

Welcome
to
Contenders Voice Discipleship Series
Genesis (“B’resheet”)

Discipleship Lessons from Manual One of Five

12 Parsha Lessons

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Introduction

Read all or part of the presentation and make up your own mind concerning its biblical validity.

The ***Contender’s Voice Discipleship Series*** is a year-long, college-level, Torah based study designed to (a) instruct and encourage messianic believers, particularly Christian saints, in their recovery of the original apostolic Nazarene faith. The ministry’s focus is to equip them in their journey of becoming true Spirit-filled, Torah-oriented disciples of Yeshua.

Thus, our C.V. Genesis course is grounded in the Hebraic realities asserted in the Scriptures. **These fundamentals highlight** (a) the centrality and authority of Yeshua, our Jewish Messiah, and His life and teaching, (b) the ongoing validity of the Torah, (c) the full ministry of the Holy Spirit, and (d) the restoration of the original apostolic faith modeled and taught by Yeshua himself and the early Nazarene Israelite apostles and disciples of the blessed Messiah. To that end the twelve parsha lessons of Genesis/*B'reshet* have been prepared to (1) ground serious *transitioning students* in their divinely bequeathed apostolic Nazarene faith and heritage, (2) equip them in end times prophetic vision, (3) assist in their becoming Spirit-filled, sanctified disciples of their Savior, (4) help them stay on track to becoming conformed to the likeness of their Messiah, the living Torah, (5) educate them concerning the reunification of the houses of Judah and Israel (Ephraim) and (6) encourage disciples to go beyond the *relationship level* of faith to develop true, Abrahamic *friendship-fellowship* with the Ecclesia's High Priest—Yeshua HaMashiach. But be sure—this growth and attainment occurs only as a believer strives to remain under the authority of the Word of Elohim and sustain communion with the Spirit. **This persistence is not a burden. It produces a joyful and blessed life. What do you think about that , dear reader? We hope you will be inspired to press forward.**

The Contender's Voice entire, year-long discipleship course consists of 54 parsha lessons. They are all based upon the **whole Word of God** → the Torah (or Pentateuch, the **first five books** of the Bible), the Tanakh (includes the remaining books of the Old Testament, also referred to as the Prophets and Writings), **and** the Apostolic Scriptures (the entire New Testament, or *Brit Chadashah*). Notwithstanding, it is the five books of the Torah that form the foundation for the education ministry of *Contender's Voice*. They are: (1) Genesis/*B'reshet*, (2) Exodus/*Sh'mot*, (3) Leviticus/*V'yikra*, (4) Numbers/*Bamidbar*, and (5) Deuteronomy/*D'varim*. **The one-year course follows** the yearly Torah reading cycle which begins with *B'reshet*. We also recommend our readers looking into *Contender's Eber School* referenced on the menu bar.

Messiah Yeshua wants Disciples.

In **each of its parsha lessons** this foundational course emphasizes the importance *and* the duty of the reader/student exalting Yeshua in all aspects of life. Matthew 4:19; 28:19-20; John 14:15-31. For that reason *Contender's Voice* accentuates the requirement, and the value also, of messianic saints (a) honoring Yeshua by obeying all

His instructions, (b) studying and complying with the Torah—all of it that is known, applicable and doable in this era, (c) living and serving under the full, active ministry of the Holy Spirit, (d) aligning with their Hebraic heritage and spiritual identity as the returning descendents of the lost tribes—the House of Israel, and (e) adopting the faith protocols and practices associated with the apostolic, Torah-rooted Nazarene faith. This was the early Judaen sect known as the *Way*.

Finally, **Contender's Voice** avers that the return of believers to these basic standards of faith will usher the Body of Messiah into greater intimacy and identification with Yeshua, contribute to separating His people from the evil spirit of the age, and equip them/us more completely to contend for the spiritual restoration needed by the Ecclesia in these latter days.

Therefore, Contender's Voice *Discipleship Series* continually emphasizes the call, nature, responsibilities, and blessings of being a true witness and disciple of Messiah Yeshua. (Matthew 22:37-40; 1 John 4:19). Enrolling in the one-year Torah Discipleship course and following through to its completion will firmly reset the diligent student's Israelite identity, cause him/her to experience notable spiritual growth, develop intimate fellowship with the Savior, and bring about a blessed transformation of life. **Does this journey appeal to you, budding guardian of Truth?**

Every lesson is divided into Eight Sections

1. Introduction: *The Call to Discipleship*. **2. Weekly Lesson:** *Torah—the Standard of Discipleship*. **3. Yeshua:** *The High Priest of our Discipleship*. **4. The Holy Spirit:** *The Power of Discipleship*. **5. Overcoming:** *The Outcome of Discipleship*. **6. Conclusion.** Application of the Principles. **7.** The Seven Questions **8. Reader's special Promise**

Note: Traditional Torah readings for each week of the year begin on the first Sabbath following Sukkot—the Feast of Tabernacles held in the *fall* season. See Leviticus 23. As stated above, the readings also include portions from the Tanakh and the Brit Chadashah (New Covenant apostolic writings).

The growing interest in the *yearly Torah reading schedule*--something an increasing number of messianic Christians are exhibiting, is strong evidence that a truth renewal, for which many people have earnestly prayed, is now underway. Furthermore, participation in the Torah reading schedule is growing right underneath the noses of many unaware believers, so to speak. It points to the efficacy of the manifold Hebrew Roots Movement. Yes, this heaven sent, spiritual phenomenon is diversified, often criticized and besmirched, but it has nevertheless spawned a

variety of Torah groups and fellowships—characterizing a cell replication in a way, but one that produces sundry, unidentical groups—not replicas as do Christian denominations. Anyway, doctrinal unity has been slow in coming, but King Yeshua’s prophetic intent to gather and unite all His scattered sheep will not be thwarted, but **will succeed**. The timely movement is **providing zealous believers—prodigal sons and daughters who are making spiritual aliyahs by returning to their Father’s house—with encouragement and fundamental knowledge** of the Hebraic/Jewish foundation of their faith.

The **Discipleship Course’s five sections**—Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy—present a steady flow of biblical truths that will instruct, encourage, equip and unify the students in their faith restoration and discipleship commitments. Thus Contender’s Voice *spiritual renewal studies and discipleship training* are timely. Our course is particularly crafted for students to learn the value of (a) teamwork, (b) discipline, and (c) devotion to duty, integral standards expected in the Assembly of Messiah. With these values well embedded, trained Contenders are prepared to recognize, expose, confront, and overcome this era’s infernally energized ambitions of evil. Spiritual wickedness and its reprobate human agencies (a) support the evolution of globalism, transhumanism, woke wickedness, and (b) expand *antichrist* evil—to name a few existential satanic aspirations. Basically, this earth-centered cosmic conflict **is tailor made for a Spirit-filled messianic brigade** of well equipped, visionary Contenders of Yahweh’s pure Nazarene Israelite truth—to **challenge and overcome**. Will you enlist?

Torah is Foundational

The Torah, as you know brethren, refers to the first five books of Scripture and is the core of divine wisdom. It is also known as the Law of Moses and the Pentateuch—a Greek word meaning “five books.” The word *Torah* means “teaching,” “instruction,” or “law.” It is the first of the three parts of the Tanakh, the Hebrew Bible, which also includes the Writings (*ketuvim*) and the Prophets (*Nevi'im*), as mentioned earlier. The Torah consists of (1) Genesis (B’resheet), (2) Exodus (Sh’mot), (3) Leviticus (Vayikra), (4) Numbers (Bamidbar), and (5) Deuteronomy (Dvarim). It is written with allegories, historical narrative, genealogies, poetry, and includes a wide spectrum of social, civil, and religious laws of divine origin. In fact, it contains [about] 613 commandments, called *mitzvot*. They are divided into 365 restrictions—or negative commands like: “*Thou shalt not commit murder...*” And there are 248 positive commands such as: “*Honor thy father and mother...*” and “*...remember the Sabbath.*” (*Exodus 20:8-12 KJV*). Also, for your information, a *Sefer Torah* is a Torah scroll, a copy that is written under strict conditions on parchment by a highly trained scribe. A *Chumash* is a Torah in book form. In summary, the Torah is *wisdom 2:0 ...* in today’s modern parlance.

Authorship of the Torah is ascribed to Moses by the process of him receiving divinely imparted words and inspiration. This is supported by (a) the Talmud [a collection of Rabbinic teachings, traditions, and oral laws divided into the *Mishnah* and *Gamera* commentaries] and (b) textual analysis of the Torah and other books of the Old Testament. Dates of the writing vary somewhat from author to author, but we will place the time circa 1450 BCE at Mount Sinai in the wilderness. Interestingly, the *Zohar* [books relating to Jewish mysticism], states that the Torah was created before the world, as a blueprint for creation. It reads: “G-d looked into the Torah and created the world. Man looks into Torah and sustains the world.” Wisdom appears to be the emphasis here. This statement should be examined on the basis of John 1:1 which says, “*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*” The “Word” speaks of pre-incarnate Yeshua (John 1:14; Rev.19:13) who “*became to us the wisdom of God...*” (1 Cor. 1:30). The verse has also been interpreted: “*Who was made unto us [manifested] from God—both righteousness and sanctification and redemption.*” Thus the student can perceive from Scripture that the closer and more intimate is one’s union and fellowship with Yeshua, the greater will be his or her wisdom. Consider his assertion from Psalm 147:5: “His understanding is infinite.” Our Creator, who shares with us the future by prophecy, also instructs us in preparation for it. Concerning divine wisdom, it is written: “*YHVH possessed me at the beginning of His way, before His works of old. From everlasting I was established...while He had not yet made the earth...when He established the heavens, I was there, when He inscribed a circle on the face of the deep...I was beside Him, as a master workman...*” (Prov. 8:22-30). The Stone Edition Chumash states, “...man’s highest privilege and loftiest attainment is in the study of Torah itself--the light--whereby mortal man unites with the thoughts and wisdom of God Himself.” [pg.xxiv] Wisdom is the chief weapon of warfare. Consider the Word of Yahweh: “*Wisdom is better than weapons of war*” (Eccl. 9:18).

The Torah establishes the cultural framework for all Israel. But its truth and principles, such as man’s basic duty to love God and his neighbor, and the Ten Commandments, indeed have universal application. The Torah clearly has a place in every person’s life. Again, most Christian believers today observe the Torah to some extent by following most of the Ten Commandments. But they would do well by returning to the seventh-day Sabbath and honoring the Feasts of Israel, the nation into which they have been grafted. However, not all the Torah’s regulations and commandments apply to everyone. Nevertheless, we believe that those who are in covenant with the Almighty through faith in the atoning sacrifice of Yeshua, who are grafted into Israel, **should study the Torah and** honor its truth, principles, and such commandments that are applicable to them. Again, living amidst Yahweh’s instructions is wise indeed. Remember what is written: “*Wisdom is the principal thing*” (Proverbs 4:7) And (a) **an example of divine wisdom at work** in the earth today, and (b) **something that will escalate** the restoration of pure, unabridged, Torah-rooted biblical truth occurring in the Ecclesia and our

nation too--is the manifold Hebrew Roots phenomenon. In closing, we want to include sanctification as an example of divine wisdom. It is the state of being *set apart* for God's purposes and use, just as Yeshua prayed in John 17:1: "*Sanctify them [believers] in the truth; your word is truth*" (John 17:17). His means for sanctification include honoring (a) His Torah instructions, (b) the seventh day Sabbath, (c) the feasts of Israel, and (d) exhibiting humility and unflinching moral behavior. Yeshua expects His people to be distinguished and spiritually segregated from the worldly culture in their journey of discipleship and faith. His apostle wrote; "*Therefore come out from their midst and be separate, says the Lord*" (2 Cor. 6:17. See Isa. 52:11; Rev. 2:1).

Therefore saint, remember that Yeshua our Messiah is the living Torah whose holy life and ways we should emulate. Are you sanctified, dear believer? Be sure to be charged with wisdom—it is readily available. Take James, chapter one to heart. *Tamid Kadima-Always Forward*. Shalom. *Hutch Church*

Explanation Concerning Titles, References, and Definitions.

The manifold Hebrew Roots restoration phenomenon is diversified and has produced many Torah-endorsing, messianic groups, factions, and religious start-ups, so to speak. Hence, there also exists a variety of beliefs, scripture interpretations, and faith practices among them. **Contender's Voice** supports the faction of the restoration movement that is focused on the original apostolic Nazarene faith, and contends for its messianic truth convictions. But we also support the right of others to hold to their own convictions. Ironing out the doctrinal wrinkles and building an effective messianic unity among "crossover" believers **will require an** (1) understanding of the early apostolic Nazarene faith taught and modeled by Yeshua **and** followed by his apostles and disciples, (2) intelligible prophetic vision, (3) enduring determination and effort, and (4) maturity for the regathered *House of Israel*...for starters. With those points in mind, we present our website—*contendersvoice.com*. which contains our spiritual beliefs. They are proclaimed throughout both our Torah **Discipleship** Manual and (b) Torah **Commentary** Manual lessons, and listed in our Articles section as tenets.

