

*A unique Messianic Jewish Commentary on the Five Books of Moses, with emphasis on portraits and foreshadowings of the Messiah. A great tool for these who wish to better understand Yeshua/Jesus and His First Century followers. A great study tool to understand Jewish thought, both in the first century and today!*

## **"Moses Wrote About Me": Portraits of Messiah in the Torah**

By Yosef Rachamim Danieli

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# MOSES WROTE ABOUT ME

Portraits of Messiah in the Torah  
A Messianic Jewish Commentary on

**Genesis**

Yosef Rachamim Danieli

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# Endorsements

Yosef Rachamim (“Rami”) Danieli wrote the book that should have been written many thousands of times in Christian history. It was not!

The passage that is the central theme of this important book is taken from the Gospel of John: *Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father; there is one who accuses you – Moses in whom you trust. For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me! But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?* (John 5:45-47)

The question is, “Why was this important theme from the Gospel of John generally speaking ignored?” Yosef is doing a great job providing us with the answer to this (and many other) questions. Here are few interesting quotes from the book:

“Israel’s Messiah, Yeshua, is the main “actor” behind the scenes of this epic play. He is first foreshadowed in Adam and later in Abel, then in Noah, Shem, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and so on. Each actor on the Torah stage brings Yeshua more into focus by providing us with new details about Him.”

Trying to express his feelings and the mind-boggling thoughts he had, following the very first time that he had read the New Testament, Yosef writes: “Something appears to be very wrong here. I could find hardly any connection between many of the practices and beliefs I had noticed in the Christian Religious System and what I was reading in the New Testament.”

Yosef Rachamim provides clear bible-based evidences to prove that Moses and Yeshua are not opposed to one another. They are rather co-dependent and approving of each other. If you don’t understand Moses, you also don’t understand Yeshua the Messiah. If you don’t understand Yeshua, you also don’t understand Moses.

*“Moses Wrote About Me”*

I highly recommend and endorse this book because it emphasizes the relationship between the Torah and The Gospel, between Moses and Yeshua, and between the Old Testament and the New Testament. This is of great importance to both Christians and Jews and, for sure, to all disciples of Yeshua! Enjoy learning and restoring the old paths, the path that Yeshua and his disciples walked and asked us to follow!

Joseph Shulam

Director of “Netivyah Bible Instruction Ministry”

Jerusalem, Israel

Our sages teach us that there are 70 faces to the Torah. The Interpretations that are offered in Yosef’s book are unique, challenging, and will cause you to re-examine your theological beliefs. Yosef’s simple, yet, rather deep approach to the scriptures provide us with a unique and fresh interpretation of the words of Moses, the prophet of Israel, and Yeshua Himself. This is without a doubt one of the most interesting Torah commentary books that one can agree or disagree with. The book will move you one way or another!

Tsachi Shapira

Ahavat Ami Ministry – Tx. USA

Yosef Rachamim (“Rami”) Danieli brings a wealth of Middle Eastern Jewish insight to this exploration of the ancient Hebraic foundation of the New Testament. His writing is warm, devotional, and richly interwoven with historic and linguistic references. I’ve been fascinated by this subject and seeking to live it for more than forty years. Yosef opened my eyes to many facets I’d not seen before. It is a joy to read.

Eitan Shishkoff

*Founding Director*

Tents of Mercy Network [[www.tentsofmercy.org](http://www.tentsofmercy.org)]

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# Table of Contents

<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS—PART ONE .....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS—PART TWO .....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>The Book of Genesis—A Short Introduction.....</b>	<b>51</b>
<b><i>Bereshit</i>.....</b>	<b>53</b>
Messiah and His Kingdom in the Story of Creation.....	58
The Garden of Eden, Jerusalem, and God’s Masterplan of Salvation.....	71
Adam, Eve, Messiah and His Bride .....	81
Trees, Trees, and More Trees – What’s so Special About Them? .....	88
Cain and Abel - Messiah and God’s Plan of Redemption Continues to Unfold .....	113
<b><i>Noah</i> .....</b>	<b>119</b>
Noah and the Messiah of Israel .....	121
Noah, The Messiah, and the End Times.....	129
After the Flood—God’s Masterplan of Salvation Continues to Unfold.....	134
The Tower of Babylon and The Great Harlot .....	140
<b><i>Lech Lecha</i> .....</b>	<b>149</b>
Abraham and God’s Masterplan of Salvation .....	151
Abram and the Messiah.....	157
Abram (and Messiah) in Egypt .....	161
Lot and the Messiah .....	166
Melchizedek and the Messiah .....	169
The Covenant between the Cut Pieces .....	174
Hagar and Sarai—An Impossible Match.....	185
The Covenant of Circumcision and Us .....	191
<b><i>Vayera</i>.....</b>	<b>199</b>
Under the Tree with Abraham and Messiah.....	200
Messiah and His Bride in Sodom and Gomorrah.....	209
Abraham, Abimelech, and the Seized Well.....	219
Messiah at the <i>Akeida</i> .....	222
<b><i>Chayei Sarah</i> .....</b>	<b>237</b>
Kiryat Arba (Hebron) – More Than Just a Geographic Location.....	238

*“Moses Wrote About Me”*

Abraham and Messiah – More Details Revealed .....	244
Abraham’s Servant and the Torah.....	246
Rebekah, Isaac, Messiah, and His Bride .....	250
<b>Toldot.....</b>	<b>255</b>
Isaac and the Messiah – More Details Revealed .....	257
Esau and Jacob – Same Ancestry, Different Destiny .....	264
Isaac’s Blessings – More of God’s Masterplan of Salvation is Being Revealed .....	271
<b>Vayetze.....</b>	<b>275</b>
Jacob and the Messiah.....	277
Leah, Rachel, and the Two Houses of Israel .....	284
The Twelve Sons, Israel, and Messiah’s Bride .....	290
Speckled, Spotted Flock and Messiah’s Bride .....	292
Laban and Satan .....	294
<b>Vayishlach .....</b>	<b>297</b>
Jacob and Messiah – More Details Revealed .....	298
A Night Experience at Jabbok Ford .....	302
Dinah and Today’s “Israelites” .....	310
Esau’s Genealogies – God’s Masterplan Becomes Clearer and Clearer .....	317
<b>Vayeshev.....</b>	<b>319</b>
Joseph and the Messiah.....	320
Judah and the Messiah .....	336
<b>Miketz .....</b>	<b>349</b>
Messiah in Egypt.....	351
Pharaoh’s Dreams, the Heavenly Court & End Time Events.....	359
Messiah’s Unique Relationships with His Brothers.....	363
Joseph, Benjamin, Messiah, and the Torah .....	372
<b>Vayigash .....</b>	<b>385</b>
Pharaoh, Joseph and the Brothers – God, Messiah and the Jews .....	386
The Land of Goshen – “A World Within A World” .....	391
Israel in Egypt in Light of the Big Picture - God’s Masterplan of Salvation .....	394
<b>Vayechi.....</b>	<b>397</b>
Adoption, Israel, the Nations, and the Body of Messiah.....	399
Genesis 49 – More Revelations of Messiah’s Identity and Characteristics.....	417
Jacob’s Burial and the Resurrection.....	421

*Portraits of Messiah in the Torah*

<b>Appendix 1 – Shaul and the Torah.....</b>	<b>427</b>
<b>Appendix 2 - The Modern-day Hebraic Roots/ Two-House Movement.....</b>	<b>453</b>
<b>Maps and Illustrations.....</b>	<b>461</b>
The Hebraic (Seven Cycles’) Mindset .....	461
From the West to the East Side of the Jordan River.....	462
General Dispersion of Humanity out of Noah’s Three Sons.....	463
Abraham’s Journey from the East to West.....	464
Shechem – A Place of Decision Making.....	465
Jacob’s Journeys - West to the East & Backwards.....	466
Jacob’s Last Journey - From the East to the West.....	467

# Introduction

## Glory to God

*And further, my son, be admonished by these. Of making many books there is no end and much study is wearisome to the flesh. (Ecclesiastes 12:12)*

It is with fear and trembling that I approach the “making” of this book. As I look back on my life—where I was born, the culture I grew up in, the education I acquired, etc.—and compare it to where I am today, the only words that come to mind are: “All glory, honor and praise belong to the God of my fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob!”

## My Story

I was born in Israel in 1959, to a traditionally observant Jewish family. My parents made *aliya*<sup>1</sup> to God’s Promised Land from Persia (Iran) in 1951. Life was not easy, for it was only three years after the establishment of the State of Israel. Everything was still new and fresh; a wonderful sense of euphoria and patriotism was in the air. My parents shared in the joy and pride of every Jew in those days, witnessing firsthand how God had fulfilled His promise to bring His people back to their promised homeland after almost two millennia in the *galut*.<sup>2</sup>

I was my parent’s tenth and youngest child. I grew up just like the other children in the land in those days, passing through the Jewish

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<sup>1</sup> *aliya*—Hebrew, *ascension*, “going up”—Immigration to the Land of Israel, a very Hebraic and biblical concept and view, of what it means for a Jew to move (back) to Zion. (See for example: Isa. 2:3; Jer. 31:6; Mic. 4:2; Ezra 7:6; Mt. 20:17; Jn 2:13; Acts 11:2; Gal. 1:18, 2:1)

<sup>2</sup> *galut*—Hebrew, *exile/diaspora*. This refers to any place a Jew lives outside the Land of Israel.

Israeli stations of life, from kindergarten through high school, and from circumcision on the eighth day to *Bar Mitzvah*<sup>3</sup> at the age of thirteen.

When I was nine years old, my father passed away. Nine years later, just before I was drafted into the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF), my mother died.

Four years before my mother’s death, I had left my small village to join a *kibbutz*.<sup>4</sup> There I met “Y”,<sup>5</sup> who over the following years would become my closest friend.

It was through “Y”, during the third year of my mandatory army service, that I heard about *Yeshua*<sup>6</sup> for the first time. “Y” had become a follower of Yeshua just a short time before. As a typical Israeli Jew, I had never paid too much attention to “that man,” who for most Jews is known as “the god worshiped by those *goyim*.”<sup>7</sup>

I remember being quite shocked when I learned that my good friend had become a follower of Yeshua. At first, I thought it was just one of those short, “finding himself” experiences that he was going

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<sup>3</sup> Bar Mitzvah—a mixture of Aramaic (*bar*) and Hebrew (*mitzvah*). Literally: “A son of the commandment/good deed”; a Jewish tradition in which a boy who reaches 13 years of age is deemed ready for life as an “adult” (i.e., mature). For the first time in his life, he reads directly from the Torah scroll in the synagogue and begins to observe God’s commandments as an adult.

<sup>4</sup> kibbutz—Hebrew, a *gathering*, a *communal farm* where, at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, communistic–socialistic ideals were first implemented in Israel by Jewish pioneers.

<sup>5</sup> “Y” - to protect my friend’s privacy.

<sup>6</sup> Yeshua—The Hebrew name of Jesus, meaning *salvation* derives from *Yehoshua* (Hebrew for Joshua), and is based on the same Hebrew root—*Ye.Sha.A* (*י.ש.א.*). The name Yeshua was used already centuries before, as a short version of Yehoshua from the Old Testament (see examples: Ezra 2:2, 6, 36, Nehemiah. 3:19, 7:7, and many more... (In English, “Jeshua.”)

<sup>7</sup> *goyim*—Hebrew for non-Jews, Gentiles, the nations.

through and that in a short while he would “come back to our Jewish heritage.” Nevertheless, I found myself curious about what attracted “Y” so much to “that man” that we Jews usually despise. With absolutely no intention of becoming a follower of Yeshua myself, I decided to explore more about this subject. Perhaps in the back of my mind I thought that while checking out my friend’s new faith, I would be able to draw him “back to the faith of our fathers.” Little did I know that I would find myself on my own adventure in that personal search for truth.

## **Mind-Boggling Thoughts**

Over the next two years - during my explorations, I read “the forbidden book,” The New Testament.<sup>8</sup> As I read it, two main observations immediately struck me:

1. *The Jewish attitude towards Yeshua—particularly within the Orthodox circles—was not right, nor was it fair.*

Please understand, I read the New Testament with no preconceived ideas and, most important of all, free of any Christian tradition or training. I found that the New Testament writings described Yeshua as a good Jewish man, a rabbi who never came against our *Torah*<sup>9</sup> and who never treated his companions badly or rudely. Quite to the contrary, He helped the poor and healed the sick, and He spoke up strongly against hypocrisy, oppression, and injustice.

I asked myself, “Why are my Jewish brethren so anti-Yeshua that they will not even read the New Testament? Why did our rabbis and

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<sup>8</sup> As you will see, in this book I use both “New Testament” and, “New Covenant writings” to describe the 27 books starting with the Gospel of Mathew.

<sup>9</sup> Torah—Hebrew, *The Law of Moses* (or Five Books of Moses). The literal meaning is “teaching,” “instruction,” and “doctrine” and not just “the law” as commonly translated. (Laws, regulations, ordinances, etc. are included in God’s Torah.)

our religious leaders not accept him at least as a prophet or a good teacher/rabbi?”

The thought that kept coming to mind was, “Something appears to be very wrong here.”

2. *I could hardly find any connection between many of the practices and beliefs I had noticed in the “Christian religious system” and what I was reading in the New Testament.*

I had a difficult time finding even a hint in the entire New Testament of the need to bow down before statues of Mary or any other figures. I did not read anywhere even a suggestion that the seventh day of the week (the Sabbath) had been replaced by the first day of the week (Sunday), as the new day of rest and worship. I did not come across any commandment to commemorate this or that saint or to celebrate new feasts such as birthdays (either Yeshua’s or others). The only feasts that I read about in the New Testament were those given directly by God to His beloved nation, frequently mentioned as *God’s appointed times*. As an Israeli Jew, I was very familiar with these Biblical feasts.

The thought kept coming to mind that here, as well, “Something appears to be very wrong.”

Nevertheless, despite the contradictions and inaccuracies taught and traditionally accepted in both Judaism and Christianity, my search for the truth led me to the inevitable conclusion that Yeshua of Nazareth, and He alone, is the long-awaited Messiah, the Redeemer of Israel.

As a young follower of Yeshua, more and more of these mind-boggling thoughts concerning Judaism and Christianity kept occurring in my troubled mind, many questions needed to be addressed: “Had God invented a new religious system after getting fed up with the old one?” “What is the *real* gospel of Yeshua?”

“What kind of kingdom did He actually talk about?” “What is the relationship between God’s *Torah* and the *New Covenant* that He made with us?” “How should I express my faith in the Messiah of Israel?” “What about the non-believers within the nation of Israel, my own flesh and blood? How should I relate to them? How should any follower of Yeshua, whether Jew or Gentile, relate to them?”

## **The Calling**

From the very beginning of my walk with Yeshua more than 35 years ago, I felt a calling within me to teach the biblical truths concerning both Judaism and Christianity. I felt drawn to study and teach the true biblical roots of our faith in the Messiah of Israel.

The first time I began to use my God-given gift of teaching was as a member of a Messianic congregation<sup>10</sup> in the city of Netanya. An opportunity to teach more broadly came later, when I became a certified Israeli tour guide. I had the privilege of imparting knowledge about the roots of my faith to many individuals, mainly non-Jews, who came from all over the English-speaking world. In addition, God later used this profession to open many doors for me to teach outside of the Land of Israel.

During the years 2000 to 2005, I had the privilege of ministering in the US, while living there with my wife and our four children. During that time, I taught the Torah on a regular basis and received

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<sup>10</sup> “Messianic congregation:” An unprecedented number of Jews began to believe in Yeshua as their messiah in the 1970s. This phenomenon has increased over the decades. These believers, rather than assimilating into culturally alien Christian churches, have been meeting together in what is known as *messianic congregations* in order to discover and express their identity as Jews who follow their Messiah. Many non-Jews who are interested in exploring the Jewish roots of their faith have joined themselves to this congregational movement.

many revelations concerning the Messiah of Israel, revelations I would like to share with you in this book series.

## **The Scriptural Inspiration for this Book Series**

One important passage that was central to my Torah teachings is found in the Gospel of John. I still remember how I yearned to understand the deep meaning of Yeshua’s words when He addressed the Jewish leaders of His days:

*Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father; there is one who accuses you –Moses in whom you trust. For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me! But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words? John 5:45-47 (emphasis added).*

It is commonly accepted that Yeshua was referring to passages such as Genesis 3:15, Genesis 49:10, Numbers 21:9–10, Deuteronomy 18:18–20, and others. These passages prove that Yeshua is indeed the promised Messiah. But, could it be that Yeshua referred to something beyond these “classic messianic prophecies” in the Torah?

When I considered other Scriptures, such as Matthew 5:18 and John 1:1, 1:14, and 8:56–58, I was unsettled. If Yeshua is indeed *the Word* that became flesh, then every *jot* and *tittle* of His Word—the Torah (and the other parts of the Bible)—must be filled with what I call “pictures, portraits or foreshadowings” that reflect and point to Him. God’s *written* Word should point to His *Living* Word.

## **The Torah Portions and the Layout of this Book**

As you will notice, there are no chapters in this book. This book (and the four others to come, by God’s grace and in His timing) follows the weekly synagogue readings of the Torah portions (Hebrew, *parashot* or *sidrot*). This cyclical reading of the Torah was

determined by the rabbis and was already in use in the days of Yeshua.<sup>11</sup> The entire five books of the Torah are divided into 54 portions correlating to the 52 to 54 weeks on the Hebrew calendar. The exact number of portions read each week is determined by whether a given year is a regular year or a leap year (when an extra month is added to the calendar<sup>12</sup>).

The first Torah portion is read on the final day of *Sukkot* (the Feast of *Tabernacles* or *Booths*), which generally occurs in September or October, and the final portion is read at the same time the following year.

All Scripture references in this book are taken from the Hebrew Bible (the Tanach<sup>13</sup> in my mother tongue) and the New King James Version, which is what I use when teaching in English.

## **Yeshua in the Torah**

One of the topics I loved teaching in the US was “Yeshua in the Torah.” We studied the entire Torah over a one-year period,

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<sup>11</sup> Look for examples in Luke 4:16–20 and Acts 13:15. According to some biblical scholars, in Yeshua’s day, the entire Torah from Genesis 1 through Deuteronomy 34 was read in a three-and-a-half year cycle. However, for many centuries now, the tradition of a one-year cycle has been adopted, a tradition that probably originated in Babylon, which once again became a ‘temporary home’ for many Jews after the destruction of the Second Temple by the Romans.

<sup>12</sup> Hebrew, *Adar sheni*, *the second Adar*, which is in the spring, around March and April. This is done in order to bridge the difference between the solar calendar of 365 days and the lunar calendar of 354 days, so that the biblical feasts take place during the same agricultural season every year. The Muslims, by contrast (and as an example), celebrate the fast of Ramadan at a different time each year due to their exclusive use of a lunar calendar.

<sup>13</sup> The “Tanach.” Hebrew acronym for *Torah* (The five books of Moses), *Nevi'im* (or, *Nevi'im* - Prophets) and *K'tuvim* (Writings). The *incorrect* translation of “Tanach” into English (and other languages) is, “The Old Testament.” More about it later on.

following the traditional Jewish weekly Sabbath readings of the Torah portions. For the first time in my life, this study allowed me to find within the text of the Torah all that God had been teaching me about His Son since I became His follower. Moreover, it was during this time that I came to understand Rav Shaul's<sup>14</sup> writings as being fully and completely based and rooted in the Torah.

While teaching the Torah portions, I discovered that throughout the first five books of Moses there are repeated patterns and foreshadowings pertaining to God's plan of salvation through the Messiah of Israel, Yeshua of Nazareth.

I would like you to imagine the Torah narratives as an epic play performed on a stage. The director of this epic play is God. The actors and actresses are the heroes of the various narratives written in the Torah. Whereas the players keep changing, the director and the story never change.

Israel's Messiah, Yeshua, is the main “actor” behind the scenes in this epic play. He is first foreshadowed in Adam and later in Abel, then in Noah, Shem, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and so on. Each actor on the Torah stage brings Yeshua more into focus by providing us with new details about Him.

Messiah's bride (those who believe Yeshua is the Son of God and their personal Savior) is the main “actress” behind the scenes. She is first foreshadowed in Eve and later on in Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, and other women in the Scriptures. And, like with Messiah Himself, each actress brings Messiah's bride into greater focus by giving us new details about her.

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<sup>14</sup> Rav Shaul. Hebrew, Rabbi Shaul (Saul the teacher/ rabbi) - the Hebrew name of Paul the apostle. Used mainly in Messianic Synagogues across the world. In this book series I'm going to use both names, to make it easier for the non-Jewish reader.

An important clarification: The biblical figure in whom there are foreshadowings, pictures, and prototypes is *never* a perfect figure by him or herself. For example, Abraham and Sara were not perfect; neither were Isaac and Rebekah, nor their son Jacob and his wives. They all sinned! Nevertheless, a careful look into their lives as portrayed in Scriptures shows what I call “hidden pictures, foreshadowings, and portraits” of Israel’s Messiah Redeemer. Throughout this book, and the books to come, I am concentrating on these “hidden” foreshadowings and pictures of Messiah and *not* on the general description of this or that figure with his/her faults.

To conclude, the Torah speaks primarily of Israel’s Messiah, His bride, and the way God will use them both to bring His salvation to the entire world to complete fruition.<sup>15</sup>

Following the traditional weekly readings of the Torah will hopefully enable you, the reader, to better understand the Jewish mindset as well as the pictures, foreshadowings (or “portraits”) of Yeshua, Israel’s Messiah, in each and every portion. My hope is that from the perspective of the Jewish Hebraic roots<sup>16</sup> you will gain a better understanding of the Torah, and indeed all Scripture; and, as a natural outcome, you will learn to be a better witness of Messiah to non-believing Jews.

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<sup>15</sup> Salvation comes only through the Messiah of Israel! Nevertheless, we are His body, and as such, we have a role to play in bringing this lost world to the saving knowledge of Messiah.

<sup>16</sup> “Hebraic Roots.” Please understand - Using this term does not mean that I’m connected, nor affiliate with a movement called, “The Hebraic (or “Hebrew”) Roots”, and/or, “The Two House” (mostly known in the USA). When I use the term “Hebraic Roots”, all I point to is the Hebrew roots of our faith in Yeshua as the King Messiah of Israel (and the entire world)! These roots are clearly expressed through the Hebrew language, the Hebrew mindset (versus the Greek mindset), the Hebrew culture and so on and so forth. At the end of this book I dedicated a short appendix to discuss the modern-day “two house movement.” (see, “Appendix 2.”)

## **The Jewish Sages—Who and Why?**

As you will notice, throughout the book I refer to “the Jewish Sages.” Who are they, and why do we need to consider their views at all?

The Jewish sages are known in Hebrew as “Chazal”, which is an acronym for the Hebrew "Chachameinu Zichronam Livracha" ("Our wise men, may their memory be blessed"). This Hebrew term refers to Jewish sages spanning from the time of the second Temple until the 6th century CE.<sup>17</sup>

An important note before I continue: When I use the term “the Jewish Sages” in this book series, I do so in a more generic sense, applying the term not only to those living in the above mentioned era, but also to famous rabbis of the classical Middle Ages, and even in recent times.<sup>18</sup>

The Jewish sages have influenced modern Jewish thought and are considered to be the authority as it relates to commentaries on the Word of God.

While I was researching this teaching series, I was struck by how close the views expressed in the commentaries of those Jewish sages are to those of the writers of the books and epistles of the New Testament.

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<sup>17</sup> “CE” – “Common Era,” correlating to commonly used “AD.”

<sup>18</sup> Famous rabbis such as Rashi, (1040 to 1105), Maimonides (1135 - 1204), Sforno (1475-1550), Shlomo Goren (modern day) and others, who greatly influenced Jewish thinking, and left their important “fingerprint” on Judaism as a religious system. When dealing with what the Jewish sages taught, I used different resources. I highly recommend the reader to purchase a very good book, called, “the Chumash,” (The Stone Edition - The ArtScroll Series – Mesorah Publications, LTD). Exactly as is with this book, the Chumash as well follows the order of the different Torah portions. Other books include “Da’at Mikra” (for Hebrew readers) and, “Mikraot G’dolat” (for Hebrew and Rashi’s writing readers.)

It is an undeniable historical fact that *Jews* wrote the books of the New Testament.<sup>19</sup> As such, there is simply no way to understand the original meaning of these writings in depth without first getting acquainted with common Jewish thought; especially during the time of Yeshua and His disciples.

Let me illustrate using this example: Shakespeare lived in England in the late 16<sup>th</sup> to the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. In order to fully understand his writings, especially when wishing to stage one of his plays and to present his message in this day and age, one must retrace the times in which he lived, the language he used, the culture in which he grew up and was influenced by, and the mindset of his contemporaries. It is almost impossible to understand Shakespeare without studying his roots. Even the English language of his time was different from the English spoken today.

