become our tutor to bring us to Messiah, that we might be justified by faith. ²⁵ But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. ²⁶ For you are all children of God, through faith in Messiah Yeshua. ²⁷ For as many of you as were baptized into Messiah have put on Messiah. ²⁸ 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. ²⁹ If you are Messiah's, then you are Abraham's offspring and heirs according to promise. (Galatians 3:16-29)

In Yeshua we have a new identity. We, who are in Messiah, are Israel; and joined with the House of Judah, we become the whole House of Israel.

Now, that's “Good News!” We become participants in the New Covenant. For the New Covenant, according to Hebrews 8:8 and Jeremiah 31:31, is between YHVH and the House of Israel and the House of Judah.

The Nature of the New (Renewed) Covenant

From the very beginning, starting in Genesis Chapter 1, YHVH has made His intention abundantly clear: **He desires a people with a heart and character like His.**

God said, “Let's make man in our image, after our likeness. Let them have dominion

over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the sky, and over the livestock, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” ²⁷ God created man in his own image. In God’s image he created him; male and female he created them. ²⁸ God blessed them. God said to them, “Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it. Have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” (Genesis 1:26-28)

This theme is reverberated throughout Leviticus – “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”²⁹”

“Be ye holy for I am holy” is an idiomatic way of saying, “Be like Me.” The content and character of our lives should reflect the content and character of the Almighty. Paul reiterates this thought in Galatians:

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith,²³ gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law. ²⁴ Those who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh with its passions and lusts. ²⁵ If we live by the Spirit, let’s also walk by the Spirit. ²⁶ Let’s not become conceited, provoking one another, and envying one another. (Galatians 5:22-25)

Fruit reveals , or indicates character. Fruit is an expression of the inward man.

“I, Yahweh, search the mind. I try the heart, even to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings.” (Jeremiah 17:10)

But Yahweh said to Samuel, “Don’t look on his face, or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for I don’t see as man sees. For man looks at the outward appearance, but Yahweh looks at the heart.” (1 Samuel 16:7)

Let your beauty be not just the outward adorning of braiding the hair, and of wearing jewels of gold, or of putting on fine clothing; ⁴ but in the hidden person of the heart, in the incorruptible adornment of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God very precious. ⁵ For this is how the holy women before, who hoped in God also adorned themselves, being in subjection to their own husbands. (1 Peter 3:3-5)

Scripture commands that we be perfect. “Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.” Matthew 5:48 (NKJV)

Paul explains this idea of perfection by saying, “Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. ² And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.” Ephesians 5:1-2 (NKJV)

This is the nature of the New Covenant. As citizens of the household of God we are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets. Yeshua Messiah is the foundation stone, the rock upon which we are built. God Himself is fitting us together as a holy habitation. We are becoming the dwelling place of YHWH.³⁰

²⁹See Leviticus 11:44-45; 19:2; 20:7, 26; 21:28

³⁰Ephesians 2:19-22

There is a transformation taking place. We are being changed from glory to glory, from truth to truth, from correction to correction, from trial to trial. Like stones in Solomon's Temple, far from the actual building site, we are being quarried and hewed into living stones by the hand of God. We are being transformed into image bearers, reflecting the glory of the All Mighty. We are becoming more like Yeshua.³¹

Something is happening inside us, in the inner man. And some day this change will be manifested as God's Holy habitation – His House.

Yeshua speaks of it this way:

"That they may all be one; even as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that you sent me."²² The glory which you have given me, I have given to them; that they may be one, even as we are one;²³ I in them, and you in me, that they may be perfected into one; that the world may know that you sent me, and loved them, even as you loved me.²⁴ Father, I desire that they also whom you have given me be with me where I am, that they may see my glory, which you have given me, for you loved me before the foundation of the world." (John 17:21-24)

This "Oneness" is expressed in love — love for God, love for one another, and love for His Torah.

Jesus said to him, " 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' "³⁸ This is the first and great commandment.³⁹ A second likewise is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' "⁴⁰ The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments." (Matthew 22:37-40)

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also love one another.³⁵ By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." (John 13:34-35)

"If you love me, keep my commandments." (John 14:15)

This is how we know that we know him: if we keep his commandments.⁴ One who says, "I know him," and doesn't keep his commandments, is a liar, and the truth isn't in him.⁵ But whoever keeps his word, God's love has most certainly been perfected in him. This is how we know that we are in him: ⁶ he who says he remains in him ought himself also to walk just like he walked.

Brothers, I write no new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which you heard from the beginning.⁸ Again, I write a new commandment to you, which is true in him and in you; because the darkness is passing away, and the true light already shines.⁹ He who says he is in the light and hates his brother is in the darkness even until now.¹⁰ He who loves his brother remains in the light, and there is no occasion for stumbling in him.¹¹ But he who hates his brother is in the darkness, and walks in the darkness, and doesn't know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes." (1 John 2:3-11)

³¹2 Corinthians 3:18

“This is love, that we should walk according to his commandments. This is the commandment, even as you heard from the beginning, that you should walk in it.” (2 John 1:6)

What is Love?³² How much do I Love God?

We can Love ice-cream, chocolate, skiing, art, music, our jobs, a cat or a dog. We can Love our parents, our spouse, or our children. Honestly, we Love just about anything. In the end, the only way to ascertain what is meant when we say, “I Love (fill in the blank),” is to turn to context for clarification.

In simplistic terms: Love, at its root, is a valuation. It’s an expression we use to say how much we value this or that. Our Love for said item may be great or small, depending upon what the object of our affection is, and what is its function or use.

Sometimes Love is about an activity. It’s fun. It’s healthy. It’s good for us. Or maybe it’s more of an association with our identity (“I love being a teacher!”). Or maybe Love is an emotional tie, or associated to a sensation, or how something affects our mood. Love can also be centered on relationships — siblings, or parents, or spouses, or children.

Love, therefore, can cover a large gamut. The easiest way for me to quantify “Love” is to simply say: Love is based on value.

I value ice-cream, because it tastes good, or I love/value the sensation of the creaminess and the coolness in my mouth. I love/value my dog or pet, because it makes me feel good, it’s faithful, it appreciates me. Or, I love/value my job, because it gives me an identity, sets boundaries, or provides opportunities and a good living.

Value is about worth, merit, or importance; and Love also is about worth, merit, or importance.

I think, when Yeshua said, “If you love Me, keep My commandments.”³³ He was giving us a litmus test. He’s asking the question, “How much value do you place on me?”

The answer is: If you love Yeshua, you will love what He loves. If you value Yeshua, you will value what He values.

Yeshua places great value on the commandments. The commandments, to be clear, are Torah – the instructions of God.

So, simply put, the litmus test is: If you love Yeshua, you love what He loves, therefore you love, or will keep the commandments – the Torah.

The **New Covenant**, as mentioned in Hebrews and Jeremiah, is saying the same thing.

“Behold, the days come,” says the Lord, “that I will make a new covenant with the House of Israel and with the House of Judah;...this is the covenant I will make with them...“I will put my Torah into their mind, I will also put it on their heart. I will be their God, and they will be my people. (Hebrews 8:8–10)

³² Love is: Being committed to the well being of another whether a person or thing. (Puppy, piano, etc.)

³³ John 14:15

The New Covenant is defined as the Torah written on the hearts and minds of both the House of Judah, and the House of Israel.

The New Covenant involves the internalization of His Law – the Torah. — His instructions. This gives Israel the ability to do what God has said (His Torah,) and to enjoy His blessings.

This is how Ezekiel explains it:

“For I will take you from among the nations and gather you out of all the countries, and will bring you into your own land. ²⁵ I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean. I will cleanse you from all your filthiness, and from all your idols. ²⁶ I will also give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit within you. I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes. You will keep my ordinances and do them. ²⁸ You will dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers. You will be my people, and I will be your God.” (Ezekiel 36:24-28)

Ezekiel numerates six important details:

1. Israel will be gathered from among the nations and brought back to the land of Israel.
2. Israel will be cleansed from all filthiness and idolatry.
3. Israel will be given a new heart and a new spirit.
4. YHVH will put His Spirit within them, and they will walk in all of His ways.
5. Israel will dwell in the land of Israel.
6. Israel will be YHVH’s people, and YHVH will be their God.”

This is the New Covenant – a heart to follow God and to worship Him in Spirit and in truth.

“God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.” (John 4:24)

The Torah

There is a beautiful Hebrew word in Scripture which I’ve mentioned several times. This word has been maligned by many. That word is *Torah* - תּוֹרָה.

In Hebrew it is spelled *Tav, Vav, Resh, Hey*. Unlike English, each Hebrew letter has its own meaning with a symbol and its definition. *Torah* shown in simplistic symbolic form would be:

- Tav symbolizes a cross
- Vav symbolizes a nail
- Resh symbolizes a man
- Hey symbolizes a window or to reveal/see

The picture painted by this the four letters of this word is someone looking through a window or beholding/seeing a man nailed to a cross or as combined: “See the Man nailed to the cross.” Torah pictorially points to Messiah, as the Man nailed to the cross.

Torah comes from the Hebrew root *yara* which is spelled *Yod, Resh, Hey*.

- Yod symbolizes the picture of a hand shaped to work, meaning work or make
- Resh symbolizes a man.
- Hey symbolizes a window or to reveal/see

Yara paints the picture of a man looking through a window or seeing what he is to do. The root concept behind *Torah* then is: Look here to gain wisdom, insight, light, instruction, and direction.

The basic foundational dictionary meaning of ***Torah* is “teaching or instruction.”** Sadly, that meaning is lost in our English translations. They have chosen to mistranslate the word as “law.”

“Law” is derived from the Greek *nomos*. In the King James version *Torah* is found 217 times. 216 of those times it is translated as “law.” In the New Testament *nomos* is found 195 times. All 195 times it is translated as “law.”

Listen to what Scripture says about *Torah*:

Torah is Truth

- Psalms 119:142 “Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness. Your Torah is truth.”
- *Torah* is light – the way to life
- Proverbs 6:23 “For the commandment is a lamp, and the Torah is light. Reproofs of instruction are the way of life,”

Torah is a fountain of life

- Proverbs 13:14 “The Torah of the wise is a spring of life, to turn from the snares of death.”

Torah is Liberty – Freedom

- James 1:25 “But he who looks into the perfect Torah, the Torah of freedom, and continues, not being a hearer who forgets but a doer of the work, this man will be blessed in what he does.”

The Word of the Lord is *Torah*

- Isaiah 1:10 “Hear the word of Yahweh, you rulers of Sodom! Listen to the Torah of our God, you people of Gomorrah!”
- Isaiah 2:3 “Many peoples shall go and say, “Come, let's go up to the mountain of Yahweh, To the house of the God of Jacob; And he will teach us of his ways, And we will walk in his paths.For out of Zion the Torah shall go forth, And the word of Yahweh from Jerusalem.”

Torah is Holy, Righteous, and Good

- Romans 7:12 “Therefore the Torah indeed is holy, and the commandment holy, and righteous, and good.”

Torah is a shadow of good things to come

- Hebrews 10:1 “For the Torah, having a shadow of the good to come, not the very image of the things, can never with the same sacrifices year by year, which they offer continually, make perfect those who draw near.”

Torah is sound instruction

- Proverbs 4:2 “For I give you sound learning (instruction). Don't forsake my Torah.”

To walk in Torah is to Walk in The Spirit

- Ezekiel 36:27 “I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and you shall keep my ordinances, and do them.”

Torah is a delight, a provision for merciful kindness

- Psalms 119:75-77 “Yahweh, I know that Your judgments are righteous, that in faithfulness you have afflicted me. 76 Please let your loving kindness be for my comfort, according to Your word to your servant. 77 Let your tender mercies come to me, that I may live; For Your Torah is my delight.”

Torah is His ways, His statutes, His Commandments, His Judgments, His testimony

- 1 Kings 2:3 “and keep the charge of Yahweh your God, to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, and His commandments, and His ordinances, and His testimonies, according to that which is written in the Torah of Moses, that you may prosper in all that you do, and wherever you turn yourself.”
- John 14:15 “If you love me, keep my commandments.”
- 1 John 2:3-6 “This is how we know that we know him: if we keep his commandments. 4 One who says, “I know him,” and doesn't keep his commandments, is a liar, and the truth isn't in him. 5 But whoever keeps his word (Torah), God's love has most assuredly been perfected in him. This is how we know that we are in him: 6 he who says he remains in him ought himself also to walk just like he walked.”
- John 15:10 “If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and remain in his love.”
- Torah is understanding, good doctrine, teaching, His Words, His Commands, wisdom, instruction, and life
- Proverbs 4:1-13 “Listen, sons, to a father's instruction. Pay attention and know understanding; 2 For I give you sound learning. Don't forsake my Torah. 3 For I was a son to my father, Tender and an only child in the sight of my mother. 4 He taught me, and said to me: “Let your heart retain my words. Keep my commandments, and live. 5 Get wisdom. Get understanding. Don't forget, neither swerve from the words of my mouth. 6 Don't forsake her, and she will preserve you. Love her, and she will keep you. 7 Wisdom is supreme. Get wisdom. Yes, though it costs all your possessions, get understanding. 8 Esteem her, and she will exalt you. She will bring you to honor, when you embrace her. 9 She will give to your head a garland of grace. She will deliver a crown of splendor to you.” 10 Listen, my son, and receive my sayings. The years of your life will be many. 11 I have taught you in the way of wisdom. I have led you in straight paths. 12 When you go, your steps will not be hampered. When you run, you will not stumble. 13 Take firm hold of instruction. Don't let her go. Keep her, for she is your life.”

Torah is a tree of life

- Proverbs 3:1-2 “My son, don't forget my Torah; but let your heart keep my commandments: 2 For length of days, and years of life, and peace, will they add to you.”
- Proverbs 3:13-18 “Blessed is the man who finds wisdom (Torah), And the man who gains understanding (Torah); 14 For her proceeds are better than the profits of silver, And her gain than fine gold. 15 She is more precious than rubies, And all the things you may desire cannot compare with her. 16 Length of days is in her right hand, In her left hand riches and honor. 17 Her ways are ways of pleasantness, And all her paths are peace. 18 She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her, and happy are all who retain her.” 19 The Lord by wisdom (Torah) founded the earth; By understanding (Torah) He established the heavens; 20 By His knowledge (Torah) the depths were broken up, And clouds drop down the dew.