Regarding names, we believe that Elohim—our eternal, divine, infinite, omnipotent and omniscient Creator is restoring the knowledge of His name—Yahweh, for His people to understand, use, teach, and proclaim, and honor. Isa. 52:6; Ezek. 25:17. Others may insist on believing otherwise. That is their privilege. Sometimes we use the four letter tetragrammaton YHWH—*Yod Heh Waw Heh*, found in the Hebrew Bible and elsewhere. Again, some prefer the letters--YHVH. What's more, our preference for the Messiah's name is Yeshua. Some others favor Yahshua or Yahushua.

The Bible quotes we use mostly are from the KJV, NAS, NEV, and occasionally the Restoration Scriptures-True Name Edition authored by messianic rabbi, Moshe Koniuchowsky. When other Bibles are used they will be referenced. Finally, the definitions of Hebrew words and names will be given within the text where they are used, along with selected footnotes.

The Lesson Box comments and quotes [excluding the Scripture verses], Chumash material, and other Rabbinic commentary references that may be included and explained, do not necessarily represent our doctrinal beliefs. They serve only as interesting, engaging narratives, insights and plausible ideas of Jewish and non-Jewish scholars and writers. There may also be short scripts from *midrashim*, the collective of ancient commentaries of the Hebrew scriptures. These are occasionally added for the readers' interest, attention, contemplation, and evaluation. Anyway, our study format makes unnecessary the reader having to repeatedly turn to source pages outside the text, a process which interrupts reading and focus. This inconvenience will thus be decreased while the learning experience is uninterrupted and enhanced. The *Seven Questions* and *Reader's Personal Promise* are present at the end of every lesson featured in each of the ten manuals. Read them carefully! Again, a full expression of Contender's Voice *Tenets of Faith* is embedded and designated in the Articles section of our website. **Now**, go forward dear reader with the presentation, evaluate its validity, and decide its merits for yourself. Do you believe that you are favored and beloved by Yahweh? You definitely are! Expect good things ahead.

Hear His Voice

Dear reader, make (a) *hearing His voice* and (b) *discerning what the Holy Spirit is pointing out to you in the Word* are priorities. This year as you read the Scriptures and each lesson completely, and prayerfully answer the seven questions that follow every parsha. You will find the effort is a valuable and transformative exercise, and very worthwhile. Indeed, learning to be led by the Spirit of Messiah, and hearing and obeying His voice, even the personal word of Elohim, should be developed. It is a great life-long and exciting undertaking. Further, it is an adventure growing numbers of believers are becoming embarked upon in these last days. Moses predicted of Israel: *"...in the latter days you will return to YHVH your Elohim and listen to His voice"* (Deut. 4:30). This "listening" is what many believers are now doing as they undertake the study of His entire Torah and yield to the full ministry of the Spirit of divine Truth. In fact, Spirit inspired, true prophetic encouragements, words of wisdom and knowledge, tongues with interpretation, et al, are the need of messianic ministry today. (1 Corinthians 12 and 14). **What do you think? Are you content with religion that functions apart from the designated ministry of the Ruach HaKadesh—the Holy Spirit?** Take seriously what is written: *"Now to each one the manifestation*

of the Spirit is given for the common good” (see 1 Cor. 12:1-27). **Study prayerfully and become spiritually acute.**

As we pray, repent, and seek Yahweh our Elohim we should expect our hearts and minds to be awakened and sensitized to His voice in this time of spiritual and moral lawlessness. Yeshua wants to speak to us today concerning the righteous plans He has ordained for the saints, and give us wisdom and joy, renew our strength, and make a way for success in our Elohim-given enterprises. What He has to say to you and me (a) is always helpful, (b) can even revolutionize our lives and vision, and (c) bless the lives of others. But the saints must truly desire to hear and become familiar with His voice, and recognize His words while discerning and rejecting those of the Gospel’s infernal enemies. Our need always is to perceive His direction, recognize His leading, and stay on His narrow Torah pathway as we serve Yeshua’s interests. Let us not waste time and resources, or befuddle other believers by turning in wrong directions. The conclusion presses the point again—we messianic believers need the Holy Spirit—who is the Spirit of truth, speaking to us every day, guiding and directing our steps, giving wisdom and discernment, and teaching us from the Scriptures. Amen.

The Seven Study Questions

These questions will appear at the conclusion of every lesson.

The “seven questions” are **a very important** aspect of each lesson. They require thought, contribute to the student’s learning, develop deeper prophetic vision, and serve to enlighten our students. All of you are strongly encouraged to take the time to complete all the embedded the questions also according to the directions. C.V. vigorously promotes study discipline. **Note:** The questions presented here are listed again at the conclusion of each lesson in both the *Torah Commentary Manuals* and the *Torah Discipleship Manuals*. Be sure to follow through with them and write out thoughtful answers. This dynamic will require **thinking!**

1a. In your opinion, what is the main theme or teaching of each of the listed readings individually? Starting with the Torah: What is its title? Where is its origin? What truth/idea does the interpretation of the title suggest? What is the Torah section's main truth, as you see it?

1b. What is the corresponding idea in the Haftorah? In the Brit Chadashah?

2. What is the outstanding, central idea or subject that runs through and unites all the individual readings, as you see it? What does it say about your own discipleship?

3. Find in the Gospels where and how Yeshua declares, demonstrates, exemplifies, or exhibits the parsha's central truth, and explain. Give chapter and verse. Will you follow Him in living the lesson's truths?
4. In what way was the glory of YHVH [manifestations of His goodness] revealed in the parsha lesson?
5. What does the parsha teach you about your Hebrew roots, your identity and crossover, your destiny, your duty?
6. In what way did the Holy Spirit/Ruach HaKodesh personally speak to you during prayer and study this week? Did He impress you about how to apply the parsha lesson directly to your life? Explain your answer using chapter and verse where necessary.
7. *"...because of practice [by reason of use] have their senses trained [exercised] to discern..."*
You and I are called to return to hearing the voice of Elohim and to functioning in the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Progressing in these vital areas will require spiritual hunger, faith, and practice. He is waiting for each of us to approach Him.

Ask the Holy Spirit to speak into your spirit/heart as you pray each day. Look for opportunities to lay hands on the sick or to be used in prophecy. Faithfully record the prophetic words and experiences you receive, and be sure to share and verify them with your brethren.

The New Covenant / *Brit Hadashah*

As mentioned already, *Contender's Voice Discipleship Series* promotes the believers' return to the original, apostolic Nazarene faith and endorses the importance of the Torah to messianic life and service. However the ministry *does not* advocate that believers (a) return to or practice any form of religious legalism, (b) convert to Rabbinic Judaism, (c) become bound to every Jewish custom—not all are compatible with the Torah, (d) develop a preoccupation with "heathen roots," (e) exhibit a harsh or critical attitude toward the Church, or (f) adopt other than Torah compatible, biblical liturgies and traditions.

Though the houses of Judah and Israel will become one restored house/kingdom again (Ezekiel 37:15-33), each house has its own historical uniqueness and identity. Consequently, as truth contenders strive to move away from the unbiblical traditions and skewed denominational teachings, and move toward the biblical standards of the original New Covenant Nazarene faith—our spiritual heritage, we will more readily fellowship with the truth and correctness we desire and be blessed for it. Such are embodied in the life and person of Yeshua, our Torah Teacher and Redeemer. While we can receive much from our Jewish brethren, let us keep in mind that Yeshua and His words are our focus and example. Those of the returning House of

Israel want to emulate **His** halacha—His pure Torah lifestyle, not that of another. These sanctified disciples are determined to learn and emulate *His* ways and abide in *His* inspired words. Messiah Yeshua is, of course, our High Priest and Mediator of the New Covenant which we proclaim is a better and a more glorious administration of the Law (See Jer. 31:31-34; 2 Cor. 3:3-9; Col. 1:13-14; Hebrews 8:6, for starters).

What's Next?

“I did not come to abolish but to fulfill...”

America, we have been told, is destined to enter a Golden Age era, one of justice, great prosperity, and advanced technology. This sounds great at first blush. We either go forward or we fall back. But what comprises a Golden Age and who will be the architects and overseers who develop and administer it? Well, some thought leaders believe we can count on several components, good and not so good, to appear prominently during the cultural transition designed to make the nation even greater than great. First, a golden age for America will include a recovery—to some extent, of traditional biblical religion and morality required to sustain constitutional governmental stability. Secondly, there will be a rise of AI superiority accompanied by Transhumanism, a neo-religion to some, which envisions a science-based reboot of human evolution and preparation for a hybrid, post-human, robotic epoch. Thirdly, our life experience will include total surveillance, travel monitoring, and cramped 15 minute cities for the common people, to cite just a few “advances” planned by a global corporate elite. **Of course**, a clear emphasis on the Kingdom of God, its Torah constitution, and His righteousness—spoken of by Yeshua, the resurrected Son of God, has yet to be clearly enunciated as a part of the plan.

Maybe the Golden Age vision will work out well, with improvements occurring throughout our nation's social, economic, and governmental realms—but it will endure only for a while. See Daniel 2:31-46. How long, though? Time will tell the tale. As for me, however, I am very happy that Yahweh our Elohim keeps His promises. With that in mind continue to pray, faithful readers—> ***“Thy Kingdom Come, they will be done.”*** This is the holy kingdom which **the Savior's followers should prioritize!**

Part One

We agree with the words of our Messiah and thus teach that the sacred Torah and the Prophets have never been abolished, annulled, or dissolved. *Matthew 5:17*. Rather, Contender's Voice declares the Torah is the foundation of all Scripture and central to the Gospel of our Jewish Messiah, Yeshua who is of Bethlehem, Judah, and the House of David. At the same time we also

recognize the grace of our Elohim powerfully revealed by the New Covenant. It miraculously benefits the spiritual needs of the individual “born again” followers of Messiah Yeshua, each one being grafted into the Olive Tree--the Commonwealth of Redeemed Israel. The two covenants, as are the earlier covenants of Scripture, are joined in the Messiah. *John 3; Roman 11*. Yet the New Covenant produces a better personal outcome for both Spirit-born Christians and Jews than did the Old mosaic Covenant. It does so **by the internalization of** (1) the Holy Spirit, (2) the Law infused into the mind and written upon the *new heart* into which (3) the divine love of YHWH is poured into hearts **by** the Spirit, and much more (Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 36:25-28; Rom. 5:5). Though ancient Israelites were instructed to put the Torah in their hearts, so to speak, during the Old Covenant period--by honoring the Sabbath, the Moedim teachings, and Yahweh’s *mitzvot*, or laws for instance--they were not consistent in doing so...except for certain exceptional individuals. *Exodus 19:5-6. Lev. 23; Deut. 6::4-8. Jer.31:31-34*. Yeshua, our eternal Sacrifice and Savior, has done this for us. Praise Yahweh. *John 14:15-17*. This precious blessing is supernaturally entrusted to those who believe in Him, giving them a new regenerated heart and the will to obey His instructions. We are new creations in Messiah (2 Corinthians 5:17)--each one miraculously endowed with new spirit, power, love, and sound minds, and an attraction to His Law. This is the great gift of the Father for His Jewish and Christian saints—who are set-apart and belong to Yahweh Elohim and are His distinguished ones among all people! *John 15 and 16; 1 Peter 2:9-10*.

Hence, we teach that the common believer is a new creation in Messiah and equipped to be led by the Holy Spirit in all matters of faith, obedience, and service. As we allow the Spirit of Elohim to minister and increasingly work in and through us, the words of YHWH become the prominently expressed part of our nature and our lives, and the words and thoughts of the world diminish. This is the fruit of the Spirit that comes forth and is nurtured and raised by the love component dynamically at work in the new heart--the inner person, or spirit. The New Covenant does not minimize or abolish the Law--Yahweh’s sacred Instructions for a blessed life, but confirms it! See Mt. 5:17 and Luke 24:44. Again, His holy truth and selfless love are internally infused within Spirit-regenerated believers who trust in Yeshua as their Messiah. **See** Jeremiah 31:33, Ezekiel 11:19-20, 36:24-27, Psalm 51:7-11, John 3:3-8 and Romans 11:26 for starters.

Part 2

Let’s look at the New Covenant for a moment longer--and magnify this great work of grace and mercy that made the atonement of Messiah Yeshua a reality. It was first pointed to in Genesis 3:15--in the Old Covenant. It is very important for believers to understand and appreciate the scope of our blessings, and be forever thankful. The New Covenant (some people believe it should be designated as the Renewed Covenant]) provides us with: (a) the spiritual birth

(regeneration of the spirit), and a new nature (a heart of flesh) that's responsive to the Spirit (John 38-16)); **(b)** YHWH's Word becoming a part of our being (Heb 4:12; Jer. 31:31-34); **(c)** a desire to obey YHWH's commandments through internally bestowed agape love (Psalm 119:36); **(d)** a perfect and divine High Priest, and a better priesthood with better sacrifices (Hebrews 4:14-16); **(e)** the gift of the Holy Spirit and His full ministry, including signs, wonders, spiritual gifts, ministry gifts, and eight motive gifts for individual saints (Rom. 12; 1 Cor.12-14); **(f)** Yeshua as our Intercessor (Heb. 7:25); **(g)** partnership and intimacy with Messiah as He works through us (Heb. 3:14); **(h)** victory over sin and an inborn hunger for righteousness (1 Cor. 15:55-57); **(i)** the satisfaction of every need met through Yeshua's cross and resurrection (Phil. 4:19), and the resurrection of the righteous (Luke 14:14). **See also:** John 3; 1 Cor. 15:20-23; 2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 4:22-27.