If these statements relating to a man who lived 400 years ago are true, then how much more do we need to study and understand the historical and cultural context in which Yeshua and His disciples lived in - two thousand years ago, so we can better and more deeply understand them?

There is no way to understand some of Yeshua's teachings in their true original meaning without first understanding the background, culture, and mindset of the people of His time.

Reading what the Jewish sages taught about different stories and teachings in the Torah will show us two main things:

1. How close they were to what Yeshua (and later on His disciples) taught.

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<sup>19</sup> The one exception may be Luke, who some believe was a Gentile, but others argue that he was probably a Jew as well.

2. How Jewish the New Testament writings are in their thought, style, and, above all in their message.

## **The Hebraic (Middle Eastern) versus the Greek (Western) Mindset**

Above, I discussed the great necessity to understand the Scriptures in their historic and cultural context. Here, I would like to elaborate on one crucially important point that, in my opinion, was missed during the past eighteen hundred years of church history. This oversight has caused much confusion and endless debate resulting in a deep division in Messiah’s body, on one hand, and widening the chasm between Judaism and Christianity, on the other hand. I am talking about the differences between “The Hebraic/Jewish/Middle-Eastern Mindset,” in which the vast majority of Scriptures were written, and “the Greek/Hellenistic/Western Mindset,” in which God’s Word has been interpreted, especially in the Western church.<sup>20</sup>

As I mentioned previously, it is an undeniable historical fact that Jews were the ones who wrote the New Testament books. As a matter of fact, Jews not only wrote the books of the New Testament, but also the vast majority of the entire Bible, both the Tanach and the New Testament.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, during the first few decades after

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<sup>20</sup> This all section is based on my own life experience as a Jew, living in the Middle East in God’s Promised Land and, thus, interacting with many other Middle Easterners, as well as interacting with the many tourists who mainly come from Western parts of the world. I have also gathered materials from articles dealing with the subject, including from the Internet. For example:  
[http://www.godward.org/hebrew%20roots/hebrew\\_mind\\_vs\\_the\\_western\\_mind.htm](http://www.godward.org/hebrew%20roots/hebrew_mind_vs_the_western_mind.htm) <http://www.shamar.org/articles/hebrew-thought.php#.WRgpE2w6xjo>

<sup>21</sup> I’m aware of the fact that the term “Jews” was mainly associated with the tribe and territory of Judah. Nevertheless, starting in what is known as “the Second Temple Period” and continuing to this very day, this term is used to represent all the 12 tribes of Israel. See more on this on page 409.

Messiah's ascension, His body was purely Jewish. Not too long after the death of the first apostles, it became increasingly non-Jewish in its orientation and, thus, lost its Jewish flavor. As it became predominantly non-Jewish, the body started handling and interpreting God's Word outside of its original context, i.e., disconnected/detached from its Hebraic/Jewish Middle Eastern mindset.

Without a doubt, Hebrew-speaking Jews who lived in the Middle East during the Tanach and New Testament periods understood and processed life and all that it included (and, thus, God's Word as well) differently than Western, non-Jewish people did and still do today.

In order to better understand this book and the Hebraic/Jewish mindset I am using, I would like to offer a short explanation and give only a few examples that will exemplify and emphasize the need to go back and deal with God's Holy Word more properly than it has been done during the past eighteen hundred years. So, let us begin.

*Logic and thought processing - linear versus cyclical*

The Western mindset is heavily influenced by Greek culture. Greek thinking is expressed through words, ideas, or logical definitions that often abstract the object of concern from its environment. To determine what an object is and why or how the object functions, a Western thinker might compile lists of truths in an outline form, *a1/b1/c1/c2/c3*, while putting them on a line ("linear thinking"). Historical events are put on a line as well, with the idea that each one of these events is actually a new event. To the Western thinker, it is the *rational part* that is important. Consequently, the *rational part* would often be abstracted from emotions so as not to hinder the logic. Using this Western thought processes, one would say that something is true based on *truth 1*, *truth 2*, and, *truth 3*. In the Western mindset, truth is fixed and static, and it never changes.

In contrast, the Hebraic/Jewish mindset is heavily influenced by Middle Eastern culture. Hebrew thinkers would express truth in *word pictures, stories, or metaphors* which would keep the object of concern in the context and relationship with its environment. The effect is that the concept would not only provoke rational thinking but would *also* provoke imagery that could be physically seen, touched, tasted, smelled, and heard with the intention of developing an emotional/spiritual bond. The Hebrew thinker might describe God as: *eagle’s wings, honey, a rock, living water, a shepherd, bread, shade, a fortress, father*, and so on. *living water*, for instance, would provoke the image of a river, stream, or rain. A person can experience living water and know its benefits and effects. Hebraic/Middle Eastern logic is contextual and *cyclical* (or spiral in nature). Events are constantly reoccurring and, thus, are placed in a cycle rather than in a line.<sup>22</sup> The Scriptures are filled with examples, but here I would like to present three very clear ones:

- King Solomon, who is described as the wisest man to have ever lived, said that all we see is actually a repetition of what has already taken place in the past and what is actually going to still take place in the future. He said: *Nothing is new under the sun.*<sup>23</sup>
- Yeshua, Israel’s Messiah, said: *I am the alpha and the omega—the beginning and the end.*<sup>24</sup> If you place these words on a line (i.e., read it through the Greek/Western “linear mindset”), it would mean that Yeshua once had “a beginning” and that sometime in the future He will also have “an end.” This conceptual understanding is in complete contrast to the Scriptures, as God has neither a beginning nor an end; He is forever the living God. Nevertheless, viewing this verse through the Hebraic/cyclical mindset, the beginning and the end meet one another (like on a ring) and, thus, are strongly

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<sup>22</sup> See my suggested illustration regarding the cyclical manifestation of God in the Bible, on page 461.

<sup>23</sup> Eccl. 1:9–10

<sup>24</sup> Rev. 1:8

connected and never actually have a beginning or an end. In other words: If you wish to understand the future, first look at the past/ at the beginning, as they are very similar and strongly connected!<sup>25</sup>

- It is sufficient to look at the stars on a beautiful clear night to understand the cyclical mindset behind the One who created them. When looking at the sky, can we find one single star or planet which is triangular or square in shape? Are they not all circular?<sup>26</sup>

In the Greek/Western mindset, life is analyzed in precise categories; e.g., for Greeks, history records facts objectively and chronologically. In contrast, in the Hebraic/Middle Eastern mindset, especially when reading Scriptures, everything blurs into everything else, and the description of history is only an attempt to preserve significant truths in meaningful or memorable ways whether or not the details are arranged in chronological order. For example, when reading the four Gospels without any prejudices, we cannot avoid the fact that the events described there are *not* always arranged in chronological order, and many times there are significant differences in the details described in each of the Gospels.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> See also Isa. 44:6-7, 46:9-10, 48:3.

<sup>26</sup> The respectful reader will find it interesting to know that biblical words, translated to English as, “path/s” and “ways,” actually read in the original Hebrew as, *Ma’agal* and/or, *Ma’agalim* - “circles” and/or, “cycles.” (see a few examples: Isa. 26:7, Ps. 17:5, and particularly, Ps. 23:3. See also Prov. 1:9, 4:11 and many more...)

<sup>27</sup> Compare Mt. 1:1-17 with Lk. 3:23–38 (I am well aware of the various attempts to explain the differences logically. What I am trying to show is that there are differences, and to the Hebrew/Middle Eastern reader, these are less bothersome than to the Western/Greek reader, who needs everything to make perfect sense to logically accept it. Note how Mt. 5 (the “Sermon on the Mount”) differs from Lk. 6:17-23, 29–30, 14:34–35 and on. (Please notice the variation in the physical geographical locations and the different context in which Yeshua’s very same words are placed by Matthew in comparison with Luke). One last example: Look at the differences in the Gospels of Luke and Mathew concerning the miracle

The Hebrew focus is more on doing things rather than *believing* one should do them; whereas, the Greek focus is mostly about the intellect and the love of expressing its thoughts. The Hebrews could care less what someone thought unless they acted accordingly. For example, Jews do not care if you *think* you should take care of the poor and the needy. They will say, “Go out and practically help someone who needs your help.” Actions are important, not just words.<sup>28</sup>

Lastly, the climax of Greek education is for a student to know what the teacher knows. The climax of a Hebrew education is for a student to become who the teacher is!<sup>29</sup>

Before proceeding, I would like to present a beautiful and humorous example from a very good friend and brother in the Lord, which exemplifies what I have discussed so far: Two men are rewarded by their boss for their great achievements. Both receive the same reward in the form of a brand-new Mercedes Benz. When the keys are handed over to them, one man, who represents the *Greek*, opens the driver’s door, looks for the button to open the hood, pushes it and goes outside the car, lifts the hood, and begins to check and study every detail of the engine and the other mechanical parts of his beautiful new vehicle. The other man, who represents the *Hebrew*, takes the keys from his boss, opens the driver’s door, puts the key in the ignition, starts the engine, and takes a long ride to greatly enjoy his beautiful new vehicle...

### *Spirit and material*

There is a clear tendency, in the Greek/Western mindset, to think that all that exists is the material and that man rules nature through

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with the demoniac Legion. (Mt. 8:28–34 versus Mk 5:1–20 and Lk 8:26–39.)

<sup>28</sup> Look at a good example of this Hebraic/Middle Eastern mindset as it is expressed in James. 2:14–26.

<sup>29</sup> See a further example in Yeshua’s own words in Mt. 10:25.

understanding and applying the laws of science. This approach leads to the conclusion that chance, coupled with cause and effect, limit what can happen in life.

The Hebraic/Middle Eastern mindset accepts that the universe is filled with powerful spirit beings and that God rules everything and is the One who causes everything to happen in His universe. This perspective leads to the conclusion that relationship with God determines how things unfold in our lives.

Moreover, the Greek/Western approach tends to split the natural and supernatural realms, while the Hebraic/Middle Eastern mindset directly connects the two and claims that the supernatural affects everything. When reading Church history, one can see that this specific point has influenced the wrong (i.e., very unbiblical) debate concerning the relationship between the *evil flesh* we live in and the *spiritual beings* we desire to become.

### *The individual and family/group*

In Greek/Western culture, the universe is centered on the individual, whose worth is based on how successful he/she is and on his/her monetary goods, material possessions, power, and personal achievement. In the Hebraic/Middle Eastern culture, however, the universe is centered on God, then the individuals He created, his/her family and lastly the tribe he/she belongs to. The individual's worth is based on and derived from family relationships rather than on personal achievements. And if he/she possesses material goods, power, etc., it is only because of God's blessings upon him/her.

Again, there are endless examples in the Scriptures supporting this idea. One needs only to examine the book of Genesis to see how God's emphasis is first on Himself as the only Creator of all things, visible and invisible alike, then on families, tribes, clans, etc.

*Numbers and their spiritual significance*

Although to the Western mind numbers are merely quantities, to the Middle Eastern mind, numbers often serve as symbols bearing spiritual significance. Here are some examples from the Scriptures:

*The Number 3*: This number is often associated with (double) blessings and resurrection. In the story of creation, it was on the *third* day that God proclaimed twice, *and it was good*. The wedding at Cana was on the *third* day. Yeshua was resurrected on the *third* day, and lastly Israel as a nation will be resurrected (from her spiritual death) on the *third* day.<sup>30</sup>

*The Number 4*: This number usually points to the whole world (“four corners of the Earth,” “four winds,” etc.). There are *four* Gospels, which are aimed at the entire people living on planet Earth.<sup>31</sup>

*The Number 6*: This number is mostly connected with mankind. As the creation of humanity (Adam and Eve) happened on the *sixth* day, it thus suggests weakness and fleshly deeds. It is no wonder that the Antichrist’s number is a multiplication of this very number.<sup>32</sup>

*The Number 7*: Most people agree that this number is “God’s number,” i.e., it mostly symbolizes *God*, as it is a number of completeness and perfectness. For example, God the Creator created all within *seven* days. He ordained the Sabbath, which is the *seventh* day of the week. Most of His feasts are based on this number. There are *seven* spirits before His throne, *seven* churches in the book of Revelation, and so on.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Gen. 1:9-13, Jn. 2:1, 1 Cor. 15:4, Hos. 6:2 (taking that *thousand years in your sight are like a day*... see Ps. 90:4 & 2 Pet. 3:8.)

<sup>31</sup> Isa. 11:12, Jer. 49:36, Ezek. 37:9, Zech. 2:6, Rev. 20:8

<sup>32</sup> Gen. 1:27, 31, Rev. 13:18

<sup>33</sup> Gen. 2:1-3, Lev. 23, Rev. 1:12-13, 4:5

The Number 8: This number is mostly associated with new beginnings. Let us look at a few examples: the commandment regarding circumcision, in which the child is named and, thus, starts his new life here on planet Earth; Noah and the seven family members with him in the Ark, after which a new beginning for humanity on planet Earth was established. Yeshua was resurrected on the “*eighth* day,” Sunday, starting a completely new era in human history. (The exact time of His resurrection, in accordance with the Hebrew counting of the weekly days, will be further discussed in this book.)<sup>34</sup>

### **“The Torah Has Seventy Faces”**

This statement demonstrates one of the most common concepts in religious Jewish circles regarding the Word of God and the five books of Moses in particular. What does this statement really mean?

According to the Jewish sages, the Word of God has more than one “face,” i.e., it has more than one way to be interpreted and understood.<sup>35</sup> The Word of God is far too deep and full of wisdom for one to attempt to fully grasp the depth of its meaning while looking at it from only one angle/face. The Torah must be approached from more than one perspective. Thus, it takes more than one, or even

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<sup>34</sup> See Gen. 7-8, 17:12, 1 Pet. 3:20–21, Mark 16:9. It is worth noticing that for some Jewish rabbis, the number 8 represents a concept that one can rise above the limitation of nature. Or, one’s ability to remove any barriers to his spiritual ascent and overcoming the natural order of life. (see for example: “The Maharal” - Rabbi Judah ben Betzalel, who lived in the 16<sup>th</sup> century CE.)

<sup>35</sup> The earliest source for the term “seventy faces to the Torah” is in an early medieval text - Midrash Bamidbar Rabba 13:15-16. The term was used by Rabbi Avraham Ibn Ezra (died 1167) in his introduction to his Torah commentary and, a century later by the mystic Rabbi Nachmanides (died 1270) in his Torah commentary on Gen. 8:4.

several, interpretations and commentaries to delve into the full depth of the Torah’s narratives and instructions.

Please remember there are many more ways to read and interpret the weekly Torah portions than these I share in this book series. My concentration is on “pictures, foreshadowings, and patterns” as they relate to *Messiah and His bride* and to *God’s masterplan of salvation*. Even limiting myself to these issues, this book (and the ones to follow, in His time), can only scratch the surface of the true depth of God’s Holy Word.

I want to personally thank you for picking up this book and being willing to open yourself up to some new “faces” in God’s Word. May He continue to bless you and fill you with His joy as you handle His most holy and precious “love letter”—the Bible.

Yosef Rachamim Danieli

***Bereshit***  
**(Genesis 1:1–6:8)**

**ISSUES DESCRIBED IN THIS PORTION**

The creation	● Genesis 1:1–2:3
The specific creation of mankind and the Garden of Eden	● Genesis 1:26-30, 2:4-25
The first sin and its consequences	● Genesis 3
The first murder and its consequences	● Genesis 4:1–16
The genealogy of Cain	● Genesis 4:17–24
The genealogy of Seth	● Genesis 4:25–5:32
The “Sons of God” and the “Daughters of Men”	● Genesis 6:1–8

## TOPICAL ORDER OF REFERENCES

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Scriptural Passage(s)</b>	<b>Page</b>
Messiah and His kingdom in the story of creation	Genesis 1:1–2:3	58
The Garden of Eden, Jerusalem, and, God’s masterplan of salvation	Genesis 2:8–3:24	71
Adam, Eve, Messiah and His bride	Genesis 1:26–30, 2:18–23	81
Trees, trees and more trees – What is so special about them?	Genesis 3	88
Cain and Abel - Messiah and God’s Plan of Redemption Continues to Unfold	Genesis 4	113

### General Data

The Torah portions are usually named after the opening words of each portion, and so it is with this first portion. It is named after its opening word—*Bereshit* (“in the beginning”).

We shall start with some general issues, proving that it is actually the God of Israel, the only One true God, who is behind every jot and tittle in His Holy Word.

## **Number Seven—God’s Signature**

Above, we said that the Torah is not a history book in the usual sense. The questions we should then ask are: “What is it” and, “what is its real purpose?”

The very clear message of the first portion, as well as the entire book of Genesis is: There is a Creator, God Almighty, who is responsible for all that is seen, unseen, and experienced in this world. His thoughts and ways, however, are not like ours. That’s the simple reason why we cannot explain everything that His Word conveys or describes by using only our logic.<sup>114</sup>

How can we be so sure that the main message of this Torah portion and the entire book is truly about this God? Below are a few among many examples.

When discussing the Hebraic/Middle Eastern mindset versus the Greek/Western one, I stated that numbers in the Scriptures (when examined through the Hebraic/Middle Eastern mindset) are more than just quantities. They have symbolic, as well as spiritual significance. I have already presented you with some examples, one of which was the number *seven*, a number that is mostly associated with God and signifies completion, and/or perfection.

Already in the beginning of the biblical narrative, we find that the number *seven* plays a major role. It is an indication to the observant reader that there is “someone behind the scenes” who is orchestrating all that happens. He is the “ultimate authority.” He is *perfect* and *complete*, as epitomized by the number *seven*. He is *God!*

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<sup>114</sup> See for example: Deut. 29:29, Is 55:8–11, Rom. 11:33–36.

Let us see how this idea is evident in this first portion:

- The process of creation, including the day on which God rested, takes place within *seven* days.
- The name of God (Hebrew, *Elohim*) is repeated 35 times (*seven* multiplied by 5).
- The word land (Hebrew, *eret* or *ha'aretz*) is repeated 21 times (*seven* multiplied by 3).
- The phrase *and it was good* (Hebrew, *ki tov*) occurs 6 times. Nevertheless, when you add the phrase *and indeed it was very good*, the total comes to *seven* times.
- The very opening verse of our portion, when read in Hebrew, is made up of *seven* words.
- In the description of the actions taken by God on the *seventh* day (again, when read in Hebrew,) there are three sentences, each of them made up of *seven* words.<sup>115</sup>

## The Creator of ALL

The opening verse of this first Torah portion (and of the entire Bible), Genesis 1:1, emphasizes that it was *GOD* who created *ALL*. This *all* includes heaven (the spiritual elements) and earth (the physical elements). This verse alone demonstrates the Hebraic/Middle Eastern mindset behind the Scriptures, as this mindset accommodates and reconciles what appears at first sight to be two contradictory extremes: the spiritual and the natural.

The second verse, Genesis 1:2, is puzzling. Many scholars and theologians have tried to explain this void or mass (Hebrew, *tohu vavohu*), which makes an unexpected appearance in the second verse of the Bible. Some claim an elapse of an extended period of time between the two verses- when Satan was cast out of God's presence and turned everything (on the earth) upside down. Others maintain that the first verse describes only the raw material that God created,

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<sup>115</sup> Gen. 2:2–3 (*God ended, He rested, and God blessed.*)

out of which He later formed all that is described in the verses that follow.<sup>116</sup>

## **Different Names - Different Attributes**

Carefully reading this first Torah portion, one can see that God's names change according to the context in which they appear:

First, *Elohim* אֱלֹהִים (Hebrew, *God*) is mentioned throughout the entire first chapter until chapter 2, verse 3.

Second, in chapter 2:4 until chapter 3:24, another name appears for the first time, *Jehovah*, or *Yahweh*,<sup>117</sup> (Hebrew, *Lord*). It is mentioned together with אֱלֹהִים.

Third, in chapter 4, only the name *Jehovah* is used, likewise, in chapter 6:1–8.

Jewish rabbis understood that the name *Elohim* speaks of God's "unchangeable attributes," such as justice and judgment, while the name *Yahweh* (or *Jehovah*,) speaks of His "flexible attributes," such as love, mercy, and patience.

When reading the story of the creation in Hebrew, it is interesting to note that when creation is described in general terms, God's name

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<sup>116</sup> The latter explanation is probably based on the following: The Hebrew meaning of *create* is different from the English translation of *made* or *formed*. The Hebrew verb for created is *barah* (versus *asah* or *yatzar* for "made" and/or "formed"). "Creating" involves supernatural or miraculous power, bringing forth something out of nothingness. "Making" usually implies using existing raw material.

<sup>117</sup> I intentionally don't write this name in Hebrew, not to offend any Jewish reader of this book. According to the Jewish sages, the last time this special name was used, was when it was uttered out of the mouth of the High priest, ten times, in the Temple, during the Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) services (see Lev. 16, the Babylonian Talmud (Yoma), and Tosefta Sota 11:8.)

that pertains to His “unchangeable attributes” is mentioned (*Elohim*).<sup>118</sup> It is like declaring, “This is the way I created it, and no one should doubt or question it. This is the way it will stand forever!” Yet when describing creation in more specific detail, in particular the account of the creation of mankind in His own image, both *Elohim* and *Yahweh* are mentioned (His “unchangeable” as well as His “flexible attributes”). This is like declaring, “Also here, there should be no question; it is unchangeable. Yet, at the same time, it is very personal; it is joined with My love, mercy and patience.”

## **Pictures, Patterns, & Spiritual Principles**

### **Messiah and His Kingdom in the Story of Creation**

Israel’s Messiah is described in the New Covenant writings as being *before Abraham*, as coming *from above*, as one who *was with the Father* and who eventually *went back to His Glory*.<sup>119</sup>

In the following paragraphs, I am going to show you how these descriptions of the Jewish Messiah are in complete agreement with some of the Jewish sages’ commentaries on the story of the creation.

### **The Beginning, the Head, Israel and the Torah**

A famous Jewish rabbi<sup>120</sup> said that the word *bereshit* should actually be read *bishvil reshit* or *bishvil harosh* (“for the beginning” or “for the head”). In his opinion, everything was actually created “for the

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<sup>118</sup> Gen. 1:1–2:3

<sup>119</sup> Jn. 1:1-18, 8:23, 52-59, 14:9-14, Col. 1:13–18, Rev. 7:17

<sup>120</sup> Rashi, living in the 11<sup>th</sup> century CE.

Torah and Israel.”<sup>121</sup> He and other sages say that the Torah and Israel “existed in the consciousness of God Almighty before they were created, given and formed.”

Now, according to the New Covenant writings, who is the “beginning” (or “head”) for whom everything was created? It is Israel’s Messiah, the one *all things were made through Him, and without Him, nothing was made that was made... all things were created through Him and for Him.*<sup>122</sup> Moreover: I do not think it would be a stretch to claim that since Yeshua is described as *the Word who became flesh*, in a sense, He was also God’s incarnated Torah.

Furthermore, throughout scriptures, there are parallels and similarities between Israel - God’s chosen nation, and her Messiah Redeemer. Both Israel and her Messiah are called (God’s) *first born son*. Both Israel and her Messiah were *called out of Egypt*. Both Israel and her Messiah were called *the Servant of God*. Both Israel and her Messiah are called to be *a light to the nations*, and, lastly: Both Israel and her Messiah are named... Israel!<sup>123</sup>

Indeed, like the sages said, both the Torah (God’s Word) and Israel (Israel’s Messiah) “existed in the consciousness of God Almighty before they were created, given and formed.”

## **The Light of the First Day**

The famous prophet Isaiah seems to provide us with his own short commentary on the story of creation. According to him, it was God

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<sup>121</sup> Based on scriptures like, Prov. 8:22 (God’s Wisdom here is seen/understood as His Holy Torah), and Jer. 2:3.

<sup>122</sup> See Jn. 1:3 and Col. 1:15–17.

<sup>123</sup> See, Ex. 4:22, Lk. 3:28, Heb. 1:6, Hosea 11:1, Mt. 2:15, Isa, 42:19, 53:11. A careful reading of Isa. 49:1-6 shows beyond doubt that it speaks both of Israel as a nation, and her Messiah Redeemer - Both are named Israel.

who *created* darkness, and *formed* the light.<sup>124</sup> As already mentioned in footnote 116 (page 57), in Hebrew, the word for *created* is, *bara*, while *formed* is, *asa*. And indeed, Isaiah rightfully stressed that the light was *formed* and not created!

A plain reading of the biblical account indicates that the light of the first three days of creation was different than the lights created on the fourth day. Moreover, it seems that the light of the first day had to do with the very first two words God uttered out of His mouth, *Yehi or* (Hebrew, “Let there be a light”). This special first day light must have been a spiritual one.

Yeshua clearly thought of Himself as a very unique spiritual light, in comparison to the lights that we are familiar with: the sun, the moon, the stars, and our own means to light our homes at dark. Here are His own words:

*I must work the works of Him who sent me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world!*<sup>125</sup>

Rashi says that God decided “to separate” this first day’s light from His creation, so that “only the righteous could enjoy it in heaven, or in the world to come.”