- Proverbs 3:21-24 “My son, let them (Wisdom, Understanding – Torah) not depart from your eyes. Keep sound wisdom and discretion: 22 So they will be life to your soul, And grace for your neck. 23 Then you shall walk in your way securely. Your foot won't stumble. 24 When you lie down, you will not be afraid. Yes, you will lie down, and your sleep will be sweet.”

Scripture portrays *Torah* as being much more than “law.” *Torah* is light, it is life, it is freedom, truth, instruction, wisdom, knowledge and much more.

According to Scripture, those who live their lives in accordance with *Torah* are blessed. These are the people who seek Him with a whole heart. These are the people who walk in His ways, and obey Him. They will not be disappointed.

Blessed are those whose ways are blameless, who walk according to Yahweh's Torah. ²Blessed are those who keep his statutes, who seek him with their whole heart. ³Yes, they do nothing wrong. They walk in his ways. ⁴You have commanded your precepts, that we should fully obey them. ⁵Oh that my ways were steadfast to obey your statutes! ⁶Then I wouldn't be disappointed, when I consider all of your commandments. ⁷I will give thanks to you with uprightness of heart, when I learn your righteous judgments. ⁸I will observe your statutes. Don't utterly forsake me. (Psalms 119:1-8)

Later on in Psalms 116 — *Torah*, His Words (Heb, *devarim*), are declared truth. *Torah* will last forever.

All of your words are truth. Every one of your righteous ordinances endures forever. (Psalms 116:160)

The Book of Psalms begins by comparing the blessed ones to the wicked. Those that are blessed delight in *Torah*, meaning there is a joy, great pleasure, an appreciation of, and attraction toward *Torah*. This is the man that meditates on *Torah* day and night. He is fruitful; but not so with the wicked. The wicked fail to see the value of *Torah*, and in the end they will perish.

Blessed is the man who doesn't walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand on the path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers; ²but his delight is in Yahweh's Torah. On His Torah he meditates day and night. ³He will be like a tree planted by the streams of water, that produces its fruit in its season, whose leaf also does not wither. Whatever he does shall prosper. ⁴The wicked are not so, but are like the chaff which the wind drives away. ⁵Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. ⁶For Yahweh knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked shall perish. (Psalms 1)

This reminds me of John 14:15, “If you love me, keep my commandments.”

And:

Yeshua said, “If a man loves me, he will keep my word. My Father will love him, and we will come to him, and make our home with him.” ²⁴ He who doesn't love me doesn't keep my words. The word which you hear isn't mine, but the Father's who sent me. (John 14:23-24)

By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep his commandments. ³ For this is loving God, that we keep his commandments. His commandments are not grievous. (1 John 5:2-3)

Torah, the Word of God, is an inextricable part of the believer's life. Simply put, we will die without it. We will not be part of the Gathering of Israel. This is the message of Matthew 7:23.

Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. ²² Many will tell me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, didn't we prophesy in your name, in your name cast out demons, and in your name do many mighty works?' ²³ Then I will tell them, 'I never knew you. Depart from me, you who work iniquity.' (Matthew 7:21-23)

The words "Depart from me, you who work iniquity," clarify the subject. "Iniquity" in Greek is *anomia*, a composite of two words: "*a*" meaning "without" and "*nomia*," meaning *Torah*. Thus the literal meaning for *a-nomia* is, "I never knew you, depart from Me, you who labor without *Torah*!"

Those who are **without *Torah*** are shut out of the kingdom.

When once the master of the house has risen up, and has shut the door, and you begin to stand outside, and to knock at the door, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open to us!' then he will answer and tell you, 'I don't know you or where you come from.' ²⁶ Then you will begin to say, 'We ate and drank in your presence, and you taught in our streets.' ²⁷ He will say, 'I tell you, I don't know where you come from. Depart from me, all you workers of iniquity.' (Luke 13:25-27)

"Behold, I come quickly. My reward is with me, to repay to each man according to his work. ¹³ I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End. ¹⁴ Blessed are those who do his commandments, (walk in Torah) that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter in by the gates into the city. ¹⁵ Outside are the dogs, the sorcerers, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood. (Opposite of truth – Torah is truth) ¹⁶ I, Yeshua, have sent my messenger to testify these things to you for the assemblies. I am the root and the offspring of David; the Bright and Morning Star." (Revelation 22:12-16)

Yeshua sent to gather the lost sheep

Yeshua said, "I was not sent to anyone but the lost sheep of the House of Israel," ³⁴ and earlier in His ministry, when he sent the twelve out, He said, "Don't go among the Gentiles, and don't enter into any city of the Samaritans. Rather, go to the lost sheep of the House of Israel." ³⁵

Scripture describes the House of Israel as "lost sheep" scattered because they have no shepherd. "My people have been lost sheep. Their shepherds have led them astray; They have turned them away *on* the mountains. They have gone from mountain to hill; They have forgotten their resting place. ⁷ All who found them have devoured them; And their adversaries said, 'We have not offended, Because they have sinned against the LORD, the habitation of justice, The LORD, the hope

³⁴Matthew 15:24

³⁵Matthew 10:5-6

of their fathers.' Jeremiah 50:6-7 (NKJV)

So they were scattered because *there was* no shepherd; and they became food for all the beasts of the field when they were scattered. ⁶ My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and on every high hill; yes, My flock was scattered over the whole face of the earth, and no one was seeking or searching for them. " Ezekiel 34:5-6 (NKJV)

Scripture also describes the Messiah as coming to gather the lost sheep of the House of Israel³⁶, becoming their shepherd, and feeding them.

I will establish one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them--My servant David. He shall feed them and be their shepherd. Ezekiel 34:23 (NKJV)

The Messiah will also destroy those that have scattered the sheep.

"I will seek what was lost and bring back what was driven away, bind up the broken and strengthen what was sick; but I will destroy the fat and the strong, and feed them in judgment." Ezekiel 34:16 (NKJV)

Yeshua, when He looked upon the multitudes, saw them as the lost sheep of Israel.

- But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion for them, because they were harassed and scattered, like sheep without a shepherd. (Matthew 9:36)
- "He who is not with me is against me, and he who doesn't gather with me, scatters. (Matthew 12:30)
- Yeshua even declares He has found the lost sheep.
"What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? ⁵ And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. ⁶ And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!' Luke 15:4-6 (NKJV)

This theme is so well known and understood that, as noted above, Caiaphas prophesied; "You know nothing at all, ⁵⁰ nor do you consider that it is advantageous for us that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation not perish." ⁵¹ Now he didn't say this of himself, but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, ⁵² and not for the nation only, but that he might also **gather** together into one the **children of God who are scattered** abroad. (John 11:50-52)

The theme of Yeshua coming to gather the scattered and lost House of Israel is carried throughout the writings of the apostles:

James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are in the Dispersion (scattered abroad): Greetings! (James 1:1)

Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the chosen ones who are living as foreigners in the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. (1 Peter 1:1)

³⁶See also Isaiah 53:6

Greater than the First Exodus

Scripture records two separate Exodus events – one in the Book of Exodus, the other in the Prophets, which Yeshua spoke of during His days on earth.

As explored earlier, in the First Exodus YHVH brings Israel out of Egypt with, “a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm, with great terror and with signs and wonders³⁷,” and describes how He “bore Israel on eagles' wings and brought them to Himself.”³⁸

The eye witness account of the Exodus has been rehearsed for thousands of years and in numerous places through the Feasts of Passover and Unleavened Bread. Moses reminded Israel of this great event just before entering the Promised Land. The metaphor, “mighty hand” of God, describes the proficiency executed in this event. The “outstretched arm” of God demonstrates the strength and power required to finish it. And the phrase, “I bore them on eagle’s wings,” aptly portrays the miraculous moving a whole nation in a single day.

In the First Exodus, according to the first chapter of Numbers, Israel had 603,500³⁹ men able to go to war. Adding to that the wives, children, and the tribe of Levi, the total number of people leaving Egypt has been estimated to be between 2 and 2.4 million.

The logistics of moving a people group that size across the desert would be astonishing! The amount of food and water alone would be staggering. Couple that with the plagues, the crossing of the Red Sea, the destruction of Egypt’s army, the plundering of Egypt, the devastation to the nation of Egypt, and a face to face meeting with YHVH Himself at Mount Sinai leaves us with an extraordinary point in history that is indelible and unforgettable — and only surpassed by the creation itself or the flood.

A New Exodus – A Second Exodus – A Greater Exodus – A “Rapture”

“Therefore behold, the days come,” says Yahweh, “that it will no more be said, ‘As Yahweh lives, who brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt;’¹⁵ but, ‘As Yahweh lives, who brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north, and from all the countries where he had driven them.’ I will bring them again into their land that I gave to their fathers.” (Jeremiah 16:14-15)

This is the promise to Israel, that sometime after the captivity, in the future, there will be another Exodus – a Second Exodus – a **Greater Exodus**. This has not happened, not yet. But it will!

This Second Exodus will be so extraordinary, so wonderful, that Israel will no longer look back to the First Exodus.

Jeremiah 23:5-8 gives the timing of this wondrous event:

“Behold, the days come,” says Yahweh, “that I will raise to David a righteous Branch, and he will reign as king and deal wisely, and will execute justice and righteousness in the land. ⁶In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell safely. This is his name by which he will be called: Yahweh our righteousness.

³⁷Deuteronomy 26:8

³⁸Exodus 19:4

³⁹See also Exodus 12:37, Numbers 11:21; 1:45-46; 26:51

“Therefore behold, the days come,” says Yahweh, “that they will no more say, ‘As Yahweh lives, who brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt;’⁸ but, ‘As Yahweh lives, who brought up and who led the offspring of the House of Israel out of the north country, and from all the countries where I had driven them.’ Then they will dwell in their own land.”

This Second Exodus occurs when YHVH raises the “Righteous Branch” to reign as King over Israel. This is the Second Coming of Messiah.

This is the event Paul is speaking of in 1 Thessalonians 4 — using the Greek word *harpazo*, Latin *rapimur*) for “caught up” — which is often translated as “Rapture:”

But we don’t want you to be ignorant, brothers, concerning those who have fallen asleep, so that you don’t grieve like the rest, who have no hope. ¹⁴ For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. ¹⁵ For this we tell you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will in no way precede those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with God’s trumpet. The dead in Christ will rise first, ¹⁷ then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air. So we will be with the Lord forever.

¹⁸ Therefore comfort one another with these words. (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18)

This is the “Blessed Hope:”

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, ¹² instructing us to the intent that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we would live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present age; ¹³ looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ; ¹⁴ who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify for himself a people for his own possession, zealous for good works. (Titus 2:11-14)

This is when the dead in Messiah will be raised, and mortality will put on immortality:

Behold, I tell you a mystery. We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, ⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we will be changed. ⁵³ For this perishable body must become imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. ⁵⁴ But when this perishable body will have become imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then what is written will happen: “Death is swallowed up in victory.” (1 Corinthians 15:51-54)

This is the promise of Ezekiel:

As I live, says the Lord Yahweh, surely with a mighty hand, with an outstretched arm, and with wrath poured out, I will be king over you. ³⁴ I will bring you out from the peoples, and will gather you out of the countries in which you are scattered with a mighty hand, with an outstretched arm, and with wrath poured out. ³⁵ I will bring you into the wilderness of the peoples, and there I will enter into judgment with you

face to face. ³⁶ Just as I entered into judgment with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so I will enter into judgment with you,” says the Lord Yahweh. (Ezekiel 20:33-37)

And again in Jeremiah:

⁷ For Yahweh says, “Sing with gladness for Jacob, and shout for the chief of the nations. Publish, praise, and say, ‘Yahweh, save your people, the remnant of Israel!’

⁸ Behold, I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the uttermost parts of the earth, along with the blind and the lame, the woman with child and her who travails with child together. They will return as a great company. ⁹ They will come with weeping. I will lead them with petitions. I will cause them to walk by rivers of waters, in a straight way in which they won’t stumble; for I am a father to Israel. Ephraim is my firstborn. (Jeremiah 31:7-9)

And in Jeremiah 29:14; 30:3; 32:37; Deuteronomy 30:3-5; Psalms 106:47; Isaiah 11:11-16; 27:12-13; 43:5-6; Ezekiel 11:17; 34:13; 36:24-37; 37:21-27; 39:27-28; Amos 9:14-15; Micah 7:12; Zeph. 3:19-20; Zech. 10:8-12

Israel will be gathered by the Hand of God from the four corners of the earth. The righteous dead will be suddenly-resurrected. It will involve an incalculable number of people. Not one will be left among the nations. All will be gathered. No one will be overlooked. The context of Scripture is clear. This event, this gathering of Israel is a one-time only event. This is for the faithful of Israel. Those who have transgressed or rebelled against God are cut off here and will not enter into the Promised Land.

But don’t forget this one thing, beloved, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. ⁹ The Lord is not slow concerning his promise, as some count slowness; but is patient with us, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. ¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. ¹¹ Therefore since all these things will be destroyed like this, what kind of people ought you to be in holy living and godliness, ¹² looking for and earnestly desiring the coming of the day of God, which will cause the burning heavens to be dissolved, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? ¹³ But, according to his promise, we look for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells. (2 Peter 3:8-13)

Chapter 7 – The Day of the Lord

The centrality of the Day of the Lord in Scripture is unmistakable. This is seen not only by the abundance of references, but by its place in theological study. The Day of the Lord is the conclusion of all apocalyptic thought. The Day of the Lord is the point to which everything is moving. It is that to which everything is building. It is the consummation and conclusion of the ages.

What is the Day of The Lord?

According to the prophets, the Day of the Lord is a time when YHVH will personally and dramatically intervene in the affairs of men. It is a two-sided event. On one side, the unrighteous will be completely destroyed; and the other side, the faithful will be redeemed.

The Unrighteous

The lofty looks of man will be brought low, the arrogance of men will be bowed down, and Yahweh alone will be exalted in that day.