Yeshua, who has redeemed the saints from the power of evil, the curse and plagues of lawlessness, and the fires of Gehenna, has become to every individual believer.: **YHWH-Tsidkenu** (our Righteousness)--Jer. 23:5-6; **YHWH-M'kaddesh** (our Sanctifier)--Lev. 20:7-8 ; **YHWH-Shalom** (our Peace)--Judges 6:23-24; Isaiah 9:6; **YHWH-Ropheka** (our Healer)--Exodus 15:26; **YHWH-Shammah** (He is present with us)--Mt. 28:20; Hab. 2:14, Heb. 13:5; **YHWH-Yireh** (our Provider—"His provision shall be seen")--Gen. 22:4; Phil. 4:19; **YHWH-Nissi** (our Banner of victory)--Exodus 17:8-15; Ephesians 6:11-13; **YHWH-Rohi** (our Shepherd)--Ezek. 34:11-15; John 10:11-13. **And in Yeshua** we also have the promise and deposit [*earnest*] of eternal life(Eph.1:14) and **(k)** the New Covenant's provision of the Holy Spirit's empowerment for consecration (Rom. 6:13-14). Amidst the trials of life we, Yeshua's followers, can rejoice for the many blessings that have been bestowed upon us **and** our divine Advocate who intercedes on our behalf before the Father's Throne of Grace. Thankyou for reading. Tamid Kadima-Always Forward. Hutch Church

The Gathering Next

And in conclusion, **(l)** the **proclamation of and the means for** the restoration of Israel was set forth long ago in Luke 4:16-21. In this section of the Gospel we read of Yeshua speaking in the synagogue of His hometown, Nazareth. The passage serves as the official announcement concerning the purpose of His ministry--the fulfillment of the prophetic concept of (a) liberty for Israel and the (b) Jubilee for the exiled and scattered northern tribes of the nation. He was fulfilling that which is written in Isaiah 61:1-2, proclaiming that He was sent and anointed to preach good news to the poor, proclaim liberty to the oppressed and recovery of sight for the blind, release the oppressed, and declare the year of the LORD's favor. Most believers understand those words were directed to Israel.

That would be the **p'shat** level, or the *surface* level of Hebraic interpretation, of His announcement. However, there's a second level of interpretation—**remez**, or the *hint* level. It reveals a deeper meaning or insight. *Remez* suggests that Yeshua was also declaring on that Sabbath day that the time for the regathering and spiritual restoration of the Ten tribes—the dispersed sheep of the House of Israel, from their 2760 year of exile—banishment, spiritual oppression and ignorance, poverty, national blindness, and false worship--had begun. What do you think, reader?

The Reunification of the Houses of Judah and Israel/Ephraim

The New Covenant, the Mediator of which is Messiah Yeshua (Heb. 12:24), actually initiates the re-gathering of the scattered lost sheep [descendents and companions] of the House of Israel back into covenant relationship with YHWH (*Isa. 11:11-14; Jer. 3:11-18; Ezekiel 37*). Further, it commences the prophesied reconciliation of the Houses of Judah and Israel/Ephraim (*Ezek. 37*). But first, Judah—who is mostly blinded to the Messiahship of Yeshua--needs an alternative Torah observant witness to stir His interest in Yahweh's Son and unmixed, unadulterated Torah faith. That witness could only be those who are now returning to their Father's house and His commandments. These contenders are striving to establish a pure, united Nazarene Torah Halacha (lifestyle). Judah needs to see the Torah *in the hearts of the saints* manifesting His likeness and life in love and power. Only the Spirit [Ruach] makes this possible however, for "...the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us" (*Rom. 5:5*). We instruct set-apart believers that they are the people of New Covenant Israel--Nazarene Faith contenders **who openly proclaim their** (1) compliance with the Torah, Sabbath, and the *moedim*, (2) submission to the fullness of the Holy Spirit, (3) uninhibited expression of Israelite/Hebraic identity, (4) joyful acquiescence to a discipleship lifestyle and its responsibilities, and (5) uncompromised devotion for Messiah Yeshua. These important commitments are among the basic standards of the original apostolic Nazarene faith taught by the Messiah and delivered once for all time to the pentecostal Jewish saints (Jude 1:3).

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"These words, which I am commanding you...you shall teach them diligently to your sons [children]..." (Deuteronomy 6: 6-7). Contender's Voice is planning to prepare our parsha lessons to provide age-based Torah-rooted instruction for our (a) children and (b) youth. This inclusion will bless young and older alike.

Contenders' Voice

Discipleship Series

Book of Genesis/B'resheet

Lesson One

B'resheet (*"In the beginning"*)

Torah: Genesis/B'resheit 1:1-6:8

Haftorah: Isaiah/Yeshayahu 42:5-43:10

Gospel: John/Yochanan 1:1-5

Lesson Sequence

1. Introduction: *The Call to Discipleship* 2. Weekly Parsha: *The Torah—the Standard of Discipleship* 3. Yeshua: *The High Priest of our Discipleship* 4. The Holy Spirit/Ruach ha Kodesh: *The Power of Discipleship* 5. Overcoming: *The Outcome of Discipleship* 6. Conclusion 7. Seven Study Questions 8. **Reader's Personal Promise**

Preface

I Yahweh's Building Code is Being Ignored. 3 Minutes

Multiple studies reveal that today's modern **confessors** of Yeshua—the majority of Church attenders in the *first-world*, western nations in particular--intentionally disregard or downplay the instructions of our Savior. His words clearly direct believers to abide in--or *continue* in, His teaching. *John 8:31-32; 2 Timothy 3:14; Eph. 6:1; 1 Pet. 1:1-2; etc.* In other words, believers are plainly taught by Scripture to remain within the divine *force*, i.e., the *authority* of YHWH's sacred truth, and thereby be yielded to the power and leadership of the Holy Spirit. *Romans 8:4; Gal. 5:18.* This is accomplished by conforming their lives to Yahweh's commandments so they are regularly subjected to **Torah-and-Spirit** blessed influences. Judging by the spiritual and moral condition of our own flagging culture, it can be concluded that most church-going Americans do not build their lives upon the strong foundation of His Spirit and Life words. *Psalms 19.* In fact,

reliable Barna polls disclose that most Christians “grow their faith lives” rooted in the (a) errant spiritual beliefs that pervade today’s modern Christendom and the (b) corrupt moral standards and carnal pursuits of human society that wage war against the soul. *1 Peter 2:11*. The Messiah clearly warned His listeners, saying: “Whosoever heareth these words of mine and **doeth** them, I will liken him as a wise man which built his house upon a rock...and the floods came...and it fell not...And everyone that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them **not**, shall be likened unto a foolish man which built his house upon sand...and the floods came, and the winds blew...and it fell: and great was the fall of it” (Mt. 7:24-27). Presented before us, brethren, is Yahweh’s *building code* for success. Are you honoring it, dear saint? To our society’s demise, our foundations of pure biblical faith are regularly violated by many people, even by our nation’s religious folks. Constructing a strong, fruit-bearing *life-legacy*--personally or corporately, can only be accomplished by building it on the solid rock of the Messiah’s words. Certainly, they constitute the “*narrow way that leads to life*” (Mt.7:14). Stay on this blessed road and you will do well.

II The Fallen Torah Foundations must be completely Recovered!

Part One 1.5 Minutes

Christendom has become institutionalized and exists today as a vast, manifold religious organization primarily directed by social goals and varied denominational rules, but not by the Holy Spirit or the clear teachings of Messiah Yeshua. Hence our nation, bereft of powerful biblical encouragement, is crumbling. In fact, it is the *Whole Truth Movement* that is rising and leading the way of spiritual renewal. The nation’s comprehensive religious system however has become spiritually impaired by the (1) contagion of **unbelief**, (2) doctrinal compromise, (3) the persuasions of changing moral standards, (4) invasive New Age values, (5) anti-biblical political ideologies--such as Social Marxism and Globalism, and (6) the radical cultural changes that have promoted **wokeness** as the debauched face of neo-America. Grim! The nation’s biblically based *spiritual foundations* of sacred truth--those standard *pillars of faith* [unmixed doctrines] that established the (a) early **ethos of America** and the (b) stability of the Ecclesia/Kahal/Church, have largely been rejected. In fact, for all intents and purposes, the foundations are **more** than impaired, they have fallen into disrepair – taking law and order, justice, biblical morality, social stability, common sense, and Elohim’s advantageous blessings--down with them. Go forward to Part Two--a 1.5 minute read follows.

Part Two 1.5 Minutes

Long ago King David addressed the *progressive spiritual decline* of Israel--the devastating result of Saul's fall to infamy. King Saul's flagrant disrespect for the Father's Torah truth was the fundamental reason for his failure as Israel's leader. He expressed disdain for the Spirit-inspired

commands of prophet Samuel, committed murder, was plagued by demons, abused his family, and consulted a witch for prophetic counsel toward the end of his life. Such is a capital crime according to the Law of Moses! Saul's disobedience proved very costly for himself, his family, and the morale of his army. Tragic misfortune for him and the nation, at the close of his reign, emerged as the result of the narcissistic king's rebellion and godlessness. *Lev. 26:14-45; Eph. 5:6*. In the course of time, the absence of heaven's protective blessing upon Saul soon became apparent as Israel proceeded against an invading army. The unresisted evil force overriding the conflict's events brought **to pass the** (1) premature death of Saul and his three sons, and **the** (2) complete routing of the Israelite army and the demoralization of its survivors. This disaster was a judgment carried out by the instrumentality of the Philistines during the battle of Gilboa. *1 Samuel 3:1*. After reflecting upon the sad and calamitous events of King Saul's monarchy, which was indeed undergirded and orchestrated by satanic power, David wrote: *"If the foundations [of true Torah-centered faith] are destroyed, [rejected and preempted by wickedness] what can the righteous do?" (Psalm 11:3.)*. Israel's melancholy experience is relevant to our nation's circumstances today. Do you know what needs to be done, dear reader? Keep going!

III Faith Recalibration 1 Minute

So it goes with our own nation and its leaders. The current state of our postmodern religion, expired morality, and rotting culture can be diagnosed as terminal. This status has been brought on by spiritual debilitation. Yes, the **foundations of biblical faith** have fallen here too, being victims of spiritual and moral compromise. Precious truth has been displaced by satanic, antichrist alternatives. Indeed, this lamentable process has progressed over time and *respectable but sedate, Torah-less Christendom— "...having the form of godliness but denying the power..."* is the product. *2 Timothy 3:5*. King David's question in Psalm 11 presents to us a question that demands a response from everyone: *"What can the righteous do?"* Contender's Voice—which is among today's guardians of Torah truth, holds forth the exhortation of Jeremiah 6:16 as the answer to David's query: *"Stand by the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls"*

IV Our Purpose 1 Minute

A **"whole truth" revival is that which the Ecclesia/Church needs. It will follow persistent earnest prayer and deep repentance. At least to a remnant, such an awakening will recover and restore** (1) the Torah's unadulterated, unmixed pure truth, (2) the Holy Spirit's uncensored full ministry to the needy Kahal/Ecclesia, (3) true biblical discipleship and the obedience of faith among converts, and (4) the supremacy of the real, Judean Messiah Yeshua. Welcome to *"the faith once for all delivered to the Nazarene Israelite apostles and disciples"* (*jude1:3*).

The good news? A “return-to-truth revival” is, in fact, well underway. The early Nazarene foundations of faith have fallen but are being restored. Jude 1:3. This dynamic faith recalibration is Contender’s Voice reason-for-being. It could be yours too. We are participants in the Nazarene Israel Movement which is working to restore the original Nazarene Israel faith that was “once for all” handed down to the apostles and disciples of Yeshua. [Brackets inserted by C.V.]

We are now introducing the first Parsha of the Torah -- **B’resheit** (*B’resheit/Genesis 1:1-6:8*).

Part 1: Introduction–*The Call to Discipleship*

Yeshua summoned His disciples. *“As He passed by He saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting in the tax booth, and He said to him, ‘Follow Me!’ And he got up and followed Him” (Mark 2:14 KJV).* “The call goes forth, and it is at once followed by the response of obedience. The response of the disciples is an act of obedience, not [simply] a confession of faith in Jesus [Yeshua]...This encounter is a testimony to the absolute, direct, and unaccountable authority of Jesus [Yeshua]. **There is no need of any preliminaries...only obedience to the call.**” [18] Dear reader, He summons you to a lifetime of following Him also. Arise. Follow at once!