I do believe that Israel’s Messiah is indeed the very light mentioned in the first day of creation. This same *light* came down in human form. And indeed, now that Yeshua is seated at the right hand of the Father, He *is* “enjoyed by the righteous in heaven/ the world to come!”

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<sup>124</sup> Isa. 45:7

<sup>125</sup> Jn. 9:4-5

## The “Foundation Stone”

According to the Jewish sages, this Earth and all that is on it was created out of one singular “stone.”<sup>126</sup> They believe that on this very “foundation stone” (Hebrew, *even hashtiyah*), Abraham (almost) sacrificed his son Isaac.<sup>127</sup> They also say this stone is the very stone upon which King David built an altar and sacrificed to the Lord to stop God’s plague.<sup>128</sup> This stone is believed to be the very same stone upon which the Holy of Holies was located in both the First and the Second temples. Today, this stone is believed to be the same one that is covered and protected by the Muslim shrine known as the “Dome of the Rock” on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem.

Again, we can see how similar are the views expressed by the Jewish sages, to the truths described in the New Covenant writings: Indeed, as we discussed above, everything that was created was created out of, through, and for Israel’s Messiah, whom Scriptures describe as the *Rock* (a very close and related Hebrew word to *stone*) of our salvation.<sup>129</sup>

Furthermore: As we will see further in our discussions of the different Torah portions in this book, Yeshua is strongly connected with *Isaac*, who clearly foreshadows Him. He is strongly connected to *the Temple*, He is described as both *the good Shepherd*, and *Messiah, son of David*, and lastly, Jacob describes Him (the good Shepherd) as *the Stone of Israel*.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> Yoma, 5:2 and others...

<sup>127</sup> Gen. 22

<sup>128</sup> 2 Sam. 24

<sup>129</sup> 1 Sam. 2:2, 2 Sam. 23:3, Is. 30:29, Ps. 71:3, 1 Cor. 10:4, Col. 1:16–17, Job. 1:1–18, Heb. 1:1–3

<sup>130</sup> Gen. 49:24

## The Very First Biblical Reference to the Seventh Day of Rest and Us

In this first portion, there is not yet a clear commandment for man to observe the seventh day (the Sabbath). The portion does mention the Creator *resting* on the seventh day and, thus, also blessing and sanctifying it in a special and unique way.<sup>131</sup>

### *The Sabbath and Israel*

Intending to make an interesting point concerning the seventh day, “the Gaon of Vilna”<sup>132</sup> spoke of the parallels and similarities between the first three days of creation and the last three days of creation: He noted that on the first day of creation, God *separated light from darkness*, day from night, and on the fourth day, He created the two illuminators, the sun and the moon, to further *separate day from night*.<sup>133</sup> He noted that on the second day of creation, God separated *the waters which are above the firmament, from the waters which are below it*, and on the fifth day, He created *the creatures that live in water and the ones that fly in the sky*.<sup>134</sup> Moreover, he noted that on the third day of creation, God separated between the dry land and the seas and commanded the earth to *yield grass and herb*, and on the sixth day, He created *the creatures that inhabit the dry land, including mankind*.<sup>135</sup>

Based on the above counterparts in each instance, and based on Jewish *midrash* and *agada*,<sup>136</sup> the Gaon of Vilna concluded that each

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<sup>131</sup> Gen. 2:1-3

<sup>132</sup> Rabbi Elijah ben Solomon Zalman. Lived in the 18<sup>th</sup> century CE.

<sup>133</sup> Gen. 1:3-5, 14-19

<sup>134</sup> Gen. 1:6-8, 20-23

<sup>135</sup> Gen. 1:9-13, 24-31

<sup>136</sup> *Midrash* – Jewish Hermeneutics, where you consider each “jot and tittle” of scripture and try to find a deeper spiritual meaning in them, while applying it to your own day and time. See more about it in footnote 510, page 189. *Agada* - Jewish legend.

day in the story of creation had a corresponding day, or “companion,” provided by God, with one exception; the seventh day. So, the Sabbath cried before the Lord, complaining that she did not have a companion like the rest of the days. In response, the Lord told the Sabbath that His nation Israel was destined to be her spouse. That perhaps explains the special relationship and the deep emotions that the nation of Israel has had for the Sabbath throughout history, so much that many Jews have preferred martyrdom to desecrating it!

*Called to enter His eternal Sabbath rest*

The Hebrew word *Shabbat* (Sabbath) is derived from the root ש.ב.ת (Sha.Va.T - to repose or desist from exertion, cease, put away, or make to rest). To the Hebrew speaker, it corresponds to the Hebrew word *lashevet*, meaning “to sit.” It is like saying that on the Sabbath day, after He finished His work of creation in the six previous days, God “sat down” on His heavenly throne and “rested.”

Now, please note that it does not say anywhere in Scripture that God got up on the eighth day (the first day of the week or, as people call it today, “Sunday”) to continue creating. Moreover, while each of the six days of creation has a time frame (*and it was evening and it was morning*), the *Shabbat* does not have any time frame. Thus, the first biblical reference to the *Sabbath* actually pointed to an eternal day of rest!

Adam and Eve, who were created on the sixth day, were the crown of God’s creation and held a unique position before Him. They were the last to be created, and everything which was created before them was actually created for them. All they needed to do was join in with their gracious and loving Creator, enter into His (seventh) day of rest and enjoy it together with Him forever!

Together with his wife, Eve, Adam was to rule over God’s creation and to take care of it, but God never meant it to be a heavy burden on them. Adam and his wife were called to do all this while being in a

position (or state of mind) of a continual Sabbath rest. This is the very rest each true follower of Israel’s Messiah is called to enter after receiving Him into his or her life and choosing to follow Him.<sup>137</sup>

### *The Sabbath as God’s very private signature*

The seventh day is one of the main “signatures of God.” It is *a sign* that points to the One and true Author and Creator of the entire universe. Honoring the seventh day as the day of rest is like declaring, “I serve the One True God, the Creator of Heaven and Earth.” Honoring the seventh day (rather than any other day of the week) points to the God of heaven and earth, who created them all in six days and then rested on the seventh. Throughout Scripture (both the Tanach and the New Testament), God never commanded us to honor any other day of the week as His holy day of rest—only the seventh day. The Sabbath is indeed *a sign* between God and His faithful ones.<sup>138</sup>

God-fearing Jews (including most Messianic Jews) still sanctify the seventh day, which begins at sundown on Friday and ends at sundown the following day. They do so with a special blessing called the *Kiddush* (“Sanctification”), which actually begins with a recitation of the first three verses of Genesis 2.

### *Sabbath? Sunday?*

The non-Jewish follower of Yeshua might say, “Well, this is good only for the children of Israel.” This is partially true. Remember, however, that non-Jewish believers are *grafted into the olive tree* and into *the commonwealth of Israel*, both of which we have discussed previously.<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> See Heb. 3 & 4, especially 4:9.

<sup>138</sup> Ex. 31:13, 17

<sup>139</sup> See Introduction and read again, Eph. 2:12-13, Rom. 11:16-18 and also Isa. 56:3–7, 66:23. See also: *There shall be one statute for you and for the stranger who sojourns with you, a statute forever throughout your*

Furthermore, it may be argued that the first body of believers met on the first day of the week. I agree. The question is, what did this phrase, *first day of the week*, really mean in the first century?<sup>140</sup>

In the Greek manuscript of the New Testament, the phrase *first day of the week* actually reads, *first of the Sabbath*. When understood in its biblical and Hebraic/Jewish context, *first of the Sabbath* refers to the time starting at the end of the *Shabbat/ Seventh day* (in the evening after sundown). Unlike the modern-day method of counting days, the biblical days commenced at evening and not at midnight or at 6 am. *And it was evening, and it was morning—the first day...And it was evening, and it was morning—the second day* and so on...<sup>141</sup>

Until today, Jews all over the world—leaving the synagogue after the Saturday evening service—still greet each other with the words “Sh’eeyeh lecha Shavua tov” (Hebrew, “May you have a good week”), simply because they follow the biblical counting of the days in which the new week has already begun at the end of their Sabbath evening service.

Moreover, for modern Jews living in Israel (exactly as it was for first century Jews), the first day of the week is a workday—starting another weekly cycle. God-fearing Jews go to work on the first day

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*generations. You and the sojourner shall be alike before the Lord. One law and one rule shall be for you and for the stranger who sojourns with you.* (Num. 15:15-16)

<sup>140</sup> I intentionally use *first day of the week* rather than “Sunday,” as the latter bears the name of one of the gods worshipped throughout the Roman Empire on that “Sun (god) day.” In Christianity (as a religious system), Sunday is usually referred to as “the day of the Lord.” I would like to stress that Sunday as well as Saturday, are not “the Days of the Lord!” *The Day of the Lord* in Scriptures rather refers to God’s severe and final judgment over this corrupted world! (See for example, Isa.13:6, Zeph. 2:2-3, Joel 1:15.)

<sup>141</sup> Gen. 1:5, 8

of the week as they take God’s commandment quite seriously: Six days you shall work, and on the seventh you shall rest.<sup>142</sup>

It is my conviction that the original Jewish body of Messiah (joined by non-Jewish believers) did not meet during the first day of the week, according to the modern account of the days but, rather, at the close of the Sabbath day, after sundown. To some of us, it may be shocking news to know that the very first reference to Sunday as “the Christian day of worship,” is from the second century (around 110 CE).<sup>143</sup>

Now, is the observance of a specific day of rest important to true followers of Israel’s Messiah? Didn’t Shaul/Paul say: *One man esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike - Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind?*<sup>144</sup> Yes, he did. Nevertheless, in my opinion, as long as we are still in this body, this “tent made of clay,” and as long as we are functioning in this present world, which operates in full accordance with God’s created physical laws, we do need to be mindful of “biblical pictures” (or “foreshadowings”), such as the Sabbath day and the biblical feasts. These pictures actually point to Messiah Himself and reveal great truths about His kingdom and His masterplan of salvation to the entire world. Being mindful of the biblical pictures and

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<sup>142</sup> Ex. 20:8-11, Lk 23:56

<sup>143</sup> It was Ignatius from Antioch who encouraged followers of Israel’s Messiah to forsake the Sabbath for what he (mistakenly and unbiblically) called “The Lord’s Day.” He considered it a frightening thought to speak of Yeshua while still observing “Judaism” or “Jewish traditions.” Now, it is true that there are two clear Scriptural references pointing to the disciples gathering on Sunday evening (see Jn. 20:19, 26). Nevertheless, these two references do not indicate at any shape or form, that these gatherings “changed the day of worship” from the seventh day to “Sunday.” And, besides, Scriptures are as clear as crystal when describing the time of Yeshua’s resurrection: It was sometime between Saturday eve’ and the following dawn - when *it was still dark!* (See Luke 24:1 and, Jn. 20:1.)

<sup>144</sup> Rom. 14:5. See also Col. 2:16

foreshadowings will prepare us all and make us ready for the real thing, Messiah's glorious return.

Moreover: When Yeshua came the first time, He had much to say about man-made traditions, which did not adhere to biblical truth but added or subtracted from it.<sup>145</sup> I am persuaded that this approach of Yeshua to man-made traditions has never changed, especially regarding a religious system that claims faith in Him, yet is still full of unbiblical, man-made rituals and (new) days of worship and feasts.

And again, to be unmindful of biblical foreshadowings and to practice man-made traditions instead, is to risk missing the real thing when it eventually occurs, especially Messiah in His return. The very purpose of all pictures and foreshadowings placed by God in His Holy Word, such as the Sabbath and the feasts, is to point and lead us to His only begotten Son, the Messiah of Israel.<sup>146</sup> If the pictures we observe are unbiblical (man-made and at times even pagan in origin), how will those who (often ignorantly) honor them recognize the real Yeshua when He returns to us?

## **The Sabbath and the Millennial Kingdom**

The seventh day of rest was meant to foreshadow a much greater future seventh day, which will take place in the end times: The Millennial Kingdom of God here on the Earth.

According to Jewish understanding, the story of the six days of creation, which climaxes in a Sabbath day of rest, correlates with six thousand years of human history, which will also culminate in "a seventh day (Millennium) of rest." According to this understanding, human history is divided into four time periods.<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> Mt. 23, Mk 7:1–13

<sup>146</sup> Col. 2:17

<sup>147</sup> Rabbi Eliyahu (one of "the Tana'im" shortly after Yeshua's time). B. Avoda Zara 9a.

- The first, which lasted two thousand years, correlates to the first two days of creation. This first period of time was dominated by “chaos and complete disorder” (or “void”).
- The second time period, also lasting two thousand years, correlates to days three and four of creation. This second time period was dominated by “Torah and order.”
- The third time period, another two thousand years, correlating to days five and six in the creation story and in which we live today according to the Jewish calendar. This third time period the sages call “the time of Messiah (!).”
- Next (and just as it is in the account of creation), the sages predict that a time period of one thousand years, correlating to day seven in the story of creation, is soon to come (in about 300 years according to their reckoning). This will be the seventh (millennial) Sabbath day of rest in which all humanity and, in fact, all of God’s creation will experience complete joy, peace, and prosperity.

In my opinion, this description of human history, as seen by the Jewish sages, is clearly expressed also in the New Covenant writings:

- Shaul says, *the creation waits for the revealing of the sons of God...*<sup>148</sup>
- Simeon Peter quotes the Psalmist who said that *one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day...*<sup>149</sup>
- John said that one day there will be *one thousand years* of peace here on Earth, when Satan will be bound and completely ineffective – a true “seven day of rest” to all creation,<sup>150</sup> and lastly,
- The author of Hebrews connects the seventh day of rest described in the creation account, with both the eternal rest

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<sup>148</sup> Rom. 8:19

<sup>149</sup> 2 Pet. 3:8, Ps. 90:4

<sup>150</sup> Rev. 20:1-7

into which all followers of Yeshua are called and the entering into God's Promised Land.<sup>151</sup>

## **The Creation Story and Our Natural and Spiritual Births**

As previously discussed, God's Word tells us that just before He started to put everything in order, all things were covered by both darkness and water.

The very first words out of God's mouth that came into full being were: *Let there be light.*<sup>152</sup> The next thing God spoke into being was the separation between *the waters which were under the firmament* and *the waters which were above the firmament*. Next, He said: *Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear*. Thus, it seems that the entire Earth, which was once covered by both darkness and water was "birthed" into existence by the Almighty.

We can see clear similarities with our own natural birth: Before we came out of our mother's womb into this world, we were also covered inside there with "darkness" and were inside the (womb's) "waters." Then, when we came out of our mother's birth canal, the very first thing we were exposed to was light. Moreover, as God separated between land and water in the very beginning, so we (dust/clay) were "separated," coming out from the waters that covered us in our mother's womb.

When speaking of the spiritual birth every true follower of Israel's Messiah experiences, we can see how it again correlates with the story of creation:

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<sup>151</sup> Heb. 3:1–4:11

<sup>152</sup> Gen.1:2–4

- On the *first* day of our spiritual walk with Him, He comes and separates between light and darkness in our lives. In order to organize the chaos that our body (“earth”) is in, He first needs to shine His light into it.<sup>153</sup>
- On the *second* day of our spiritual walk with Him, God separates between the different “waters” in our lives. Since Scriptures show that water can refer to the Word of God, His voice, and/or to people,<sup>154</sup> we can see how God, in His great mercy, separates between His voice and the voice of this world in our lives. Moreover, He makes a distinction between us and the people (waters) around us who are not His.
- In the *third* day of our spiritual walk with Him, He separates between “the seas and the dry land” in our lives. He starts putting the right balance between His word (water) and the visible fruits our bodies are to yield as believers (or, in other words, the conduct of our lives as His tabernacle here on Earth).
- On the *fourth* day, He starts giving us more understanding of His natural laws and the balance between these laws and “the rulers of the heavens”—the sun, moon, and stars. He also gives us more understanding of His word, the constitution of His kingdom, and the Torah that He implants in our hearts which protects and guards us in this world.
- On the *fifth* day, He allows us to become more deeply rooted in His “sea,” the Word of God, and to be more fruitful in our lives in both a spiritual and a physical sense.

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<sup>153</sup> As I mentioned when discussing the differences between the Greek/Western mindset and the Middle Eastern/Jewish one, unlike how it is understood in the Greek/Western mindset, when our Father created us, nothing about us was bad or evil. All about us was good. We were not divided into an unclean flesh and a good spiritual being. He never called us to separate our spirit from our natural bodies (nor from the physical world around us). We were called to separate ourselves from the deeds of the flesh and not from the flesh itself.

<sup>154</sup> Eph. 5:26, Heb. 10:22, Rev. 1:15, 14:2, 17:15

- On the *sixth* day, we reach the highest spiritual level, as we become more fully aware of the *image* of Him in whom we were created. We see Him face to face, and we fellowship with Him in His Garden. We enjoy His presence without any barrier, without any shame at all, in full harmony with Him and with all that He has created for us. We are actually ready to enter another day that He has also created especially for us,
- The *Seventh* Day. This is the day in which He Himself entered into His rest. It is into this very day of rest that God wants each and every one of us to enter at the end of this journey called salvation. Again, the seventh day of every week only foreshadows this future glorious reality we are going to enjoy together with Him.

## **The Garden of Eden, Jerusalem, and God’s Masterplan of Salvation**

Throughout history, and especially over the past 250 years, scholars have been trying to establish the geographical location of the Garden of Eden. Most Bible maps locate it somewhere in Mesopotamia (Latin, “in between the rivers”), northeast of Israel, in the region where modern Iraq, Turkey, and Iran are located.

In my opinion, the Garden was located where the Old City of Jerusalem stands today. To be more precise, it was at the location today called the Temple Mount. Furthermore, I believe that the place called Eden is the very land that was later promised to our Father Abraham.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> Gen. 15:18-21

## **The Garden of Eden, the Cyclic Hebraic Mindset, and Jerusalem**

Does the location of the land and the Garden of Eden have any spiritual significance? I think it does. By correctly establishing the geographical location of both the land and the Garden of Eden, we will have insight into God’s great wisdom as it relates to His masterplan of salvation— salvation which He freely offers to all who desire it. Bear with me as I take a few paragraphs to elaborate and to make this point clear.

In the introduction to this book, I dedicated a number of pages to “the Hebraic/Middle Eastern Mindset” versus the “Greek/Western Mindset.” I raised an important point connected with the Hebraic mindset, which is the *cyclic* repetition of events and the strong connection between the beginning and the end.

I also noted that God created everything *good*. I said that this creation included both the spiritual and natural elements. Not only this, but God is using the natural to speak and point to the spiritual. It is enough to look at Yeshua’s parables to see this point, as He never spoke to the people on a philosophical level. For example, you don’t hear Him say, “the Kingdom of Heaven is like the moon or like Venus or Mars.” Instead, Yeshua used nature to discuss spiritual truths.<sup>156</sup>

Understanding these points, we are now ready to take a very important journey through God’s Holy Word—a journey whose beginning and end are strongly related and connected.

### *The beginning*

In the beginning, when God created the heaven and the earth, He chose to place His Garden in an earthly/physical/natural location.

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<sup>156</sup> See for example, Mt. 13:1–43.

Why? The Almighty desired to dwell not only in the heavenlies, but also in one specific place He had just created on Earth. He aspired in this way to have an intimate love relationship with, and to be as close to, the very “crown of all His creation”—human beings. But as we already know, this original plan was interrupted as Adam and Eve sinned and, thus, “missed the mark” God assigned for them.<sup>157</sup>

By sinning against God’s clear commandment not to eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, Adam and his wife lost their glorious position before God and were cast out of the Garden—out of God’s very presence.

Now, to a crucially important fact: The biblical account of this tragic event tells us that poor Adam and Eve were cast out of that Garden, towards a very specific direction—towards the east.<sup>158</sup>

One of Adam and Eve’s closely following descendants was named *Nimrod* (literally, “let us rebel”). This infamous character went even farther eastward than Adam and Eve. In fact, it was Nimrod who built Babylon for the first time, in the east, in the land called *Shin’ar*.<sup>159</sup> It was in Babylon that people attempted to construct an immense tower, a tower that God disliked so much that He came down to stop its construction, confuse their common language, and scatter the people across the earth.<sup>160</sup>

It is evident from both Scriptures and history that the city of Babylon was located *east* of where Jerusalem would later be built. If you draw a line from the city of Jerusalem to the east, this line will take you to the city of Babylon.<sup>161</sup> Moreover, later in history, it was to this very

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<sup>157</sup> The actual Hebrew meaning behind “committing sin,” *chet*, comes from *le’hachti*, meaning “to miss the mark.”

<sup>158</sup> Gen. 3:23–24

<sup>159</sup> Gen. 10:8–11

<sup>160</sup> Gen. 11:1–9

<sup>161</sup> Please note: When I speak of East and West, I’m referring to the Jordan River as the border separating between them. See map on page 462.

area of Babylon that God exiled His beloved, Chosen People, after they had repeatedly disobeyed Him.<sup>162</sup> It was in Babylon that God’s Chosen People pleaded and wept for God to return them to Zion.<sup>163</sup> It is the city of Babylon which is described in the New Covenant writings as *the Great Harlot*.<sup>164</sup> Babylon is the very antithesis of Jerusalem. It embodies everything that is contrary to what the city of Jerusalem, the city of the Great King, represents.

Could it be that what took place at the very beginning, at that geographical location called “The Garden of Eden,” is strongly related to Messiah’s first and Second Coming?

In order to answer this important question, we need to examine the purpose of Messiah’s coming then and what it still is now. Did Yeshua visit this planet to establish a new religion called “Christianity?” Did He come to correct and/or improve the Judaism of His time? Doubtless, neither of the above is true.

### *Messiah’s great commission*

The number one mission of Israel’s Messiah was (and still is) to open for us, Adam and Eve’s descendants, the way back to God’s Garden of Eden and to restore that lost intimate relationship with our heavenly Father. In other words, Yeshua came to totally reverse the tragic process of death, the full separation from God—a separation that began when Adam and his wife disobeyed God’s solitary, simple rule.

When understood through the Hebraic (cyclic) mindset, this reversal process is to take place in both the spiritual realm (heaven) and in the physical realm (the Garden of Eden). In other words, God is not fully satisfied in only redeeming our spirit, but also our soul and body. Wherever our ancient parents “missed the mark” and, thus lost their

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<sup>162</sup> 2 Kgs. 17:24, 24:8–16, 25:1–30

<sup>163</sup> See for example, Ps. 122, 126, and 137:1.

<sup>164</sup> Rev.17

special position and intimate relationship with their Creator, that is exactly where the Almighty is going to redeem them and fully restore everything to them.

*Abraham our father*

Have you ever wondered why we, as followers of Israel's Messiah, are called *sons* (and daughters) of *Abraham*? Was Abraham the only good and faithful follower of God in the Scriptures? Was he better than others, such as Shem, Noah, Enoch, or Elijah? Why are we not called "sons of Noah?" Why are we not called "sons of Shem" or, maybe, "sons of Enoch," "sons of Elijah," and so on? Why are we called *sons of Abraham*, and why is Abraham called *the father of all believers*?<sup>165</sup>

Have you noticed that unlike Shem, Enoch, Noah, or Elijah, Abraham was the very first man of faith God called to change his geographic location, to come out of his homeland (vicinity of Babylon) and into the far away land of Canaan?<sup>166</sup> Why?

Abraham, as the future *father of all believers*, was to set an example and pattern for all true followers of God to pursue in their lives when starting their journey home to God's loving arms. Abraham was called to leave everything behind, turn his back to *the great harlot*, and make his journey to *the city of the Great King*, where his "parents" (Adam and Eve) had lost everything. Abraham was called to return to where God would later in history begin the complete restoration of humanity to Himself.

When reading the Word of God through its Hebraic/Jewish mindset and considering that (a) the beginning and the end are strongly connected, (b) nothing is new under the sun and, lastly, (c) Yeshua came to reverse the death process that started in the Garden of Eden,

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<sup>165</sup> See for example, Rom. 4:11–12, Gal. 3:7, 29 (and there are many more.)

<sup>166</sup> Gen. 12

it makes perfect sense why our Father Abraham was indeed called to leave behind his father’s geographic location and pagan practices. In complete faith, Abraham obeyed God’s call to uproot his household, relatives, livestock, and household goods and to move to another specific location. *By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.*<sup>167</sup>

The Almighty planned to redeem the lost human race through one of Abraham’s future descendants (Messiah Yeshua). This was to be accomplished at the very same spot where the human race had lost its glorious position before Him and had begun a long journey of both spiritual and physical death. Where did Adam and Eve lose it? It was in the *Garden* of Eden. Where is God going to redeem their descendants, the human race? At exactly the same spot—a *garden!*<sup>168</sup>

As previously mentioned, God is the Creator of both the natural and the spiritual. God’s salvation has to do with all the realms in which mankind lives. God will not “lose” any battle to Satan in any realm, as He is the very Creator of all realms. Satan tricked the *first Adam* and his wife in a specific geographical location, and that is exactly where the *second* (or *last*) *Adam* is going to defeat and crush him, bringing Adam’s descendants back unto the intimate relationship they enjoyed (in the Garden) before they sinned.