¹² For there will be a day of Yahweh of Armies for all that is proud and arrogant, and for all that is lifted up; and it shall be brought low: (Isaiah 2:11-12)

The Righteous

From now on, there is stored up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give to me on that day; and not to me only, but also to all those who have loved his appearing. (2 Timothy 4:8)

Scripture has much to say about the Day of the Lord:

- Wail, for the day of Yahweh is at hand! It will come as destruction from the Almighty.⁷ Therefore all hands will be feeble, and everyone's heart will melt. ⁸ They will be dismayed. Pangs and sorrows will seize them. They will be in pain like a woman in labor. They will look in amazement one at another. Their faces will be faces of flame. ⁹ Behold, the day of Yahweh comes, cruel, with wrath and fierce anger; to make the land a desolation, and to destroy its sinners out of it. ¹⁰ For the stars of the sky and its constellations will not give their light. The sun will be darkened in its going out, and the moon will not cause its light to shine. ¹¹ I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity. I will cause the arrogance of the proud to cease, and will humble the arrogance of the terrible. ¹² I will make people more rare than fine gold, even a person than the pure gold of Ophir. ¹³ Therefore I will make the heavens tremble, and the earth will be shaken out of its place in Yahweh of Armies' wrath, and in the day of his fierce anger. (Isaiah 13:6-13)
- The great day of Yahweh is near. It is near, and hurries greatly, the voice of the day of Yahweh. The mighty man cries there bitterly. ¹⁵ That day is a day of wrath, a day of distress and anguish, a day of trouble and ruin, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and blackness, ¹⁶ a day of the trumpet and alarm, against the fortified cities, and against the high battlements. ¹⁷ I will bring distress on men, that they will walk like blind men, because they have sinned against Yahweh, and their blood will be poured out like dust, and their flesh like dung. ¹⁸ Neither their silver nor their gold will be able to deliver them in the day of Yahweh's wrath, but the whole land will be devoured by the fire of his jealousy; for he will make an

- end, yes, a terrible end, of all those who dwell in the land. (Zephaniah 1:14-18)
- Be silent at the presence of the Lord Yahweh, for the day of Yahweh is at hand. For Yahweh has prepared a sacrifice. He has consecrated his guests. ⁸ It will happen in the day of Yahweh's sacrifice, that I will punish the princes, the king's sons, and all those who are clothed with foreign clothing. ⁹ In that day, I will punish all those who leap over the threshold, who fill their master's house with violence and deceit. ¹⁰ In that day, says Yahweh, there will be the noise of a cry from the fish gate, a wailing from the second quarter, and a great crashing from the hills. ¹¹ Wail, you inhabitants of Maktesh, for all the people of Canaan are undone! All those who were loaded with silver are cut off. (Zephaniah 1:7-11)
 - ¹⁸ "Woe to you who desire the day of Yahweh! Why do you long for the day of Yahweh? It is darkness, and not light. ¹⁹ As if a man fled from a lion, and a bear met him; Or he went into the house and leaned his hand on the wall, and a snake bit him. ²⁰ Won't the day of Yahweh be darkness, and not light? Even very dark, and no brightness in it? (Amos 5:18-20)
 - But concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, you have no need that anything be written to you. ² For you yourselves know well that the day of the Lord comes like a thief in the night. ³ For when they are saying, "Peace and safety," then sudden destruction will come on them, like birth pains on a pregnant woman; and they will in no way escape. (1 Thessalonians 5:1-3)
 - Blow the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of Yahweh comes, for it is close at hand: ² A day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness. As the dawn spreading on the mountains, a great and strong people; there has never been the like, neither will there be any more after them, even to the years of many generations. ³ A fire devours before them, and behind them, a flame burns. The land is as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them, a desolate wilderness. Yes, and no one has escaped them. (Joel 2:1-3)
 - ...for then there will be great oppression, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, nor ever will be. ²² Unless those days had been shortened, no flesh would have been saved. (Matthew 24:21-22)

This great and terrible Day is called:

- The Day of the Lord — Acts 2:20; 1 Thessalonians 5:2; and 2 Peter 3:10
- The Day of the Lord Jesus — 1 Corinthians 5:5
- The Day of Christ — 2 Thessalonians 2:2; Philippians 1:10; 2:16
- The Day of God — 2 Peter 3:12,
- The Great Day — Jude 6
- The Day of Eternity — 2 Peter 3:18
- The Day of Redemption — Ephesians 4:30
- The Day of Visitation — 1 Peter 2:12
- The Last Day — John 6:39-40, 44, 54; 11:24; 12:48
- The great Day of God the Almighty — Revelation 16:14
- The Day when the Son of Man is revealed — Luke 17:30,
- The completion of the Day of Jesus Christ — Philippians 1:6
- In the Day of our Lord Jesus Christ — 1 Corinthians 1:8
- On the Day of our Lord Jesus — 2 Corinthians 1:14
- The coming — 1 Corinthians 15:23; 1 Thessalonians 3:13; 2 Thessalonians 2:1; 1 Corinthians 1:7; 2 Thessalonians 1:7; 1 Peter 1:5; 1 Timothy 6:14; 2 Timothy 4:8; Titus 2:13; Romans 5:2; Ephesians 1:18; Colossians 1:5
- That day — Matthew 7:22; Matthew 26:29; Luke 10:12; Luke 21:34 1 Corinthians 3:13; Romans 2:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:2-4; 2 Thessalonians 1:10; 2 Thessalonians 2:3; 2 Timothy

1:12; 2 Timothy 4:8; Hebrews 10:24-25; 1 Corinthians 4:5; Matthew 8:29; Mark 13:33; 1 Timothy 6:14-15; 1 Peter 1:5; Revelation 22:12

- A day of wrath, A day of trouble and distress, A day of devastation and desolation, A day of darkness and gloominess, A day of clouds and thick darkness — Zephaniah 1:15
- The Lord's Day — Revelation 1:10

A Basic Outline of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation — Context for the Day of the Lord

Creation → Adam (and the fall) → The Days of Man → The Day of the Lord → New Heavens and a New Earth

Scripture begins with the story of creation and ends with the new heavens and new earth. The new heavens and earth are preceded by the Day of the Lord. Previously, in Chapter 2 we laid out the *moedim* or the set times of YHVH and His calendar. This basic outline is a simplified form of that concept. In the outline, the Days of Man refers to the 6,000 years or 6 days allotted to man. The foundation for this reasoning is Psalms 90:4 “For a thousand years in your sight are just like yesterday when it is past, like a watch in the night.”

That chronology (see Chapter 2 - The Beginning) is affirmed in Malachi 4:2 where Messiah comes on the fourth day, or the fourth millennium. Malachi 4:2 refers to the Messiah as the “sun of righteousness.”

“But to you who fear my name shall the sun of righteousness arise with healing in its wings. You will go out, and leap like calves of the stall.”

Where does the Gathering of Israel fit in this outline? A partial answer is found in Jeremiah 29:

For Yahweh says, “After seventy years are accomplished for Babylon, I will visit you and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place. ¹¹ For I know the thoughts that I think toward you,” says Yahweh, “thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you hope and a future. ¹² You shall call on me, and you shall go and pray to me, and I will listen to you. ¹³ You shall seek me, and find me, when you search for me with all your heart. ¹⁴ I will be found by you,” says Yahweh, “and I will turn again your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places where I have driven you, says Yahweh. I will bring you again to the place from where I caused you to be carried away captive.” (Jeremiah 29:10–14)

The Gathering of Israel will occur sometime after the seventy years of the Babylonian captivity. From our perspective that might be two or three thousand years, but in YHVH's only two or three days. His return, however, has a Stipulation: Israel must seek YHVH with their whole heart.

Israel will find Him when they draw near to Him with a pure heart – a heart that loves and walks in truth, a heart that seeks with eagerness and a real desire to find Him.

Israel's pure heart will be produced through Jacob's Trouble.

For, behold, the days come,' says Yahweh, 'that I will reverse the captivity of my people Israel and Judah,' says Yahweh. 'I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they will possess it.'

“We have heard a voice of trembling; a voice of fear, and not of peace. ⁶ Ask now, and see whether a man travails with child. Why do I see every man with his hands on his waist, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned pale? ⁷ Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it. It is even the time of Jacob’s trouble; but he will be saved out of it. ⁸ It will come to pass in that day, says Yahweh of Armies, that I will break his yoke from off your neck, and will burst your bonds. Strangers will no more make them their bondservants; ⁹ but they will serve Yahweh their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up to them. ¹⁰ Therefore don’t be afraid, O Jacob my servant, says Yahweh. Don’t be dismayed, Israel. For, behold, I will save you from afar, and save your offspring from the land of their captivity. Jacob will return, and will be quiet and at ease. No one will make him afraid. ¹¹ For I am with you, says Yahweh, to save you; for I will make a full end of all the nations where I have scattered you, but I will not make a full end of you; but I will correct you in measure, and will in no way leave you unpunished.” (Jeremiah 30:3–11)

Jacob’s Trouble will cause Israel to seek YHVH with a pure heart. A trial by fire will purify the hearts, and all of Israel will find Him and will be returned from her captivity.

This brings us to the concept of *shuv*, a Hebrew term meaning “to turn” or “return.” It occurs over 1,000 times in the Tanakh, the Old Testament (the Torah, The Prophets, and the Writings).

Shuv means to return to God, to repent, and turn away from false gods and self-interests. Jeremiah admonishes Israel to *shuv* (turn back, repent) from backsliding, abominations, evil ways, iniquities, the pursuit of other gods, and breaking the covenant.

- Go and proclaim these words toward the north, and say: 'Return (shuv), backsliding Israel,' says the LORD; 'I will not cause My anger to fall on you. For I am merciful,' says the LORD; 'I will not remain angry forever. Jeremiah 3:12 (NKJV)
- "If you will Return (*shuv*) O Israel," says the LORD, "Return (shuv) to Me; And if you will put away your abominations out of My sight, Then you shall not be moved. (Jeremiah 4:1 NKJV)
- "Now therefore, speak to the men of Judah and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying, 'Thus says the LORD: "Behold, I am fashioning a disaster and devising a plan against you. Return (shuv) now every one from his evil way, and make your ways and your doings good." ' "(Jeremiah 18:11 NKJV)
- "But I said: 'How can I put you among the children And give you a pleasant land, A beautiful heritage of the hosts of nations?' "And I said: 'You shall call Me, "My Father," And not turn (shuv) away from Me.' (Jeremiah 3:19 NKJV)
- They have turned (shuv) back to the iniquities of their forefathers who refused to hear My words, and they have gone after other gods to serve them; the House of Israel and the House of Judah have broken My covenant which I made with their fathers." (Jeremiah 11:10 (NKJV)

After Jacob’s Trouble, Ephraim (Israel) will deeply and sincerely lament because YHVH has chastised him, punished him. Ephraim feels abused like an untrained bull. He cries to be restored to the covenant relationship with YHVH. He will cry, “Restore me, and I will Return (*shuv*), for You YHVH are my God. I have turned from my sin, my folly, my idolatry. I am convicted; I am remorseful because of my sin. I am in mourning. My sorrow grows deeper and deeper; I feel the dis-

treasure in the extremities of my being. I am ashamed, humiliated, because I bare the reproach of my youth.”⁴⁰

And YHVH’s answer to Israel’s cry, “I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn (*shuv*) away from doing them good; but I will put My fear in their hearts so that they will not depart from Me.”⁴¹

This is based upon the heart of God who says, “But on this one will I look: On him who *is* poor and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at My word.”⁴²

It is the basis for the plea: “If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.”⁴³

It becomes the reality of the promise, “For if you return to the LORD, your brethren and your children will be treated with compassion by those who lead them captive, so that they may come back to this land; for the LORD your God *is* gracious and merciful, and will not turn *His* face from you if you return to Him.”⁴⁴

Thus Day of the Lord (also called Jacob’s Trouble) will change Israel’s heart, she will repent, and seek God’s compassion and faithfulness. All these elements lead to and ultimately become the Gathering of the Whole House of Israel.

This is no small thing, nor small feat. This is the gathering of Israel from the four corners of the earth as described by Ezekiel:

²² “Therefore tell the House of Israel, ‘Thus says the Lord Yahweh: “I don’t do this for your sake, House of Israel, but for my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you went. ²³ I will sanctify my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned among them. Then the nations will know that I am Yahweh,” says the Lord Yahweh, “when I am proven holy in you before their eyes.

²⁴ “ “For I will take you from among the nations and gather you out of all the countries, and will bring you into your own land. ²⁵ I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean. I will cleanse you from all your filthiness, and from all your idols. ²⁶ I will also give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit within you. I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes. You will keep my ordinances and do them. ²⁸ You will dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers. You will be my people, and I will be your God. ²⁹ I will save you from all your uncleanness. I will call for the grain, and will multiply it, and lay no famine on you. ³⁰ I will multiply the fruit of the tree and the increase of the field, that you may receive no more the reproach of famine among the nations.”⁴⁵

⁴⁰Jeremiah 31:18-19

⁴¹Jeremiah 32:40 NKJV

⁴²Isaiah 66:2 NKJV

⁴³2 Chronicles 7:14 NKJV

⁴⁴2 Chronicles 30:9 NKJV

⁴⁵Ezekiel 36:22–30

Now I can understand why Paul said:

Now I say this, brothers, that flesh and blood can not inherit God's Kingdom; neither does the perishable inherit imperishable.

⁵¹ Behold, I tell you a mystery. We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, ⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we will be changed. ⁵³ For this perishable body must become imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality. ⁵⁴ But when this perishable body will have become imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then what is written will happen: "Death is swallowed up in victory." (1 Corinthians 15:50–54)

I am also reminded of Moses' words in Deuteronomy 30:3-4:

"...that the LORD your God will bring you back (*shuv*) from captivity, and have compassion on you, and gather (*qābatz*) you again from all the nations where the LORD your God has scattered you. ⁴ If *any* of you are driven out to the farthest *parts* under heaven, from there the LORD your God will gather (*qābatz*) you, and from there He will bring (*laqach*)⁴⁶ you."⁴⁷

"Qabatz"- Hebrew for Gather

Qabatz means to "gather" in the sense of "assemble," "gathering parts," "keeping together," or "to gather" things together into a single location. It is often used of gathering people or assembling them.

Qabatz, word wise, is related to *kibbutz* meaning assemblage, gathering, community, or company.

In Hebrew *qabatz* is spelled *qof bet tsade*.

The *qof* symbolizes "change"; *bet* symbolizes the "house (the container of people)"; and *tsade* symbolizes the *tzaddik*.

Tzaddik means "righteousness" in Hebrew. Biblically speaking, it represents those who are in Messiah — those that are "found in Him, not having my righteousness derived from Torah, but one that has righteousness through trusting in Messiah — the righteousness from God based on trust."⁴⁸

The three traits of the *Tsaddik* are righteousness, humility, and hiddenness. They strive for truth, love, justice, fairness, and full honesty. They are the **hidden ones of God**.