B’resheet [also spelled *B’resheet*] means *“In the beginning”*. *B’resheet/Genesis* is also the title of the first book of the Torah. Thus, the Book of *B’resheit/Genesis* starts our annual Torah reading cycle and is appropriately called the “Book of Beginnings” since it provides the narrative of creation. It was written by Moses around 1440 BCE and includes the period of Adam through to Joseph, a time span of approximately 2400 years.

It is said that creation is the story of the birth and establishment of Israel as the nation that inherited the task of Adam and Eve, which was to guard the Garden, multiply descendants, and restore and establish the worship of Yahweh, the one true Elohim, in the earth. **B’resheet is our first discipleship lesson.**

B’resheet brings us an account, in chapters one through eleven, of the creation of all things. Further, it reveals Elohim/God as the divine Originator of creation and redemption, and provides an account of the origin of the nations. The four most notable events in this long period are creation, the fall of man [the Antediluvian Stage of human history], the flood, and the Tower of Babel [the Postdiluvian period]. In chapters twelve through fifty, *B’resheet* makes

known the beginnings of the Hebrew nation [Patriarchal stage of human history] as chosen and established by Yahweh to be the particular people through whom the promise of man's redemption would be fulfilled. There are four outstanding characters in the first book of the Torah, Genesis/B'resheet, among whom the Almighty made and confirmed a covenant of redemption and blessing. They are Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph.

Yeshua is revealed in the Book of Genesis/B'resheet as our Creator, the Beginning, as the Seed of the woman, through the skins of sacrificed clean animals that Adam and Eve were clothed in after their fall, as the Ark of our Salvation, as Isaac the Begotten Son and Joseph the Beloved Son. An encouraging **central truth** in B'resheet--the failure, weakness, and sin of mankind is overcome by the redeeming grace, mercy, and unlimited strength of the Holy One of Israel. As you read, listen for His voice to speak to you personally. Begin anew, and follow Him!

Part 2: Torah---The Standard of Discipleship

Parsha Lesson One: B'resheet (*"In the beginning"*)

*"Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them [actually does them] may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock" (Matt. 7:25). Yeshua "...knows **only one possibility**: simple surrender and obedience, not interpreting it [the Word] or applying it, but doing and obeying it. That is the only way of hearing His word..." [2B]*

1. Traditionally, Deuteronomy [Devarim] 34:12, the last verse of the Torah, is read to begin the new Torah cycle. *"...and for all that mighty power, and for all the great terror which Moses showed in the sight of all Israel."* It is then followed with B'resheet: *"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth..." (B'resheet 1:1).* This joining is done to affirm that the Torah is one book, an unbroken continuum of divine wisdom and revelation. The final letter of Devarim 34:12 is *lamed*. As we read B'resheet 1:1 we notice that the first letter of the first word is *bet*. By uniting, or connecting *lamed* and *bet* together, there is formed the word *leb* [*lev*], the Hebrew word for heart.

The message: The Torah is a never-ending, united testimony of divine truth and man's purpose, and reveals and represents the heart of the YHVH. [1]

Note: The Hebrew word used for "God" in B'resheet 1:1 is *Elohim Aleph-Tav*. *Aleph-Tav* are the first and last letters in the Hebrew alphabet, and are used to describe YHWH's Son in the Renewed Covenant: *"I am Aleph and Tav, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last"*

(Rev. 22:13 RS). Colossians 1:16 and Proverbs 30:4 confirm that the Son is the true Creator and the Abba is the Master Designer." *Restoration Scripture; True Name Edition*. See John 1:1-5.

"And the earth was formless and void [a waste and emptiness], and darkness was over the face of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving [hovering] over the face of the waters. Then God said let there be light; and there was light" (B'resheet 1:2-3). There was a beginning to our terrestrial globe, to the heavens, and the rest of the universe which constitutes one vast, expanding, complex system. The universe is indeed spread out and far reaching, but not infinite. It is old, but not eternal; existent, but not self-existent. Neither is it self-energized or self-sustaining. It is obedient to the omnipotent Elohim of Israel, its Creator. He is the strong and mighty One. *Elohim* is a masculine Hebrew word in plural form. As such, it expresses the fullness of Yahweh's Divine nature, the multiplicity of His Divine powers, and foreshadows the revelations of the Father, Son, and Spirit. The Hebrew word for *created* is "bara", which is used exclusively of God and carries the idea of a distinctively creative act whereby "...the visible universe neither existed from eternity, nor was fashioned from pre-existing materials, nor proceeded forth as an emanation from the Absolute, but was summoned into being by an express creative fiat [command]." It is understandable why Jeremiah, upon hearing that Yahweh would restore houses, fields, and vineyards to fallow Israel, exalted Him in a burst of praise: *"Ah Lord God! Behold, You have made heaven and the earth by Your great power and outstretched arm! Nothing is too difficult for you..." (Jer. 32:17).* And YHVH responded to the praise and declaration of His prophet. *"Then the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah, saying, Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh; is anything too difficult for Me?"* His power is beyond our comprehension. With these Scriptures in mind, we today can confidently say with Paul: *"I can do all things through Him who strengthens me" (Phil. 4:13).* [2]

"The earth was formless and void. And darkness was upon the face of the deep." (verse 2). Literally, earth was an empty wasteland and emptiness, or *tohu vabohu*. The word is used in Isaiah 34:11 [applied to nations] and Jeremiah 4:23 [applied to Judah] to indicate a ruined, desolated and depopulated land.

Whether or not there was a previous cosmos wherein the earth became shipwrecked and void because of the sin and fall of angels is an ongoing discussion. We believe however, that such a cataclysm is the case. The prevailing thick and foreboding dense folds of gloom that engulfed the once beautiful planet offered no hint that the world of chaos would be transformed into a place of light and life. But Yahweh wanted the planet to have an appropriate form and be populated with life [again], and therefore He brought it forth. The chaos of the pre-Adamic world revealed in parsha B'resheet is a picture of the unregenerate spirit and darkened soul of fallen man, who is thus apart from YHVH's mercy and salvation in Messiah. Following along, the human soul, devoid of divine light, is also: **(1) without order**, existing in confusion and ruin, and

needing restoration and Torah structure/form; (2) *without life*, dead in trespasses/sin; (3) *without light*, cloaked in darkness and ignorance, and devoid of Torah truth; (4) *without hope*, living outside God's covenant and helplessly dominated/driven by the power of his fallen, sinful, selfish nature. But (5) **not without God**. Our Abba made provision, and "*demonstrates His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Messiah died for us*" (Rom. 5:8). And take note--grace was at the beginning. "...for He is good; because His mercy endureth forever" (Ps. 118:1 KJV).

"...and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters..." (verse 2).

The Holy Spirit "is uniformly represented as the source and formative cause of all life and order in the world, whether physical, intellectual, or spiritual (Job 26:13; 27:3; Ps. 33:6; 104:29; 143:10; Isa. 34:16; 61:1; 63:11). As it were, the mention of the *Ruach Elohim* is the first out-blossoming of the latent fullness of the divine personality, the initial movement of that sublime revelation of the nature of [Elohim], which advancing slowly...throughout the Old Testament times, culminated in the clear, ample, wonderful disclosures of the Gospel.

"The special form of the divine Agent's activity is described as that of 'brooding' (*merachepeth*, to be tremulous, as with love...to cherish young—see Deut. 32:11) or fluttering over the liquid elements of the shapeless and tenantless globe, communicating to them, doubtless, those formative powers of life and order which were to burst forth into operation in answer to the six words of the six ensuing days." [3]

The passage could also be taken as a picture of the houses of Ephraim and Judah, both of which descended into disobedience, disorder, dispersal, and disintegration, but by the mercies of the Most High, not complete destruction.

As once with a void and empty earth, the whole house of Israel is experiencing the "*Spirit of God moving over the surface of the waters*" mightily in this hour to restore the kingdom, power, and glory of YHVH to all of a reunited Israel.

We read that the creation activity took six days. There was light, air and water, dry land and plants, lights, fish and fowl, animals and man. It is said that *time* itself was actually first to be created—"In the beginning," or when time began.

2. "*Elohim saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day*" (B'resheet 1:31).

Everything was not just good, it was very good! [Day two, however, when the division of the waters from the waters occurred, is not reported as *good*. Perhaps because it was a portent of the eventual division among YHVH's people, Israel, from one another.] Elohim not only looked

upon man, but on everything He had done, and saw that all things were existing and integrated in perfection, and He was entirely satisfied. The earth, with man as its pinnacle, was a glorious attainment and the fulfillment of the Divine plan, according to the Torah blueprint. And the angels were astounded and rejoiced, as it is written of creation, "...who hath laid the measure...who laid the cornerstone thereof, when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of Elohim shouted for joy?" (Job 3:86-7).

[**Note:** Again, this verse may be in reference to what some would call the pre-Adamite world, that which existed before Genesis 1:2.] This we do know. He will do great things for you and me to rejoice over also. After all, He loves us greatly! "...eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither has entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them that love Him" (1 Cor. 2:9 and Isa. 64:4).

3. "Then Elohim blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because He rested from all His works which God created and made..." (B'resheet 2:3).

YHVH *blessed* the seventh day. Thus, it was declared to be a special day, one of divine favor. It

would be a day of blessing and benefit for all creation. And YHVH sanctified the seventh day. That is, He declared it to be holy, distinct from the other six days, and set apart for a divine purpose, just as Mount Sinai, Aaron and his sons, and the year of Jubilee were all sanctified and invested with a holy character. **The seventh day, or Sabbath, was consecrated as an eternal institution**, a day of resting from labor, by Elohim. It is meant to be a memorial: **A.** To His creative power. **B.** To the rest He took after six days of creative work.

Shabbat, the Hebrew word for Sabbath, means "rest" or "cessation." [Ashkenazi pronunciation is *Shabbos*; Yiddish is *Shabbos*.] It is a day of rest. Actually, it is the element of rest that distinguishes the seventh day as the Sabbath and connects it to YHVH. Shabbat begins at sundown on Friday and ends at sundown on Saturday. Shabbat is a day when Believers are freed from normal, common labors and thereby are to rest, spend personal time with Elohim, family and friends, contemplate and engage in spiritual pursuits, and do good (Mt. 12:12). The seventh day Sabbath directive is the fourth of the Ten Commandments given at Sinai. "*Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy*" (Ex. 20:8).

Most Believers correctly regard the Ten Commandments as God's code of conduct for man, especially incumbent upon all them who name Yeshua as Messiah.

After the passing of the Apostles and their peers, the early Ecclesia/Christian church was still growing but experiencing persecution. When Constantine became Emperor of Rome he

officially instituted Christianity as the national religion of the state, ended widespread persecution, and incorporated into the Nazarene faith the customs and beliefs of ancient cultic Mithraism, Rome's popular sun-god worship. Established Jewish religious customs and beliefs were thus boldly challenged and systematically removed from the faith and practice of true Believers by the stream of pagans that flooded the "church." During the reign of Constantine, the Sabbath day was changed from Saturday to Sunday. With no sanction or basis from Scripture in either the Old or New Covenants institutional Christianity, in the form of the Roman Catholic Church, endorsed the emperor's decree. The protestant churches eventually followed suit. In 1894 the Catholic Church officially "took credit" for the change in the Sabbath observance. The apostles and early church believers followed the pattern of faith demonstrated by Yeshua, and honored the seventh day Shabbat. The Hebrew Roots and Messianic Israel movements are restoring the Sabbath to its proper purpose and time.

4. *"Then YHVH Elohim formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being" (B'resheet 2:7).*

The first man was fashioned by the hand of the Almighty from the dust, or elements, of the earth. He did not emerge from primordial slime, nor did he evolve from some obscure, lowly species to a place of nobility. He was lovingly and personally designed and formed directly by divine creative power, and was the crown of Yahweh's creation. Adam's body was constructed by the fine atoms and molecules of earth and animated by the very breath of the *Ruach Elohim*, or Spirit of God, making him immortal, a spirit-material being made in the likeness and image of Elohim, a proto-type for many more to come, and distinguished from the lower creation. Let us consider several things the creation of Adam's body brings to mind. **A.** The body of the Believer is a temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19) and should be respected and stewarded. **B.** Man's spirit is a creation from God. A Believer's regenerated, Spirit-born spirit is a gift of the Most High (Eccles. 12:7; Isa. 57:16; Zech. 12:1), a fact that should motivate us to humility and gratitude. **C.** Disciples of Yeshua are called to glorify God with both their bodies and their spirits (Rom. 12:1-2; 1 Cor. 6:20).

"YHVH Elohim planted [specially prepared] a garden ["gan" in Hebrew] in the east, in Eden ["delight"]; and there He placed the man whom He had formed" (B'reshet 2:8). Eden, luxuriant, prophetic, exceptional in usefulness and beauty, was divinely prepared and tailored for Adam and Eve. But they fell into sin, were ejected, and their failure swept through all succeeding generations of mankind into a catastrophic condition [inheritance of the sin nature] and fearful penalty: *"The wages of sin is death."*

But Eden is a prophetic picture, a foreshadow of **(a)** a renovated, restored earth, and **(b)** what Israel--whose biblical boundaries we believe encompass the area of ancient Eden--will become in the fullness of her restoration at the second advent of the Second Adam, Messiah Yeshua.