### *Jerusalem and God’s master plan of salvation*

Speaking of the city of Jerusalem being the geographic location of the ancient Garden of Eden, it is very interesting to note that the name of this famous city, in and by itself, contains a full description of God’s master plan of salvation. Let me explain.

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<sup>167</sup> Heb. 11:8. See also map in page 464.

<sup>168</sup> Jn. 19:41

There are mainly two meanings for the name “Jerusalem:”

- a. In the Hebrew Scriptures (Tanach), “Jerusalem” is read *Yerushalem*.<sup>169</sup> It consists of a number of Hebrew words: *yerusha* (inheritance), *shalem* (perfect/compete), *leshalem* (to pay), *shilem* (paid), *tashlum* (payment), and lastly, *shalom* (peace). This fits very well with what we have established thus far concerning Yeshua’s “great commission.” Yeshua, Israel’s Messiah, the Son of the living God, who is *perfect* and *complete* (*shalem*) paid (*shilem*) the full price (*tashlum*) for sin. By paying the price for sin in full, He established His perfect *peace* (*shalom*) in His people and He also gave them their legal *inheritance* (*yerusha*) —Eden and the Garden of Eden forever and ever.
- b. *Yerushalem* could also be a combination of two Hebrew words: *yir’eh* (will see to it) and, like we saw above, *shalem*, (complete/ perfect). The first word (*yir’eh*) comes from Abraham’s response to his son Isaac, when binding him on the altar.<sup>170</sup> Abraham calmed his son by telling him that it was God who would provide the lamb for the sacrifice. So here again, we can see how well *Yerushalem* fits the above description. In other words, within the name *Yerushalem*, the good news (“gospel”) is condensed. It’s like Abraham prophesied (knowingly or unknowingly) the following: “One day, my precious son Isaac, God is going to provide (*yir’eh*) the perfect (*shalem*) lamb—the Lamb of God (Yeshua of Nazareth). If we add the other words (from the above point a.) to Abraham’s words to his beloved son, it would sound

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<sup>169</sup> According to the rabbinical vowel and punctuation system (which will be discussed in greater detail in the closing portion of this book - *Vayechi*), it is pronounced as *Yerushalayim* (plural tense), due to the (biblically based) Jewish understanding that there are actually “two Jerusalems,” the earthly and heavenly.

<sup>170</sup> Gen. 22:8. We will discuss this narrative in great details when getting to the Torah portion of *Vayera*. (Gen. 18:1-22:24) The NKJV translation reads *yir’eh* as *God will provide*.

like the following: “This perfect (*shalem*) lamb, is going to pay (*shilem*) the full/complete (*shalem*) price (*tashlum*) for humanity’s sins and will give them a perfect (*shalem*) peace (*shalom*) with him.” Where would this ultimate provision (*yir’eh*) take place? At the very same place where the foreshadowing/picture (Abraham binding Isaac to the altar) took place—*Mount Moriah*—Jerusalem—the Garden of Eden.

### *Repentance and its east to west orientation*

As noted, Adam and Eve were cast out of the Garden in a very specific direction—towards the east. Now, notice the following.

Since the tragic event in the Garden of Eden, men and women returning to God in repentance did so by approaching Him from east to west. Let me share a few examples from His Word:

- After sinning against his brother Esau, Jacob had to run for his life. Where was the place he ran to located? You guessed right—*east* of the Jordan River. After twenty long years in exile, Jacob, now called *Israel*, returned to his beloved father Isaac, who dwelt back in Canaan, in the west.<sup>171</sup>
- The nation of Israel later followed the same pattern and crossed the Jordan River from east to west.<sup>172</sup>
- In the wilderness, God commanded His Chosen People to build a Tabernacle for Him. In that Tabernacle, and later in both the First and Second Temple, which stood on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, God’s most holy place was located at the very west.<sup>173</sup> The sinner who needed blood atonement gave his sacrifices in the outer court, which was on

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<sup>171</sup> Gen. 27–33. It is interesting to note here that the Hebrew word for repentance is *t’shuvah*, which comes from *lashuv*, meaning “to come back,” to make a 180-degree turn.

<sup>172</sup> Josh. 3–4

<sup>173</sup> Ex. 25–31, 35–40; 1 Kgs. 6–8

the easternmost side of the Tabernacle or Temple, while facing west.

*Everything points to Jerusalem*

Is there any other spot or city on earth besides Jerusalem that has been continually fought over for centuries? Is any city in Iraq or Turkey, Lebanon or the US continually referred to in Scripture with the same loving, positive and prophetic words as Jerusalem?

Moreover, why would God choose to put His Holy Name in a very specific geographic location on Earth, namely Jerusalem? Are there no better and more peaceful (and beautiful) places where God could have decided to do this? Have you ever pondered why Jerusalem is the main focal point and chief concern of all of the nations in the world in these “latter days” (the end times)? Have you ever wondered why it is that the final war (ushering in Yeshua’s Second Coming) is going to be over the city of Jerusalem?<sup>174</sup> Where is the world’s attention continually drawn to in today’s news?

*And what about Mesopotamia?*

Before closing this discussion regarding the geographical location of the Garden of Eden, we need to address yet another important question: “How is it that most scholars locate the Garden of Eden in a completely different area?”

The main reason why most scholars locate the Garden in the area known as Mesopotamia, or “the Fertile Crescent” (today known as part of Iraq, Turkey, and Iran), is due to the fact that two very famous rivers mentioned in the Garden of Eden narrative, the Tigris and

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<sup>174</sup> Look at only a few examples: Zech. 12–14, Rev. 21:1, 10, etc. Moreover, it is on the Mount of Olives (facing Jerusalem from the East) that Yeshua’s feet will touch when He returns to rule and reign on earth. It is to Israel that Yeshua is going to restore the Kingdom. (Act. 1:6–7)

Euphrates, flow there. Nevertheless, the scholars fail to take into account the following important point.

The original biblical text was written in ancient Hebrew. It literally reads: *And a river (singular) goes out from Eden to water the Garden, and from there (from within the Garden), it splits into four heads....*<sup>175</sup> According to the text, the four rivers are only branches or spin-offs from the one river that flowed within the Garden of Eden.

Now, in Mesopotamia only two of these four rivers are flowing - the Tigris and Euphrates. According to most scholars (very much based on the biblical text), the other two rivers, the Gichon and the Pishon, are located in the region today known as Africa. Some say that at least one of these two rivers is directly connected to the Nile. Now, when you look at a map of the ancient/biblical world,<sup>176</sup> you can easily see that Canaan (the Land of Israel) is located exactly in-between the first two rivers indicated and the last two rivers indicated. In other words, while the Tigris and Euphrates are located at one end of Canaan, northeast of it, the Gichon and Pishon are located at the other end, southwest of it.

Again, the biblical narrative clearly says that there was only one river watering the Garden of Eden and that it was from within the Garden that it split into these *four heads*. If scholars are correct in locating two of the four rivers in Africa and the other two in Mesopotamia, then it makes sense that the Garden of Eden itself was somewhere in between. Again, when looking at the map, this “somewhere in between” falls exactly in the Land of Israel. Indeed, the Garden of Eden was located in the center and as a bridge connecting the then-

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<sup>175</sup> Gen. 2:10. It is not a matter of “mere coincidence” that one river is mentioned also in Ezek. 47:1-12, and in Rev. 22:1-2; both of which are end time prophesies which relate to the restoration of all things back to where they were in the very beginning!

<sup>176</sup> Look again at the map on page 462.

known ancient world, where most of the famous empires originated.<sup>177</sup>

## **Adam, Eve, Messiah and His Bride**

Towards the end of the sixth day, after He had created and formed the world and all that is in it, God wanted to bring one last thing into existence, a very unique creation—a man in His *own image and likeness*.<sup>178</sup> So, God created the very first Adam.

### **A Reflection of God's Own Image**

The Hebrew word for image, *tzelem*, is connected to another Hebrew word—*tzel* (a shadow). God wanted Adam and his descendants to resemble Him on the earth. He wanted them to be His shadow or reflection. Every human being we see around us is meant to remind us of our Creator, God Almighty.

Thousands of years later and exactly as with the creation of the first Adam, God brought the *Second (or Last) Adam* —Israel's Messiah, into our world.<sup>179</sup> Yeshua is also described as *the image of the invisible God*,<sup>180</sup> the very one who came to restore the pre-sin garden conditions and intimate fellowship that existed between God, the first Adam, and his wife, Eve.

Moreover, exactly as it was God's intention for the first Adam and his descendants to reflect His likeness, so it has been for almost two

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<sup>177</sup> Deut. 11:12, Ezek. 38:12. In ancient biblical times, the Land of Israel served as "a land bridge" connecting these two very influential areas. This is also one of the main reasons why historically and today this area is very important and why individuals and nations have fought many wars over this region and for the land bridge itself.

<sup>178</sup> Gen. 1:26-27

<sup>179</sup> *Second or Last Adam* see Rom. 5:12-14, 18-19, 1 Cor. 15:21-22, 45-49.

<sup>180</sup> Col. 1:15

thousand years with Israel’s Messiah and His true followers. When “in Him,” Messiah’s disciples are to be nothing but a reflection, a *tzel* of God’s own image.

## An Unusual Birth

The Hebrew name *Adam* is derived mainly from three other Hebrew words: *adama* (earth/clay/dust), *adom* (red), and *dam* (blood). When God created the first man, He took some *adama* and formed it into an earthly body. He then *breathed* (His spirit) *into it* and it became a *living being*.<sup>181</sup> So, the first man was called *Adam*, as he was a mixture of *adama* (earth/dust, which was most likely red, *adom*) and *dam* (blood). In the Scriptures, there is a clear connection between life and blood.<sup>182</sup> No wonder, then, that without the blood (*dam*) flowing in our earthly bodies, we are considered dead, and our bodies return to the dust (*adama*).

The creation of the first Adam can be considered a miracle since he came out of nothing (soil/*adama*). This foreshadowed yet another miraculous birth that took place a few thousand years later. God again took *adama* in the shape of an earthly vessel named Miriam<sup>183</sup> and *breathed* (His Holy Spirit) into her womb, thus, bringing forth His Son, the *second Adam* into our world.

Israel’s Messiah, who is *the Word that became flesh*<sup>184</sup> was indeed a miracle child, born to a young virgin, which in the natural was an impossible occurrence. This phenomenon of miraculous nativity

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<sup>181</sup> Gen. 2:7

<sup>182</sup> See for example: Lev. 17:11.

<sup>183</sup> Mary of Nazareth.

<sup>184</sup> Yeshua clothed Himself with flesh, bones and blood. (Lk. 24:36–43; Jn. 1:14)

occurs throughout the Scriptures and includes (besides the birth of Messiah) the birth of the nation of Israel.<sup>185</sup>

## **Revelation of the First Bride**

As we are discussing now the first Adam as a foreshadower of the second Adam, Israel's Messiah, it is my understanding that Eve, the first wife mentioned in the Scriptures, provides us with a foreshadowing of "the second wife," Messiah's bride.

Many consider the birth of Messiah's bride (the *ecclesia*, the called-out ones) an event that took place on the feast of Pentecost.<sup>186</sup> I do not share this very popular view. It is my opinion that Messiah's bride was born on the feast of Passover, at Golgotha, while He was still on the cross. Allow me to explain.

It is my understanding that what happened on the day of Pentecost, was foreshadowed at Mt. Sinai, when the nation of Israel was given her "betrothal ring" (the Torah); where God "stamped" her as His own from then on. So, when was Israel "birthed" as a nation? I believe it was on that Passover night, when she applied *the blood of the Passover lamb* on her door posts and lintels, while still in Egypt and, thus, "came out"/was "called out" (*ecclesia*) of Egypt, as God's very nation/bride.<sup>187</sup>

In the Garden of Eden, God first put Adam into *a deep sleep* and then took a rib out of his side, built a female human body of it, and, behold, the very first wife/bride came into existence.<sup>188</sup>

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<sup>185</sup> The Jewish sages understood this concept very well. We are going to see it as we proceed with the portions of Genesis. (especially when dealing with the sons of Jacob/Israel.)

<sup>186</sup> Hebrew, *Shavuot/Weeks* (Acts 2.)

<sup>187</sup> "Ecclesia" – the Greek word, which literally means, "the called out." Usually translated as "Congregation," "Assembly" and/or, "Church."

<sup>188</sup> Gen. 2:21

Thousands of years later (again, during the feast of Passover), God put yet another Man into “a deep sleep.”<sup>189</sup> While in this (unconscious) state, a Roman soldier pierced Him through His side, and out of His side gushed water and blood.<sup>190</sup> It is my understanding that the water and blood symbolized an integral part of a birth process (as blood and water are present in the natural birth process as well). Therefore (based on the pattern set in the Garden of Eden), she whom I call “the second bride” or “Messiah’s bride,” was birthed on the very moment that her husband – the *Lamb of Passover* - was “asleep” on the cross.

Moreover, please note that the first Adam was created outside the Garden of Eden. Eve, on the other hand, came out of his side while inside the Garden.<sup>191</sup> The very same is true concerning Israel’s Messiah, who was born outside the city of Jerusalem (the geographic location of the Garden of Eden).<sup>192</sup> Yet His bride was born (out of His side) at Golgotha, which was inside *a garden* as well, and, within the city of Jerusalem’s jurisdiction.<sup>193</sup>

## **A Mother of All Living Beings**

The first Adam named his wife *Chava* (Eve), because *she was the mother of all living beings*.<sup>194</sup> He gave her this name subsequent to their having eaten from the forbidden tree. It was after God told him that they would return to the dust, that is, to die. Thus, Eve was *the*

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<sup>189</sup> In the New Covenant writings, there is a repeated connection (or interchange) between “death” and “sleep.” See, Jn. 11:11–14; Mt. 27:52; 1 Cor. 15:20; 1 Thess. 4:13–15.

<sup>190</sup> See Jn. 19:34.

<sup>191</sup> Gen. 2:8, 15, 2:15–25

<sup>192</sup> He was born in Bethlehem (in accordance with the prophecy of Micah 5:2) and for most of His life lived in the city of Nazareth.

<sup>193</sup> Jn. 19:41. Yeshua was taken to be crucified at Golgotha, outside the city’s walls. Nevertheless, He was still considered to have been crucified in Jerusalem. (see Rev. 11:8)

<sup>194</sup> Gen. 3:20

*mother* of all of those who live in the natural realm yet are spiritually dead!

We are all the descendants of this first couple, Adam and Eve. We all came out of a fallen mother and father. We all are spiritually dead creatures—until we come to the saving knowledge of Israel’s Messiah. In response to one who desired to follow Him, Yeshua said: *Let the dead bury the dead.*<sup>195</sup> What did He mean by that? He meant that although there are many in this world who look very much alive, inwardly (spiritually) they are actually dead.

The same principle works with the second Eve, in the spiritual realm. Thanks to what Yeshua did for her, her spirit is revived, regenerated, saved, and, thus, she is going to live forever. Thus, the “second Eve” is also *the mother of all living beings*. She is the mother of all people whose spirits were regenerated/reborn, destined to live forever! The second Eve—Messiah’s bride—is to spread His life, which is in her, to others. She is to give life, to be a mother to many newborn children (new followers of Israel’s Messiah).

### **The Bridegroom-Bride Relationship**

The woman was called *eesha* (אשה woman) because she came out from the *eesh* (איש man).<sup>196</sup> Interestingly enough, when read in Hebrew, the word *eesh* and *eesha* are connected yet to another Hebrew word, *esh* (אש fire). God added the Hebrew letter *yod* (י) to *esh*, and so it became *eesh*. To the woman, God added the Hebrew letter *hay* (ה), so it became *eesha*. These two added letters (*yod* and *hay*) form one of God’s names, *Yah* (יהו).<sup>197</sup>

Now, if you take the name of God (*Yah*) out of the names of the woman and the man, they are left without Him in their midst, and

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<sup>195</sup> Lk. 9:60

<sup>196</sup> Gen. 2:22–24

<sup>197</sup> See for example: Ex. 15:2, 17:16; Ps. 77:11; Isa. 26:4, 38:11. In all these references, the King James translates *Yah* as, *Lord/ the Lord*.

thus, they become a consuming fire (אש) towards one another (a fire of lust, envy, suspicion, blame shifting, etc.). If you put *Yah* back in their midst, they are assured of His “fire” of love and patience. Thus, they can have a peaceful and successful marital relationship.

God created the woman for man as *a helper against him*.<sup>198</sup> The Jewish sages said something interesting about this: When the husband is “worthy,” his wife becomes “his helper.” When he is “unworthy,” she comes “against him”—only to “balance him” and to help him “correct his ways.”<sup>199</sup>

To Adam, Eve was *bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh*.<sup>200</sup> In the spiritual realm, Messiah’s bride is exactly the same: Followers of Yeshua have been united with Him and become *members of His body*.<sup>201</sup> Adam and Eve’s *one flesh* relationship is a beautiful picture of the close relationship between Israel’s Messiah and His bride—the second Adam with His second Eve.<sup>202</sup>

## **A Completely Different Kind of Love**

Adam knew the consequences that would follow his partaking of the forbidden fruit. He was fully aware that his action would eventually lead to his death. Nevertheless, of his own free will he took the fruit and ate it together with his wife. Why did he do this? Was he so utterly foolish? He could very well have said to his wife (who had already eaten of the forbidden fruit), “You ate it! That is your problem. You die alone. I’m not ready to die because of your foolishness!” Did he say this to Eve? The first Adam did not abandon his beloved wife to be alone in her terrible state. He chose to go with her wherever she went, even unto death. By doing so, Adam

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<sup>198</sup> A literal translation from the Hebrew. (Gen. 2:18,20) *Neged* in Hebrew can be translated also as “before” and “in front of.”

<sup>199</sup> Yevamot 63a, Rashi

<sup>200</sup> Gen. 2:23

<sup>201</sup> See 1 Cor. 12:12–27.

<sup>202</sup> Eph. 5:31–32

foreshadowed one of the main characteristics of Israel's Messiah, Yeshua of Nazareth. Here it is...

The first Adam foreshadowed a completely different kind of LOVE which Messiah would demonstrate towards His chosen nation Israel (and all those who would later on be *grafted into the olive tree*). This was what I like to call, "a pre-sin state kind of love," a sacrificial love with not even one inch of selfishness involved! Please do not forget that when the first Adam chose to eat the forbidden fruit, he did so as a man not yet tainted by sin. It was only his wife who had already "tasted sin." He was not yet aware of sin at the time he chose to partake of what God had prohibited.

When Israel's Messiah came into this world, He was not only free of sin, He remained free of sin to the very end of His earthly life. From this very position, and out of His own complete free will, Yeshua, exactly like the first Adam, chose to identify with His sinful wife—the nation of Israel—and, thus, took on all her sins (foreshadowed by the forbidden fruit). The love Yeshua expressed in His earthly life and in His death on the tree was not defiled by any worldly (Satanic) pollution. It was a pure, godly love. It was also "a pre-sin-state kind of love," selfless and sacrificial!

Messiah came down to this planet to experience everything that we human beings experience, including the very outcome of eating fruit from the forbidden tree. By His own free choice, Yeshua allowed the tragic consequences of the sin in the Garden of Eden to be placed upon Him. He partook of our sin as the first Adam (His foreshadower) did thousands of years before with his wife, Eve. The Scriptures declare that Yeshua actually *became sin* on our ("second Eve's") behalf.<sup>203</sup> He died as *accursed man hanged on a tree*.<sup>204</sup> This He did in order to redeem all the descendants of Adam from the curse that fell on them since that tragic event in the Garden.

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<sup>203</sup> 2 Cor. 5:21

<sup>204</sup> Deut. 21:22-23; see also Acts. 5:30, 10:39; 1 Pet. 2:24.

## Trees, Trees, and More Trees – What’s so Special About Them?

### The Forbidden Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil

Over the years, many have tried to answer the inevitable question: Why did God forbid Adam to eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil? He certainly did not forbid them to eat from the fruit of the Tree of Life...? Moreover, God, who knows all things long before they happen, surely knew what the tragic outcome would be.

What did this Tree of Knowledge symbolize? Considering the sages’ approach that “the Torah has seventy faces,” there are countless ways to look at this. In the following paragraphs, I’ll share with you my own take on this.

Up to the moment when Adam and Eve ate this fruit, all they knew was good. They were like little children who had not yet been exposed to the evils of this world. They were children who were at home with their loving parent, who provided all of their needs and satisfied them in every possible way. Yet, Adam and his wife had the right to choose whether or not to obey His command. In part, their inherent right to freedom (including freedom of choice) was due to the fact that they were created in the image and likeness of God. As such, they were even granted power and dominion.<sup>205</sup> Nevertheless, as God’s creation and not His co-creators, they needed to obey Him and fully depend on Him and His wisdom.

The Bible says that *the inclination of man’s heart is evil from his youth*.<sup>206</sup> “Youth” in the Hebrew Bible (*na’ar* and *na’ara*) refers to

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<sup>205</sup> See, Gen.1:28-31. Please note: From the immediate context, it seems that God did not give them any dominion over other people or (secular) governments, but rather, *over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moves upon the earth...*

<sup>206</sup> Gen. 8:21

“very young children” (even babes), “young man,” “a soldier,” and “a servant” or “a slave.”<sup>207</sup>

Yeshua declared that we must become like little children if we wish to enter the kingdom.<sup>208</sup> Adam and Eve were like children in the Garden. They were naïve and pure, clean from the filth of the evil one, until they decided to partake of evil in the form of the forbidden fruit.

So why did God forbid Adam to eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil? Simply because He never created them to be “creators” or “gods.” They were made in His image, and, therefore, could express God’s beauty and delight on earth in terms of music, poetry, building, etc., but not in the grand fashion and design that is His role alone as the Creator. He never intended for them to have complete equality with Him!

As we discussed previously, Adam and Eve were created to reflect God, to resemble Him. They were formed to fellowship with Him as their Father and King and to delight in all that He had brought into being, especially for their enjoyment and care.<sup>209</sup> Adam and Eve were not able to deal with evil. God is the only One who is able to govern wickedness! They were not God and, thus, they were incapable of contending with evil once they had encountered it.

The Jewish sages understood it in a similar way: They said that until Adam and Eve ate from the forbidden fruit, they had the will to do only good, but after disobeying God and partaking of it, they were suddenly aware of their will to do evil, and this would increase tremendously as time went on.<sup>210</sup>

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<sup>207</sup> Gen. 41:12, Ex. 2:6, 33:11, 1 Sam. 17:42

<sup>208</sup> Mt. 18:1-7. When Yeshua said these words, it is very likely that Genesis 8:21 was on his mind.

<sup>209</sup> Gen. 1:28

<sup>210</sup> Sforno (Rabbi Ovadia ben Jacob Sforno – lived during the 15-16 centuries CE) and others...

As mentioned previously, before Adam and Eve disobeyed God, they had a glorious position before Him. From this very special place, they were able to inherit and oversee everything God had created for them. Best of all, God created them as eternal souls to live with Him forever. Once evil gripped their lives, it altered that glorious position. This very fact of losing their original place before God was the manifestation and evidence of their limitations and incapability as created beings and not creators. Access to the Tree of Life would now be denied to them, and their bodies would return to dust—to the very material God used to create them with, in the first place. This is exactly what Yeshua, Israel’s Messiah, came to reverse!<sup>211</sup>

## Indeed, a Very Interesting and Appealing Tree

Eve saw a few things in that tree that appealed to her. All of them were connected in one way or another to head knowledge. She saw that the tree was *good for food, pleasant to the eyes, and desirable to make one wise*.<sup>212</sup> Once she interacted with the Serpent, without even noticing it, she adopted his ways and tactics and mixed truths with lies (see following section).

God’s original words concerning the trees in the Garden were: *Pleasant to the sight and good for food*.<sup>213</sup> In Eve’s perception, the tree of knowledge of good and evil, was *good for food, pleasant to the eyes, and, desirable to make one wise* (Hebrew, *lehaskil*). It is interesting to note that whereas the English translation reads Eve’s perception as *pleasant to the eyes*, the Hebrew reads *lustful to the eyes* (*Ta’ava laeynaym*). The poor woman trusted Satan’s words more than her Creator’s. She really thought that by fulfilling her *lust* for the forbidden fruit she would become *wise*.

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<sup>211</sup> 1 Cor. 15:35–57

<sup>212</sup> Gen. 3:6

<sup>213</sup> Gen. 2:9

Since that tragic event in the Garden of Eden, the whole world has been subject to the very same process: We humans are not satisfied with the clear instructions of God. Instead, we try to rationalize them. We give as many excuses as we can to get around God's clear commandments, sometimes using His own Word out of context or adding to it, as did Eve. We really think we can improve on His commandments and instructions. We tell ourselves, "God probably did not envision the situation I'm in at the moment, so why not try to do it my way just this time? How wrong can I be? At least I can gain more wisdom in the process."