- They have taken crafty counsel against Your people, And consulted together against Your sheltered ones. (Psalm 83:3 NKJV)
- For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion; In the secret place of His tabernacle He shall hide me; He shall set me high upon a rock. (Psalm 27:5 NKJV)
- You shall hide them in the secret place of Your presence from the plots of man; You shall keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues. (Psalm 31:20 NKJV)
- He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the

⁴⁶See Appendix B

⁴⁷Deuteronomy 30:3-4

⁴⁸Philippians 3:9

Almighty. (Psalm 91:1 NKJV)

- For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. (Colossians 3:3 NKJV)

Qabatz hints at something much greater. It's about a Special Treasure. It's the collecting of the righteous of God, taking them out of captivities and nations. It's the formation of God's House. And it is a much-repeated promise:

Deuteronomy 30:3-4

- that the LORD your God will bring you back from captivity, and have compassion on you, and gather (*qābatz*) you again from all the nations where the LORD your God has scattered you. ⁴ If *any* of you are driven out to the farthest *parts* under heaven, from there the LORD your God will gather (*qābatz*) you, and from there He will bring (*laqach*)⁴⁹ you.

Isaiah 43:5

- Fear not, for I *am* with you; I will bring your descendants from the east, And gather (*qābatz*) you from the west;

Jeremiah 29:14

- I will be found by you, says the LORD, and I will bring you back from your captivity; I will gather (*qābatz*) you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you, says the LORD, and I will bring you to the place from which I cause you to be carried away captive.

Ezekiel 11:17

- Therefore say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "I will gather (*qābatz*) you from the peoples, assemble you from the countries where you have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel." '

Ezekiel 20:34

- I will bring you out from the peoples and gather (*qābatz*) you out of the countries where you are scattered, with a mighty hand, with an outstretched arm, and with fury poured out.

Ezekiel 20:41

- I will accept you as a sweet aroma when I bring you out from the peoples and gather (*qābatz*) you out of the countries where you have been scattered; and I will be hallowed in you before the Gentiles.

Ezekiel 36:24

- For I will take you from among the nations, gather (*qābatz*) you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land.

Zephaniah 3:20

- At that time I will bring (Heb. *bo*) you back, Even at the time I gather (*qābatz*) you; For I will give you fame and praise Among all the peoples of the earth, When I return your captives before your eyes," Says the LORD.

The Special Treasure — “am segulah”

The *am segulah* is introduced in Exodus 19:5: “And now, if you obey Me and keep My covenant, you shall be to Me a treasure out of all peoples (*segulah mikol ha'amim*), for Mine is the entire earth.”

Rashi, a Jewish writer, explains *segulah* as “a beloved treasure” and references Ecclesiastes 2:8, “I also gathered for myself silver and gold and the special treasures of kings and of the provinces. I acquired male and female singers, the delights of the sons of men, and musical instruments of all kinds.”

⁴⁹See Appendix B

In contrast, the *Targum Onkelos* explains “*segulah mikol ha’amim*” as “and you shall be more beloved before Me than all the other nations. (Exodus 19:5)

When the two writings converge they form the idea of a “treasure” and “a uniquely beloved status in the eyes of our Creator.”

Segulah can describe a relationship between people. For example, Jacob loved Rachel more than Leah,⁵⁰ meaning his bond to Leah suffered by comparison with Rachel ... his relationship with Rachel was *segulah*, a dimension of special love. It was a more involved union, an intertwining of souls, a union outside verbal description. It was more than emotional love; it was a oneness.

Imagine a king’s treasure room. Imagine not just any king, but the greatest, most magnificent, most distinguished, most noble king. Imagine his treasure room as a reflection of his prestige. It is filled with grandeur and unspeakable treasures of gold and silver and jewels ... treasures beyond comprehension. But in the midst of this exhilarating room, there is this one item that is so special, so unique, so wonderful, so beautiful, so amazing that the King himself points to it and says, “That one is special.” That one is the *am segulah*. That one is the Special Treasure.

As with much of Scripture, Exodus 19:5 is conditional. “If Israel will *shema* (obey) and *shamar* (keep) the covenant, then Israel will become *am segulah* (a special treasure.) Conversely then, if Israel fails to *shema* (hear and do) and *shamar* (guard) the covenant, Israel will not become *am segulah* (a special treasure.)

Israel’s status of becoming *am segulah* is directly tied to the first and greatest commandment:

Shema Yisrael: Adonai Eloheinu, Adonai Echad.

Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God; the Lord is one

You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. (Deut. 6:4-5).

Hearing and doing, and guarding are integral parts of the relationship between YHVH and His people. This is what being holy means.

“For you are a holy (separated out) people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure (*am segulah*) above all the peoples on the face of the earth.” (Deuteronomy 7:6 NKJV)

And because Israel has chosen to listen and obey, the promise will be realized.

“...that the LORD your God will bring you back (*shuv*) from captivity, and have compassion on you, and gather (*qābatz*) you again from all the nations where the LORD your God has scattered you.⁴ If *any* of you are driven out to the farthest *parts* under heaven, from there the LORD your God will gather (*qābatz*) you, and from there He will bring (*laqach*)⁵¹ you.” (Deuteronomy 30:3-4)

Again, the idea of a Special Treasured People is replete in Scripture:

⁵⁰Genesis 29:31

⁵¹See Appendix B

- But the LORD has taken you and brought you out of the iron furnace, out of Egypt, to be His people, an inheritance, as you are this day. (Deuteronomy 4:20 NKJV)
- For you *are* a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth. (Deuteronomy 7:6 NKJV)
- For you *are* a holy people to the LORD your God, and the LORD has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples who *are* on the face of the earth. (Deuteronomy 14:2 NKJV)
- You shall not eat anything that dies *of itself*; you may give it to the alien who *is* within your gates, that he may eat it, or you may sell it to a foreigner; for you *are* a holy people to the LORD your God. You shall not boil a young goat in its mother's milk. (Deuteronomy 14:21 NKJV)
- Also today the LORD has proclaimed you to be His special people, just as He promised you, that *you* should keep all His commandments, (Deuteronomy 26:18 NKJV)
- When the Most High divided their inheritance to the nations, When He separated the sons of Adam, He set the boundaries of the peoples According to the number of the children of Israel. ⁹ For the LORD'S portion is His people; Jacob is the place of His inheritance. (Deuteronomy 32:8-9 NKJV)
- For You separated them from among all the peoples of the earth to be Your inheritance, as You spoke by Your servant Moses, when You brought our fathers out of Egypt, O Lord GOD. (1 Kings 8:53 NKJV)
- For the LORD has chosen Jacob for Himself, Israel for His special treasure. (Psalm 135:4 NKJV)
- "But you, Israel, *are* My servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, The descendants of Abraham My friend. (Isaiah 41:8 NKJV)
- But now, thus says the LORD, who created you, O Jacob, And He who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called *you* by your name; You are Mine. (Isaiah 43:1 NKJV)
- The Portion of Jacob *is* not like them, For He *is* the Maker of all things, And Israel is the tribe of His inheritance; The LORD of hosts is His name. (Jeremiah 10:16 NKJV)
- "They shall be Mine," says the LORD of hosts, "On the day that I make them My jewels. And I will spare them As a man spares his own son who serves him." (Malachi 3:17 NKJV)
- ...Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works. (Titus 2:14 NKJV)
- But you *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; (1 Peter 2:9 NKJV)
- So the last will be first, and the first last. For many are called, but few chosen. (Matthew 20:16 NKJV)
- For many are called, but few are chosen. (Matthew 22:14 NKJV)

The Day of the Lord can be a frightening topic or an encouraging one. YHVH will set all things true. His plumb line will be raised. Righteousness will come to earth at His hand; and unrighteousness will end, also at His hand. He will personally intervene in the affairs of men. Everything is moving toward that point. His consummation and conclusion of the ages will be just and true. Yet — both now and in the midst of trouble — in a secret place ... He hides His chosen ones.

Chapter 8 – Obedience/The Path of the Chosen

We closed out the last chapter with, “For many are *called*, but few are *chosen*.”⁵²

Who are the *called*? And who are the *chosen*?

The *called* are defined by John 3:16 “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” Thus, the *called* are those who place their faith or trust in Him. They are the “whosoever will.”

The “whosoever will”:

- And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that hears say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. (Revelation 22:17 KJV)
- Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: (Matthew 7:24 NKJV)
- Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. (Matthew 10:32 NKJV)
- For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother." (Matthew 12:50 NKJV)
- For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. (Matthew 16:25 NKJV)
- For whoever does the will of God is My brother and My sister and mother." (Mark 3:35 NKJV)
- When He had called the people to Himself, with His disciples also, He said to them, "Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me."³⁵ For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it. (Mark 8:34-35 NKJV)
- Whoever comes to Me, and hears My sayings and does them, I will show you whom he is like: ⁴⁸ He is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently against that house, and could not shake it, for it was founded on the rock. (Luke 6:47-48 NKJV)

The *chosen* are the treasured ones described in the previous chapter, the *am segulah*.

Participation in that group is active rather than passive. And it can be difficult and uncomfortably elusive.

Matthew 22:14, “For many are called, but few are chosen” is a *remez*⁵³ of Matthew 7:13-14, “Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad *is* the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. ¹⁴ Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.”

The Way and the Gate are obedience and holiness. The gate is traversed with pain and effort. The Gate is the only access into the City of God. And of course, Yeshua Himself is the “Way”

⁵²Matthew 22:14

⁵³The rabbis of Yeshua’s day used a technique called *remez*. They would use a phrase in a discussion that would allow hearer to deduce for themselves the fuller meaning of the teaching. Yeshua used this method often.

(John 14:6), and the Door or Gate, by which the sheep enter into the fold (John 10:7).

Another way of saying the same thing is, “And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.”⁵⁴

Or, “He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.”⁵⁵

Or, “If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple.”⁵⁶

Or, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.”⁵⁷

Remember Jacob? He wrestled with God. His name was changed to Israel. In that instant his identity, his walk, and his life was changed. And so it is with all believers. The old man must die — that the new man might live.

We who died to sin, how could we live in it any longer? ³ Or don't you know that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴ We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life. ⁵ For if we have become united with him in the likeness of his death, we will also be part of his resurrection; ⁶ knowing this, that our old man was crucified with him, that the body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be in bondage to sin. ⁷ For he who has died has been freed from sin. ⁸ But if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him; ⁹ knowing that Christ, being raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over him! ¹⁰ For the death that he died, he died to sin one time; but the life that he lives, he lives to God. ¹¹ Thus consider yourselves also to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:2-11)

Again, Scripture is rife with this message:

- I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me. (Galatians 2:20)
- ...that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth. (Ephesians 4:22-24)
- More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, (Philippians 3:8)
- Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. (Colossians 3:5)
- And He was saying to them all, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me. (Luke 9:23)

⁵⁴See Matthew 19:24, Mark 10:25, and Luke 18:25

⁵⁵Matthew 10:39 NKJV

⁵⁶Luke 14:26 NKJV

⁵⁷Romans 12:1 NKJV

- Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. (John 12:24)
- Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect. (Rom. 12:1-2)
- So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh—for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live. (Romans 8:12-13)
- Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. (Romans 6:11-14)
- He must increase, but I must decrease. (John 3:30)
- ...instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age. (Titus 2:12)
- ...live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for the lusts of men, but for the will of God. (1 Peter 4:2)
- And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. (Matthew 10:38)

The message is clear. YHVH has determined that all who are in Messiah will be conformed to His image, adopted as children of God.

- For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.³⁰ Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified. (Romans 8:29-30 NKJV)
- ...having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, (Ephesians 1:5 NKJV)
- In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, (Ephesians 1:11 NKJV)

The problem, therefore, lies in the little four letter word – ***Obey***.

There can be many reasons to not obey. Like children, maybe we just don't listen. Or maybe we quite plainly forget what was said. Or maybe we absolutely don't want to. Maybe we believe a lie about who we are, or a lie about the Word of God. Perhaps we use our circumstances as an excuse. Maybe we believe we can't change. Maybe our fears and insecurities feel unsurmountable. Maybe we just don't want to pay the price of obedience, or maybe we've failed to hide God's Word in our heart. Perhaps we think our way is best. Or maybe, just maybe, we want to be our own god.

Two Matters we need to settle are: 1) Do I really know God? and 2) Do I really understand what it means to obey the voice of God?

1) Do I really know God?

Many times our concept of God is not built upon a personal relationship with Him, but rather an

image in our heads garnered from life experiences, culture, or by what we've been taught.

Some teach that the God of the Old Testament is mean and unmerciful, but the God of the New Testament is gracious, loving, and merciful. However, the truth is there is only one God.

The God of the Old Testament and the God of the New Testament are one and the same:

- Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel, And his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: 'I *am* the First and I *am* the Last; Besides Me there is no God. (Isaiah 44:6 NKJV)
- To you it was shown, that you might know that the LORD Himself *is* God; there is none other besides Him. (Deuteronomy 4:35 NKJV)
- ...that all the peoples of the earth may know that the LORD *is* God; there is no other. (1 Kings 8:60 NKJV)
- I, *even* I, *am* the LORD, And besides Me there is no savior. (Isaiah 43:11 NKJV)
- For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, ⁶ who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time, (1 Timothy 2:5-6 NKJV)
- He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. (Colossians 1:15 NKJV)
- For in Him (Messiah) dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; (Colossians 2:9 NKJV)
- ...that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, and attaining to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ, (Colossians 2:2 NKJV)
- In order that their hearts may be encouraged, Being knit together in love, Even unto all the riches of the full assurance of their understanding, Unto a personal knowledge of the sacred secret of God/Christ. (Colossians 2:2 EMPH)
- ...looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, (Titus 2:13 NKJV)
- And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, Justified in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Preached among the Gentiles, Believed on in the world, Received up in glory. (1 Timothy 3:16 NKJV)

And just as important, God never changes:

- For I am the LORD, I do not change; Therefore you are not consumed, O sons of Jacob. (Malachi 3:6 NKJV)
- God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good? (Numbers 23:19 NKJV)
- And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor relent. For He is not a man, that He should relent. (1 Samuel 15:29 NKJV)
- They will perish, but You will endure; Yes, they will all grow old like a garment; Like a cloak You will change them, And they will be changed. (Psalm 102:26 NKJV)
- ...that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us. (Hebrews 6:18 NKJV)
- Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. (Hebrews 13:8 NKJV)
- Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning. (James 1:17 NKJV)
- I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, says the Lord, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty. (Revelation 1:8 NKJV)
- I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last. (Revelation 22:13 NKJV)

Knowing God:

How do we get to know someone? How do we develop a close personal relationship with someone? It requires time — quality time spent with the other person.