5. "And the rib, which YHVH Elohim had taken from man, made He a woman, and brought her to Adam" (B'resheet 2:22).

Adam was nobly created, comfortable in Eden, given world-wide dominion--and lonely. He had the company of Yahweh Elohim, and the presence of the animals, but there was none like himself, no complement, no peer, no human companion.

Eve was made from the material of the man, under God's watchful superintendence, by His personal handiwork. Then, with the Garden home in readiness and the animals having been named (we assume), "...He brought her to Adam." Eve was divinely escorted to her mate, not behind a bush or closed doors, but openly, in what was probably a grand and glorious ceremony to which all the animals of the forest and heaven's ministering angels were invited and in attendance. [Of course, Satan and his demonic horde, seething in envy and hatred, were hiding and observing from a distant ethereal vantage point...and planning.] **This was creation's first marriage**, another "*beginning*," and we can be confident it was a memorable affair. Here we see the foundation of a strong union, and the representation of an ideal marriage, **a marriage laureate, so to speak**.

A. The marriage was between a man and a woman, a hallowed alliance approved by the Almighty.

B. The father's approval is seen in Abba giving away the bride. **C.** The woman's full consent is pictured in Eve's ready compliance. **D.** The man's consent is shown in Adam receiving the bride and bringing her into his heart. "*This is now bone of my bone* [she is part of me, united in one life]...*She shall be called Ishshah...*" (v. 23). They were married under the canopy of heavenly glory and divine affections.

Note: The *chuppah* is the canopy under which Jewish couples stand during their wedding ceremonies. It is representative of the wedding in Eden. Thus we agree, Yahweh is the world's best Matchmaker. The marriage was the plan and work of the Most High and we can only try to imagine the celestial benedictions and prophecies of potential that were breathed out upon the innocent, radiant pair as they stood before their Maker and united in love. After the marriage, which was ceremonially and officially endorsed and celebrated by their Creator, there followed what could only be the happiest of honeymoons, in a specially prepared place in a private location in Eden for the joyful bride and groom. Today the Bride of Messiah, redeemed Israel, is being restored in Spirit and Truth by the Spirit of God for the advent of Messiah, to go with Him at His appearing to a specially prepared place (Jn. 14:1-2).

Lesson: **1.** May we Believers be patient, and allow the Most High to select our spouses and lead us to them. **2.** May we, the Body of Messiah, be watchful and found with oil in our lamps when the call comes, "*Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him*" (Mt 25:6).

6. "...she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat" (B'resheet 3:6).

Sin is apparently possible with the most pure and noble person. Adam and Eve, undefiled and innocent as they were, sinned. They may have fallen into disobedience to YHWH's will even if they had not been tempted (James 1:14; Jude 1:6). But, the fact is, they *were* tempted, and that is an important distinction between man's rebellion and that of the angels (Heb. 2:16; 2 Pet. 2:4). Satan, motivated by envy and malice and perversely using his divinely bequeathed enablement and cunning skills, manipulated the first couple into disobedience and sin. The "tempter" coaxed them into their spiritual fall; he seduced them into forfeiting their God-given dominion in the earth to him. He has been tempting mankind, even Yahweh's set-apart people, ever since. Notable examples include Job (Job 2:7); David (1 Chron. 21:1); even Yeshua (Luke 4:13); Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:3)].

Today, demonic activity and satanic powers still conspire to deceive all mankind, blind them to the truth of the Gospel, bring confusion and strife to the current revival of the Body of Messiah, interfere with the restoration of the whole house of Israel, and create an anti-Christ [anti-Messiah] New World Order.

"The gates of hell are opening. Dark forces are expanding their assault on mankind. Many have talked about the 'end times,' the 'last days' or the 'latter days'...humanity has finally reached this long awaited era... though many have not yet realized it, we have entered that period." [3B] Yet, by our ongoing immorality and paganism we in the west keep giving the powers of darkness a debased spiritual ambience in which to flourish.

In the narrative of the fall of Adam and Eve we catch a glimpse of the nature of satanic temptation. **A.** It urges people to doubt the divine goodness and love of Elohim, and undermines confidence in Him. **B.** It causes people to question divine wisdom and Scriptures, and removes the fear of retribution. **C.** It suggests people can become as knowledgeable as the Most High, and fills the soul with selfish ambition and arrogance. **The "tempter's" primary weapon is the *lie*, which he uses to draw men away from truth** (2 Thess. 2:11; 2 Cor. 11:3). The wickedness of temptation will stir up hidden unbelief, selfishness, and love for the world. Adam's and Eve's sin had disastrous results. The couple knew they had fallen from a holy estate to a carnal, baser plateau of existence. They had lost their purity, covering and authority, mourned their loss, were naked, felt deeply ashamed, and therefore uncomfortable with the company of Yeshua. Guilt and fear had preempted innocence and joy. They learned from a tragic experience that sin is morally contagious and brings havoc everywhere it reigns.

Let us keep in mind that Yeshua, the Second Adam, faced essentially the same threefold temptation as did Adam and Eve in the garden, yet was victorious (Mt. 4:1-11; Lk. 4:1-13). We, who trust Him share in His victory and can therefore say, *"But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer ["are more than conquerors," KJV] through Him who loved us" (Rom. 8:37).*

Yeshua has clothed believers in His righteousness. His love for us is so strong that nothing can, by its own power, come between Him and His people or separate them from His love. He takes all things, even those with harmful intentions, and works with them for our good and His glory. That weapon or evil work forming (or already formed) against you therefore cannot prosper on its own, but will be turned to serve His purpose and thereby be transformed for our good (Rom. 8:28). So not only can we conquer our opposition in His Name, that which works against us shall sooner or later become for us; that evil sent to harm us will have a divine hook put in its mouth and be turned by YHVH to our good; we may discover our enemies becoming our supporters, helpers, and even friends. That is what being "more than conquerors" means. Therefore, let us not be persuaded by the temptation of unbelief and fear that hovers over and shapes the world system, but live by faith in the Messiah. Trust in His Word. Remain under His dominion—and not the enemy's, by keeping His commandments. Follow through in the Torah reading schedule this year. And keep going forward in the restoration of the kingdom, power, and glory of Yeshua to all Israel.

"They heard the sound [voice] of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day and the man and his wife hid themselves..." (B'resheet 3:8).

Sweet fellowship had been broken by sin, and the couple, who before had no doubt welcomed YHVH's approach and companionship, hid themselves because of their sense of guilt. YHVH called out to them, a sure indication something was terribly wrong. The criminals had fled His Presence, but were found, examined, and sentenced. The serpent, whose chief weapons had been distortion and lies, received no mercy; for the woman and the man, sorrow and physical death became their portion, but with the sentence came a prophecy of hope (Gen. 3:15), a glimpse of the Messiah to come. The promise of redemption came forth in the midst of the chaos and turmoil that sin had loosed into the couple, Eden, the earth and all therein, and even the cosmos (Rom. 8:22-23). *"I will put enmity between thee and the woman; and between thy seed and her seed; He shall bruise [crush] you on the head..." (B'resheet 3:15).*

This prophecy is called the *Proto-evangelicum*. It speaks of the doom of Satan and the hope of mankind. **Note:** The seed of the serpent refers to (a) the Nephilim and (b) Eve's posterity, or descendants, who "should imbibe the devil's spirit and obey the devil's rule (Mt. 23:33; 1 John 3:10). The seed of the woman implies those whose character and life should be of an opposite description, followers of YHVH [believers in the covenant of promise]...and in particular the

Lord Jesus Christ [Yeshua HaMashiach], who is styled by preeminence *‘the Seed’* (Gal. 3:16, 19) who came *‘to destroy the works of the devil’* (Heb. 2:4; 1 Jn. 3:8). This we learn from the words that follow, and which, not obscurely, point to a seed which would be an individual person, *“He.”* [5]

In the promise, which was given on the first day of man’s rebellion and sin, we observe the wondrous grace of the Almighty bringing to the forefront YHVH’s intention of salvation for the tempted and fallen. He is compassionate. Paul encouraged the Corinthians concerning YHVH’s care, assuring them that no sinner or backslider is beyond the reach of YHVH; *“...but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide a way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it”* (1 Cor. 10:13).

We also learn quickly from the account that it is foolish to hide from the Almighty. It is best to run to Him than to flee from Him. We discover quickly that the short road of repentance leads to mercy. The sinner and backslider, even though discipline is meted out in some measure, will receive mercy and acceptance once they bow and ask forgiveness. Adam and Eve, while on earth, would never enjoy the same level of personal fellowship with their Maker again, but they had the hope of eternal life. *Yeshua said to him, have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me Philip?”* (John 14:9).

Intimacy with Yeshua is a privilege and a joy. May nothing enter our lives that weakens or interferes with that sweet spiritual companionship that we disciples are called to enjoy. Close fellowship is important to our Master also. Hence, in the referenced verse we believe Yeshua was not rebuking the apostle but was instead encouraging him to spend time drawing closer and getting to know Him better. Indeed, He said to all His disciples, *“No longer do I call you slaves...but I have called you friends, for all things I have heard from My Father I have made known to you”* (John 15:15).

This statement tells us that the Master desires relationships with His followers that involve heart, mind, and spirit intimacy and identification, qualities of friendship that are extremely rare, if existent at all, on earth. He invites us to break bread with Him (Rev. 3:20) which is another invitation to enter into *friendship fellowship*. While believers receive His blessings and truth as did Philip, we wonder how many really *know* Him? The result of intimacy with Messiah is abundant fruit (see John 15:1-4 and Acts 4:13).

To walk intimately with Yeshua, hear Him speak, and allow Him control of our lives produces a life that is strong and calm, joyful and filled with peace. He satisfies every deep need.

We believe the heavenly call of this hour is for Believers to return to “garden intimacy” with the Creator, and happily accept His invitation into holy friendship. But be assured, intimacy with Yeshua is developed and maintained by keeping His Word!

“...the word *Torah* does not actually translate to ‘Law’. It is called the Law because the Words of the King of the universe do carry the weight of Law. However, the word *Torah* actually translates to *instruction*; and in this context it means *the bride’s instructions*. The *Torah* then was [comprises] the written instructions that anyone wishing to become YHVH’s bride should practice, because it would ‘purify’ them.” [48]

"...therefore YHVH Elohim sent him [Adam and Eve] out of the garden of Eden to cultivate the [now cursed] ground from which he was taken...He stationed the cherubim and the flaming sword...to guard the way to the tree of life" (B'resheet 3:23-24).

However severe and uncomfortable (albeit necessary) Yahweh's judgment and eviction were, **Adam and Eve were not left abandoned or without hope**. They had reasons for some degree of consolation. **First**, His Spirit did not depart, but Yahweh's presence remained with them as evidenced by the emblems of His Glory, the Cherubim and the Flaming Sword, remaining in the garden. **Secondly**, the way to the Tree of Life was not shut, it was only guarded, implying [remez interpretation] the way would one day be open again. **Thirdly**, the way for them, and subsequent generations, to enjoy regular relationship and worship with the Almighty was established through the blood sacrifice.

"YHVH Elohim made garments of skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed them" (v. 21). This action served to provide covering for sin and shame, and was an instruction in the practice of sacrificing an innocent animal to make atonement. It was also a clear sign of His ongoing affection and care for the first couple. So it has also been with Israel, YHWH's chosen witness, throughout her tumultuous history (Isaiah 43). Whenever judgment was pronounced, the promise/the hope of future restoration followed close on its heels. *"In an outburst of anger I hid my face from you for a moment, but with everlasting loving kindness I will have compassion on you, says your Redeemer" (Isaiah 54:8).*

God provides the promise of hope. He imparts the faith to believe and also gives the inspiration and power to go forward. All three aspects of motivation are born of His everlasting agape love for His people. *"And now abide faith, hope, love, these three...: (1 Cor. 13:13).* He has a current word of encouragement, a *rhema* for today, for each one of us who call upon His name. Stop and listen for a moment before proceeding. Expect to perceive His voice. Hear Him!