Ever since that first act of disobedience, our "wisdom" compared to His amounts to nothing! In our hopeless situation (knowing good and evil but without the capacity and capability to deal properly with this kind of knowledge), we had better fully trust His wisdom, which is manifested so wonderfully in His Word.

Humanity's drive for head knowledge derives from its deficit of godly confidence, love, intimacy, and acceptance; all of which our first parents had plenty of in that Garden before they fell into sin. The wisest man described this condition most lucidly and came to the inevitable conclusion: *Fear God and keep His commandment for this is man's all.*<sup>214</sup>

## **Satan's Garden Tactics**

In the Bible, as well as in Jewish tradition, the Serpent mentioned in the Garden of Eden is the symbol of evil, evil inclination, darkness, and Satan himself.<sup>215</sup> It is easy to note that since the tragic event in the Garden, Satan's tactics have not changed much. If we are aware of them, it will help us resist him—hopefully with greater wisdom than Eve did in the Garden.

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<sup>214</sup> Eccles. 12:13

<sup>215</sup> Rev. 20:2

Let us now examine two of the most effective tactics he uses when dealing with us humans: (a) misquoting God’s word and, (b) mixing lies and truth.

*Has God indeed said you shall not eat of every tree of the garden?<sup>216</sup> You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it, your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.<sup>217</sup>* What Satan actually tried to do was to instill doubt in Eve’s heart regarding the exact Word of God delivered to her by her husband, Adam.

As you can see for yourself, Satan added words that God never said: God never forbade Adam to eat from “every” tree of the Garden!<sup>218</sup> Satan knew exactly what God said to Adam, but as previously noted, he used this tactic to introduce doubt into Eve’s heart. Satan wanted to provoke Eve to engage in a discussion with him. He wanted her to relate to him in some way. He wanted her to “open the door” for him, so he could “enter” and stir up confusion and doubt and, thus, bring his plan, to separate her and her husband from God, to fruition.

Satan lied when he told her that she and her husband would not die; nevertheless, in the same breath he also spoke truth to her: *For God knows that in the day you eat of it, your eyes will be open, and you will be like God.* Well, in the following section, I’ll explain how they indeed became *like God*. Nevertheless, Satan did not tell her that she and her husband would not be able to deal with this new knowledge of evil after they ate the forbidden fruit. He said nothing about their inability to completely control and master evil. He neglected to tell her that their nakedness would be exposed. He did not tell Eve that by heeding his words, she would be rejecting her bridegroom’s

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<sup>216</sup> Gen. 3:1. The first four words are the English translation of only one Hebrew word, *af*, which in modern Hebrew means “even though.” In both biblical and modern Hebrew, this word is usually used by those whose desire is to instill doubt in someone’s heart.

<sup>217</sup> Gen. 3:4-5

<sup>218</sup> Gen. 3:1-2, compare with 2:16-17.

words and, in effect, would be “committing adultery” by accepting the covering and authority of “another god” (Satan).

Do you remember the Scripture that tells us that Satan can disguise himself as *an angel of light*?<sup>219</sup> Well, another tactic Satan used on Eve was being soft rather than threatening. He was not too pushy, but smoothly lured her into doubt concerning her bridegroom. He left after the short conversation between them, leaving her to her own judgment. After all, was she not free to choose or to decide for herself (sound familiar)?

In light of these insights, how important it is for everyone who claims to believe in God and His Messiah to know God’s Word, the Bible. If we do not know God’s Word competently, it will be hard to resist the doubts Satan tries to instill in our hearts (while himself using God’s Word). We all should follow Yeshua’s example, who Himself fought the Devil using “God’s Sword.”<sup>220</sup>

Why did Eve fall into Satan’s trap? *And the woman said to the Serpent....*<sup>221</sup> There was absolutely no need for Eve to get into any kind of conversation, discussion, or negotiation with Satan. Until this day, when he comes to whisper in our ears, we are not to give him the pleasure of even relating to him (unless we know God’s Word well enough and fully trust in it). Eve should have first gone to her husband to ask him for his opinion, as he was the one who had received God’s instructions and delivered them to her in the first place.

## **Nakedness, Cunning, and God’s Clothes**

The first thing Adam and Eve became aware of after they disobeyed God’s Word was their nakedness. Isn’t that strange? Why hadn’t they noticed this before they ate the forbidden fruit?

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<sup>219</sup> 2 Cor. 11:14

<sup>220</sup> Mt. 4:1–10 & Eph. 6:10–18 (especially verse 17.)

<sup>221</sup> Gen. 3:2

From the original Hebrew text of Genesis 2:25 through 3:11, some interesting details emerge: There are two words that Scriptures use for nakedness, and although they are spelled slightly differently, they sound almost the same. The Hebrew states that before Adam and Eve sinned, they were *arumim* (ערוּמִים, naked).<sup>222</sup> Yet, after they sinned, the Hebrew states that they noticed they were *eirumim* (עִרְמִים, naked).<sup>223</sup> There is one small Hebrew letter that makes the difference in these two Hebrew words used to describe nakedness, the letter *yod* (י), which is the smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet.

Now, as we know, Adam and Eve were not alone in the Garden. There was someone else there, the Serpent, who in Hebrew is described as being *arum* (ערוּם) as well. Nevertheless, here, in this specific verse, the NKJV translates *arum* as *cunning*.<sup>224</sup> Thus, when reading the text in its original Hebrew language, it seems that before Adam and Eve sinned, there was no difference between them and the Serpent, as they were all *arumim*, which can mean both *cunning* and *naked*.<sup>225</sup>

Now, as already noted, after Adam and Eve had sinned, they observed they were *eirumim*.<sup>226</sup> Again, the one thing that made the difference between their nakedness (*arumim*) before the sin and their nakedness (*eirumim*) after the sin was the addition of that one small Hebrew letter, *yod*.

When discussing the bridegroom–bride relationship, I mentioned the use of this very same Hebrew letter as it is found in the Hebrew word

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<sup>222</sup> Gen. 2:25

<sup>223</sup> Gen. 3:7

<sup>224</sup> Gen. 3:1

<sup>225</sup> There are two Hebrew roots, upon which these two words are based: *a-r-m* (א.ר.מ) and *a-r-a* (א.ר.א). In Scripture, these roots are connected to each other, and at times are mentioned together in the same sentence (Ezek. 16:7, 22, 39, 23:29. The New King James English translation uses two different words: “naked” and “bare.”)

<sup>226</sup> Gen. 3:7. Notice the use of this same word, this time in singular—*eirom*, in verses 10 and 11.

*eesh* (אִישׁ man). There I pointed out that in Scripture, the letter *yod*, when adjoined to the fifth letter of the Hebrew alphabet (*hay*) forms one of God’s names, *Yah* (יָהּ). Thus, when you take the *yod* from the descriptive names of man (*eesh*), it changes the name into “fire” (Hebrew, אֵשׁ *esh*).

Here, in this tragic event, we find a similar principle: Satan told Adam and Eve that when they would eat the forbidden fruit, they would become *like God, knowing good and evil*. Well, let me suggest that Satan was actually right about this one. Isn’t it true that immediately after they disobeyed God, they became *like God—knowing good and evil*? Notably, “good” was the only thing Adam and Eve knew up to that tragic moment. Now, after eating the fruit, they became aware (like their Creator) of both good and evil and, thus, one of the letters that make one of God’s names – *Yah*, was inserted into their sad (naked) state. But for them, *becoming like God* had terrible consequences!

Before they made this fatal mistake of heeding the voice of the Serpent, it was God who “clothed” them with His holy presence (or, in other words, with His holy *sh’china*, His in-dwelling/His Spirit). Yes, He covered and clothed them so well, they were not even aware of their nakedness. You can say that they were “one with God.” In this situation, they were *arumim*—both “naked” and “cunning” (wise/shrewd), lacking nothing. Once they ate of the forbidden fruit, they immediately were stripped of their very special clothing (God’s covering and protecting *sh’china*/Spirit), which at the same time also uncovered their poor and new condition—being “like God,” now knowing not only good but evil as well, but with no way to bear its tragic consequences.

While in Adam’s descriptive name, *eesh*, there was the very positive and encouraging indication that God (again, represented by the letter *yod*) was indeed with him and that He had created him in His own image; now after Adam’s sin, this very same letter is added to describe his complete nakedness and low spiritual condition as a

sinner (*eirom*) before His loving Creator. It is as if God was saying to Adam (and to us all), “When I created you, Adam, you were covered—clothed with My sh’china/Spirit, My love, My protection, and My provision. Moreover, I formed you with a free will to make choices, as you were fashioned (unlike the rest of My creation) in My own image and likeness. Yes, it was a free will that I gave you, to choose whether or not you would obey My voice. You were to be more *arum* (cunning/wise) than the Serpent himself. Yet you yielded to his seduction and, as a result, you have turned from *arum* into *eirom* (naked) while losing the oneness with My presence—My clothing, My protection, and My fellowship. Oh, how miserable you are now, Adam!”<sup>227</sup>

Yes, nothing has changed since that tragic moment in the Garden. The moment we disobey God’s voice, we discover how naked and bare we actually are. We recognize that, indeed, now we are *like God, knowing good and evil*, but this new “package deal” includes the terrible consequences of utter hopelessness and helplessness, as we are incapable of dealing with this new knowledge (of evil).

On the other hand, when obeying God’s Word, we are assured of an intimate relationship with Him, whereby, we are covered and clothed by His love and mercy. And indeed, Shaul encourages us to *clothe yourself with Messiah*; i.e., to return into this pre-sin Garden fellowship and intimacy with the Creator, based on the shed blood of Messiah on our behalves. This intimacy with the Creator does away with the shame connected with nakedness as happens also in a healthy marital relationship.<sup>228</sup>

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<sup>227</sup> It is very interesting to see in this light, Yeshua’s instructions to His disciples when He sent them out to preach the good news of the kingdom. He advised them to be “wise as serpents.” (Mt. 10:16)

<sup>228</sup> See Rom. 13:14, Gal. 3:27, Eph. 4:24, Col. 3:10 (some translation read *put on the Lord*, and, *have put on Christ*...). In marriage, there is no shame in nakedness between husband and wife. Knowing and trusting each other so well, being so intimate with one another, they live together, even while exposing their nakedness to one another.

## Shame and Clothes

When Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit, they immediately lost the reality of perfect intimacy with their Creator. The joy of “being married” to Him; being “one with Him,” was missing. The reality of “being clothed” by Him was no longer there. This horrible instance of making a wrong decision destroyed the perfect relationships that they had previously enjoyed. They were unable to cover themselves and hide their nakedness, nor could they apply God’s covering by themselves. He Himself needed to do that for them!<sup>229</sup>

But again, as the wise man said, *there is nothing new under the sun*,<sup>230</sup> until this day, people around the world desire to be *like God*, *knowing good and evil* (especially those in the New Age movement), a desire that will eventually cause them to lose everything they think they have. Even now, people still try to acquire *knowledge* rather than a life-giving relationship with God, who is our only true Lord and Creator. Until today, God exhorts us not to lean upon our own understanding (as much of it is influenced by that Serpent of old), but instead to trust Him in all our ways.<sup>231</sup>

Moreover: As mentioned above, the Jewish rabbi/ teacher Shaul (Paul) exhorted us to take advantage of our new, redeemed position before God—in Second Adam, Yeshua—and, thus, to *put on the Lord Yeshua*, to “clothe ourselves with Him.” Upon what in the world did he base this specific instruction? In my humble opinion, Shaul learned and based it on this very Torah portion.

When reading Scriptures in their original language, Hebrew, we can see some other “hidden nuggets:” Before they sinned, Adam and Eve were both naked. Nevertheless, they *were not ashamed* of it.<sup>232</sup> The Hebrew word there for “ashamed” is, *yitboshashu* (יִתְבַּשְׁשׁוּ) and it is

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<sup>229</sup> Gen. 3:21

<sup>230</sup> Eccles. 1:9

<sup>231</sup> Ps. 37:1-7, Prov. 3:1-7

<sup>232</sup> Gen. 2:25

based on the root *b.o.sh* (ש.ו.ש). After they sinned and acknowledged they were naked (i.e., uncovered, unclothed), they immediately covered/clothed themselves with fig leaves. God was not satisfied with their solution, and instead He Himself made them *tunics of skin* and *clothed them*. The Hebrew word used there for (He) *clothed them* is, *vayalbishem* (וילבשם). Hebrew speakers can easily recognize the phonetic connection between *busha* (shame) and *levush* (clothing). Yes, back in the Garden of Eden, God covered Adam and Eve’s “shame” (*busha*) with the only true “clothes” (*levush*) - the *tunics of skin*.<sup>233</sup> What were these *tunics of skin* a picture/foreshadow of?

### **Fig Leaf Coverings, Tunics of Skin, and the Father’s Perfect Love & Timing**

Adam and Eve made fig leaf coverings for themselves in an attempt to fix the new state of nakedness (both physically and spiritually) in which they found themselves. The efforts they made in the Garden are no different from the ones we make today.

The Hebrew word for fig is *te’ena* (תאנה). This word is very similar to yet some other Hebrew words, which are spelled exactly the same: *to’ana* which speaks of “an excuse,” “pretext,” “opportunity” and/or, “occasion” (to betray).<sup>234</sup> None of us really like to take responsibility for our wrongdoings. Instead, we find all the excuses in the world by which we might justify ourselves. One of the most repeated means of escaping responsibility is to blame our situation on God: *It’s the*

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<sup>233</sup> The same principal of root and phonetic connections between different Hebrew words is displayed throughout Scripture. It shows the beauty of the Hebrew language. Here are just two examples: The connections between the word *begeid* (another word for “clothe”) and *b’gida* (betraying). The connection between, *chet* (sin) and *lechate* (to clean, to purify). We shall discuss these examples in greater detail once we get to the other books of the Torah.

<sup>234</sup> See for example: 2 Kings 5:7, Mt. 26:16, Mark 14:11.

woman you gave me; It's the Serpent (you have created;) and so on.<sup>235</sup>

Nevertheless, God, who is a merciful and loving father, allowed Adam and Eve sufficient time to find a hiding place in the Garden, to sew their fig leaves as a covering, and to hear His voice as He walked in the garden.<sup>236</sup> Yes, God did not want to embarrass His children in their naked state. He did not want to surprise them unawares. He gave them enough time to make preparations before He actually called them. His question, *where are you?* does not for a moment mean that He ceased to be an all-knowing God. Rather, He was aiming at having them come to a full realization of their fallen state and giving them a chance to repent.

He does the exact same thing with people today, including us. When difficult times come our way, when we try to hide ourselves *in the cool of the day*, He still gives us the time we need before He makes His voice heard. Approaching with grace and mercy, He then asks, *did you eat from the tree from which I forbade you to eat?* This is so that we will be fully aware of when and how we went astray and, thus, return to Him in full repentance.

Moreover, when a problem presents itself, God looks for the root cause. He is not satisfied when issues are dealt with superficially. He continues to pose the right questions until He gets to the very root of the problem, which is the Serpent, Satan. Notice that God does not practice His mercies on the Serpent. He does not approach him with questions. Satan is doomed without any opportunity for repentance.<sup>237</sup>

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<sup>235</sup> Gen. 3:12–13

<sup>236</sup> Gen. 3:7-8

<sup>237</sup> Gen. 3:11–14

## God’s Solution to Mankind’s Hopeless Situation

As we saw above, Adam and Eve made *fig leaf coverings* for themselves. But were fig leaves sufficient to cover their nakedness? The answer the Bible gives is crystal clear: No! They could not cover their nakedness using excuses (*to’anot*). Fig leaves will never be sufficient as they will eventually dry up/wither. They won’t be able to give sufficient covering from the cold or from the heat nor from our naked state before God.

So, what would cover their nakedness? Only *skin tunics* provided for them by God Himself.<sup>238</sup> Notice, please, that Adam and Eve could not even put on these tunics by themselves. They needed God the Almighty to clothe them with these new skin coverings. Yes, He was and still is the only One able to cover mankind’s nakedness! All of this transpired to represent something far greater that would take place (at the same geographical location) a few thousand years later.

It is purely common sense that in order to produce these skin tunics, God needed to slaughter an animal. What kind of animal did He slaughter? Genesis 3 does not provide us with an answer. Nevertheless, in the New Covenant writings, we are told that Israel’s Messiah was *the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*.<sup>239</sup> Could there be a connection between the animal God slaughtered in the Garden of Eden and that slain *Lamb*? I believe there is.

As fig leaves were not sufficient for Adam and Eve, so they are not sufficient for us today. As they needed God’s skin tunics to fully and sufficiently cover their nakedness, so do we. And while we know what kind of special material God used in that Garden, we need to ask ourselves, “What is the covering God has provided for us in our own days?” The “clothing” God is expecting mankind, the

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<sup>238</sup> Gen. 3:21

<sup>239</sup> Rev. 13:8

descendants of Adam and Eve, to wear now, is Israel's Messiah, Yeshua of Nazareth!<sup>240</sup>

Israel's Messiah came to earth a few thousand years after the tragic event in the Garden. He came to function as the *second* or *last Adam*. As such, He died on a tree at Golgotha which (as previously discussed) was, in my opinion, located in the same spot where the ancient Garden of Eden was—in Jerusalem. And as we mentioned already, exactly as the first Adam's death started in a garden, Yeshua's death also took place in a garden, so it could be reversed.<sup>241</sup>

In the same way, God wishes to put His clothing, His Son's precious "skin tunic," on the ones who acknowledge their nakedness and come to His saving arms in true repentance.<sup>242</sup> Yes, those who desire to sufficiently cover their spiritual nakedness must ask God Almighty to clothe them with His Son's skin tunic—the covering made of *the Lamb of God, slain from the foundation of the world*.

In order for us to see the truth regarding the identity of Israel's Messiah and His mission as the perfect *Lamb of God*, we first need the Holy Spirit to open the eyes of our understanding. This must happen before we can apply this great truth to our own lives. Unless this happens, we will remain blinded and deceived by the lies of Satan and self-deceived by our own rebellion. Unless God steps in with His great mercies, we still have eyes, but cannot see; we have ears, but cannot hear...<sup>243</sup> Yes, we all need God to open our

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<sup>240</sup> See again how Shaul encourages us to *clothe yourselves with Messiah*. Rom. 13:14, 1 Cor. 15:49, 2 Cor. 5:3.

<sup>241</sup> Gen. 2:15-3:24, Jn. 19:41-42. Adam died spiritually once he ate the fruit, exactly in accordance with God's words to him. As we know, spiritual death effects the soul, and eventually leads to the death of the physical body as well. And indeed, Adam eventually did die physically (see Gen. 5:1-5).

<sup>242</sup> See for example, Isa. 61:10.

<sup>243</sup> For example: *And Moses summoned all Israel and said to them: You have seen all that the Lord did before your eyes in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh and to all his servants and to all his land, the great trials that*

(spiritual) eyes. We all need to have a personal “God moment!” We all need His special touch on our lives. Allow me to elaborate on this one with a wonderful example, taken from the Gospel of John.

## Nathaniel, the Fig Tree and, the Torah

Nathaniel was from Cana in Galilee. According to Yeshua’s own words, he was *a true Israelite in whom there is no guile!*<sup>244</sup> Yet, when hearing that his friends found the Messiah, and that this Messiah was from Nazareth, he had a very hard time to believe his friends, and asked: *Can anything good come out of Nazareth?*<sup>245</sup> Meeting Yeshua in person, however, Nathaniel’s eyes were opened and he declared: *Rabbi, You are the Son of God!*<sup>246</sup> What was it that convinced Nathaniel that Yeshua was indeed the Son of God? Or, in other words: What was that “God moment” as far as Nathaniel was concerned? It was when Yeshua told him, *when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.*<sup>247</sup> What was so special with Yeshua’s statement?

According to the Jewish sages, the fig tree was either the Tree of Life or the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil.<sup>248</sup> Whichever is true, one thing is certain: The fig tree was indeed one of the first trees mentioned in the Word of God, and within the context of the Garden of Eden. Moreover: In Jewish tradition, the fig tree is one of the pictures that describes the Torah. This tree yields new ripe fruit daily when in season, allowing the partaker to enjoy its sweet taste and benefit from its nutritional value on a daily basis. The Torah does the

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*your eyes saw, the signs and those great wonders. But to this day the Lord has not given you a heart to understand or eyes to see or ears to hear.* (Deut. 29:2–4) See also: Isa. 6:9-13, 32:3; Jer. 5:21; Ezek. 12:2; Mark. 8:18; Rom. 11:8.

<sup>244</sup> Jn. 1:47

<sup>245</sup> Jn. 1:46. Nazareth, in comparison to Cana, was not such an important city. In fact, according to Archeological digs there, it seems that it was a very small city/village, inhabited by poor Jews.

<sup>246</sup> Jn. 1:49

<sup>247</sup> Jn. 1:45–51

<sup>248</sup> Yalkut HaMehiri on Ps. 36; Bereshit Rabba 39:14.

very same: It yields new spiritual nourishment each day and rejuvenates our spirit. Based on this tradition, some rabbis in Yeshua's time would teach their disciples while sitting under a fig tree.<sup>249</sup>

Knowing this, we can better understand Nathaniel's amazement at Yeshua's statement. Yeshua's words enabled Nathaniel to recognize that Israel's Messiah was (one) with God already back in the Garden of Eden! After all, wasn't Nathaniel a good Torah student, who studied its narratives with rabbis under a fig tree? As such, Nathaniel understood very well the meaning of what Yeshua had said to him: Yeshua knew him and seen him already—in *the Garden of Eden*—in “his father's (First Adam's) loins.” Yeshua knew Nathaniel long before he was even conceived in his mother's womb!<sup>250</sup>

## **The Consequences of Partaking of the Tree of Knowledge**

God pronounced terrible curses over those who were directly involved in this very tragic event in the Garden. Unfortunately, until Messiah's return to establish His millennial (Sabbath) kingdom on earth, these curses are still in effect. Let us now elaborate on each of these curses and their spiritual significance.

### *Satan's Punishments and the End of All*

The devil's punishments can be summarized in one word: *humiliation*. He fell from the exalted position of one who walked and

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<sup>249</sup> Song of Songs, Rabba, 6 (describing Rabbi Akiva sitting under fig trees with his disciples). This tradition is probably based on 1 Kings, 4:25 and others alike.

<sup>250</sup> According to Shaul/Paul, God *chose us in Him, before the foundation of the world!* (Eph. 1:4) As for *the loins*, see something similar in Hebrews 7:4–10; especially verse 10.

stood upright in his Creator’s presence,<sup>251</sup> to becoming a footless creature that would forever *eat dust*.<sup>252</sup>

But this won’t be his greatest punishment. The greater one still awaits him: *And I will put enmity between your seed and her seed, He shall bruise your head and you shall bruise His heel.*<sup>253</sup>

It is interesting to note how some of the Jewish sages understood this Messianic prophecy. They said that ever since the Garden’s tragic events, Satan has been trying his utmost to cause us all to put God’s Word under our feet (heel), while we, on our part, need to do our very best to use our heads (I.e., study God’s Torah) against his tactics.<sup>254</sup>

Although this is not the primary and main meaning of this prophecy, there is some truth to it, as we really do need to fill our minds with God’s Word in order to effectively battle against Satan. In New Testament terminology, we are encouraged to, *renew your minds*, part of which, in my opinion, is to read, to get to know, and to consume His Holy Word.<sup>255</sup>

The phrase *her seed* or “a woman’s seed” (Hebrew, זרעה) is very unusual in the Scriptures. Apart from this reference in Genesis 3, there are very few instances in the Bible where a woman’s seed is mentioned.<sup>256</sup> Most references to seed relate to a man’s seed, such as “Abraham’s seed” and “Jacob’s seed.”<sup>257</sup>

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<sup>251</sup> This, in accordance with Scripture, Jewish and Christian traditional interpretations. (see for example Isa. 14:12–15, Ezek. 28:1–19.)

<sup>252</sup> Gen. 3:14

<sup>253</sup> Gen. 3:15

<sup>254</sup> “Midrash Hane’elam,” part of the “Zohar” (connected to the Kabbalah/Jewish mysticism.)

<sup>255</sup> Rom. 12:1-2

<sup>256</sup> Hebrew, זרע, זרעך. Gen. 4:25, 16:10, 24:60 (translated as “descendants”), Lev. 12:2 (translated as “conceive.”)

<sup>257</sup> See for example: Isa. 41:8, 45:19; Jer. 33:26; Ps. 22:24 (translated as “descendants”), 105:6.