Knowing someone necessitates learning how they think and learning to also value what they hold dear. It involves coming to understand their motivations and convictions. The same is true with getting to know God.

How is this done? By spending time with Him, talking with Him, reading His Word, and as Paul says, “studying to show yourself approved unto God.”

For example, we know from His Word that He is, by His very nature, love.⁵⁸

The apostle John said, “Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says, ‘I know Him,’ and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.” (1 John 2:3-4)

And of course, we look to Him through His Son, Yeshua:

God...has at the end of these days spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom also he made the worlds. ³ His Son is the radiance of his glory, the very image of his substance, and upholding all things by the word of his power, who, when he had by himself purified us of our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; ⁴ having become so much better than the angels, as he has inherited a more excellent name than they have. (Hebrews 1:2-4)

More Scriptures on Knowing God:

- "As for you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve Him with a loyal heart and with a willing mind; for the LORD searches all hearts and understands all the intent of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will cast you off forever. (1 Chronicles 28:9 NKJV)
- Thus says the LORD: "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, Let not the mighty man glory in his might, Nor let the rich man glory in his riches; ²⁴ But let him who glories glory in this, That he understands and knows Me, That I am the LORD, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight," says the LORD. (Jeremiah 9:23-24 NKJV)
- Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. ⁴ He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. ⁵ But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. ⁶ He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked. (1 John 2:3-6 NKJV)
- And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. (John 17:3 NKJV)

2) Do I really understand what it means to obey the voice of God?

Our English word *obey* is defined and generally understood as:

1. To comply with, or perform, the bidding of, or do what one is commanded
2. To submit to the rule or authority

⁵⁸1 John 4:8, 16

Honestly, no one likes to be told what to do. For many, “I command you!” are fight or flight words. We all fall prey to the thought, “You’re not the boss of me!” Or, “Don’t tell me what to do!”

It seems like the first word we learn as a child is, “No!”

We’re told not to throw the ball, and if we do, the ball will be taken away. But we do it again anyway. Teenagers roll their eyes when asked to do something, especially if they think it’s stupid, unfair or something they don’t agree with. As adults we get angry and defensive when we’re told to eat a healthy diet — or even worse, exercise.

Let’s be honest. We crave independence and autonomy. We want to call the shots. We want to make the rules. We don’t like someone else telling us what to do, so we don’t do it. Or we react by going silent, sighing, complaining or even verbal assault.

The idea of rebelling against authority or rules is nothing new. It’s as though resistance is engrained into our culture and our brains from an early age. We all have some form of inner rebel that questions or does the opposite of what we’re told.

So when we read the word *obey* in Scripture our hackles go up.

Our English word Obey comes from the Old French word *obeir*, which comes from the Latin *obedire* or *oboedire* and means “pay attention to, or give ear.” *Ob* literally means listen and *audire* means “hear or perceive.”

Somewhere along the line the meaning of Obey got twisted from “pay attention or hear and respond” to “do what I say.”

Open a *Young’s Analytical Concordance* to the entry on Obey. On the Hebrew side the first entry is for Proverbs 30:17:

The eye that mocks his father, And scorns obedience to his mother, The ravens of the valley will pick it out, And the young eagles will eat it.

The Hebrew for obedience here is *yiqqahah* and it means *obedience*, but the Septuagint renders it *prosdakia* (*expectation*). This word is used only one other place in Scripture is Genesis 49:10:

The scepter shall not depart from Judah, Nor a lawgiver from between his feet, Until Shiloh comes; And to Him shall be the obedience of the people.

Every other listing in *Young’s Concordance* defines words translated as Obey from the Hebrew to mean “hearing, hearkening, to hear, hearing,” etc. The vast majority of the time the Hebrew word used is *shema*.

Scripture **nowhere** calls for blind obedience. What Scripture does teach is: Evaluate and then Act.

Paul succinctly states this thought when he says: “Examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good;” (1 Thessalonians 5:21 NAS)

Kenneth Wuest expands the thought:

Be putting all things to the test for the purpose of approving them, and finding that

they meet the requirements, put your approval upon them. Be constantly holding fast that which is good. (1 Thessalonians 5:21 *Wuest NT*)

More Scripture on evaluating:

- And they shall teach My people the difference between the holy and the unholy, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean. (Ezekiel 44:23 NKJV)
- “Do not drink wine or intoxicating drink, you, nor your sons with you, when you go into the tabernacle of meeting, lest you die. It shall be a statute forever throughout your generations,¹⁰ that you may distinguish between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean,¹¹ and that you may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the LORD has spoken to them by the hand of Moses.” (Leviticus 10:9-11 NKJV)
- These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so. (Acts 17:11 (NKJV))
- And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. (Romans 12:2 NKJV)
- I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars; (Revelation 2:2 NKJV)
- And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment,¹⁰ that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, (Philippians 1:9-10 NKJV)
- Yes, and why, even of yourselves, do you not judge what is right? (Luke 12:57 NKJV)⁵⁹

Obedience in Scripture means: **Hear**... then **Evaluate**,...then **Respond**. It means to listen, and act accordingly.

NAS Revelation 3:20: 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will dine with him, and he with Me.

Revelation 3:20 illustrates this principle in greater fullness:

Consider this. I have taken my stand at the door and am politely knocking. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him, and I will dine with him and he himself will dine with me. The one who gains the victory, I will give to him of sitting with me on my throne, as I gained the victory and sat down with my Father on His throne. He who has ears, let him hear at once what the Spirit is saying to the assemblies. (WuestNT)

The Almighty Himself stands at the door of our hearts and is politely knocking, asking us to hear His voice and to respond. If we do so, then He will respond by coming into our lives and establishing a holy relationship, a relationship where we will get to know Him. He desires to be friends with us. He desires good things for us. He wants us to live as His chosen ones.

It's been like this from the very beginning:

⁵⁹See also Leviticus 11:47; 20:25-26; Ezekiel 22:26; Isaiah 8:20; Matthew 7:15-20; Mark 7:14-16; 1 Corinthians 2:14-15; 1 John 4:1

For this commandment⁶⁰ (principle) which I command you today is not too hard for you or too distant. ¹² It is not in heaven, that you should say, "Who will go up for us to heaven, and bring it to us, and proclaim it to us, that we may do it?" ¹³ Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, "Who will go over the sea for us, and bring it to us, and proclaim it to us, that we may do it?" ¹⁴ But the word is very near to you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it. ¹⁵ Behold, I have set before you today life and prosperity, and death and evil. ¹⁶ For I command you today to love Yahweh your God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments, his statutes, and his ordinances, that you may live and multiply, and that Yahweh your God may bless you in the land where you go in to possess it. ¹⁷ But if your heart turns away, and you will not hear, but are drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them; ¹⁸ I denounce to you today, that you will surely perish. You will not prolong your days in the land where you pass over the Jordan to go in to possess it. ¹⁹ I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. Therefore choose life, that you may live, you and your descendants; ²⁰ to love Yahweh your God, to obey his voice, and to cling to him; for he is your life, and the length of your days; that you may dwell in the land which Yahweh swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them. (Deuteronomy 30:11-20)

But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him." ¹⁰ But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. (1 Corinthians 2:9-10 NKJV)

This promise above should cause seekers of God to rejoice. All of our quests and questions are seen and answered in Him. What He has prepared for those who love Him is beyond our wildest imagination. Yet — He reveals them to us through His Spirit. We only need hear and do, *shema*.

⁶⁰Command: Hebrew *mitṣ-vāh* (noun) derived from *sāwāh*, and occurs around 180 times, translated "commandment." The predominant emphasis of *mitṣ-vāh* is being a divine precept, a principle issued by God and centered on the Torah and the covenant.

Chapter 9 – The Ten Words

Continuing on the thought of our Obedience, which we've seen is key in knowing/walking with God, our exploration would not be complete without looking at The Ten Words.

There are two versions of the Decalogue (The Ten Words) in the Bible – Exodus 20:2-17 and Deuteronomy 5:6-21. Traditionally they are referred to as the “Ten Commandments,” however Scripture never uses that term. This is one of those little known facts in today's world!

In Exodus 34:28, Deuteronomy 4:13; and 10:4 Scripture calls them the “Ten Words.”

- So then he was there with Yahweh forty days and forty nights, bread did he not eat and water did he not drink, and He wrote upon the tables, the words of the covenant, the ten words. (Exodus 34:28 EMPH)
- Then spoke Yahweh unto you out of the midst of the fire, a voice of words you were hearing, no form were ye seeing, there was only a voice. ¹³ Then declared he unto you his covenant, which he commanded you to do, the ten words, and wrote them upon two tables of stone. (Deuteronomy 4:12–13 EMPH)
- And he wrote upon the tables, according to the first writing, the ten words, which Yahweh had spoken unto you in the mountain, out of the midst of the fire, in the day of the convocation, and Yahweh delivered them unto me. (Deuteronomy 10:4 EMPH)

“The Ten Words” are not commandments or ultimatums, as most believe and recite. Rather they reflect YHVH's desire for relationship with Israel by their listening to Him, and following His instructions. The literal Hebrew is “words or sayings.”

The Hebrew for “words” (as underlined above) is *dēbārīm*, the plural of *dābār*.

Dābār is a common term primarily meaning “a word, or words” (if plural). It has numerous nuances, including the sense of “thing or matter.”

It is spelled *dalet bet resh*. The *dalet* symbolizes a door, *bet* a house, and *resh* a man. Thus, it is the manner in which a man enters the house. We enter the House of God through His Word.

Yeshua is called “The Word” in both the Book of John and the Book of Revelation. Yeshua is also called “The Door.” Hebraically, Yeshua, as the man, is the Door or entrance into the House of God.

Then Jesus said to them again, "Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. ⁸ "All who *ever* came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. ⁹ "I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. (John 10:7-9 NKJV)

“The Ten Words” lay out a litmus test. Almost all of our English Bibles translate the Hebrew as “and Thou shall not,” as if to enforce the idea that God is commanding, rather than explaining. However, “thou shall not” is not in the literal Hebrew.

The Biblical Hebrew language does not contain a negative imperative (command). In Hebrew, a

negative command is produced by use of an imperfect prohibition via a negative participle.⁶¹ In English we would say, “You do not kill.” But in Hebrew it would simply be, “You not kill.”

I assume this is the explanation for *Young’s Literal Translation* where he renders “thou shall not” as “you have no” or “you do not.” This interpretation portrays a relationship between man and God. Man will not have any other gods; man will not make any graven images; man won’t consider the name of YHVH as ineffective, etc. Why? — Because he is fulfilling the Goal. He is taking on the character of God. He is becoming like YHVH and reflecting YHVH’s image. And if that is happening — then that man won’t have any other gods, that man won’t make any graven images of God, that man won’t consider the name of YHVH as ineffective, etc.

“The Ten Words” are a description of the believer who is walking in unity with Yeshua. **It is a description of character, not a list of do’s and don’ts.**

And God spoke all these words, saying, ‘I am Jehovah your God, who has brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of a house of servants.

1. You have no other Gods before Me.
2. You do not make to yourself a graven image, or any likeness which *is* in the heavens above, or which *is* in the earth beneath, or which *is* in the waters under the earth. ⁵ You do not bow yourself to them, nor serve them: for I, Jehovah your God, *am* a zealous God, charging iniquity of fathers on sons, on the third *generation*, and on the fourth, of those hating Me, ⁶ and doing kindness to thousands, of those loving Me and keeping My commands.
3. You do not take up the name of Jehovah your God for a vain thing, for Jehovah acquits not him who takes up His name for a vain thing.
4. Remember the Sabbath-day to sanctify it; ⁹ six days You do labor, and hast done all your work, ¹⁰ and the seventh day *is* a Sabbath to Jehovah your God; You do not do any work, thou, and your son, and your daughter, your man-servant, and your handmaid, and your cattle, and your sojourner who is within your gates, -- ¹¹ for six days has Jehovah made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that *is* in them, and rests in the seventh day; therefore has Jehovah blessed the Sabbath-day, and doth sanctify it.
5. Honor your father and your mother, so that your days are prolonged on the ground which Jehovah your God is giving to you.
6. You do not murder.
7. You do not commit adultery.
8. You do not steal.
9. You do not answer against your neighbor a false testimony.
10. You do not desire the house of your neighbor, You do not desire the wife of your neighbor, or his man-servant, or his handmaid, or his ox, or his ass, or anything which *is* your neighbor’s.’ ⁶² Exodus 20:1-17 (YLT)

Sometimes understanding Scripture falls prey to personal Biblical paradigms. I live in North

⁶¹Section 18.5 Negation of the Imperative. To produce a negative command, Hebrew does not negate an imperative form. Prohibitions (negative commands) are expressed with the negative particles לֹא (lo) or אַל (al) with the imperfect. For review, the particle לֹא (lo) before the imperfect can express an absolute and permanent prohibition. The particle אַל (al) before imperfect expresses an immediate and specific prohibition. (*Basics of biblical Hebrew Grammar* by Gary D. Pratico and Miles V. Van Pelt)

⁶²See also Deuteronomy 5:6-21

American. I see the world through Western eyes. We all approach the Bible with our own cultural habits, and ingrained patterns of interpretation. Sometimes that's okay, and sometimes it's warped. Sometimes we get it right, and sometimes we inadvertently twist Scripture. That's why we study.

Perhaps our view of God is one that sees Him as a potentate, a dictator. Or maybe our view is that God is more paternal in nature. The point being — whether our view is monotheistic, Trinitarian, oneness, Hebraic, polytheist, pantheistic, atheistic, deist, agnostic, evangelical, Unitarian, diagnostic, sacramental, Pentecostal, orthodox, catholic, or protestant, we all have a paradigm — we all have a set of glasses through which we view, see and understand the Bible. Christianity alone is estimated to have over 30,000 denominations. Whew! The choices!

“The Ten Words” is another example of the two sides of a coin. Like the two sides of the Day of the Lord — where there will be those that are redeemed and those that are not; and those that are rewarded and those that are punished. The same applies here with “The Ten Words.” There are those who view Scripture as a “Love Letter,” and those that see Scripture as a “Legal Document.”

The Western mind wants to ask the question: which one is it — a love letter or a legal document? The Eastern mind, on the other hand says: Scripture is both, and so much more.