7. *"Now the man had relations with his wife Eve, and she conceived and gave birth to Cain...Again, she gave birth to his brother Abel..." (B'resheet 4:1-2).* Abel was the keeper of sheep and Cain was a farmer, a tiller of the ground. The brothers worked the same land and worshipped the same God, and offered Him their oblations together. Cain offered crops, a bloodless sacrifice, which only acknowledged his dependence on Yahweh. Abel brought the best of his flock, a blood sacrifice, which was a more excellent offering (Heb. 11:4), which should precede meal, non-blood offerings. It acknowledged Abel's consciousness of sin, his faith in the atoning blood, his belief in the divine promise and hope in divine mercy. Abel's offering was thus favored by Yahweh. It was given in faith, obedience, and sincerity, and therefore he was regarded as righteous, and justified. Cain was not accepted because, by offering fruit from the ground, he showed himself to be unbelieving and irreverent regarding God's promise and way of salvation. The brothers were divided in their religious worship. Cain became jealous and wrathful. *"Who is able to stand against envy?" (Prov.27:4).* At some point, in a fit of jealousy and rage, he murdered Abel. Cain was thereafter banished from the presence and fellowship of God, and Abel was taken to glory. **Lessons: A.** Give Him your first-fruit offerings. **B.** Follow peace with all men, and holiness. **C.** Only the atoning Blood of Messiah, the promised Seed, will keep a person safe and upright in life and confident in death. **D.** You *are* your brother's keeper. *"Love thy neighbor."*

8. *"This is the book of the generation of Adam" (B'resheet 5:1).*

The book, or written account, enumerates the generations from Adam to Noah and his sons. Seth, not Cain or Abel, begins the account. This is because Abel had no children and Cain's seed perished in the flood. "Rambam explains why the people of that era lived such long lives. As God's handiwork, Adam was physically perfect [so was Eve] and so were his children. As such it was natural for them to live a long time. After the flood, however, a deterioration of the atmosphere caused a gradual shortening of life until it would appear that in the times of the Patriarchs, people lived a normal lifespan of seventy and eighty years, while the most righteous lived longer." [Chumash; Bereshis; p. 25.] The short catalog with names and life-spans follows: Adam (930), Seth (912), Enos (905), Cainen (910), Mahalaleel (895), Jared (962), Enoch (365 before he was taken to heaven), Methuselah (969), Lamech (777), Noah (950), and we include Shem in the godly line. Calculations place Noah's birth 126 years after the death of Adam, who lived long enough to see seven generations, which ended with Lamech.

The antediluvian saints, the descendants of Adam, were sinners who had been begotten in their father's, Adam's, sinful likeness. Hence they were long-lived but, because of sin, they were also a dying race. The names listed, from Adam to Noah were the spiritual leaders of the Ecclesia (believing assembly, kahal, church) of Yahweh in the generations of the primeval world. We are not informed of their secular achievements, status, or inventions. The distinction of these men

and women is founded in: **A.** They possessed faith in the Creator God. They understood and believed in the promise of the woman's seed. **B.** They observed the divinely prescribed religious observance. These believers practiced sacrificial worship. In the first generations such worship was probably a private, family ritual, but in the days of Enos it may have become more of a community, or social practice. We believe public sacrifice was a social preventative against the encroachment of evil practices into a holy community. This was probably the case with the *Sethites* who, in this way, developed their reverence and faith in defense against the increasing ungodliness around them. **C.** They were non-conformists in the surrounding societies/world. In the third generation we note that there began to develop a more obvious separation/demarcation between the holy ones who identified themselves by the name of Yahweh, and the world-oriented Cainites. **D.** They bore witness to righteousness in a wicked, ungodly world. Enoch, who prophesied the coming of the Lord (Jude 1:14), and Noah in particular were cited as righteous in their generations, and what was true of these two we can safely believe was true of the rest of the listed men. They walked with Elohim Almighty. They were the uncontaminated biological forefathers of the promised Seed, Messiah, and represent character or history features that point to Him. **Observe:**

(1) **Adam** points to Messiah Yeshua as the Second Adam (1 Cor. 15:45) who defeated temptation and restored lost dominion. (2) **Abel** was the first martyr and prefigured Yeshua by dying by his brother's hand. Seth was born and substituted for him, and is a shadow of Messiah who took our place (Rom. 5:8) (3) **Enos, the Frail One**, whose human nature spoke of "*a tender plant, and a root out of dry ground*" (Isa. 53:2). (4) **Cainan, Possession**, hints of Him who was a gift of God (2 Cor. 9:15). (5) **Mahalaleel, Praise of God**, suggests the Redeemer as Him who "*was not ashamed to call us brethren, saying, I will declare My Name unto My brethren, in the midst of the church (congregation) will I sing praise unto thee*" (Heb. 2:11-12). (6) **Jared, Descent**, prophecies of Messiah Yeshua who came forth [down] from the realm of Glory/Heaven (John 6:38). (7) **Enoch**, the dedicated and instructed one, who walked with God and was translated that he should not see death, speaks of our Redeemer (a) who for his people "*sanctified Himself*" (John 17:19) and (b) "*in whom were hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*" (Col.2:3), and (c) who could say concerning His heavenly Father, "*I do always those things that please Him*" (John 8:29), and (d) who having finished His divine mission on earth ascended into Heaven (Acts 1:11). (8) **Methuselah, Man of the Dart**, also reveals the Son as He whom the royal psalmist sang, "*Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies*" (Psalm 45:5). (9) **Lamech, Strong Youth**, gives a glimpse of the strong One whom King David saw in a vision raised up to help Israel (Psalm 89:19). (10) **Noah, Rest**, speaks of Messiah whose sacrifice Yahweh smelled as a sweet savour/aroma of rest (Gen. 8:20-22; Eph. 5:2). [6]

9. "*Then YHVH said, My Spirit will not strive with man forever, because he is also flesh, nevertheless his days shall be one hundred and twenty years...*[We believe this not a reference

to human age, but to the number of Jubilees mankind would inhabit the earth before the Millennial Sabbath Rest. **Note:** One-hundred twenty times fifty (Jubilee—every 50th year) equals six thousand years.]....*the Nephilim* [fallen ones, angel-human hybrids, giants] *were in the earth in those days...then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth...but Noah found grace* [the gratuitous favor of Elohim given to sinful mankind] *in the eyes of the Lord"* (B'resheet 6:3-8).

Chapter six of B'resheet describes the "latter days" of the Antediluvian world. The day of grace that had extended over a long period was nevertheless limited, and the Spirit would soon quit striving for sinful, corrupted man. Depraved human society had fallen away from fearing God, and became debased, degraded, licentious, hellish--ruled and abused by Nephilim tyrants whose behavior was characterized by brute satanic force. During the pre-Flood centuries the morally tainted, occult, mercenary societies of earth had altogether removed themselves from any opportunity for repentance or hope of redemption. *"There is a sin leading to death"* (see *Romans 1:18-25; 1 John 5:16*). Apparently, some sins are so corruptive, are so disfiguring of soul and character, so destructive of conscience, so offensive to heaven, that they pervert, destroy and erase in a person the interest, hope and desire for redemption, and represent crossing the spiritual line of no return. The outcome of such yielding to wickedness is an irreparably seared conscience leading to sociopathic behavior, unbelief, and demonic control. The civilizations of that primeval world had spun away from monotheism and gravitated to idolatry and the worship of many demonic gods. The result was absolute spiritual, moral and social chaos on a scale that still far exceeds what we witness on earth today. Many teach that even the gene pool of humanity had become spoiled, contaminated by the unholy activity of fallen angels cavorting with humans. [**Note:** We read today how advancing technology, gnome manipulation, and bioengineering among other related explorations of science, are being intently developed to produce enhanced human beings, superior and genetically different from normal people. *"As it was in the days of Noah..."*] However, in the midst of the misery, violence, suffering, and spiritual darkness there existed a ray of light, the undefiled Noah, and his family. He was declared by the Almighty to be righteous in his generation, unblemished in body and soul by the multi-fold corruption that polluted the planet. Yahweh's grace was upon him, not because he deserved it but because he had been faithful [obedient] to that which was entrusted to him. He never left his estate as had the fallen angels (Jude 1:6).

Noah exemplifies true discipleship by his unwavering obedience to Yeshua's call.

Haftorah: *"Thus says El-YHVH, Who created the heavens and stretched them out, Who spread out the earth and its offspring (vegetation), Who gives breath to the people in it" (Isaiah 42:5).*

The Haftorah compliments and reinforces the Torah reading. This particular reading points back to creation and connects itself to *B'resheet*. In the passage, the prophet Isaiah exhorts Judah that, just as YHVH sent light into the chaotic earth in the beginning of its restoration and re-ordering, so too are they, even all Israel, to return to YHVH and be a light for the surrounding nations. They were appointed to *"open blind [darkened, cloudy] eyes, to bring prisoners out of the dungeon [of ignorance and paganism, etc.]; those who sit in [spiritual] darkness out of a [their] prison."* Isaiah's word continues (43:1-10) with a vision of the final redemption with all creation singing praise in that day, and the judgment of the nations that have persecuted Israel.

Part 3: Yeshua—The eternal High Priest of the Believers Discipleship

There are two levels of covenant priesthood—the Levitical, suspended for now, and the Royal Priesthood of the order of Melchizedek, over which Yeshua reigns as our eternal High Priest. Believers belong to the Royal Priesthood order and are each personally invested with the authority of King Yeshua, the power of the Holy Spirit, and a hunger for righteousness. Psalm 110, Matt. 28; Hebrew 5-8; 1 Peter 2:9

1. *"In the beginning was the Word [He was not created nor did He 'begin to be'], and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him..." (John 1:1-3).*

Yeshua is an Eternal Being, deity existing in a continuous state. He is divine, in Whom is the Life, and Light was the emanation of that Life. He was the Word before He became man. *"In the beginning..."* all things were created by Him. Yeshua is currently gathering and restoring the lost sheep of the House of Israel one redeemed and converted person at a time. By Yeshua the Father has provided a new beginning for man. Thus, the Messiah is seen in numerous types throughout the book of Genesis/B'resheet. We'll look at three from this parsha:

(a) *"In the beginning..." (Gen. 1:1).* There was a beginning of creation, and only Elohim was before it. YHVH has an order. Disorder and chaos--that which is not His will, but the product of sin--are not the beginnings of things, but are only permitted until His restoration--that which is *very good*--has returned all things to their ordered and useful place.

To that end, the brooding, hovering, and vitalizing presence of the Spirit moved over the chaotic deep, and God spoke, *"Let there be light..."* Yeshua, Who is the Light of men, declared with august authority, *"I am the Aleph (Beginning) and the Taf (Ending), says the Master YHVH, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty" Rev. 1:8).* The authoritative words speak of "being," not "becoming." In other words, there is no "coming to be" in His divine nature. He

was, and is, and always will be. **Yeshua is the “Beginning”...the “I Am that I Am.”** All things seen and unseen came into being through Him, the eternal instrument of divine counsel and activity of Elohim. Therefore, in all things He has pre-eminence.

(b) *“...God [Elohim. Mighty One, Highest Being, Plurality in perfect oneness. Deuteronomy 6:4] created...” (B'resheet 1:1).* The epistle speaks of the Son in the following way: *“For by Him were all things created, both in the heavens and in the earth, visible and invisible...all things have been created through Him and for Him” (Col. 1:16).* **Yeshua is the Creator.** The entire universe--every galaxy, system, star, planet, moon, molecule, atom, electron, neutron, quark, string; everything organic or inorganic, material or non-material--is held together and sustained, each in its duration and sphere, *by Yeshua's power!* Everything visible and invisible, including principalities and rulers of spiritual darkness, nations and rulers, things known and unknown, and all the energy and power in the far-flung, multi-dimensional cosmos, are of His creation, subject to His sovereign authority, and under His control. Consequently, He is well able to fulfill His promises and do great and marvelous things in the lives of them who trust Him. For instance, the Holy One of Israel, the Ancient of Days whose going out has been from eternity, who is omnipotent and omniscient, has said through His prophet: *“Behold, I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel, his companions; and I will put them with it, the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they will be one in My hand” (Ezek. 37:19).* We can observe this prophecy coming to pass before our eyes today through the Hebrew roots movement and the effort toward reconciliation between Jew and Gentile and their gradual coming together to form [create] “one new man” in Messiah. Our Creator and Redeemer does great and mighty things in His vast creation.

(c) *“And I will put enmity [animosity, rancor, malice] between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise [crush, trample down] you on the head, and you shall bruise [wound] him on the heel” (B'resheet 3:15).* In this prophecy we foresee the defeat and destruction [crushing of the head—the power and authority] of the devil by the Seed of the woman--(a) Messiah in His atonement first, and (b) Messiah by the Spirit through the seed of Abraham. Revelation 12. **Yeshua is the Seed of the woman,** who was born of the virgin, lived in perfect obedience to the Torah, and made atonement for man by His cross and resurrection.

Part 4: The Holy Spirit--The Power of Discipleship

“You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you...” (Acts 1:8). This endowment from heaven is reserved for the followers of Yeshua. Understand that Torah [Word] and Spirit work as one. Hence, learn His Torah *and* be filled and overflowing with YHVH's power. “Yes, there is power, a blessing, an assurance, a rest in the presence of the Holy Spirit. You can feel His presence and know that He is with you. You [disciple] do not need to spend an hour without this inner knowledge of His holy presence. With His power upon you, there can be no failure. You are above par all the time.” [5B] He loves you.

Should not Torah teaching be accompanied and endorsed by the manifestation of YHVH's presence, with confirming signs, wonders, demonstrations, and power of the Holy Spirit? Of course! Torah instruction without the fullness of the Holy Spirit [escort, teacher] can eventually trend toward legalism and religiosity.

On the other hand, Holy Spirit renewal without Torah instruction [as chaperon, guide] can lead to an extraordinary pursuit of experience, mysticism, excess, and undo fascination with supernaturalism. Torah and Glory *together*, presented in partnership, will enrich Believers in both Spirit and Truth while safeguarding them from dangerous tangents and lopsidedness, and from end-time deception. Keep in mind, **Torah perfection and Spirit fullness are united in Yeshua**. Let them be united and operative in you.