A careful reading of the New Covenant writings shows a clear connection between God's words to the Serpent and their (partial as of yet) fulfillment in Israel's Messiah, Yeshua of Nazareth, who is indeed "the seed of the woman." Yeshua was born of a virgin. No man's seed was involved in His coming to earth. He was *the Son of the Living God, Immanuel*, "God is with Us."<sup>258</sup> He is the only one who actually defeated Satan, when He died and rose again, thus conquering Satan's ultimate weapon against mankind – death! And lastly, He is the one who will eventually do away with Satan on God's final Day of Judgment.<sup>259</sup>

### *Eve's Punishments*

*In pain you shall bring forth children.*<sup>260</sup> It is interesting that while the English translation states *pain*, the Hebrew actually reads *sorrow* (אָזָב *etzev*). *And he shall rule over you...*<sup>261</sup> This clearly means that he, Adam, did not do so before the sin. Man was not created to "rule" over his wife but, rather, over the creation of God together with his wife.

Also, it is interesting to note the Jewish sages' view of *He shall rule over you*: They say that since the woman did not listen to her husband when he taught her God's commandments in the Garden, she now had to pass all authority over to him and submit herself to him.<sup>262</sup>

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<sup>258</sup> See Isa. 7:14, 9:6, Mt. 1:18–25.

<sup>259</sup> 1 Cor. 15:20–26, 50–57; Gal. 4:4–5. I was told by Eric Morey, a leader of an Israeli Messianic Congregation, that the only manner of execution (in ancient times) that could actually "bruise one's heels" was crucifixion. This being the case, Satan, who thought that at Yeshua's cross he had achieved complete victory over God's Son, actually only "bruised" His heel, while Yeshua, finally, is going to "crush" his very "head."

<sup>260</sup> Gen. 3:16

<sup>261</sup> Gen. 3:16

<sup>262</sup> To put this into perspective, here is what the Jewish sages said concerning the proper relationship between a husband and his wife: "A man should honor his wife more than himself and love her as himself. If

Since we are still dwelling in this “tent made of clay,” we all experience some of these curses. Whereas the woman is totally equal to a man while “in Messiah,” she is still called *the weaker vessel*.<sup>263</sup> Yes, spiritually, in Yeshua, women and men are equal. Nevertheless, in the natural/physically, they are not. We have different physical functions; for example, only a woman can conceive and bear children. Generally, the man is physically much stronger than the woman. Historically and until this very day, it is usually the man who does hard labor, who fights in wars, and so on.

The Bible is clear about right relationships between a woman and a man in the body of Israel’s Messiah. The man (not the woman) is called to be the leader. The man is *the head of the woman* and not otherwise. Men should love their wives as Yeshua loves His body, and women should submit to their husbands as the body of Messiah submits itself to Yeshua.<sup>264</sup>

### *Adam’s Punishments*

*In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread...*<sup>265</sup> Adam was to work hard for the rest of his life. This curse is the reason why, until today, the descendants of Adam do their best to avoid hard physical labor and to obtain wealth—the quicker the better. Why? So that they can

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he has money, he should increase his generosity to her according to his means. He should not cast fear upon her unduly, and his conversation with her should be gentle. He should be prone neither to melancholy nor anger.” Concerning the wife’s responsibility, they add: “A wife should honor her husband exceedingly and revere him...and refrain from anything that is repugnant to him. This is the way of the daughters of Israel who are holy and pure in their union, and in these ways, will their life together be seemly and praiseworthy.” (Rambam, Hill. Issues 15:19–20)

<sup>263</sup> 1 Pet. 3:7. In my opinion, Peter was not speaking only of the physical condition or strength of a woman in comparison to that of a man, but of a women’s propensity (especially of non-believers) to be deceived. (see also 1 Tim. 2:14.)

<sup>264</sup> Eph. 5:22-33

<sup>265</sup> Gen. 3:19

have more free time to rest and to enjoy life. Indeed, one of the greatest curses on Earth is our need to toil for our continued survival.<sup>266</sup>

*For dust you are and to dust you shall return.*<sup>267</sup> Before sin entered the world, death (returning to the *adama/dust/soil*) did not exist. Earth (the physical realm) and heaven (the spiritual realm) co-existed in complete harmony. Indeed, one of the roles for which God created humankind was (and still is) to bridge the gap between the physical and the spiritual realms and to be God's representative here on earth. In other words, Adam was to be a priestly king, intermediating between heaven and earth.<sup>268</sup> I believe this is exactly what the Messiah of Israel, "the Second Adam," is going to do from His throne in Jerusalem during His future millennial reign.

Since that tragic event in the Garden, sin has been part of our reality. This is the reason the flesh always fights the spirit and tries to pull us down, back to the *adama (dust/soil)*. When we yield our flesh to our spirit man ("new creation" or "new man"), the Spirit of God pulls us upward towards heaven.<sup>269</sup>

## **The Two Guards and the Tree of Life**

It was on the *east side* of the Garden that God placed *the cherubim* and *the two-edged sword* to guard and protect the Tree of Life.<sup>270</sup> Are there any "hidden pictures/foreshadowings" also here? I believe there are. Allow me to elaborate.

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<sup>266</sup> In the western world, this curse is not felt as much as it is in third world countries (or among the poor of any nation), although here, too, it takes a great deal of hard work to pay not only for our needs, but also our pleasures.

<sup>267</sup> Gen. 3:19

<sup>268</sup> In this very context, note the call upon the Nation of Israel (and us as well). Ex. 19:6, 1 Pet. 2:9.

<sup>269</sup> Romans 7 and 8 explains the struggle we have while still in this body of flesh.

<sup>270</sup> Gen. 3:24

*The cherubim and the two-edged sword*

Let us start with the cherubim. It is interesting to note that *cherubim* were later on mentioned as *covering the ark of the covenant* with their wings. Just as the cherubim guarded the Tree of Life in the Garden of Eden, so they were later on guarding the Ark of the Covenant and all that was in it.<sup>271</sup> Moreover, these *cherubim* were part of *the mercy seat*. They were *hovering* (or flying) over the ark, while being an integral part of its covering/ its lid.

Now, I would like to draw your attention to something very interesting: What is translated into English as *mercy seat*, in Hebrew is *kaporet* (כפרת). *Kaporet* is derived from the Hebrew root כ.פ.ר (Ka.Pha.R, or, Ka.Pa.R). It is connected to other Hebrew words, such as *kapara* (כפרה atonement, ransom) and *kopher* (כפר propitiation<sup>272</sup>). Talking about Atonement, the sixth of seven biblical feasts is named, *Yom Hakipurim* (יום הכיפורים) - Day of Atonement.<sup>273</sup> In Noah's Ark, *kopher* was the waterproof material covering and sealing it.<sup>274</sup> So, we can see that *kaporet*, *kopher*, and *mercy sit*, have to do with atonement and covering.

Let's continue with the two-edged sword. As mentioned above, in addition to the cherubim guarding the (only one) eastern entrance to the Garden, *a two-edged sword* was placed there as well. As we know, in scriptures the word of God is connected to *two-edged sword*.<sup>275</sup> As the Torah is part of God's holy Word, we can describe it as well as *two-edged sword*.

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<sup>271</sup> Ex. 25:10-22. God willing, I'm going to discuss the beautiful pictures and foreshadowings of Yeshua in the Tabernacle, especially in the Ark of the Covenant, in greater detail when I deal with the Torah portions in the next book – Exodus.

<sup>272</sup> See 1 Jn. 2:2.

<sup>273</sup> Lev. 16 (where the words *Kaporet*, *Kiper* and *Kapara* is used few times) and 23:26-32.

<sup>274</sup> Genesis 6:14. The Hebrew word for *pitch* is *kopher*. We shall discuss this also in the next Torah portion.

<sup>275</sup> See Heb. 4:12 and, Rev. 1:16, 2:12.

*Two special guards that point to Israel's Messiah Redeemer*

Besides guarding the entrance to the Garden, both the *cherubim* and the *two-edged sword* pointed towards the Tree of Life. Whoever would try to find this crucially important tree would have no need to look far and wide for it. It was evident that the Tree of Life was within reach, but only if you passed behind and through these two special guards.

According to Shaul the apostle, one of the Torah's main role was (and in my opinion still is) to point (or *tutor us*) to the Messiah of Israel.<sup>276</sup>

It is very interesting to note that in Jewish tradition, the Torah is described as a “Tree of Life!”<sup>277</sup> How does the New Covenant writings describe Yeshua – Israel's Messiah Redeemer? Yeshua is both the Word *that became flesh*, and, *the way, the truth and the life*.<sup>278</sup>

One of the very first things we must consider while searching for God's true Messiah is the path we should take. In order to clearly see the direction leading to “Messiah's exact location,” we must first go past these two guards. We must be acquainted with the Word of God (the Torah, *the two-edged sword*), and we must experience His mercies, atonement, covering and protection—*the cherubim*. We must let His Holy Spirit “hover above the waters of our souls” and draw us towards Him!

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<sup>276</sup> See Gal. 3:23-24.

<sup>277</sup> In Jewish liturgy, one verse is continually repeated as the Torah is brought back to its Ark in the Synagogues: “she (the Torah) is the tree of life to those who hold fast to it.” It is based on Prov. 3:18, that actually speaks of God's Wisdom (see verse 13). It is not a stretch, in my opinion, to say that God's Wisdom is indeed manifested in and through His holy Torah.

<sup>278</sup> Jn. 1:1–3, 14, 14:6

Attempting to remain only with *the sword* (the Torah), without going further—behind it—to the *Tree of Life* itself (Yeshua) will surely lead us to death.<sup>279</sup> On the other hand, it is also not enough to say, “God is full of mercy, He understands my weaknesses, He atones for me, He covers me with His great mercies and grace,” and so on...

None of us can reach the Tree of Life, and thus, gain eternal life, by only observing the Word, the Torah, nor by claiming God’s mercies/grace and continuing to do our own thing. In order to gain eternal life, one must pass through the two guards and proceed further, behind them, to the actual source of life, to the very Tree of Life, who is Yeshua, Israel’s Messiah. The two guards are there to point us in this crucially important direction.<sup>280</sup> Yeshua is the only one who can give us eternal life. Eternal life exists only in Him. Only by faith and complete trust in what He did for us on that tree at Golgotha can we be back in the Garden and enjoy Him - the very *tree of life!*

## **Two Trees United in “Yet Another Tree”**

In my understanding, there is a strong connection between the *Tree of Life*, the *Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil*, and what I call “yet

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<sup>279</sup> Rom. 7:10, 2 Cor. 3:6. We are going to discuss the relationship between “faith” and “the Torah” further, and in greater detail, as we proceed with the study of the Torah portions in this book.

<sup>280</sup> I would like to clarify one very important thing here: What I discuss above does not mean that God expects everyone to first have knowledge of His Holy Torah before being aware of the saving knowledge of His Son, Yeshua of Nazareth. As we all know very well, there are many instances, especially among Muslims, where people have no knowledge of the Torah or other scriptures and yet come to Yeshua through dreams, visions, etc. It is my humble opinion that once anyone comes to the saving knowledge of Israel’s Messiah, he/she will need to study the entire written Word of God, which includes His Holy Torah, which then will show/demonstrate all that I discussed above concerning its great importance in the life of true followers of Messiah.

another tree:” the tree upon which Yeshua was crucified two thousand years ago.

First, Adam and his wife Eve disobeyed God’s clear instructions and ate from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. This was a crucially wrong choice that became the very means by which death was introduced to this world.

Did you notice that before this tragic event took place, God did not say anything specific to Adam and Eve concerning the Tree of Life that was in the same Garden? It seems like they chose to first approach the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil instead of the Tree of Life. Something must have gone very wrong in Adam and Eve’s minds if, instead of taking full advantage of the Tree of Life (to live forever with their Creator), they compromised that eternal life for the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil.

Again, Adam and Eve’s disobedience introduced death for the first time, and they lost the very special position that they had enjoyed with their Creator, until that moment. In other words, by choosing to partake of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, Adam and Eve forfeited their privileged status with God, and it affected us all, as we all are their descendants.

A few thousand years later, God sent His only begotten Son, Israel’s Messiah, as the *second* (or *last*) *Adam* to reverse this process of death that began with our first earthly parents. The Scriptures tell us that Yeshua came to this world and *tasted death*.<sup>281</sup> How exactly did He do that? He became the very man prophesied by Moses as the *accursed, hanging on a tree*.<sup>282</sup>

As mentioned above, it is my understanding that the Tree of Life located inside the Garden of Eden, was a picture of Israel’s Messiah.

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<sup>281</sup> Heb. 2:9

<sup>282</sup> Deut. 21:22-23; Gal. 3:13

As we established above, Yeshua Himself declared that He is *the way, the truth and the life*.<sup>283</sup> Moreover, Scripture tells us that the very *life was in Him*.<sup>284</sup>

Messiah, foreshadowed in the Tree of Life within the Garden of Eden, became *accursed, hanging on a tree*. Nevertheless, the cruel death He suffered on the tree of crucifixion actually brought *life* to everyone who came and will come to Him in true repentance and faith. Since Messiah’s first coming two thousand years ago, and until now, whoever comes to Him and follows in His footsteps, even until death (i.e., “tastes” death), can actually receive and obtain eternal life.<sup>285</sup>

And here is the beautiful picture: While Adam and his wife were not allowed to taste the fruit of one of the two most important trees in the Garden of Eden, the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, now all of us (their descendants) are called to come to the foot of “yet another tree,” “Yeshua’s Tree” - the crucifixion tree, and “taste” its great benefits, one of which is eternal life with Him in His glorious kingdom!

Hanging on the tree of crucifixion at Golgotha and bearing the consequences of the first Adam’s sin, Messiah actually united the two other trees mentioned in the Garden of Eden. Why did Yeshua need to be *accursed, hanging* on that Golgotha tree? Because of Adam and Eve’s disobedience. Yes, while hanging on that tree, Yeshua followed the first Adam’s pure love towards his wife, Eve, and thus He as well “partook” with us (the new Eve) from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Yeshua completely identified with the first Adam’s sin (tasting the forbidden fruit/sin/death), and on the crucifixion tree, He Himself became the manifestation of the consequences and penalty of that sin. Yes, Israel’s Messiah, the very

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<sup>283</sup> Jn. 14:6

<sup>284</sup> Jn. 1:4 & 1 John 1:1–2

<sup>285</sup> Rom. 6:3–5, 11; 1 Cor. 15:20–22 and more...

*Tree of Life*, united Himself with *the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil* out of pure divine love for each and every one of us.

And since His first coming, whoever comes to “Messiah’s Tree” and “tastes” from His everlasting goodness is actually following in His Master’s footsteps: he/she admits that, as First Adam and Eve’s descendants, they also “partook” of the forbidden tree and that now the only one possible solution to their terrible hopeless and helpless condition is to come to the foot of “Messiah’s Tree,” where they can gain back their lost position before God.

Now, with the understanding that the Garden of Eden was really where Jerusalem is now located, this picture becomes even clearer. Both the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge were in that Garden (Jerusalem). That’s exactly where Yeshua united these trees in His own “Tree”—the crucifixion tree.

After his sin, Adam was not allowed to eat from the Tree of Life, which was in the midst of the Garden. Since Messiah’s death on the tree, every human being is called to come to “Messiah’s Tree” and partake of Messiah’s forgiveness in order to obtain eternal life.

## **Cain and Abel - Messiah and God’s Plan of Redemption Continues to Unfold**

### **Same Ancestry, Different Paths**

Cain and his brother Abel are the first examples of a principle that runs throughout the Scriptures, a principle I like to call “same ancestry, different paths.” Here are a few examples of this principle: In Abraham’s house (as we will see later in our study of this book’s portions), there were two sons: Ishmael and Isaac. The two sons had the same father, but nevertheless they walked in completely different paths. In Isaac’s house, there were also two sons: Esau and Jacob, who also walked in completely different paths. Later, even in the

nation of Israel, there was a clear division of two different nations (houses or kingdoms) that also took completely different paths.

Cain and Abel were born to the same parents and lived in the same house, yet eventually they walked in two completely different paths and thus they represent completely different types or characters. As we are approaching the end of this first Torah portion, we see that two very distinct family lines descended from these two brothers.<sup>286</sup>

## **Cain—The Father of the Unrighteous Line**

Eve called her firstborn son Cain. Scripture tells us that she chose this name thinking, *I have acquired a man from God* (Hebrew, *kaniti eesh*). The Jewish sages<sup>287</sup> believe what she meant to say by giving him this name was that now human beings would be full partners with the Creator, in the sense of creating more human beings in His likeness and image. Thus, not only did God not leave or forsake them after they sinned, but in His great love and mercy, He also allowed them (and us) to become His partners in our procreation.

Cain’s (unrighteous) line starts and ends with a murder!<sup>288</sup> Contrary to Abel, who was a shepherd, Cain worked the ground. He was more attached to the dust/soil from which he was taken than to spiritual things. He worked so hard that all of his attention went into his work and not into enjoying God’s creation.

The Jewish sages maintain that Cain brought to God only the least, and not the first or best fruits of the soil, a fact that pointed to his heart attitude. According to their interpretation, he was pretty “stingy” with the offerings he presented to God.<sup>289</sup> Also, the fact that

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<sup>286</sup> Gen. 4:1–24

<sup>287</sup> Nida 31:71, and Rashi

<sup>288</sup> Gen. 4:8, 23–24

<sup>289</sup> Ibn Ezra, Radak. See also the evil servant in Yeshua’s famous parable. (Mt. 25:14–30, especially verses 18, 24–25.)

Cain became *a builder of a city* indicates that he was focused only on himself and on material things.<sup>290</sup>

God does not desire that anyone would perish.<sup>291</sup> In His great mercies, He had compassion on Cain by giving him the *sign* he begged for and that would keep him protected from other men. Even before Cain murdered his brother, God was interested in his well-being. He encouraged Cain to look inside himself and discover the real problem, so that he could repent and regain God's blessings.<sup>292</sup>

Ever since Adam and Eve introduced us to the power of sin (which leads to death), it has been increasingly more difficult to fight it. Nevertheless, God still requires us to fight it until it flees from us. We *can* control it—if we choose to do so by yielding to God's Spirit.<sup>293</sup> If we choose to do good and right, the situation will never be overwhelmingly bad, and the *countenance of our faces* won't fall.

As He did with Adam and Eve when approaching them after they sinned, God asked Cain a question, this time the question concerned the location of his brother. This was so Cain could acknowledge the reality of his helpless and hopeless situation, repent, and receive God's forgiveness. But being intent on doing evil, Cain displayed brazen insolence and responded in a way that only befits a person who is in complete spiritual blindness: *Am I my brother's keeper?*<sup>294</sup>

What was Cain's punishment? He, like his father, was cast out from God's presence and condemned *to wander and roam from place to place*.<sup>295</sup> This is the price paid by everyone who is not willing to return to their Creator in true repentance. Everyone who is stubborn against God will find himself wandering from place to place in a

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<sup>290</sup> Gen. 4:17

<sup>291</sup> 2 Pet. 3:8–9

<sup>292</sup> Gen. 4:6–7

<sup>293</sup> Rom. 6:11–14

<sup>294</sup> Gen. 4:9

<sup>295</sup> Gen. 4:14. Very much like his master (the Devil). See Job. 1:7, 2:2.

futile search for meaning in a meaningless life, looking for satisfaction that cannot be found except in the loving arms of our Creator.

## **Abel— The Father of the Righteous Line and Messiah’s Second Foreshadower**

We saw how the first Adam was a foreshadower of Israel’s Messiah. Following him, Abel gives us some more important insights into Messiah’s description.

Although the Bible does not give a specific reason as to why Eve named her younger son *Abel*, Yeshua related to this son as being a *righteous man*.<sup>296</sup> The writer of Hebrews also describes him as *righteous* and says that God is *testifying of his gifts, and through it he, being dead, still speaks...* He continues on to say that Yeshua’s blood is *better than Abel’s*.<sup>297</sup>

In Hebrew, the name Abel reads *hevel*, or at times, *havel* (הֶבֶל). In King Solomon’s writings, this same word, *hevel*, is frequently used in quite a negative connotation, as it speaks of something worthless, *vain and futile*.<sup>298</sup>

The true Messiah of Israel was (and, unfortunately, still is) viewed by many as “nothing special,” “worthless” and “vanity” to even consider. Many Jews until this day regard words of testimony coming out of the mouth of followers of Yeshua as *hevel havalim* (vanity of vanities).

Moreover, Yeshua, as Scripture describes Him, had *no form or comeliness*. In Him, there was *no beauty* that one should *desire*, and

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<sup>296</sup> Mt. 23:35, Lk. 11:51

<sup>297</sup> Heb.11:4, 12:24

<sup>298</sup> Eccl. 1:14, 2:11,17,21,23, 4:4, 6:2, 8:14; Isa. 30:7, Jer. 10:3, 16:19, Zech. 10:2; Ps. 39:6,7,11; Prov. 21:6

He was (and still is, especially among the Jews) *despised and rejected*.<sup>299</sup> Yeshua did not look like “a Hollywood star;” quite the contrary, outwardly He did not look special. It was what He was from within that really mattered and made the dramatic change in human history. And all of this was patterned after His “second foreshadower,” Abel.

Abel was a shepherd. Many of God’s righteous people had some connection to tending sheep. The Messiah of Israel called Himself *the Good Shepherd*.<sup>300</sup> Being a shepherd helps develop spiritual skills for godly leadership. A shepherd usually spends much time in the open. He can see and appreciate God’s creation, tend to it, commune with God, write and sing songs to Him, etc.<sup>301</sup>

Abel offered God the most precious blessing that had been given to him. He offered *the firstborn*. As we shall see in the following Torah portion (*Noah*,) the firstborn plays a very important role before God. Adam was a firstborn, so were Seth (after Abel’s tragic death), Noah, and Abraham. And, of course, Yeshua Himself was the firstborn of both Miriam (Mary) and God. We are called *the congregation of the firstborn*.<sup>302</sup>

Besides, Abel not only brought the *firstborn* lambs, but also the best of *their entrails*. God loves the giver who has a cheerful heart and the one who sacrifices the best of the best (symbolized by the *entrails*).<sup>303</sup>

There is a commonly accepted commentary, according to which God accepted Abel’s sacrifice because of “the shedding of blood” that was involved. Now, even though this commentary is true by itself, in

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<sup>299</sup> Isa. 53:1–3

<sup>300</sup> Jn. 10:11-16. A few examples of shepherds include Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses and David.

<sup>301</sup> See a good example in Ps. 23.

<sup>302</sup> Heb. 12:23

<sup>303</sup> 2 Cor. 9:7; Ex. 29:13, 22; Lev. 3:3, 9,14,16, 8:25. 9:10

my opinion, it does not delve into the heart of the matter. I believe that the issue here was not just the “shedding of blood” but rather a matter of one’s heart attitude. God is far more interested in the attitude of our hearts than He is in us performing “the correct religious ceremonies.”<sup>304</sup>

I see Abel’s offerings as a beautiful picture of the final sacrifice that God Himself provided for mankind. This is Yeshua who gave His entire self as a sacrifice (including His “entrails”) on the altar of the crucifixion tree. This should also be the attitude of a true worshiper and follower of God and His Messiah.

Indeed, the blood of Israel’s Messiah *speaks better than that of Abel’s*. Yeshua’s complete faith in God, manifested in the precious blood He shed on that tree, still “speaks” in a loud voice today. His blood, that permeated the earth at that famous Passover two thousand years ago, still “cries out” to God in a very loud voice—much louder than Abel’s!<sup>305</sup> It still bears witness to God’s great and incomparable love towards humanity.

After Abel was murdered, Seth continued the righteous line, which included a man named *Enosh* (mortal) in whose days people started *to call upon the name of the Lord*.<sup>306</sup> As this righteous line continues, we can clearly see that it leads to people out of whom God chose to bring forth the Redeemer, His only begotten Son.<sup>307</sup> People like Noah and Shem, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah, David, and finally Yeshua, came out of this righteous line.<sup>308</sup>

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<sup>304</sup> See how this biblical principle is repeated in 1 Sam. 15:22, Isa. 1:10-17, Hos. 6:6, Mich. 6:6-8, Mt. 9:13 and more...

<sup>305</sup> Gen. 4:10. Heb.11:4, 12:24

<sup>306</sup> Gen. 4:26

<sup>307</sup> Gen. 5:1–32

<sup>308</sup> Also, if we look carefully at Seth’s genealogy, we discover some interesting things: Initially, only the firstborn sons are listed. Second, Adam lived to see Lamech, Noah’s father. He also lived long enough to see Enoch.

# *Noah*

(Genesis 6:9-11:32)

## ISSUES DESCRIBED IN THIS PORTION

The order to build the ark	● Genesis 6:13-7:5
The flood	● Genesis 7:6-8:14
After the flood	● Genesis 8:15-9:17
Ham's sin and its consequences	● Genesis 9:20-27
Noah's sons and humanity's dispersion	● Genesis 10:1-32
The Tower of Babel	● Genesis 11:1-9
Shem's descendants	● Genesis 11:10-32

## TOPICAL ORDER OF REFERENCES

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Scripture Passage(s)</b>	<b>Page</b>
Noah and the Messiah of Israel	Genesis 5:28-8:22	121
Noah, the Messiah, and the end times	Genesis 7	129
After the flood – God's masterplan of salvation continues to unfold	Genesis 8:15-10:32	134
The Tower of Babel and the Great Harlot	Genesis 11:1-9	140

## General Data

Named after its central figure, *Noah* (Hebrew, *Noach*), the second portion of Genesis deals primarily with the flood and the dispersion of the nations of the world descended from Noah’s three sons.