The Bible thematically segues from creation, to provision, to judgment, to deliverance, to covenant, to promises. It delves into the relationship between man and God regarding righteousness, faithfulness, mercy, and love. It wrestles with man's rebellion, estrangement and perversion. Redemption, forgiveness, reconciliation, gifts of grace, the new life in Messiah, the coming kingdom, and consummation of the ages are all seen as the gracious works of God.

Scripture contains narratives, rules, instructions, anecdotes, prophets, priests, kings, believers and unbelievers. There are love stories, rebellious preachers, and collections of wisdom, praises, and poetry.

Simply put, Scripture can be seen as both a Love Letter and Legal Document.

Scripture portrays God as Judge of the whole earth, and all that is in it.

- There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy. Who are you to judge another? (James 4:12 NKJV)
- But God is the Judge: He puts down one, And exalts another. (Psalm 75:7 NKJV)
- Let the heavens declare His righteousness, For God Himself is Judge. Selah (Psalm 50:6 NKJV)
- You caused judgment to be heard from heaven; The earth feared and was still, ⁹ When God arose to judgment, To deliver all the oppressed of the earth. Selah (Psalm 76:8-9 NKJV)
- (For the LORD is our Judge, The LORD is our Lawgiver, The LORD is our King; He will save us); (Isaiah 33:22 NKJV)
- For by fire and by His sword The LORD will judge all flesh; And the slain of the LORD shall be many. (Isaiah 66:16 NKJV)

Scripture also portrays Him as Israel's Lover.

- The LORD has appeared of old to me, saying: "Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; Therefore with loving-kindness I have drawn you. (Jeremiah 31:3 NKJV)
- And because He loved your fathers, therefore He chose their descendants after them; and He brought you out of Egypt with His Presence, with His mighty power, (Deuteronomy 4:37)

NKJV)

- ...but because the LORD loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers, the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. (Deuteronomy 7:8 NKJV)
- "I have loved you," says the LORD. "Yet you say, 'In what way have You loved us?' *Was not Esau Jacob's brother?*" Says the LORD. "Yet Jacob I have loved; (Malachi 1:2 NKJV)
- They are abundantly satisfied with the fullness of Your house, And You give them drink from the river of Your pleasures. (Psalm 36:8 NKJV)
- You have put gladness in my heart, More than in the season that their grain and wine increased. (Psalm 4:7 NKJV)
- You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand *are* pleasures forevermore. (Psalm 16:11 NKJV)
- As the deer pants for the water brooks, So pants my soul for You, O God. ² My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God? (Psalm 42:1-2 NKJV)
- Because Your loving-kindness is better than life, My lips shall praise You. (Psalm 63:3 NKJV)

YHVH, as both Judge and Israel's Lover, provides instructions so we can approach Him in an honoring way. His regulations are purposeful, with reason, and not arbitrary.

Deuteronomy 6:1 is another example:

Now these are the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments, which the LORD your God commanded to teach you, that ye might do them in the land whither ye go to possess it: (KJV)

Commandments, statutes, and judgments are *mitzvot*, *huqqim*, and *mishpatim* in the Hebrew – the variety of translations⁶³ of the verse are interesting. *Mitzvot*, *huqqim*, and *mishpatim* are variously translated as:

- mitzvah, laws, and rulings
- instruction, laws, and precepts
- precepts, ceremonies, and judgments
- body of commands, statutes, and ordinances
- commands, ceremonies, and dooms
- commands, decrees, and laws
- commands, decrees, and ordinances
- commands, decrees, and regulations
- commands, laws, and rules
- commands, ordinances, and laws
- commands, regulations, case, and laws
- commands, rules, [statutes; ordinances; requirements], and laws
- commands, rules, and laws
- commands, rules, and regulations
- commands, statutes, and judgments
- commands, statutes, and rights
- commands, statutes, and rules

⁶³About 50

- The, Lord, your, God, has, directed, me, to, teach, you, his, commands, rules, and, laws, (Voice)⁶⁴
- The, Eternal, your, God, commanded, me, to, teach, you, these, rules, and, judgments, (NIRV)⁶⁵

The Hebrew lexicons offer some assistance in understanding these terms.

Mitzvot means “instruction, a principle.” The emphasis is on precept, teaching, or principle. It is used for the instruction of a father to a son. It gives a rational basis for the supplied principle. *Mitzvot* are instructions for living.

Huqqim means “a rule, regulation, or prescription that escape human comprehension.” It refers to things that are prescribed -- to the details that are issued as conditions. It can be used to designate a legal right or privilege.

Each *hōq* (a single *Huqqim*) is an “unexplained directive”. It is something we are told to do because we trust the One Who told us to do it. We are not told the specific reason why we are to do it nor its place in the Great scheme of Redemption. It is purely relational and not aimed at the mind but the heart. It is not designed to fix something broken in the world or restore divine balance. It is personal. It is a relational test calling for an unquestioning response — a childlike faith.

Mishpatim are judgments given by God to show or illustrate what He would do in a given situation. They are “judicial verdicts associated with the judicial process, a formal decree dictated by reason.” It reflects the concepts and meanings behind the heart of God's purposes, and can reference His attributes. It represents the most important concepts for correct understanding of government – whether of man or the whole creation. Rendered “judgment” in most of the four hundred or so appearances in the Hebrew Bible, this depiction is defective because of our separation of legislative, executive, and judicial functions in government. *Shāpaṭ*, the common verb (from which *mish-pāṭ* is derived) means “to rule, govern,” and both the verb and noun include all the functions of the legislative, executive, and judicial functions in government.

The simplest way to view these is as “House Rules.” These are the rules of God’s House. If you wish to live in His house, you must abide by His rules. If not, then you can’t be part of the House. Those that live by the rules prosper, those that don’t are punished.

A paradigm based on the above reasons brings us to see “The Ten Words” as a demonstration portraying our love for Messiah as by hearing and doing what He asks. So rules are a good thing! They prevent injury, thwart injustice and devour chaos. They are both “House Rules” and an assessment of the heart.

The same is said in John 14:15:

“If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.”

God is Good

God is good. We personally experience that goodness by living in His goodness through compliance and respect to His Word. Scripture abounds with verses on His goodness. Here is a small sam-

⁶⁴The Voice

⁶⁵New International Reader’s Version

ple:

- So He said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One that is God. But if you want to enter into life keep the commandments." (Matthew 19:17 NKJV)⁶⁶
- Good and upright is the LORD; Therefore He teaches sinners in the way. (Psalm 25:8 NKJV)
- He loves righteousness and justice; The earth is full of the goodness of the LORD. (Psalm 33:5 NKJV)
- Oh taste and see that the LORD is good; Blessed is the man who trusts in Him! (Psalm 34:8 NKJV)
- You are good and do good; Teach me Your statutes. (Psalm 119:68 NKJV)
- They shall utter the memory of Your great goodness And shall sing of Your righteousness. (Psalm 145:7 NKJV)
- I will mention the loving kindnesses of the LORD And the praises of the LORD According to all that the LORD has bestowed on us And the great goodness toward the House of Israel Which He has bestowed on them according to His mercies According to the multitude of His loving kindnesses. (Isaiah 63:7 NKJV)
- The voice of joy and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride the voice of those who will say: "Praise the LORD of hosts For the LORD *is* good For His mercy endures forever"-- and of those *who will* bring the sacrifice of praise into the house of the LORD. For I will cause the captives of the land to return as at the first' says the LORD. (Jeremiah 33:11 NKJV)
- The LORD is good A stronghold in the day of trouble; And He knows those who trust in Him. (Nahum 1:7 NKJV)
- Or do you despise the riches of His goodness forbearance and longsuffering not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance? (Romans 2:4 NKJV)
- Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you goodness if you continue in His goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off. (Romans 11:22 NKJV)
- "For My thoughts are not your thoughts Nor are your ways My ways" says the LORD. ⁹"For as the heavens are higher than the earth So are My ways higher than your ways And My thoughts than your thoughts.(Isaiah 55:8-9 NKJV)
- But 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 diligently seek Him.(Hebrews 11:6 NKJV)

⁶⁶See Also Mark 10:18, Luke 18:19

Chapter 10 - How to Respond

In the preface of this book I state that the purpose of writing this book is to chronicle my search for the origins of Paul's thought process. My objective is to find Paul's source or sources of inspiration. Where in Scripture did Paul glean the idea that both the living and dead would be changed in a nano second? Where did the idea of a resurrection begin?

In that process we have ventured all over the Scriptures from Genesis and the *moedim*; to the creation of man being molded into God's likeness; to Noah, Moses and the exodus of Israel; to the gathering of Israel; the Shema; the *am sequelah*; to obedience and The Ten Words; and lastly to Paul's pedigree and paradigm.⁶⁷

It has been an amazing journey! And I stand with Paul.

"Eye has not seen, ear has not heard nor has it entered into the heart of man the things that God has prepared for those who love Him."⁶⁸

It seems, however, there remains one more question: How are we to respond?

Again, turning to Scripture provides the answer.

Jeremiah 6:16

Jeremiah 6:16 is a small and succinct Scripture packing a lot of punch.

Yahweh says, "**Stand** in the ways and **see**, and **ask** for the old paths, 'Where is the good way?' and **walk** in it, and you will find rest for your souls. But they said, 'We will not walk in it.'

YHWH is speaking to Israel, and asking them to stop and consider their situation.

The phrase "in the ways" can mean something good or something bad. It could mean a Godly path or a path in darkness.⁶⁹

The word "see" in our passage means to make sure of being on the right path, and "ask" means to request.

The request is for the old or ancient paths. The ancient paths are the paths of righteousness and

⁶⁷Please see Appendix A and Appendix B for Paul's Pedigree and Paradigm

⁶⁸1 Corinthians 2:9

⁶⁹And his heart took delight in the ways of the LORD; moreover he removed the high places and wooden images from Judah. (2 Chronicles 17:6 NKJV); And a letter came to him from Elijah the prophet, saying, Thus says the LORD God of your father David: Because you have not walked in the ways of Jehoshaphat your father, or in the ways of Asa king of Judah, (2 Chronicles 21:12 NKJV); He also walked in the ways of the house of Ahab, for his mother advised him to do wickedly. (2 Chronicles 22:3 NKJV); For he walked in the ways of the kings of Israel, and made molded images for the Baals. 2 Chronicles 28:2 (NKJV); And he did *what was* right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the ways of his father David; *he did not* turn aside to the right hand or to the left. (2 Chronicles 34:2 NKJV); From those who leave the paths of uprightness To walk in the ways of darkness; (Proverbs 2:13 NKJV); Rejoice, O young man, in your youth, And let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth; Walk in the ways of your heart, And in the sight of your eyes; But know that for all these God will bring you into judgment. (Ecclesiastes 11:9 NKJV)

holiness. They are the same path walked by Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It is the path that the Torah of Moses points to, and the realization of promises to David.

This was penned long before Judaism ever existed. Clearly, to set the record straight, the old path is not Judaism. It is the way Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob walked.

Ancient paths in other Scriptures:

- "Remember the days of old, Consider the years of many generations. Ask your father, and he will show you; Your elders, and they will tell you: (Deuteronomy 32:7 NKJV)
- "Because My people have forgotten Me, They have burned incense to worthless idols. And they have caused themselves to stumble in their ways, *From the ancient paths*, To walk in pathways and not on a highway, (Jeremiah 18:15 NKJV)
- "Set up signposts, Make landmarks; Set your heart toward the highway, The way in which you went. Turn back, O virgin of Israel, Turn back to these your cities. (Jeremiah 31:21 NKJV)
- To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them. (Isaiah 8:20 NKJV)
- "Remember the Torah of Moses, My servant, Which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel, With the statutes and judgments. (Malachi 4:4 NKJV)

Verbs

Verbs express action! Jeremiah 6:16 invites believers to take action - Stand, See, Ask, and Walk.

The parallel passages to Jeremiah 6:16, however, express a different call to action – to **Remember**.⁷⁰

Remember what? Remember the Torah! We have been reminded to remember the “Rememberers” in the Torah!

- Remember the day you came out of Egypt – Exodus 13:3
- Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy – Exodus 20:8
- Remember all the commandments of the LORD and do them – Numbers 15:39
- Remember you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out from there by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm – Deuteronomy 5:15; 15:15
- Remember well what the LORD your God did to Pharaoh and to all Egypt – Deuteronomy 7:18
- Remember that the LORD your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you *and* test you, to know what *was* in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not – Deuteronomy 8:2
- Remember the LORD your God, for *it is* He who gives you power to get wealth, that He may establish His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as *it is* this day – Deuteronomy 8:18
- Remember. Do not forget how you provoked the LORD your God to wrath in the wilderness. From the day that you departed from the land of Egypt until you came to this place, you have been rebellious against the LORD – Deuteronomy 9:7
- Remember the day in which you came out of the land of Egypt all the days of your life – Deuteronomy 16:3
- Remember that you were a slave in Egypt, and you shall be careful to observe these statutes

⁷⁰Deuteronomy 32:7, Jeremiah 18:15, Jeremiah 31:21, Isaiah 8:20, and Malachi 4:4

- Deuteronomy 16:12
- Remember what the LORD your God did to Miriam on the way when you came out of Egypt – Deuteronomy 24:9
- Remember that you were a slave in Egypt, and the LORD your God redeemed you from there; therefore I command you to do this thing – Deuteronomy 24:18
- Remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt; therefore I command you to do this thing – Deuteronomy 24:22
- Remember the days of old, Consider the years of many generations. Ask your father, and he will show you; Your elders, and they will tell you – Deuteronomy 32:7

The Ten Things to Remember:

1. Remember the day you came out of Egypt (mentioned twice)
2. Remember the Sabbath day
3. Remember and do all the commandments
4. Remember well what YHVH your God did to Pharaoh and to all Egypt
5. Remember the...forty years in the wilderness
6. Remember YHVH your God
7. Remember you provoked YHVH your God to wrath in the wilderness
8. Remember you were a slave in Egypt (mentioned four times)
9. Remember what happened to Miriam
10. Remember the days of old

This list is simplified by two Hebrew terms – ***Shema*** and ***Shamar***.

Remember ***Shema***? It's the Hebrew word for *hear and do*. Remember, it's the first and greatest command.

“Hear (*shema*), O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD *is* one! ⁵ You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.” (Deuteronomy 6:4-9 NKJV)

⁷¹

Hear and do. It's like the old hymn, “Trust and Obey.”

Trust and obey,
For there's no other way
To be happy in Jesus,
But to trust and obey.

Hear and do – trust and obey – they're like a hand in a glove – they say the same thing. Success in the Kingdom of God is predicated on following God's instructions – following the House Rules.