1. *"...the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters" (B'resheet 1:2).*

The mention of the *Ruach Elohim* [Spirit of God] opens to the reader a broader understanding of the fullness of the personality of Elohim, which subject advances through the Old Testament to greater disclosure in the Gospels and Acts. He is described here as moving, or brooding (with love) over the formlessness and void of earth. The Spirit imparts life and brings order where there is disorder. He is the Father's glorious gift for Believers in Yeshua (John 14:16-26, 14:26; 16:5-15; Acts 1:6-8; 2:1-4; 37-39).

"Now concerning spiritual gifts brethren, I do not want you to be unaware" (1 Cor. 12:1). In B'resheet we begin a new journey toward (a) developing greater sensitivity to and discernment of the voice and word of the Holy Spirit, (b) experiencing a broader ministry in the gifts of the Spirit, and (c) yielding more readily when being consciously led by the Spirit. These advancements will help us to more effectually and joyfully participate in the fulfillment of last days restoration prophecies. During the year's parsha cycle, as you seek and wait upon Him, He will reveal Himself to you. Read these references as encouragement to your faith: Jer. 29:13; Jn. 10:3; 5:27; 18:37; Rev. 19:10.

Our study this year will systematically cover all aspects of the Holy Spirit and His ministry, and also provide encouragements and suggestions for group exercises. Returning Israelites, even all Believers from both houses of Israel, Judah and Ephraim, must mature in the knowledge of restored truth and in experiencing the anointing and power of the Holy Spirit in order to be adequately equipped as disciples for the end times. Yeshua wants to speak directly to us and

develop intimate fellowship with each of His people in this dynamic hour. The enhancement of our fellowship will be accomplished through our walking with integrity in His revealed truth and *by entering into deeper communion with the Spirit* in the days ahead. *"This I say then, walk in the Spirit and you will not fulfill the lust of the flesh" (Gal. 5:16). As a result of diligent, faith-filled effort this year in our discipleship series, many will experience new realms of the Spirit and greater manifestations of the Glory of Yahweh, and be further transformed in His likeness.*

Scripture exhorts the Believer to sing the Word of Elohim. Declaring and blessing involve speaking *and* singing the Scriptures. *"Let my lips utter praise...let my tongue sing [tunefully] of your Word" (read Psalm 119:171-172).* Put His Word in your heart and sing it out in faith. *"So shall My word be which goes forth from my mouth; it will not return to Me empty, without accomplishing what I desire..." (Isaiah 55:11).*

"Sing to the Lord a new song, sing His praise from the end of the earth!" (Isaiah 42:10). The Song of the Lord is a prophetic exchange with melody. It is His new, unpublished song; a spontaneous praise and prophetic utterance often sung with music, whose composition is from the Holy Spirit. It is praise and worship inspired and energized from a supernatural, divine Origin. In this prophetic activity--singing the Song of the Lord--Yeshua sings exhortation, edification, and encouragement to His people, His people sing Spirit-inspired responses of praise to Him, and he also sings comforts and strength through His people over Israel, the land, Judah, and Jerusalem. It's a glorious and powerful exchange we want to participate in week to week—lesson to lesson this year!

Part 5: Overcoming—*The Outcome of Discipleship*

Apostolic discipleship in the darkening days ahead is pre-requisite for the Bride of Messiah. To know Yeshua as Savior **necessitates** following Him as Lord. Period. *"...large crowds were going along with Him" (Luke 14:25).* Today there are also crowds, evangelical swarms who "go along" with Yeshua, but they are disinterested in His commandments, superficial, disregarding truth that interferes with their carnal faith, selective. Yeshua is interested in recruiting disciples, not merely Christian crowds. The lukewarm will fall and be rejected. The Bride of Messiah, however, will make herself ready (Rev. 19:7), and be found without spot or wrinkle. The *greater works* and *overcoming* of which we read will be found with the Master's true disciples who pursue the fullness of His Word and Spirit, and follow Him.

1. *"For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah" (Mt. 24:37).* For more than a century Noah's preaching, along with the construction of the ark, were trumpet calls to repentance for the surrounding pre-Flood world. His preaching about impending judgment

went unheeded. Hardened, depraved mankind, who had observed the ark being built, continued spiraling down spiritually into ever-worsening violence, moral confusion, and even physical corruption until the judgment of the Flood could be withheld no longer. The doomed earthlings had refused to comprehend and thereby benefit from the manifold warnings of the coming annihilation. *"With their ears they scarcely hear, and they have closed their eyes"* (Mt. 13:15). They continued pursuing their carnal and disobedient lifestyles, and preferring debauchery over the nurturing and care of their souls. Yes, the pre-flood humans who had heard Noah preach and witnessed the progress of his ark became calloused to his sermons and bored with his sensational building project, and thus did not amend their lives. Yeshua warns that the same recklessness, dullness, unbelief, and evil paranormal activity will be prominent at the time just prior to His coming (see 1 Tim 4:1-5).

The Holy One of Israel has alerted us with prophecies that provide clues to the signs and the timing of His coming [*parousia*], and we should be careful to study and understand them. Many prophetic Scriptures deal with the restoration of Israel and the return of the House of Ephraim prophesied to occur in the latter days. We list five signposts of the times: **A.** The restoration of the house of Judah in the land of Israel. **B.** The establishment of the State of Israel. **C.** The nations dividing the land of Israel. **D.** The punishment /discipline of the House of Ephraim, which was once spiritually blind, scattered and alienated among the nations, and not in covenant with the Almighty, has come to an end. **E.** The beginning of the restoration of Ephraim to his historic Hebraic identity and heritage. [See: Ezek. 4:5; Lev. 26:18, 21, 24, 28; Jer. 30:18; Joel 3:2; Isa. 66:8; Jer. 31:18-20, 31,40; 33:7-8; Ez. 37:14; Hosea 1:10; 2:23; 14:4-7; Zech. 10:9-10; 12:7.]

"Watch therefore..." (Mt. 24:42). Those wanting to be **overcomers** are strongly exhorted to be alert, in a condition of preparation for His coming. The wise and faithful servant, we are told, is the one who watches for Yeshua. To "watch" means to live in an intimate state of faith in the Messiah, and be prepared for the advent of the Master, so that whenever He does come He will be welcomed. *"Blessed is that servant."* Such a believer lives at a higher spiritual level than do others, enjoys intimate fellowship with Yeshua through the Spirit, and walks in victory.

2. *"But we should always give thanks to YHVH for you, brethren beloved by the Lord [Master] because He has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth: (2 Thess. 2:13).*

We have been recognized and chosen for salvation by YHVH Elohim from before creation, before *"in the beginning,"* from eternity, and called through faith in the Gospel to share in the glory of the risen Redeemer. Man is not passive in the acquisition of this great salvation and sanctification, for YHWH's truth must be believed (Jn. 3:16). Hence, He, through the Scriptures, urges us to faith and steadfastness. Let us follow the example of the godly pre-flood

saints—those mentioned in the “generation of Adam” (Genesis 5)—and stand fast, holding firm to the faith once delivered to the saints. In this way we will please our Master Yeshua, prosper, bear fruit, do good works, and grow in grace.

3. *"...with humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit..." (Eph. 4:3-4).*

May we remember that salvation is not just a personal or family matter, but carries profound social and national implications. When we come to Messiah, and are born-again and grafted into Israel, we are given a new identity and spiritual heritage, power to become overcomers, and presented *ipso facto* with a corporate responsibility. It is to promote and "preserve the unity of the Spirit" within the whole house of Israel through participation in that which is close to the heart of Yeshua.

6. Conclusion

"If love is to be our watchword, as it must be, then by the word of Him who is love personified, we must reject transgression and any kind of advocacy for it in others. Pure Christ-like love *flowing from true righteousness* can change the world. It [the original apostolic-Nazarene discipleship] is a straight path, and it is a narrow path without a great deal of latitude at some points, but it can be thrillingly and successfully traveled." [6B] Commit wholly to Yeshua and His kingdom principles. Allow your soul to prosper.

We submit four matters of great importance for all faithful disciples of the Messiah to pursue in these *latter days*, days of deepening spiritual deception and moral darkness: **A.** Sanctification (1 Th. 4:3). **B.** The Great Commission—preaching in the power of the Holy Spirit, and teaching and training disciples, not merely making and coddling converts (Matthew 28:18-20). **C.** The reconciliation of Judah and Ephraim; the restoration of Ecclesia into the unity of the Spirit. **D.** The restoration of the kingdom, power, and glory of Yahweh to all Israel (Acts 1:6-8). **E.** Respect for His commandments. *"If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make Our abode with him" (John 14:23).*

7. Seven Study Questions

"...always be ready to give an answer..." (1 Peter 3:15).

The *lesson questions* are **a very important** aspect of the student's learning. All readers are strongly encouraged to take the time and include them in their study discipline. Prayerfully

answer each one! They are intended to coax the student to rely upon interaction with the Holy Spirit, discern His voice, receive insight, and obtain prophetic enlightenment.

This process will assist each learner to (1) develop a vision for the restoration and reconciliation of the whole house of Israel, (2) grow in foundational knowledge of the Torah, (3) recover the principles, practice, and Holy Spirit power of the early, first-century Nazarene believers, and (4) experience and enjoy greater dimensions of the kingdom, power, and glory of Yeshua.

Note: The questions presented here are listed again at the conclusion of each lesson in both the *Torah Commentary Manuals* and the *Torah Discipleship Manuals*. **To repeat—be sure to follow through with them.**

1a. In your opinion, what is the main theme or teaching of each of the listed readings individually? Starting with the Torah: What is its title? What is the interpretation? What truth/idea does the interpretation of the title suggest? What is the Torah section's main truth, as you see it?

1b. What is the corresponding idea in the Haftarah? In the Brit Chadashah?

2. What is the outstanding, central idea or subject that runs through and unites all the individual readings, as you see it? What does it say about discipleship?

3. Find in the Gospels where and how Yeshua declares, demonstrates, exemplifies, or exhibits the parsha's central truth, and explain. Give chapter and verse. Will you follow Him in living the lesson's truths?

4. In what way was the glory of YHVH [manifestations of His goodness] revealed in the parsha lesson?

5. What does the parsha teach you about your Hebrew roots, your identity, your destiny, your duty?

6. In what way did the Holy Spirit/Ruach HaKodesh personally speak to you during prayer and study this week? Did He impress you about how to apply the parsha lesson directly to your life? Explain.

7. *"...because of practice [by reason of use] have their senses trained [exercised] to discern..."*
You and I are called to return to hearing the voice of Elohim and to functioning in the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Progressing in these vital areas will require spiritual hunger, faith, and practice. He is waiting for us to approach Him.

Ask the Holy Spirit to speak into your spirit/heart as you pray each day. Look for opportunities to lay hands on the sick, or to be used in prophesy. Faithfully record the prophetic words and experiences you receive, and be sure to share them with your brethren.

It is helpful to **share** your answers, insights, and revelations with your study group (table class). We recommend meeting regularly in a small group. This allows for healthy interaction and exchange, and militates against stagnation. Practice operating with your spiritual gifts under the anointing of the Holy Spirit while among your friendly, supportive peers. Allow for open participation in leading praise and worship. Give altar calls at your table for healing, refreshing, and prophetic words. These are effective ways for all present to mature in their calling and gifting. The non-threatening small group provides a favorable and encouraging environment in which to learn the ministry of the Spirit. You will do well. **Tamid Kadima-Always Forward.** Shalom.

Footnotes: 1A. www.meguiar.addr.com/judgmnt.ht., p. 2. 1B. The Cost of Discipleship, D. Bonhoeffer, p. 57. 2B. Ibid, p. 197. 3B. On the Path of the Immortals, Forward, G. Stearman. 4B. Nazarene Israel. Yosef ben Ruach, p.22. 5B. Greater Works, S. W., p. 305. 6B. www.lds.org/general-conference/2014/04/the-cost-and-blessing-of-discipleship?lang=eng P. 4.

1. Adapted from Restoration Scriptures, True Name Edition. 2. Adapted, no quotes; House of Yeshua.Org. 3. Genesis, Pulpit Commentary, Eerdmans, p. 2-3. 4. Ibid, pg. 4. 5. Ibid, p .66. 6. Ibid, p. 100. No quotes; reference.