Noah is mentioned a number of times in the New Covenant writings.<sup>309</sup> This alone makes this portion of great importance to the followers of Israel’s Messiah.

The number *seven* plays a significant role in this portion, just as it did in the previous one. For example, God speaks to Noah exactly *seven* times. The name Noah is mentioned *thirty-five* times (*seven* multiplied by five).<sup>310</sup>

Besides the biblical account, a flood is mentioned in other primarily pagan ancient literature, in the region of Mesopotamia (Assyria, Babylon).<sup>311</sup> When compared with the biblical account, these accounts contain slight but significant differences. Here are only a few examples:

- The Torah teaches that the flood was *a direct outcome of sin*—terrible sin that flourished on Earth—and that it was *a just punishment* given by *a just God*. In comparison, one of the pagan accounts claims that the flood came because “God, who was resting, was disturbed by the loud noise mankind was making,” so He decided to punish them and brought about the flood.
- The Torah teaches that it was *Noah’s righteousness* (as God saw it) that brought about his salvation from the flood. The

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<sup>309</sup> Mt. 24:37-44; Heb. 11:7; 1 Pet. 3:18-21; 2 Pet. 2:5

<sup>310</sup> Gen. 6:13, 7:1, 8:15, and 9:1, 8, 12, 17. See also, Gen. 7:2, 3, 4, 10, 11.

<sup>311</sup> See for example: “Epic of Gilgamesh” – One of few Mesopotamian accounts, dates back to the 7 century BC. See also a good article in the “Jewish Encyclopedia” from 1906 at:

<http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/6192-flood-the#anchor11>

other accounts give *no reason* for the salvation of one man and his family from the flood.

- The Torah teaches that the flood was decided upon by the *One True God* of the entire universe. The other accounts state that “the gods debated among themselves whether or not to bring about the flood.”
- The Torah teaches that God only *smelled* Noah’s sacrifice. The other accounts say that “the gods jumped eagerly upon the sacrifices to consume them.”
- The Torah describes Noah as *a man* and in no way as a god. This can be seen especially in his behavior after the flood.<sup>312</sup> The other accounts claim that after the flood, “the surviving man was promoted to a god.”

In the first Torah portion, we saw how both Adam and Abel were pictures/foreshadows of the Messiah of Israel. This portion is going to reveal more details about Israel’s Messiah, this time through the third foreshadower – *Noah*, who is the next “actor on the stage” of this “epic play,” directed by the Almighty.

## **Pictures/Patterns/Spiritual Principles**

### **Noah and the Messiah of Israel**

#### **A Perfect Firstborn Son, a New Chance, and a Real Rest**

Noah’s father was named Lemech.<sup>313</sup> In Jewish tradition, the order of consonants in a word can be moved around to draw a specific

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<sup>312</sup> Gen. 9:20-21

<sup>313</sup> Gen. 5:28. In Hebrew, the name is spelled and pronounced as, *lemech*. In English it is, *Lamech*. Due to its deep spiritual meanings, I intentionally chose to use the Hebrew spelling and pronunciation.

spiritual lesson. By changing the order of consonants in Lemech’s name, it can be spelled (and it therefore also sounds) like *melech* (a king). Reading *Lemech* as *melech*, king, and considering the total number of the years he had lived, exactly 777 (a multiplication of “God’s number”),<sup>314</sup> could be a hint that Lemech is a picture of our heavenly Father and King (*God*), while Noah, his firstborn son, is a foreshadower of *Yeshua, God’s firstborn Son*.

It is interesting to note that Noah was not only Lemech’s firstborn, but also the first man to be born after the death of the first Adam. When dealing with the first Torah portion, I discussed the similarities between the first Adam and Yeshua. One of the clear similarities is the fact that both of them are described as God’s *firstborn*.

Here, I would like to add a few more details relating to the great importance of firstborn sons in God’s eyes: God always uses the *firstborn* in what I described in the Genesis portion as “the righteous line.” Adam was a *firstborn*, Seth became a *firstborn* after his brother was murdered, and now comes *Noah, the firstborn* man after Adam’s death. Careful reading of the text shows that God’s calling of Noah was actually the same calling that He had given the first Adam.<sup>315</sup> And indeed, the first Adam’s original calling would be preserved throughout the generations—through firstborn sons—and all the way to the nation of Israel, who would also be called *God’s firstborn*.<sup>316</sup> The last in this list of firstborn sons is, of course, the *Second/Last Adam*, Yeshua, the Messiah of Israel.

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<sup>314</sup> Gen. 5:31

<sup>315</sup> Immediately following the departure of Noah and his family from the ark, at the end of the flood, God gave them the same commandments that He gave Adam and Eve on the day He created them. One could say that Noah and his family actually took on Adam’s (and Eve’s) original callings. (Gen. 8:16-17, 9:1-2)

<sup>316</sup> Ex. 4:22

When the text is read in Hebrew, Noah is described as *tamim*.<sup>317</sup> The word *tamim* can be translated as “perfect,” “pure,” “upright,” and “innocent.” All of these descriptions fit the character of Israel’s Messiah. But notice, please, Noah was *tamim* “in his generations” (*generations*, plural.) It was not only in his own generation. Thus Noah, as a *firstborn* in the “righteous line,” is a wonderful picture of the perfect (*tamim*) Messiah who came thousands of years later to save the world, that is, not only His own (first century CE) generation, but a remnant from all the *generations* all the way from First Adam’s to the very last one, existing at Yeshua’s soon Second Coming!

Noah, Lemech’s son, was the tenth generation from Adam. Ten is yet another significant number in Scripture that speaks of order, law, trials, and testing.<sup>318</sup> Nine generations had passed since Adam, and mankind had suffered tremendously under sin and, as a result, bore the heavy yoke of its consequences.<sup>319</sup> It seems that God had revealed that He would give mankind a chance to correct his ways during a time period of ten generations before He would put an end to that period. But this end would only mark the beginning of a new period of ten generations and once again, a new chance mankind can correct their ways.<sup>320</sup>

Noah’s name comes from the Hebrew verb *lanuach* (to rest). The noun is *menucha* (rest). The Hebrew words *Noach* (Noah) and *yenachamenu* (will comfort us) sound very similar. Indeed, in Noah’s time God wanted to comfort families from “the righteous line.”<sup>321</sup> Thus, He provided Noah and his family (again, the ones closing that

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<sup>317</sup> Gen. 6:9

<sup>318</sup> Consider for example: The *Ten* Commandments in Exodus 20; testing/trial period in Numbers 14:22, Daniel 1:12-15. See also, Mt. 25:1, 28 and Rev. 2:10.

<sup>319</sup> Gen. 5:28-29

<sup>320</sup> As we shall see in next portion, Abraham was exactly the tenth generation from Noah.

<sup>321</sup> See Gen. 5:1-29; especially verse 29.

tenth generation from the beginning of this righteous line), with a chance to repent and to come to the ark, so they could be delivered from the judgment to come.

When Yeshua came the first time, things did not look good for the Jewish nation. Israel was under heavy Roman occupation. The people were oppressed, abused, and many of them probably were depressed. Good was considered evil, and evil was considered good.<sup>322</sup> Most of the Jews (including the disciples) longed for a redeemer who would bring them a much-needed *rest* (redemption and release) from the Roman heavy yoke and restore the kingdom to Israel.<sup>323</sup>

As *Lemech* (or *melech*/king) begat his son *Noach* (rest), so God, the only perfect Father and King (again, symbolized by the number 777), begat His Son *Yeshua*, so that this cursed and heavily-yoked, overworked, and enslaved world could find the *real rest in Him*.<sup>324</sup>

*Noah walked with God*.<sup>325</sup> This phrase was used to describe Enoch as well. But most of all, it describes Israel's Messiah. Yeshua emphasized over and over again that all He came to do on Earth was *His Father's will!* All that He taught, all that He did, everything He experienced here on Earth, was in complete accordance with His Father's perfect will for Him. Indeed, everyone who carefully (and without preconceived ideas) reads the life of Yeshua of Nazareth can see plainly that He indeed *walked with God*.<sup>326</sup> God Himself confirmed this clearly when He spoke from heaven concerning His Son: *This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased*.<sup>327</sup>

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<sup>322</sup> See Yeshua's "Beatitudes" (Mt. 5) and His strong words to the Jewish leaders of His day. (Mt. 23)

<sup>323</sup> Acts 1:6

<sup>324</sup> Mt. 5:1-10, 11:29, Heb. 4:1, 3, 9-11

<sup>325</sup> Gen. 6:9

<sup>326</sup> Mt. 12:50, Jn. 4:34, 5:30, 6:38, 40

<sup>327</sup> Mt. 3:17. See also 17:5.

## **Noah's Ark and Messiah's Body**

As mentioned above, after Adam and Abel, Noah is the third clear foreshadower of Israel's Messiah. Here, I would like to discuss Noah's role as a redeemer more specifically.

Noah was commanded to build an ark. Whoever came into this ark was indeed redeemed and fully protected from God's coming wrath. The Hebrew word used here for ark is *tevah*. This exact word is mentioned only once more in the entire Tanach (Hebrew Scriptures), in the context of yet another redeemer—Moses.<sup>328</sup>

The two arks mentioned in the Tanach were covered with “waterproof materials.”<sup>329</sup> In our portion, the Hebrew words used to describe both the waterproof materials and the actual action of covering the ark, come from the same Hebrew root (*KaPaR/כ.פ.ר*). As discussed previously in connection to the *cherubim*, which guarded the way to the tree of life, it speaks mainly of *covering* and *atonement*.<sup>330</sup> To protect it from the gushing waters and other dangers of the flood, Noah's Ark was well *covered* or *atoned* for, both from within and from without.

Messiah's Body is also *covered* with one “waterproof material”—His own (*atonement*) blood. It is only when being *in Him* that followers of Yeshua are *covered, atoned for, protected, and saved* from the (soon to come) wrath of God. It does not really matter how terrible God's judgment will be upon this world. We, like the eight souls in

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<sup>328</sup> Ex. 2:3. Moses himself is a beautiful picture/foreshadower of Yeshua, as we shall see when studying the Torah portions in the next book—Exodus.

<sup>329</sup> Gen. 6:14, Ex. 2:3

<sup>330</sup> See discussion regarding the two guards and the tree of life in the *Bereshit* portion. As we mentioned there, one of the most important Holy Days mentioned in the Torah comes from this same root—*Yom Kippur* (Day of Atonement.)

Noah’s Ark, are *covered, secured, and protected*, as long as we keep ourselves *inside The Ark*—Messiah’s body.

*Three levels of maturity*

In Noah’s Ark, there were three floors, a window (very near the roof), and a door. Inside were the three sons of Noah with their wives, clean and unclean animals, and enough food and space for all.

When looking carefully at Yeshua’s body of believers, we will notice that there are what I generally describe as “three different levels of maturity:”

First, we have what I call *the Shemites*, represented by *Shem*. (See the following discussion on the meaning of each of the names of Noah’s three sons.) These believers are situated at the top level of maturity in Messiah. They are the ones who are the closest to “Messiah’s light” (the ark’s window).

Next, there are those I call the *Japhethites*, represented by *Japheth*. These believers are somewhere in the middle. They need to be careful not to fall into a *lukewarm* condition. As we are going to see further, according to the Jewish sages, Japhethites have real spiritual value only “while inside the tents of Shem,” which according to them means “the tents of God’s Shechinah Glory.”<sup>331</sup>

And lastly, there are the *Hamites*, represented by *Ham*. These believers are at the very bottom level of maturity in the ark (Messiah’s body). Please note that out of this son (*Ham*) came *Canaan*, whose actions speak and point to a very low (if any) level of spiritual maturity.<sup>332</sup>

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<sup>331</sup> Gen. 9:27. Onkulos, Yonatan and others (based on Gen. 18:1, 25:27 and others - describing God visiting His chosen ones at their tents, or very near their tents. Add to it the fact that He dwelled in a *tent* while in the 40 years of wondering in the wilderness.)

<sup>332</sup> Gen. 9:22, 25-26

*Both false and true disciples, with enough food for everybody*

As in Noah's Ark, also in Yeshua's body of believers, there are both "clean and unclean animals," i.e., both false and true followers. Please note that when Yeshua describes the Kingdom of God, He uses the picture of a fishing net. This fishing net, when raised up from the water, contains both "clean and unclean fish." He also says that only at His return will there be a final separation between the "clean/true/faithful" and the "unclean/false/unfaithful."<sup>333</sup>

And what about the fact that there was enough space and food in Noah's Ark? It clearly involved a great miracle to include everyone inside the ark. It would have been impossible to contain all the people and animals in the size of the ark described in Scripture. And, as it was in Noah's Ark, so it is in "Yeshua's Ark"—His body. There is enough space for everyone who desires to come in. We need only to want it with all our hearts. We need to ask God to "open the door of the Ark" for us, i.e., to show us the truth concerning His Messiah, which I believe He will gladly do. After all, wasn't it God Himself who brought the animals into the ark? This is the very same truth concerning people who are continually being drawn into Yeshua's body.<sup>334</sup>

Exactly as it was in Noah's Ark, so it is in Yeshua's body of believers. There is "enough food," i.e., *the Word of God* (taught and understood by the help of the Holy Spirit and those who are called to teach) for everyone who desires to be nourished by it.

And finally, notice please, that Noah's Ark was *floating on the water*. It did not have any solid contact with the ground. So, it should be with true followers of Yeshua. As Spirit-led people, we should look at and be attached to *things which are above* rather than to "earthly things" (i.e., being carnally oriented). Although as followers of

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<sup>333</sup> His kingdom also contains both *wheat* and *tares*. Mt. 13:24-30, 47-50. (See also Mt. 7:21-23, 25:1-13.)

<sup>334</sup> Gen. 6:20, 7:15, Mt. 13:10-17, Jn. 6:37-40, Act. 2:47

Israel’s Messiah we live in this world, we are actually *not* of this world.<sup>335</sup>

## Noah’s Ark and Water Immersion<sup>336</sup>

In their teachings, the apostles Shaul and Simeon (Peter) connect *water immersion* (water baptism) with two events from the history of Israel: the crossing of the Red Sea and the flood in Noah’s days. According to Simon, Noah and his family were *saved through* (or by) *water*.<sup>337</sup>

When carefully reading the detailed stories of conversion in the New Covenant writings, we see that they always involved water immersion.<sup>338</sup>

Immersion in water, according to the plain description in Scripture, is not a matter of choice on the part of the follower of Yeshua. It is described as the spiritual circumcision every true follower of Yeshua must go through.<sup>339</sup> Immersion has to do with the “separation” of a true follower of Yeshua from this world (represented by Egypt, as far as it concerns the crossing of the Red Sea). In immersion, the true follower “cuts” (I.e., washes, cleanses) Egypt/ the world out of his life. By being united and identified with the death and burial of Yeshua, the true follower buries his old nature (sinful mentality, slavery to sin, etc.) in the water and rises up as *a new man, a new creation*.<sup>340</sup>

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<sup>335</sup> Jn. 15:18-20; 17:14, Col. 3:1-11, 1 Pet. 2:11

<sup>336</sup> Gen. 7:17-23

<sup>337</sup> 1 Cor. 10:1-2, 1 Pet. 3:20-21

<sup>338</sup> Look at the conversion stories of the very first three thousand people at *Shavuot* (Pentecost, Acts 2:38-41); the people in Samaria (Acts 8:12-13); the Ethiopian Eunuch (Act. 8:35-38); Shaul (Paul) himself (Act. 9:18); Lydia from Philippi (Act. 16:15); the keeper of the prison in Philippi (Acts 16:33), and finally, the people in Corinth. (Acts 18: 8)

<sup>339</sup> Col. 2:11-13. We will discuss circumcision in greater detail in the next portion.

<sup>340</sup> Rom. 6:3-5, 2 Cor. 5:17

It is interesting to note that the water that saved the eight souls in Noah's ark, was the same water used by the Almighty to execute His just judgment upon the sinful inhabitants of the ancient world. This very phenomenon is repeated at the crossing of the Red Sea; the waters of the Red Sea "saved" the Israelites that crossed it, while the perusing Egyptians were severely judged while trying to cross it the same way.<sup>341</sup>

## **Noah, The Messiah, and the End Times**

If we pay attention to Yeshua's words concerning the end times and His Second Coming, we cannot ignore the fact that we are indeed living in the very fulfillment of these *latter days*.<sup>342</sup> Let us consider a few examples.

We have been witnessing *wars and rumors of wars* for decades now. More people have been killed in wars over the last 100 years than ever before. Across the earth, earthquakes have become increasingly frequent. There are many false teachers who say, *He is here, He is there...*

Moreover, it is my understanding that the most important sign pointing to the fact that we are indeed living in the end times is the establishment of the modern State of Israel; this, after almost two thousand years of Jewish dispersion and against all odds! Jerusalem becomes more and more the city the eyes of the world are pointing to; it is also the very central issue in the conflict between Israel, the Muslim world and specifically those called "Palestinians."<sup>343</sup>

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<sup>341</sup> Ex. 14

<sup>342</sup> Mt. 24-25

<sup>343</sup> I say, "these called Palestinians" simply because there has never been such a people/entity in the past. In my opinion, this new (invented) entity/"nation" is the biggest threat to Israel as a nation, from within the land itself. Unfortunately, Israeli leaders, together with leaders of most states

Whoever has *eyes to see and ears to hear* will notice how in our very days, *evil is called good and good is called evil*. But exactly as in the days of Noah, so it is in our days: the vast majority of people are still spiritually blinded to what is happening all around them.

*Enough time to build the ark and to repent*

According to the Jewish sages, it took Noah 120 years to build the ark. Why such a long time? This was so people would have enough time to repent and come into the ark (or to plead with God to relent concerning His coming judgment).<sup>344</sup> Scripture is not clear on the exact length of time it really took Noah to build the ark, but one thing is for certain: The Jewish writers of the New Testament agreed (in principle) with the understanding of the sages. For example, Peter tells us that God “delays judgment” so more people will have time to repent and return to an intimate relationship with Him.<sup>345</sup>

People in our day are no different than those who lived in Noah’s time. Then, they mocked Noah and scorned him until the flood came and took them by surprise, killing them all. Ever since the Gospel of Israel’s Messiah was first preached, people have been mocking and scorning it as well.<sup>346</sup>

The responsibility Noah bore towards his contemporaries is the same responsibility true followers of Israel’s Messiah have in these last days. Messiah’s true disciples are to keep busy “building Yeshua’s Ark.” We are to take the time to construct the ark of God’s kingdom here on Earth, so people can see it, be attracted to it, and come into it. As present-day followers of Israel’s Messiah, the inevitable question

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in the world swallowed that lie. However, this issue is a topic for another (entirely different) book.

<sup>344</sup> Rashi and Ramban. Based on Gen. 6:3 – *Yet his days will be one hundred and twenty years...* The Jewish sages thought this time limit on the life of man, was intended specifically at Noah’s generation.

<sup>345</sup> 2 Pet. 3:3-9

<sup>346</sup> 1 Cor. 1:18-31

we should ask ourselves is, “Can people see Yeshua’s Ark in our midst? Does it draw their attention just as Noah’s Ark did?”

*The dove and the olive leaf*

In this context of the end times and the spiritual condition in our day, it is very interesting to note that the dove sent by Noah returned with *a freshly plucked olive leaf*.<sup>347</sup> The Hebrew word used for plucked is *taraf*. It speaks of something that was (or is being) preyed upon or devoured. Could this be another hint regarding the condition of God’s beloved people Israel, just prior to Yeshua’s Second Coming? Could it be speaking of *the remnant left from the Great Tribulation*—those who were preyed upon and devoured by the attacking nations, and who are now being grafted back into their own *olive tree*—even as God’s chosen of long ago were called into Noah’s Ark?<sup>348</sup>

## **God’s Prophetic Timetable**

It is interesting to see that the Word of God is very specific regarding the timetable of the flood: The length of the entire event was exactly *one year and ten days*. The beginning of the flood occurred when *Noah was 600 years old, on the 17<sup>th</sup> of the second month*.<sup>349</sup> The rain itself (together with the gushing water from under the ground) lasted *40 days and nights*.<sup>350</sup> The ark rested on Mount Ararat *on the 17<sup>th</sup> of the seventh month*—exactly *150 days* after it all had begun.<sup>351</sup> *On the first day of the tenth month*, the mountain tops were visible, and *40 days* later, Noah opened the window and sent out the raven.<sup>352</sup> Twice, a period of *seven days* is mentioned in connection with the dove that

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<sup>347</sup> Gen. 8:11

<sup>348</sup> Isa. 4:2-3, 6:9-13; Zech. 12:9-10, 13:8-9

<sup>349</sup> Gen. 7:6, 11, 8:14

<sup>350</sup> Gen. 7:12,17

<sup>351</sup> Five months (Gen. 8:4)

<sup>352</sup> Gen. 8:5-7

Noah sent.<sup>353</sup> On the *first day of the first month* the waters dried up from the earth.<sup>354</sup> Let us now elaborate further on some of the significant numbers previously mentioned, together with some interpretations of the Jewish sages. Following are several interesting points to consider.

*The rain and the gushing water from underground*

As mentioned previously, the rain and water from underground lasted *forty* days and nights. Generally speaking, *forty* is a number of “a testing period,” after which a change/new beginning takes place.<sup>355</sup> Indeed, the rain and the gushing waters “tested” Noah and his companions in the ark for *forty* days, after which “a new beginning” was declared by God (and this was still long before the waters completely dried up from the earth).

*Noah’s age—end of a testing period and a Sabbath day of rest*

Noah was *600 years old* when the entire series of events began. As we saw in the introduction, the number *six* usually speaks of mankind (whom God created on the sixth day).

In the Genesis portion, we discussed the Jewish sages’ approach and commentary on the story of creation. We said that they correlate the six days of creation to the six thousand years of human history, which would conclude on the *seventh* day (or, in the terminology used by Yeshua’s followers, “the millennial kingdom of Yeshua here on earth”).<sup>356</sup> Is it possible that another judgment is due to fall on

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<sup>353</sup> Gen. 8:8,10,12

<sup>354</sup> Gen. 8:13 (According to verse 14, the land was completely dry on the 27<sup>th</sup> day of the second month.)

<sup>355</sup> Moses spent *40* days on Mt. Sinai, Israel spent *40* years in the wilderness, Yeshua spent *40* days in the wilderness, and so on...

<sup>356</sup> See “The Sabbath, the Promised Land and the Millennial Kingdom.” As we mentioned there, this opinion is based on God’s Word: *a day is like a thousand years*. (see Ps. 90:4, 2 Pet. 3:8.)

planet Earth in our days, since humanity has reached 6,000 years of its existence? Judgment that will be followed by a Sabbath day of rest, the (seventh) millennial kingdom for mankind and the entire creation? A Sabbath day which will be followed by “a new beginning” period where there will be *new heaven and new earth*?<sup>357</sup>

And, when speaking of new beginnings in context of the story of the flood, it is very interesting to note the following: In the very beginning (Genesis 1), all was covered with water while the spirit *hovered over the water*.<sup>358</sup> And so it was in what I call “the second beginning” or “the new page in human history” that God opened in Noah’s days: The Spirit of God *hovered above the water*.<sup>359</sup> As far as God was concerned, Noah and his companions were the founders of a new era/ new period in human history, at least as it pertains His relationship with mankind.

#### *Noah’s Ark resting*

Noah’s Ark *rested* (Hebrew, *vatanach*, from *menucha*, “rest”; see our previous discussion regarding Noah’s name) on Mount Ararat, in the *seventh* month. As some of us know, the first month in God’s calendar is *Nissan* (in March or April, according to the Gregorian calendar).<sup>360</sup> So the ark must have rested on that mountain during the Feast of Tabernacles (*Sukkot* or *Booths*), which is a very significant feast. It is the *seventh* and last feast in what I call “God’s prophetic calendar.” It speaks of the ingathering of all back to the Creator; it points to God “tabernacling” with us, His people, at the end of days.<sup>361</sup> In other words, Noah’s Ark resting on the mount on the seventh month is yet another foreshadowing of the *seventh*

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<sup>357</sup> See Rev. 21:1; 2. Pet. 3:13; Isa. 65:17.

<sup>358</sup> Gen. 1:2

<sup>359</sup> Gen. 8:1 – “Wind” and “Spirit” are the same very word in Hebrew, *Ruach*.

<sup>360</sup> Ex. 12:1-2

<sup>361</sup> We will discuss God’s feasts in greater detail when we consider the Torah portions in books of Exodus and Leviticus.

(millennial) “day of rest” where, as we said above, the entire creation is going to have “a Sabbath rest” with Yeshua, Israel’s Messiah. Yes, this will happen when He comes to gather those who are His, and “to tabernacle” with mankind and reign as king over all the earth.