The second term is ***Shamar***.

Remember Exodus 19:5? It's conditional. “If Israel will *shema* (obey) and *shamar* (keep) the covenant, then Israel will become *am sequlah* (a special treasure.) Conversely then, if Israel fails to *shema* (hear and do) and *shamar* (guard) the covenant, Israel will not become *am sequlah* (a special treasure.)

⁷¹See Deuteronomy 6:4-9, Deuteronomy 11:13-21, and Numbers 15:37-41 for the full Shema; See Shema under Paul's Pedigree Chapter 7

In order to participate in the *am segulah*, and the rapture, we must *shema* and *shamar* – hear and do (obey), and guard the covenant, the Torah.⁷²

Hineini

In the garden, God enjoyed a close companionship with Adam and Eve. Scripture seems to hint that it was routine for God to walk and talk with Adam in the garden in the cool of the day. We don't know how long this went on, but what we do know is that one day Adam heard the voice of God calling to him, but this time it was different. Adam and Eve hid themselves from the presence of God – this is not how we want to respond.

Scripture also records the story of God calling out to Abraham. In Genesis Chapter 22 Abraham hears the voice of God and, not knowing what would be asked of him, he replies, “*Hineini*.”

Hineni is pronounced “hee-NAY-nee.” It is combination of *hineh* and *ani* – “here” and “I.”

It means, “Here am I.”

That is the place we want to be. When YHVH calls, we respond, “Here am I!”

When God calls, we need to respond by saying, “Yes, Lord, how may I serve you? What are You speaking to me? What may I do to please you?”

Our response should be like that of a bride desiring to please her bridegroom. The Shulamite in Song of Songs portrays the love which we, too, are to possess. “He has brought me to the banquet house and His banner over me is love. Sustain me with raisin cakes; refresh me with apples — for I am weak with love.” (Song of Songs 2:4,5).

And the Bridegroom says, “You are altogether lovely, my darling, and no blemish is in you....You have captivated my heart....How delightful is your love, my sister, my bride! How much better is your love than wine.”⁷³

After all, is this not what the “Rapture” is all about? It’s about Messiah returning for a bride.

- For *as* a young man marries a virgin, *So* shall your sons marry you; And as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, So shall your God rejoice over you. (Isaiah 62:5 NKJV)
- Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another--to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God. (Romans 7:4 NKJV)
- For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. (2 Corinthians 11:2 NKJV)
- Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready." (Revelation 19:7 NKJV)
- Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. (Revelation 21:2 NKJV)
- Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me and talked with me, saying, "Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife." (Revelation 21:9 NKJV)
- And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely. (Revelation 22:17)

⁷²For more on “*Shamar*” see Appendix B – Paul’s Paradigm

⁷³Song of Songs 4:7, 9, 10

NKJV)

“Who is the Bride?” It is the company of believers who have made themselves ready by trusting in Him. It is the believers who live their lives to please and obey Him. They are born-again, filled with the Spirit, walking in the Torah — people buried in the grace, mercy and majesty of Messiah. They love Him with all their hearts, minds, and souls. They worship Him in Spirit and in Truth.

These are the ones who have wrestled with God, and prevailed. They are Israel, the *am sequlah*, that SpecialTreasure. They are the called out ones, the chosen ones, those that are set apart for His use, and for His pleasure. They are the redeemed, and they will live with Him, in His House, for the remainder of eternity.

May our response to His call be a simple: “*Hineni!*” (hee-NAY-nee) “*Here am I!*”

Appendix A – Paul’s Pedigree

After reading Paul’s letters and seeing he wrote of events to come from personal revelation by YHVH and with the foundation of Torah, one has to wonder about the man Paul. He is the predominant apostle who taught us the concepts in Torah behind the Greek word *harpazo* (“caught up”). What qualified him to write things pertaining to the end times – including the Greater Exodus/Rapture? Who was this man — and what was his pathway to knowing God as he did?

This is what Peter said regarding Paul’s writings.

Therefore, beloved, seeing that you look for these things, be diligent to be found in peace, without defect and blameless in his sight. ¹⁵ Regard the patience of our Lord as salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given to him, wrote to you; ¹⁶ as also in all of his letters, speaking in them of these things. In those, there are some things that are hard to understand, which the ignorant⁷⁴ and unsettled twist⁷⁵, as they also do to the other Scriptures, to their own destruction. (2 Peter 3:14-16)

Peter is saying that Paul consistently speaks of things (especially the Day of the Lord) in all his letters. Paul writes concepts that overwhelm our understanding, and which the *unlearned and unstable* (meaning those not taught in Torah⁷⁶) twist to their ruin, and twisting other Scriptures as well.

Paul’s history, as recorded in the New Testament, is telling.

We are introduced to Paul in the Book of Acts where he plays a sort of “007” – with a license to kill!

In Acts Chapters 7 and 8, Paul is introduced through the stoning of Stephen. Paul, most likely, has a seat in the Sanhedrim at thirty years of age. In the midst of this troublesome murder he is distinguished as a witness consenting to Stephen’s death. The authority for this act was granted by the Sanhedrin; and Paul stands as the agent of this Jewish Court, assenting and authorizing this reprehensible killing. Chapter 8 continues with the story of the fear generated in the believing community due to this great persecution. The following chapter records Paul’s change of heart. He meets the Master in a blinding light while traveling on the road to Damascus.

Even after his conversion, Paul never loses his Jewishness. The Book of Acts attests to this. He is seen faithfully observing *Shabbat* (Sabbath) in Acts 13:13-14, 42-44; 16:9-13; 17:2-3; and 18:4. In Acts 18 he takes a Nazirite⁷⁷ vow. In Acts 20 he observes *Shavuot* (Pentecost.) In Acts Chapters 21 through 26 he is accused of forsaking Moses (the *Torah*) and defends himself by saying “Neither

⁷⁴“without ordinary instruction.”

⁷⁵Literally, torture by means of the rack; and hence “strain,” “distort.”

⁷⁶For Moses (Torah) has had throughout many generations those who preach him in every city, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath." Acts 15:21 (NKJV)

⁷⁷Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'When either a man or woman consecrates an offering to take the vow of a Nazirite, to separate himself to the LORD, [Numbers 6:2 (NKJV)]

Then the Nazirite shall shave his consecrated head at the door of the tabernacle of meeting, and shall take the hair from his consecrated head and put it on the fire which is under the sacrifice of the peace offering. [Numbers 6:18 (NKJV)]

against the Torah of the Jews, nor against the temple, nor against Caesar have I offended in anything at all...to the Jews I have done no wrong.”

Paul describes himself as, “a Jew, born in Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, educated strictly according to our ancestral law, being zealous for God, just as all of you are today⁷⁸.”

And while in prison awaiting his death, Paul says of himself, “I, too, have reason for confidence in the flesh. If anyone else has reason to be confident in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, a member of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless.⁷⁹”

Paul was not a twentieth or twenty-first century American Christian. He was a Jew – in every sense of the word and his writings reflect his life as a Jew in culture, in concepts, in ideals and in the revelation that God gave him. If we take Paul’s words out of that context we do serious damage to their meaning. It is imperative that we understand Paul and his vocabulary through his eyes; otherwise we run the serious risk of misunderstanding what he said; and become culpable to Peter’s admonition of twisting and perverting the words of Paul to our own destruction.

Paul Exposed Israel’s Uncircumcised Ear

To whom should I speak and testify, that they may hear? Behold, their ear is uncircumcised, and they can’t listen. Behold, Yahweh’s word has become a reproach to them. They have no delight in it. ¹¹ Therefore I am full of Yahweh’s wrath. I am weary with holding it in. (Jeremiah 6:10-11)

Jeremiah is speaking to Israel, who would no longer listen to God. Though God pleaded with her to return, she refused and was cast out of the land, dispersed among the nations.

The solution for Israel was simple, and clearly stated by Jeremiah.

Yahweh says, “Stand in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, ‘Where is the good way?’ and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls. But they said, ‘We will not walk in it.’ (Jeremiah 6:16)

The *old paths* are the “ancient paths,” or literally the “eternal paths.”

This is a call to repent – to return.

“Hear, Israel: Yahweh is our God. Yahweh is one. ⁵ You shall love Yahweh your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might⁸⁰.”

The ancient paths are the way of the fathers – Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Paul, as a Jewish Rabbi, taught Torah. He never abandoned his ‘Jewishness’ even among Gentile believers. He followed the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob throughout his whole life. He un-

⁷⁸Acts 22:3

⁷⁹Phil 3:4-6

⁸⁰Deuteronomy 6:4-5

derstood that Yeshua of Nazareth really was Israel's Messiah, and he never stopped thinking, speaking or writing as a Jew.

Paul writes:

¹⁵ Give diligence to present yourself approved by God, a workman who doesn't need to be ashamed, properly handling the Word of Truth. ¹⁶ But shun empty chatter, for it will go further in ungodliness, ¹⁷ and those words will consume like gangrene, of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; ¹⁸ men who have erred concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past, and overthrowing the faith of some. ¹⁹ However God's firm foundation stands, having this seal, "The Lord knows those who are his," and, "Let every one who names the name of the Lord depart from unrighteousness." (2 Timothy 2:15-19)

Paul admonishes believers to be assertive, to be attentive, and to be careful in the handling of the "Word of Truth." The Word of Truth, in this context is the Tanakh, the Old Testament – comprised of the Torah, the Prophets, and the Writings. The books of the New Testament did not exist at this point in time, and it would be presumptuous for Paul to refer to his own writings as the Word of God. When Paul says, "Depart from unrighteousness," he means to walk in righteousness, do the right thing ... walk in Torah.

The Shema

It is interesting that the oldest daily prayer of Judaism is the *Shema*. It is comprised of three Scriptures – Deuteronomy 6:4-9, Deuteronomy 11:13-21, and Numbers 15:37-41.

As previously discussed, "hear" in Hebrew is *shema*, meaning "hear and do" or "listen and obey."

The *Shema* was not only important to Paul, but central to everything he wrote.

Shema is Hebrew for "hear." It means hear and do. James illustrates this in the second chapter of the Book of James, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without works, and I by my works (what I do) will show you my faith.

¹⁹ You believe that God is one. You do well. The demons also believe, and shudder."⁸¹ Romans 10:17 "So then faith *comes* by hearing (*Shema-ing*), and hearing (*Shema-ing*) by the word of God." (James ties "Faith" with the *Shema* – "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD *is* one!" [Deut 6:4])

The shortened form of the *Shema* is:

Shema Yisrael: Adonai Eloheinu, Adonai Echad.

Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God; the Lord is one (Deut. 6:4).

The importance of the *Shema* is clearly demonstrated by Yeshua when asked:

³³ When the multitudes heard it, they were astonished at his teaching. ³⁴ But the Pharisees, when they heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, gathered themselves

⁸¹James 2:18-19

together. ³⁵ One of them, a lawyer, asked him a question, testing him. ³⁶ “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the law?”

³⁷ Jesus said to him, “ ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’³⁸ This is the first and great commandment. ³⁹ A second likewise is this, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’⁴⁰ The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments.” (Matthew 22:35-40)

Paul opens the book of Romans with this statement:

¹ Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the Good News of God, ² which he promised before through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, ³ concerning his Son, who was born of the offspring^z of David according to the flesh, ⁴ who was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, ⁵ through whom we received grace and apostleship, for obedience of faith among all the nations, for his name’s sake; (Romans 1:1-5)

In this statement he declares that he, as a slave of Yeshua the Messiah, was commissioned “for obedience of faith among all the nations.”

What does Paul mean by the “obedience of faith?”⁸²

The word “obedience” is *hypakoē*. According to *Strong’s* it means “attentive hearkening, and by implication compliance or submission.”

Hypakoē is in bold lettering and underlined:

5 δι’ οὗ ἐλάβομεν χάριν καὶ ἀποστολὴν εἰς ὑπακοήν πίστεως ἐν πᾶσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν ὑπὲρ τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ, Romans 1:5–7 (UBS4)

Liddell and Scott defines *hypakoē* as “to listen, hearken, give ear.” *Hypakoē* is a compound word – *hypo* (meaning under) and *akouō* (meaning to hear.)

The root for *hypakoē* is *akouō* and found in the Greek translation of Deuteronomy 6:4. *Akouō* is in bold lettering and underlined:

⁴ Καὶ ταῦτα τὰ δικαιώματα καὶ τὰ κρίματα ὅσα ἐνετείλατο Κύριος τοῖς υἱοῖς Ἰσραὴλ, ἐξεληθόντων αὐτῶν ἐκ γῆς Αἰγύπτου Ἄκουε, Ἰσραὴλ· Κύριος ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν Κύριος εἷς ἐστίν· Deuteronomy 6:4 (LXX Swete)

In Hebrew it reads “*Shema Israel*.”

Paul, in Romans 1:5, is saying he was commissioned by Yeshua to bring the Gentiles to the obedience to the Faith – the (*shema*) hearing and doing of Torah.

The Faith means “walking in Torah.”

⁸²See *The Mystery of Romans: The Jewish Context of Paul's Letters* by Mark D. Nanos for a full explanation.

Yeshua asks in Luke 18:8, “When the Son of Man comes, will He really find *faith* (literally “the faith”) on the earth?”

The faith as described in Scripture is:

- Genesis 26:5 “because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My Torah.”
- Numbers 12:6-8 “Then He said, “Hear now My words: “If there is a prophet among you, *I*, the LORD, make Myself known to him in a vision; I speak to him in a dream. ⁷ Not so with My servant Moses; He *is* faithful in all My house. ⁸ I speak with him face to face. Even plainly, and not in dark sayings; And he sees the form of YHVH. Why then were you not afraid To speak against My servant Moses?”
- Numbers 14:24 “But My servant Caleb, because he has a different spirit in him and has followed Me fully, I will bring into the land where he went, and his descendants shall inherit it.”
- 2 Kings 18:5-6 “He (Hezekiah) trusted in YHVH God of Israel, so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor who were before him. ⁶ For he held fast to the LORD; he did not depart from following Him, but kept His commandments, which the LORD had commanded Moses.”
- Revelation 14:12 “Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Y’shua.”
- Micah 6:8 “He has shown you, O man, what *is* good; And what does the LORD require of you But to do justly, To love mercy, And to walk humbly with your God?”

The *Shema* is the essence of Paul’s faith.

Paul:

- Never abandoned his Jewishness even among Gentile believers.
- Followed the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob throughout his whole life.
- Understood that Yeshua of Nazareth really is Israel's Messiah.
- Never stopped thinking, speaking or writing as a Jew.