## **After the Flood—God’s Masterplan of Salvation Continues to Unfold**

### **God’s Mercies and Love Endure Forever**

When dealing with the first portion we discussed God’s two descriptive names. We said that the name *God* (Hebrew, *Elohim*) speaks of His unchangeable attributes, while the name *Lord* (Hebrew, *Jehovah/Yahweh*) speaks of His attributes of intimacy, love and mercy. Now, when looking at the story of the flood and what took place immediately afterwards, some very interesting points emerge.

*God* is mentioned in the context of His clear instructions to Noah and his companions after they left the ark. However, on two other occasions, one before the flood and the other after it, *Lord* is mentioned. And more specifically, the name *Lord* is mentioned (a) when He Himself closed the door of the ark (just before the rain fell and the underground water started gushing out) and (b) when He *smelled* the sacrifices offered by Noah.

Again, who closed the door of the ark so that the flood waters wouldn’t harm Noah and his family? The *Lord* Himself! Who accepted Noah’s sacrifices? The *Lord*. Do you remember who made the *skin tunics* and covered Adam and Eve’s naked bodies? Again, it was the *Lord* Himself.<sup>362</sup> All of this is as if God wanted to say to

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<sup>362</sup> Gen. 3:21, 7:16

Noah and his companions, “It is a new beginning; I’m fully restoring our relationship of intimacy based on *My love and mercy*.”<sup>363</sup>

God promised He would never again judge the earth with flood waters.<sup>364</sup> What caused Him to make this promise? He, in His great love and mercy (*Lord/Jehovah*), *smelled* the good fragrance of Noah’s sacrifices. The Hebrew word used to describe the smell itself is *re’ach nicho’ach* (a soothing aroma). To the Hebrew speaker, the words *Noach* (Noah, *rest*) and *nicho’ach* sound very similar. When I read the text in its original Hebrew, I can understand it to mean that God was delighted in the sacrifices that were offered by the ones *who were at rest*. This must be true also concerning those of us who are in Yeshua’s complete *rest*. We, too, should approach God with offerings and sacrifices of praise that create *a soothing aroma* for Him. Why? Because our offerings are presented to the Father from a condition of “perfect peace and rest” provided by Yeshua, our great Redeemer.<sup>365</sup>

Moreover, the rainbow is yet another proof of God’s loving-kindness towards man.<sup>366</sup> Until the flood, there were probably neither clouds nor rain. According to Sforno,<sup>367</sup> every time we see a rainbow in the sky, we must not only remember God’s grace and promises, but we must also call people to repent and return to their Creator.

And lastly, the permission to eat meat, given only after the flood, was an act of mercy in itself, as there was probably nothing else to eat in these first days outside the ark. Nevertheless, this permission was restricted. God forbade eating meat with its blood. Here, we have the

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<sup>363</sup> Gen.8:20-22

<sup>364</sup> Gen. 8:21-22, 9:11-17

<sup>365</sup> See also 2 Cor. 2:15, Eph. 5:2, Heb. 4:1-13.

<sup>366</sup> Gen. 9:8-17

<sup>367</sup> Rabbi Ovadia ben Jacob, who lived during the 15-16 centuries CE.

very first clear indication of the importance of the blood, as it contains *life*.<sup>368</sup>

## **Noah’s Flesh (Weakness) and God’s Master Plan of Salvation**

As we already know, Noah is the third foreshadower of the Messiah of Israel in the Torah, after Adam and Abel. Nevertheless, as we continue to read this portion, we can clearly see how human he actually was, while following the pattern set by his father and grandfather (and exactly like us all). Noah had one clear weakness: Scriptures tell us he got so drunk he did not notice he was naked.<sup>369</sup> Could it be that even here, in Noah’s very weakness, there are some hidden, nevertheless very important truths concerning humanity and God’s great plan of salvation for the entire world? I believe the answer is yes. Allow me to elaborate.

Mankind, as we know it since the flood, came from the loins of Noah’s three sons. Noah’s very weakness (drunkenness) revealed some of the true prophetic characteristics of these “new fathers” of humanity. Actually, the very names of Noah’s three sons hold a great deal of prophetic data concerning God’s masterplan for the salvation of all humanity.

Let us start with *Shem*. The name of this son, in Hebrew, literally means *a name* (שם). Shem’s descendants spread throughout Asia, the Middle East and the surrounding areas.<sup>370</sup> According to Scripture, 70 nations descended from Noah’s three sons.<sup>371</sup> As we proceed in our

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<sup>368</sup> Gen. 9:3-6. The role of blood in God’s plan of salvation will become clearer as we proceed to study the Torah portions, especially in the books of Exodus and Leviticus. (see for example: Lev. 17:11.)

<sup>369</sup> Gen. 9:20-24

<sup>370</sup> See map on page 463.

<sup>371</sup> Gen. 10:2-4, 6-7, 13-18, 22-32. The Jewish sages (especially in the Babylonian Talmud, and also in the writings of the Rambam), believe that God gave these nations what is known as “the seven Noahide laws:” *no*

study of the portions in this book, we will see that out of these seventy nations, God chose only one to represent Him here on Earth as His beloved *Chosen People*. Both the nation of Israel and the great King Messiah, the Redeemer of all mankind, would eventually come from Shem's loins. In fact, one of God's descriptive names is *the God of Shem*.<sup>372</sup>

*Shem* is also called *the father of all the children of Eber* (in Hebrew, *Eber*).<sup>373</sup> From *Eber* we have yet another descriptive Hebrew word, which was attached to an important additional Biblical character, Abraham. He would be called *Abram the Hebrew* (Hebrew, *Avram Ha'Eevri*).<sup>374</sup> In Hebrew, *ever* and *eevri* come from the same root ע.ב.ר (*Aa.Va.R*), which means "passing," "crossing" (usually from one side of a river to its other side), "wandering," "moving" and "going from one place to another." Indeed, all the first known *Hebrews* "wandered" and "crossed over" from place to place, following the example of their Father Abraham.<sup>375</sup>

The Jewish sages claim that Shem was the only one who really cared for his father Noah when he was found in his nakedness, and that he was the one who covered Noah's naked body. They say this is the reason why Shem was worthy to sit in tents—the tents of God's Shechinah Glory, or, "tents of Torah study."<sup>376</sup>

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to idolatry, *no* to cursing the divine name, *no* to murder, *no* to sexual transgressions, *no* to theft, *no* to eating a limb torn from a live animal, and lastly, the *establishment of a court system* to keep order (under laws and regulations) and to administer justice.

<sup>372</sup> Gen. 9:26. Religious Jews, when asked "how are you doing?" often use the phrase, "*Baruch Hashem*" (Bless the Name, or, blessed be the Name), referring to the God of Israel.

<sup>373</sup> Gen. 10:21

<sup>374</sup> Gen. 14:13

<sup>375</sup> As we proceed with the study of the portions in this book, we shall see how Abraham, yet another picture/foreshadower of Messiah, crossed rivers on his way to the Promised Land and, while in the land, continued his journeys, "moving" from one place to another.

<sup>376</sup> Rashi and others.

We continue with the next son, *Japheth*. This son’s name, in Hebrew *Yefet*, is probably derived from *Yofi*, (beauty). Japheth’s descendants resided mainly in Europe and its surroundings.<sup>377</sup>

As previously mentioned, some Jewish sages claimed that Japheth’s beauty did not have much value unless “it is seen within the tents of Shem” (i.e., while being in God’s Shechinah glory, and studying Torah together and under the guidance of Shem). It is interesting to note that even before Yeshua’s first coming, many Gentiles from western countries (from Japheth’s loins), were attracted to Judaism and, thus, converted to it.<sup>378</sup> Not long after Yeshua’s ascension back to His Father in heaven, many Gentiles (again, coming mostly from Japheth’s loins) joined themselves with the Messianic Jews. The best example of this is found in Acts 10, which describes the first Western Gentile family of Cornelius - who was most likely “a Japhethite” (belonged to *the Italian regiment*), and who joined in with the Messianic Jewish body of Yeshua. In Messiah’s body, which has both Jews and Gentiles, we can see a fulfillment of the Jewish sages’ understanding; that is, both “Shemites” (Messianic Jews) and “Japhethites” (mostly Western Gentiles) are worshiping and studying God’s holy word, in “the tents of Shem.” Indeed, Noah’s prophecy about Japheth dwelling in Shem’s tents was, and still is being fulfilled in our days.<sup>379</sup>

The third and last of Noah’s sons was *Ham*. In Hebrew, his name is *Cham* (hot). Many of Ham’s descendants reside in Africa of today.<sup>380</sup>

It is worth noting that *Ham* is always mentioned together with his son, *Canaan*. The Jewish sages concluded that “it was actually

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<sup>377</sup> See map on page 463.

<sup>378</sup> See a hint in Yeshua’s words in Mt. 23:15. Note also 1 Cor. 7:17-20. Could it be that Gentiles converting to the Jewish faith has its roots in the book of Esther? (See Esther 8:17.)

<sup>379</sup> See a similar principle in, Isa. 2:3 & Micah. 4:2.

<sup>380</sup> See map on page 463.

Canaan who started it all.”<sup>381</sup> *Ham* was the one who exposed his father’s nakedness to his other two brothers. Yes, he was the first one to see his grandfather Noah in his nakedness, but instead of covering his naked body, he went out to bring the others to view “the interesting scene.” Some even go so far as to say that it was Canaan (prior to calling the others to the scene), who actually “performed sodomy” on his grandfather in the tent!<sup>382</sup> Ham’s greatest failure came because of his unawareness of his son and his own moral nakedness. Thus, he was *cursed*, and his future was determined to be *a servant of servants to his brethren*.<sup>383</sup>

The actual Hebrew word that is usually translated in Scriptures as *servant* is *eved* (עֶבֶד). It is connected to yet another Hebrew word, *Avoda* (אֲבוּדָה, work), and can also be translated as *slave*. Moreover, the word *Canaan* comes from the root *ע.נ.א* (*Ca.Na.A*), which speaks of “surrender” and/or “submission.” History has proved this curse to be true and effective. Most known slaves from recent centuries actually originated from the regions of Africa, i.e., being Canaan’s descendants.<sup>384</sup>

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<sup>381</sup> Rabbi Judah (“the president/ruler” – 2-3 century CE) and Rabbi Nehemiah. (also 2 century CE.)

<sup>382</sup> This sage’s conclusion is not farfetched, as when reading the account in Hebrew, it literally reads, *when Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done* (Hebrew, *Asa*) to him.

<sup>383</sup> Gen. 9:25-27

<sup>384</sup> I would like to stress that I’m *NOT* justifying “slavery” and I’m for sure *NOT* taking sides with anyone who was (and those who still are) involved in slavery! I’m only pointing to the biblical prophetic fulfillment in human history. Shaul, while addressing the issue of “slaves” clearly said that if it is possible for one to “free himself,” it is good to do so (1 Cor. 7:21-22). Moreover, ALL human beings, regardless of where they come from, their color or race, are welcome with wide open hands, in true repentance, into Yeshua’s body, and that includes descendants of Ham as well!

## The Tower of Babylon and The Great Harlot

### East and Rebellion

According to Scriptures, as well as the traditional Jewish understanding, there was one specific man who was responsible for the attempt to build the Tower of Babylon (Hebrew, *Bavel*). It was *Nimrod, the son of Cush, son of Ham*.<sup>385</sup>

As mentioned in the first Torah portion, *Nimrod* in Hebrew literally means “we shall rebel” (or “let us rebel.”) Although he is described as *a mighty hunter before the Lord*, he was the one who caused the people of Babylon (a city he himself had built) to rebel against God. According to the sages, the Babylonians chose to listen to Nimrod rather than to “the three great fathers—Noah, Shem and Abraham”—who were still alive at that time.<sup>386</sup>

Another important point that is worth mentioning again, is the direction in which the people who eventually built the tower journeyed. They traveled *to the plain in the land of Shin’ar*,<sup>387</sup> which was in the area where modern day Iraq and Turkey are located, east of the Land of Israel.

As I shared with you in the first portion of this book, it is my understanding that the location of the Garden of Eden was not where most of today’s scholars believe it was, but rather in the Land of Israel and, more precisely, at Mount Moriah/the Temple Mount, which is in the Old City of Jerusalem.<sup>388</sup> As you will remember, Adam and Eve were cast out (of that Garden) towards the East.<sup>389</sup>

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<sup>385</sup> Gen. 10:6-12

<sup>386</sup> Chulin 89a, P’sachim 94b, Eruvin 53a, Avoda Zara 53b, midrashim (such as Genesis Rabba.) and others...

<sup>387</sup> Gen. 11:2

<sup>388</sup> See again map on page 462.

<sup>389</sup> Gen. 3:24

Following the same pattern, the people of Babylon, of their own choice, traveled as far as they could eastward, in order to be as far as possible from God's presence (Jerusalem). Thus, we see here a clear pattern and spiritual principal in God's Word: East and rebellion are strongly connected.

As we mentioned previously, the orientation of the Tabernacle in the wilderness (and later on in both the First and the Second Temple in Jerusalem) was East-West.<sup>390</sup> As we shall see when dealing with the Torah portions in the book of Exodus and Leviticus, the sinner (i.e., one who rebelled against the Almighty) needed to make a hundred-and eighty-degree turn (repent), depart from his/her past (sinful) life, and come back and into God's Tabernacle/Temple (representing His Garden). He/she could do it only through one door, which was located in the most eastern side. Then he/she would need to allow the shedding of blood on the Brazen Altar (representing the shed blood of Messiah), continue through the Laver (representing water immersion) into the Holy (representing the desert/wilderness walk), and then all the way to the most western side of the Temple – the Holy of Holies (or, *inner sanctuary, most holy* - representing the Promised Land – End of the journey), where His very presence - the Ark of the Covenant, was located.

## **Making a Name for Oneself**

There were actually three main reasons for God's great dissatisfaction with the people of Babylon: (a) they built the tower *for us*, (b) they wanted to make *a name for ourselves*, and (c) *Lest we be scattered abroad over all the face of the earth* (which was connected to the first two reasons).<sup>391</sup> These three points show us how far mankind had strayed from the original calling of the Creator in the first place:

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<sup>390</sup> Ex. 25–31 (specifically 27:13-16), 35–40 (specifically 38:13-20); 1 Kgs. 6–8

<sup>391</sup> Gen. 11:4

First, as we discussed while dealing with the opening Torah portion, when God created mankind, He created them *in His own image*. As said there, the Hebrew word for “image” is *tzelem*, which comes from *tzel*, “a shadow.” Mankind was to resemble “God’s image” by being His “little shadows” here on Earth. Mankind was to rule over everything God created on this planet. They were to be “ministers,” appointed and supervised by God Himself, who would use them to govern planet Earth, *His* planet. None should try to build anything for him/herself. All of us should build whatever we build for Him and for His glory!

Second, the Creator gave both Adam and Noah a command to *fill the earth* and to *spread all over it*.<sup>392</sup> Here we see people who aimed at doing the exact opposite. Instead of filling and spreading throughout the Earth, they gathered themselves in one place. By dispersing them, God – in His great mercies, was actually directing and bringing them back to their first calling!<sup>393</sup>

Third, while there was full harmony between the Creator and His creation in the Garden of Eden (Jerusalem) before sin, and with no selfish ambitions, at Babylon (just opposite Jerusalem, to the East), we see that man did not care where he came from or to whom he belonged. They were very egocentric. Human beings were never created to *make a name* for themselves! They were rather made to carry *God’s name* within and upon them. They were made to spread *God’s name* throughout all the Earth.

Generally speaking, when human beings are disconnected from God, their Creator, who is their real source and purpose of life, they immediately set out to “make a name” for themselves. Why? A name speaks of one’s identity, character, self-worth, authority, and so on. All of these qualities were intended to come directly from the Creator. Without the presence of God in him, man is left with a great

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<sup>392</sup> Gen. 1:28, 9:1-3

<sup>393</sup> Gen. 11:5-9

void in his spirit. It is no wonder that man without God always seeks something with which he can fill the big hole in his heart.

When man is disconnected from his Creator, a great fear takes hold of him. Without God in his life, the only way he can deal with that fear is to share his heavy burden with others who are in the same spiritual condition. He and the others surrounding him need companionship, comfort, acceptance, and love so badly that they get together and “do something about it.” This “oneness,” this “togetherness,” makes them feel good and powerful. However, the only problem with this kind of “unity” is that the main and most important “pillar” upon which all should be based and built—God Himself—is missing.

I believe a good example from modern history is the fall of Communism. Some of the ideals of Communism were actually good (sharing and being equal with each other and so on). But once you take the Creator out of these wonderful ideals, the entire building collapses! I believe that the first time real communistic ideals (or better put, true bible-based community ideals) were implemented was in the first century by the first followers of Yeshua. The key difference, though, was at that *God* was the very center and “the pillar” around which their togetherness, unity, and oneness grew.<sup>394</sup> I do believe that we, followers of Israel’s Messiah, need community life and we should always function within the context of a believing community (sharing, having things in common, etc.), but our community should follow the example of the first Jewish body of Yeshua, and must be centered in God and His Son!

God was indeed very much concerned lest human beings succeed in their plans, both in the Garden of Eden (after the fall) and now in the city of Babylon. He, who *loves* His creation so much, was fully

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<sup>394</sup> See for example: Acts 2:44-45, 4:32-37. I think that the first believers did not act “out of their Jewish context.” They were following the principles by which another Jewish group at their time - the Essenes, were living, already two centuries before them.

aware of the devastating consequences of the poor decisions made by both Adam and Eve and now by the inhabitants of Babylon. In His great *compassion* for them, He put an end to their ignorant attempts by bringing His judgments upon them and saving them from their own dangerous selves.

## The Great Harlot

Babylon is used throughout the Bible as “a model of evil.” It is a picture of everything that is in opposition to the only One True God, and His City, Jerusalem, *the City of the Great King*.<sup>395</sup>

While dealing with the differences between the Hebraic and Greek mindsets in the introduction of this book, I mentioned Solomon’s statement: *Nothing is new under the sun!*<sup>396</sup> History repeats itself over and over again. It is no wonder that the story of the Tower of Babel was included (by the Jewish sages) in the Noah Torah portion. It was the Jewish Messiah who drew a correlation between the days of Noah and the days of His return.

The book of Revelation also sheds much light on end time events, the terrible developments that take place just before Yeshua’s Second Coming. John, the Apostle and writer of this important book, describes people in the end times attempting to gather themselves around a false Messiah, “the Antichrist.” John calls this humanistic New World Order: *Babylon, the Great Harlot*.<sup>397</sup>

As in the story of the Tower of Babylon, so it is in these last days: People believe that if their modern “towers” (globalism, oneness, strength, power, academic achievements, superiority) reach the heavens, they will be delivered from God’s coming judgment on

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<sup>395</sup> 2 Kings 24-25 (it was Babylon who destroyed Jerusalem/ the city of the great king and the first Temple); Isa. 13-14 (God’s judgment over Babylon); Isa. 48; Jer. 25.

<sup>396</sup> Eccles. 1:9

<sup>397</sup> Rev. 14:8, 16:19, 17:5, 18:2, 10, 21

Earth. They think that if God decides to judge Earth again with a flood *or fire*, they will escape it simply by “climbing” to the top of their man-made escape mechanisms.

Today, with the “New Age movement,” the “New World Order,” and so on, people are once again repeating the mistakes made so long ago by the people of Babylon. People in this modern world are again yielding themselves to what I call “the modern Nimrod system” which is, in my opinion, nothing but the spirit of Antichrist telling them, “We need to unite and build for ourselves a system that will help us fight all the dangers of this world, all its obstacles, all its hardships...” Yes, the spirit of this world (Antichrist) is pushing people to make “a name for themselves.” It assures people they are all children of the same God, and the only thing they really need is “right understanding” which is achieved by “looking inside themselves,” “being aware of their true self” and, worst of all, “seeing God in themselves and all – including nature - around them.” This spirit of Antichrist continues to tell them, “Yes, let us join together now; our lives will be much better once we are united and hold things in common. Bring your talents and join in the building of this powerful new world order,” which, in reality, is nothing more than the rebuilding of that same old *Tower of Babylon!*

## **Get Out of Her, My People!**

As discussed, while dealing with the differences between the Hebraic and Greek mindsets, in Scripture, there is a strong connection between the natural and the spiritual. In other words, the natural speaks and points to the spiritual. In this context, it is interesting that one of the biggest centers of evil and terrorism in recent years is in the region of modern Iraq and Iran (where ancient *Shin'ar* and *Babylon* were located). It is worthy of noting that Saddam Hussein, up to the minute he was executed, considered himself to be the successor of the famous biblical figure, Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, the one who destroyed the first Temple in Jerusalem. It is

common knowledge that before he passed from this world, he also thought to rebuild the ancient city of Babylon.

The Bible warns us: *Get out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins.*<sup>398</sup> If this speaks only of a physical, geographic location (modern Iraq and Iran), then only the believers in that area should be really concerned and fully attuned to that clear warning. As recent world events continue to unfold, one can see that the *Babylon* of Scriptures is not just a geographic location here on planet Earth, but, rather, it is what I call “an evil spiritual authority, a stronghold, a system, an ungodly mindset,” all of which are well spread throughout our planet. Indeed, when God executed His holy judgment on the people and Tower of Babylon, the ancient evil spirits as well spread throughout the earth.<sup>399</sup>

Yes, that *Babylon* can be found everywhere these days. Again, when God dispersed the people of Babylon, the rebellious spirits joined with them. They took their idols with them. They took their pagan ambitions, practices, and evil spiritual orientations with them. Today, these pagan ideas and practices are all around us. Whether they are tangible idols (statues or figurines that are still worshipped in many places, mostly in Third World countries) or modern idols (such as career, money, harlotry, child abuse, abortions, and so on), they still originate from the same ancient city and its tower—the Tower of Babylon.

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<sup>398</sup> Rev. 18:4. See also Isa. 48:20, Jer. 50:6-10, 51:45-48

<sup>399</sup> Not many know that the leading “force” behind the New World Order movement, are “secret societies,” such as the “free masons,” “the aluminates” and others... careful reading of their “belief system” will shock any true follower of Israel’s Messiah. They do believe that the God of Israel, described in the Tanach and the New Covenant writings is no other than, “the god of darkness,” while the “true god” is actually... Lucifer! (one of the descriptive names of Satan/the Serpent. See, Isa. 14:12. In Hebrew, *Heillel Ben Shachar* – “son of the dawn/morning break.” The context is very interesting: Isaiah prophesied against the king of...Babylon!)

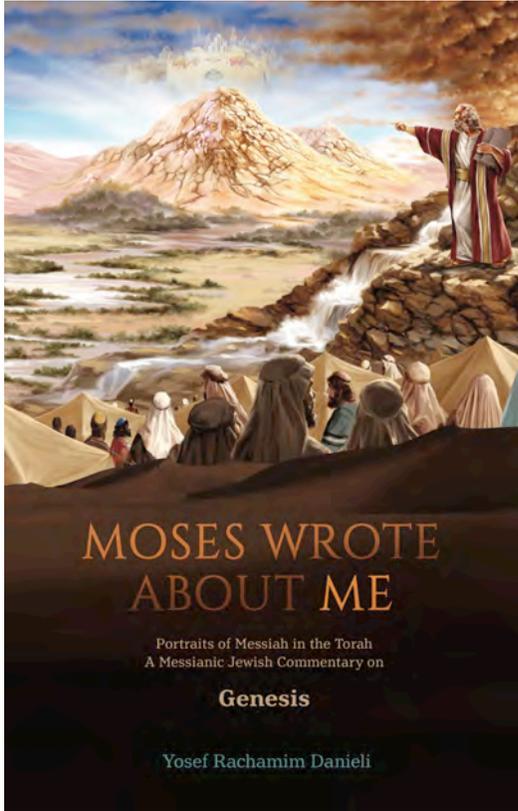
I really believe that every one of us, yes, even followers of Israel's Messiah Redeemer, should ask the following questions: "Are there any old, sinful remnants of Babylon in me?" "Are there any Babylonian remnants in the body of Yeshua today?"<sup>400</sup> "Is the Babylonian spirit (Nimrod's spirit of rebellion) affecting even us modern day believers?" "Is there any tendency *to make a name for ourselves*?" "Do we tend to build huge sanctuaries and gather people around one very charismatic leader instead of *spreading out* into home groups or small congregations as was done in the first century?" "Do we have intimate (family-oriented) relationships like the first body of believers enjoyed, where everyone was actually an active, contributing member in the weekly gatherings?"<sup>401</sup>

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<sup>400</sup> Any true and sincere follower of Israel's Messiah who does a little research on some well-known and widely accepted traditions of the church today, such as the "Christian feasts" and different "celebrations," will be shocked to discover the pagan (Babylonian) origins of these very well-accepted (and practiced) traditions.

<sup>401</sup> See for example: Acts 2:44-47 and 1 Cor. 16:19





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