Paul, in Romans 1:5 affirms, “Through Yeshua we have received grace and apostleship to promote the hearing and doing (*shema*) of our faith and to make disciples for His name's sake among all the nations.

This is the foundation or context of Paul’s teachings and ministry.

Appendix B – Paul’s Paradigm (Adam/Noah/Israel/The Stone)

Adam, Noah, and the carrying-off of Israel are all topics Paul would have learned from childhood in addition to his studies of the Hebrew language. And “The Stone” I speak of entered his adult world in an unplanned manner. All four of these topics, plus direct revelation from YHVH, would create the basis for his paradigm and writing: “Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.”

Adam

Genesis 2:15

Yahweh God took the man, and put him into the Garden of Eden to cultivate and keep it.

- The Hebrew for “took” is *lāqach*
- The Hebrew for “put” is *yanach*
- The Hebrew for “cultivate” is *abad*
- The Hebrew for “keep” is *shamar*

Laqach means “to take physically, to get into one’s hands, to snatch or seize; or take in marriage.”⁸³

Yanach means “to deposit, put, lay down, place”

Abad means “to work or serve.” It is a common verb found about 300 times predominantly meaning “serve,” but it can also mean “Worship.” This is evident in 2 Kings. 10:19 ff.; 17:12 ff., where idolatrous worship is practiced by rebellious Israelite people and leaders.

The modern understanding of Worship is vastly different from that of the Fathers of Faith. A modern definition always includes the idea of music, and focus on praise and worship by singing, or even prayer.

The first place in Scripture where the word “Worship” is found is Genesis 22:5:

Abraham said to his young men, “Stay here with the donkey. The boy and I will go yonder. We will worship, and come back to you.” (Genesis 22:5)

In response to YHVH’s command, Abraham departs to sacrifice Isaac, his son, his only son. In explanation to his two accompanying men he said, “We will worship and then return.”

Abraham rose early in the morning, and saddled his donkey; and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son. He split the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went to the place of which God had told him. ⁴On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place far off. (Genesis 22:3-4)

The actual Hebrew word for “Worship” is *shachah*. It means “to bow down, to depress oneself

⁸³Gen 19:14; Num 12:1; 1 Chr 2:21

to the ground, to prostrate oneself.” In the King James Version it is translated: “worship” 99 times, and other times as “bow” 31, “bow down” 18, “obeisance” 9, “reverence” 5, and also “fall down stoop, or crouch.” *The Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* says it is similar to the Akkadian *shihû* meaning “to wallow” or “to descend.”

In Genesis 18:2 Abraham “*shachahed*” (Worshiped) at the door of his tent when he met YHVH. In Genesis 19:1 Lot “*shachahed*” (wallowed) at the gate of Sodom when he met the two angels sent to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah.

The idea of Worship, Biblically speaking is based on the idea of bowing the knee in obedience. When Abraham said he was going to worship he meant he was going up on the mount to obey God, not going up in song or dance or praise as understood in a more modern paradigm.

Shamar means “to guard.” *Shāmar* is a common verb occurring over 450 times with the dominant sense of “keep” or “guard” for most of its usages. The meanings “watch” and “observe” overlap with these two senses, although there are also other occurrences of these meanings.

Shāmar is also used nominally to refer to a "watchman" in general contexts (Ps. 130:6; Isa. 21:11; Song 3:3; Isa. 62:6; Jer. 51:12).

Shāmar expresses the sense of "observe" primarily in the context of "keeping," “guarding” or "obeying" the commands of God.

The *Targum Jerusalem* translates Genesis 2:15:

“And the Lord God took the man, and made him to dwell in the Garden of Eden; and sent them to do service in the Torah, and to keep (guard).”

In Genesis 2:15, Adam was “snatched” *laqach* and “put” *yanach* in the garden by the hand of God to “work” *abad*, and “guard” *shamar* the garden. Or --Adam was physically moved to the garden to live, work, worship and guard the garden.

The *Septuagint* translates the Hebrew *laqach* with the Greek word *lambano*. *Lambano* is a synonym of *harpazo*, translated “caught up” in 1 Thessalonians 4:17, “Then we who are alive, who are left behind, will be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air — and so we shall always be with the Lord.”

In writing this verse to the Thessalonians, Paul used the same word and concept Moses used in Genesis referring to the transporting of Adam into the Garden of Eden. Paul knew Torah and wrote through revelation based on Torah.

Paul’s wording seems to reflect on the transporting of Adam in Genesis. The Garden of Eden placement sounds remarkably similar to the gathering of Israel, the Greater Exodus, or the Rapture (if you prefer). YHVH is going to snatch all of Israel and move her back to Himself; where she will live and work with Messiah in caring for and guarding the kingdom.

Could it be, that at the very beginning, YHVH was pointing to the very end? Was Adam a type (shadow) of things to come? This gives us something to ponder.

Noah

Most certainly I tell you, this generation will not pass away, until all these things are accomplished. ³⁵ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. ³⁶ But no one knows of that day and hour, not even the angels of heaven, but my Father only.

³⁷ “As the days of Noah were, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.” ³⁸ For as in those days which were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ship, ³⁹ and they didn’t know until the flood came, and took them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. ⁴⁰ Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken and one will be left. ⁴¹ Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and one will be left. ⁴² Watch therefore, for you don’t know in what hour your Lord comes. ⁴³ But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what watch of the night the thief was coming, he would have watched, and would not have allowed his house to be broken into. ⁴⁴ Therefore also be ready, for in an hour that you don’t expect, the Son of Man will come. (Matthew 24:34-44)⁸⁴

In this Matthew 24 passage and its parallel, Luke 17, Yeshua relays a simple simile – “As the days of Noah were, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.”

The similarities between Noah and the flood, and the return of Messiah are striking:

- Noah and his family escaped the flood by obeying God and entering the ark — believers escape the future wrath by being in Yeshua. The Lord knows who are His. (II Timothy 2:19) He gave himself to redeem us to be a purified people for Himself. (Titus 2:14)
- Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord and, as commanded, he and his family built the ark before the floods came — believers are not caught “unaware” but have knowledge through the relationship with Yeshua.
- Noah’s generation, in general, was unaware of what God was about to do, so the flood came suddenly and unexpectedly — and so it will be at the end of the ages when those who have not believed the truth and have delighted in wickedness will be condemned. (II Thessalonians 2:12)
- Noah’s generation, in general ignored the warning and persisted in wickedness — in the last days scoffers will come, following their own evil desires. (II Peter 3:3)
- The men of Noah’s generation entered into unlawful marriages, and unclean relationships: they were sinful, wicked, hedonistic, lustful, and without Torah – and so will it be at the end of the ages when wickedness increases and the love of most will grow cold. (Matthew 24:12)
- Noah’s generation wholly gave themselves up to the pleasures of life and lust of the flesh, without concern for the things of God — and so it will be in the end of the ages.

Adam Clarke: “As the days of Noah - they were eating and drinking - That is, they spent their time in rapine, luxury, and riot. The design of these verses seems to be, that the desolation should be as general as it should be unexpected.”

Albert Barnes: “For as in the days ... - The things mentioned here denote attention to the affairs of this life rather than to what was coming on them. It does not mean that these things were wrong, but only that such was their actual employment, and that they were regardless of what was coming upon them.”

⁸⁴See also: Luke 17:20–36

Genesis 7: 17 reads:

The flood was forty days on the earth. The waters increased, and lifted up the ark, and it was lifted up above the earth.

“Lifted up” in Hebrew is *nasa* and means “take up.” *Holladay* lists *nasa* as a synonym to *harpazo*, the Greek word translated “caught up” in 1 Thessalonians 4:17.

“Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.” 1 Thessalonians 4:17 (NKJV)

This “lifting up” or “catching up” spoken by Paul’s reflects the same concept of God moving Adam from outside the Garden to inside the Garden in Eden; and Noah (and his family) being lifted above the flood waters in the ark. Both the Hebrew word *nasa*, and the Greek word, *harpazo*, convey the picture of God moving His people into safe places.

With this thought in mind, Paul writes to encourage believers in Yeshua that there will come a day when another great transporting of God’s people will occur. History will repeat itself. The Lord will take His People out of this world of Godless chaos and into a prepared place of safety with Him.

Israel

Nasa is also found in Exodus 19:

And Moses went up to God, and Yahweh called to him from the mountain, saying, “Thus you will say to the house of Jacob and you will tell the Israelites, 4 ‘You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt and how I bore (carried off - *nasa*) you on eagles’ wings and I brought you to me. Exodus 19:3–4 (LEB)

In Paul’s Torah studies, he would have understood the Hebrew word *nasa* in the Book of Exodus describing YHWH’s “carrying off” the Israelites out of Egyptian bondage. By connecting scripture to scripture, he possibly connected this transporting of people to that of Adam in Genesis which use with the same word or concept.

And once again, we see the transporting of the children of Israel out of Egypt was for their safety and a deliverance from the Godless taskmasters of that day. YHWH had a place prepared for them.

Adam, Noah, and the carrying-off of Israel are all topics Paul would be aware of and which conceivably form, at the very least, a partial basis for his writing, “Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.”

The Stone

The key element in Paul’s Paradigm was his personal knowledge of the Holy One. One of the many descriptions he uses is that of Yeshua as The Stone. He refers to Him as the Chief Cornerstone in Ephesians 2: “Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built to-

gether for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.”

One has to ask, “What is important about the stone from Paul’s perspective?”

The Hebrew word for “Stone” is *‘eben* אֶבֶן. It is spelled *aleph bet nun*.

In Hebrew pictographs, *aleph* is the picture of an ox and symbolizes strength. *Bet* is the picture of a tent and symbolizes a house. *Nun* is a picture of darting fish and symbolizes life. Put them all together and *eben* means the “strength of life is in the house.”

The Hebrew word *Eben* (אֶבֶן) is formed from two separate words – *aleph bet* (אֶבֶן) meaning “father,” and *bet nun* (בֵּן) meaning “son,” indicating that the Father and the Son are **one**.

- I and My Father are one.⁸⁵
- ...so that their hearts may be encouraged, united in love and into all the wealth of the full assurance of insight into the knowledge of the mystery of God — that is, Messiah⁸⁶
- ...looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ⁸⁷

We know that **Yeshua is that Stone**, that *eben*.

- **Moses wrote:** “But his bow remained in strength, And the arms of his (*Joseph’s*) hands were made strong by the hands of the Mighty God of Jacob (From there is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel),” Gen 49:24
- **From Psalms we read:** “The stone (*eben*) which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone.”⁸⁸
- **Isaiah wrote:** “He will be as a sanctuary, But a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense to both the houses of Israel.” Isaiah 8:14
- **Isaiah wrote:** “Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: “Behold, I lay in Zion a stone for a foundation, A tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation; Whoever believes will not flee in haste.” - Isaiah 28:16-17
- **Luke wrote:** “... let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole. “This is the stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.” “Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”⁸⁹ See Matthew 21:42-45; Mark 12:10-11 and Luke 20:17-18.
- **Paul wrote:** “What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness of faith; but Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness. Why? Because they did not seek *it* by faith, but as it were, by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone. As it is written:

*“Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offense.
And whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.”* - Romans 9:30-10:1

⁸⁵John 10:30

⁸⁶Colossians 2:2 (LEB)

⁸⁷Titus 2:13

⁸⁸Psalms 118:22

⁸⁹Acts 4:10-12

Paul wrote:

“Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.” - Ephesians 2:19-3:1

Peter wrote in 1 Peter 2:4-8: “Coming to Him *as to* a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, you also, as living stones, spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture,

"Behold, I lay in Zion

A chief cornerstone, elect, precious.

And he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame."

Therefore, to you who believe, *He is* precious; but to those who are disobedient,

"The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone,"

And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense."

They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed."

The New Testament verses above use the Greek word, λίθος *lithos* (lee'-thos) for “stone,” which is the Greek equivalent to our Old Testament Hebrew word, *eben* (עֶבֶן).

Paul knew the Stone of Israel (Genesis 49:24). He described Him as the “Stone of Stumbling” and “Rock of Offense.” Paul’s conversion from persecuting believers to becoming one with them is found in Acts 9. His miraculous, blinding encounter with Yeshua changed his path forever. A conversation between Ananias (a disciple hesitant to shelter Paul) and the Lord went like this:

“Then Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he has done to Your saints in Jerusalem. And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name.".... But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake." Ananias obeyed and cared for Paul who received his sight after three days, was baptized and immediately began proclaiming Yeshua in the synagogues saying, ‘He is the Son of God. ‘”

Paul knew and taught that the key is Messiah. He is the Living Stone. He is the foundation of The House. It is His life that is imparted to little stones – believers - who are being built into the corporate House of God. Other men voiced the same understanding throughout scripture.

If we believe on this Stone, we can’t lose; and if we dis-believe Him, we can’t win. Unbelief, however, does not defeat the purposes of God.

Perhaps C.S. Lewis said it best:

“We all serve God inevitably, but it makes a great difference whether you serve like

Judas or serve like John.”⁹⁰

God triumphs in the end, whether we believe or not. He triumphs in our obedience and our disobedience. Our being good or evil, rejecting or accepting, believing or unbelieving cannot frustrate the purposes of God. “The stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner.”

We are called to simply trust Him. Paul’s Paradigm establishes that he walked away from his old life of sin and disobedience and totally trusted in Him.

Peter, a co-laborer with Paul echoes Paul’s understanding from Torah and puts it this way:

“Putting away therefore all wickedness, all deceit, hypocrisies, envies, and all evil speaking, ² as newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the Word, that with it you may grow, ³ if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious: ⁴ coming to him, a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God, precious. ⁵ You also, as living stones, are built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ⁶ Because it is contained in Scripture, “Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, chosen, and precious: He who believes in him will not be disappointed.”

⁷ For you who believe therefore is the honor, but for those who are disobedient, “The stone which the builders rejected, has become the chief cornerstone,” ⁸ and, “a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense.”

For they stumble at the word, being disobedient, to which also they were appointed.

⁹ **But you** are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession, that you may proclaim the excellence of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light: ¹⁰ who in time past were no people, but now are God’s people, who had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

¹¹ Beloved, I beg you as foreigners and pilgrims, to abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; ¹² having good behavior among the nations, so in that of which they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they see, glorify God in the day of visitation.” (1 Peter 2:1-12)

⁹⁰The Quotable Lewis, edited by Wayne Martindale and Jerry Root