Contenders' Voice

Discipleship Series

Book of Genesis/B'reshet

Lesson Two

Noach (“Noah”)

Torah: Genesis/B'reshet 6:9-11;32

Haftarah: Isaiah/Yeshayahu 54:1-55:5

Brit Chadashah/New Covenant: Acts/Maaseh 1:1-11 and 1 Peter/Kepha Alef
3:18-22

Lesson Sequence

1. Introduction: *The Call to Discipleship* **2.** Weekly Parsha: *The Torah—the Standard of Discipleship* **3.** Yeshua: *The High Priest of our Discipleship* **4.** The Holy Spirit/Ruach ha Kodesh: *The Power of Discipleship* **5.** Overcoming: *The Outcome of Discipleship* **6.** Conclusion **7.** Seven Questions **8.** **Reader's Personal Promise**

Consider

“Something is coming...on the horizon...hastening...deception [of the most diabolical, cunning order]. Unspeakable malevolence. Darkness. The world has been too busy in self-indulgent

materialism to see [discern and comprehend] the signs of its approach. Many in the Ecclesia [western Christendom], too enamored by comfort, affluence, and prosperity, have slowly fallen asleep at the helm of kingdoms of their own creation, and are completely unaware of the approaching evil and deception.” [1A] The deepening and broadening of spiritual darkness is resulting in accelerating radical and destructive changes to every culture on the planet, and preparing the way for supernatural delusion of a nature that will cause the faith and love of many believers to grow cold. Obviously, the time has come for the saints to repent of sin and indifference, and make *teshuvah*. For us, that means to *return*—to go all the way back to the beginning, to the true roots of our biblical faith. To stand strong, we will need to be dressed in the full armor of God. **Make ready for a great outpouring of His Holy Spirit!**

Part 1: Introduction—*The Call to Discipleship*

“Yeshua is described in the Gospels as being a *rabbi* or “teacher” (John 1:38, 3:2) and His followers are called disciples or “students.” A disciple or student [pupil, learner, imitator] is expected to learn and grow in knowledge and understanding. By doing so, one day he will become...the teacher of other disciples. A disciple of Yeshua is a student of God’s Word...and understands the ways of the Kingdom of God.” [1B] A disciple lays down his self-life [*psuche*/soulish life], carries his cross, and gradually becomes transformed into the likeness of his Master. This is our joy. Therefore, follow your Redeemer and do His works. Be filled with His Spirit, and obey His Word. Serve others. It is the most fulfilling, profitable way of living.

Previous lesson: Parsha B'resheet ("In the beginning") opened up the new year of the Torah reading cycle. Fifty-four *parshiot* [parshas] are included in the 52 week year. Jewish tradition tells us that the Torah reading cycle was started by Ezra the Scribe and 120 members of the Great Assembly in the fourth century before Messiah. B'resheet, the first *parashah*, is the narrative of creation, Adam and Eve, sin, the promise of the seed, Cain and Abel, the godly lineage of Adam to Noah, and the antediluvian world. In the parsha YHVH's Word establishes Him as the Creator who has the right to administrate His creation. *B'resheet* revealed--by Eden and the Garden, and the original fellowship Adam and Eve had with Him--Yahweh's original vision and intent for the world and mankind. He desires the worship from all people of the one true Elohim--Himself. From His promise of the *seed* (3:15), we learn that the unholy things of the world will all eventually give way to the restoration of the Kingdom of God in the earth. This will be accomplished through Israel, His chosen, anointed nation, and its Messiah. **Follow Him!**

This week’s discipleship lesson: Parsha *Noach* ("Noah") is this week’s study. From the time of Adam to that of Noah, mankind had journeyed for centuries downhill into increasing sin and

wickedness until, at last, judgment was decreed on the widespread, runaway corruption of human society. The story of Noah is the story of the great Flood and salvation. He and his family were destined to become the postdiluvian ancestors of the entire human race.

Parsha Noach's theme is **rest, but not ease**. "...and I (regardless of how *others* may treat you) *will give you rest*" (Mt. 11:28). Yeshua is not going to remove responsibilities and purposeful labors, however challenging, from those who come to Him, rather He will provide restoration and refreshment for the soul, and inspiration for what YHVH may have prepared for them. So it was with Noah. The name *Noah* means *rest*. At first glance the title for the parsha seems out of place, since we have learned that the name of each parasha/prarashat reveals its essential lesson, its basic essence, its core message. After all, the troubled time just preceding and during the flood was turbulent, certainly not peaceful. But as we read we discover the name Noah, or *rest*, is a very appropriate title for our Torah reading. The flood became the divine means for purging the world of the bloody violence and corruption which kept it in a deteriorating state of turmoil, agitation, struggle, and perversity. Let us recall, the antediluvian earth's civilization—debased societies generally consisted of unholy mixtures of angelic beings, nephilim, and humans, we believe—was corrupted beyond the point of redemption. The character and behavior of earth's inhabitants had become unspeakably savage, and humankind became locked into a state of moral and spiritual degeneration. There was no means of reversing the accelerating decline, no remedy for purifying an irreversibly compromised population, and no adequate atonement for the shed blood of the innocent, except by a total cleansing of the earth.

The flood was the cure for the planet's severe ailment and the means of allowing a new beginning. Noah's Ark—the building of which was a very strenuous undertaking—would preserve the few righteous ones and carry them from turmoil to rest. Hence, the deluge came, regenerated the earth and prepared it for newness and change. When Noah and his family disembarked from the Ark, though they were probably cautious in their new surroundings *and* quite wary over clouds that appeared above their tents, nevertheless rejoiced in YHVH's peace which was present to greet them. They were in a totally scrubbed and renewed world! Holy sacrifices of clean animals were made to give thanks to the Most High. The little, untainted family society, along with the many animals and the entire countryside, were finally at rest.

It is this way for Believers who trust and abide in Yeshua, the Ark of man's salvation. When we come to Him, we make a transition as did Noah, only our passage is spiritual. Believers are translated from the kingdom of darkness and its satanic bondage and burdens into the kingdom of light and rest for our souls. "*For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins*" (Col. 1:13). The Kingdom of God is new, blessed territory for redeemed man. It is far separated

from the once familiar realm of evil, the power of sin, and spiritual darkness. *"Go out from among them and be ye separate"* (2 Cor. 6:17). The kingdom of fallen angels and their progeny, of which was the pre-flood estate of Noah, has been preempted by the kingdom of Elohim's own eternal Son. Through faith, we leave the murky world behind and separate ourselves unto the Most High. His kingdom, of which we are now representatives and ambassadors empowered to show forth its character and excellency, will not be shaken but will grow and endure forever.

In Elohim's Kingdom, Messiah Yeshua rules by His Word (Torah) and Spirit. The blessings are never diminished despite the great and growing numbers that enter, and the subjects are all anointed kings and priests who thrive under His authority. The Messiah is our blessed Sovereign, our righteous King, and we are free to worship Him in Spirit and Truth. This is the purpose of grace.

In the Book of Revelation we read of the new song the twenty four elders sang when they fell down before the Lamb *"...saying, Thou are worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou was slain, and hast redeemed [purchased] us to God by thy blood out of every kindred and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we will reign on earth"* (Rev. 5:9-10 KJV). It is our song too!

Today, the Spirit is leading Believers to make another transition; to make a "cross-over" [or *eber*, from which comes the word "Hebrew"] as did Noah and his family in the Ark. And Abraham also is an example and inspiration, who left Mesopotamia with his family and *crossed over* a boundary into Canaan. Believers are being called in the same way, only we are leaving traditional, tainted, institutional Christianity/religion and crossing over to (1) the fullness and vitality of our Hebraic origins and (2) the renewal of Holy Spirit. The crossover brings the traveler to spiritual renewal, rest [peace; shalom], and fresh strength and vision. Elohim has spoken this Word personally to many, saying: *"Thus says YHVH, Stand by the ways and see and ask for the ancient paths, Where the good way is, and walk in it; And you will find rest for your souls"* (Jer.6:16a).

As was Noah, you--His disciple, are one who has heard YHWH's summons—only *you* are being *inwardly* prompted to return to the Hebraic paradigm of faith. It is a timely call to which many are responding. A flood of globalism, oppression of personal liberty, technologically transformed society, deception, and paranormal activity are coming.

Part 2: Torah—*The Standard of Discipleship*

Parsha Lesson Two: Noah ("Noah")

Torah comes from the Hebrew Word "yarah" which means to teach, point out, lay a foundation. *Torah* is the divinely inspired *instruction manual* on how to live in accordance with YHVH's will once a person comes into covenant with the Almighty. It is a foundation for life. *"...keep My words and treasure My commandments and live, and My teaching as the apple of your eye"* (Deuter. 30:1). Noah said, "Do not think to destroy the land."

Torah

The Torah [*instruction, teaching, Law*] is composed of B'resheet (*In the beginning.../Genesis*), Shemoth (*The names.../Exodus*), Vayiqra (*And He called.../Leviticus*), Bamidbar (*In the wilderness.../Numbers*), and Devarim (*The words.../Deuteronomy*). The Hebrew names are derived from the first words of each of the Torah books. These five ancient books, also called the Pentateuch, are part of the Old Testament, or what the Jews call the *Tanach*. In Hebrew, the *Tanakh* is an acrostic, or the combined abbreviations for: (1) *Torah*, the first five books; (2) *Navi'm* (prophets), a section that includes Joshua, Judges Samuel, Kings, and the prophets (both major and minor). The *Navi'm* narrative starts where the Torah ends. (3) *Ketuvim* (writings), which includes Psalms, Proverbs, Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles.

Therefore the Torah can also refer to the entirety of Jewish Scriptures and be said to encompass all Jewish law and religious teachings. To be technical, "*the Torah*" refers to the first five books, also called *Chumash* ["five"]. "*Torah*" without the article, refers to the whole body [corpus] of written and Oral law. This includes the Mishna (evaluations of the law), Gemara (analysis of Mishna), Midrash (exegesis; compiled homiletic commentary), Talmud (central text of Judaism), and piles of legal commentaries. The Torah, in which all redemption doctrine has its roots, is the foundation of the Christian's Bible.

1. "*These are the records of the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his time; Noah walked with God*" (B'resheet 6:9).

Noah [*Noach* in Hebrew, meaning "rest"] was a just man. His heart was sincere and upright before his Maker, trusting in the promise of the seed of the woman. "*Then God said to Noah, the end of all flesh has come before Me*" (B'resheet 6:13). YHVH was not seeking the ruination of mankind, but the wicked, injurious, corrupt condition of human society had risen as an unrelenting stench into the face of the Almighty with such persistence and volume that the remedy could no longer be delayed. "*The earth* [referring to men--with possibly the involvement of other-dimensional entities--who had become wholly defiled spiritually, totally lacking any redeeming qualities] *is filled with violence through them*" (B'resheet 6:13). Judgment was pronounced--the universal, supernaturally wrought destruction of unrepentant man, creatures also, and the cleansing/washing of the defiled lands was decreed. Yet God

remembered the righteous, the clean, as He does always. Noah was commissioned: *"Make thee an ark."*

The appointed task would be a test of faith and prove to be the means of salvation for his family. So, though threatened by the growing wickedness of humans, endangered by the violence of the *Nephilim* [offspring of "the sons of god" and the "daughters of men;" giants; human hybrids], and pressed by the prospect of a flood, Noah proceeded by faith with his preaching and building, and eventually completed the arduous construction task. *"I will show you my faith by my works..." (James 2:18)*. It is for the *building of the ark*--a good work if there ever was one--that Noah is most remembered. "According to the Midrash, the Torah means to teach that the 'primary offspring' of the righteous are their good deeds, for the worthwhile things that a person does are his primary legacy." [Chumash, Stone Edition pg. 30] The faithfulness and labor of Noah bring Yeshua's words to mind: *"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works [faith works/obedience to His voice], and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Mt. 5:16)*. Each individual's legacy is comprised of the good works and the fruit of transformed lives left behind after he or she, having served Yeshua and people, has passed to glory. Some insist Noah's legacy--the massive boat/ship, is still somewhat intact and covered with ice in the heights of the Ararat range. Maybe.

But may our perspective not be earthly, but heavenly, as was Paul's who wrote: *"...we preach...warning...and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect [complete] in Messiah Yeshua" (Col. 1:28)*. **Note:** We understand from the Greek word *teleion*, which translated means "perfect," that perfection of character or absolutely blameless behavior is not implied, but that "perfect" refers to maturity and intimacy of relationship with YHVH that produces love and obedience toward Him and a lifestyle of holy devotion and service to others. This sort of "perfect," mature lifestyle will fulfill the requirements of the commandments of Messiah (Mt. 22:39).

Though he lived in a time of universal corruption and violence, Noah was similar to Enoch. He was blameless; that is, Noah was reverent and walked in God's ways and truth as he understood them, thus he was kept undefiled by the corruption surrounding him, maintaining a sincerity of heart that was unleavened with hypocrisy. His mouth and life proclaimed righteousness. And he heard from the Almighty. **We learn: A.** *"The secret of YHVH is with them that fear [reverence] Him, and He will show them His covenant."* **B.** The Ark is a type of Messiah--with believers safely sealed in Him, and carried upon the waters of the Holy Spirit.

2. *"Then the Lord said to Noah, Enter the ark, you and your household, for you alone I have seen to be righteous before Me in this time. You shall take with you of every clean animal by sevens, a male and his female..." (B'resheet 7:1-2)*. **Note:** As you read, observe that in this venture Noah did not lean on his own understanding standing, but trusted in the Word of YHVH completely.

Noah and his family entered the ark at the last minute, which is an implication drawn from the wording, "...because of the waters of the flood" (V. 7). He may have been reluctant, hoping for a last minute reprieve from heaven or repentance from the populace. Neither one happened. When they did enter, YHVH shut the door to the Ark behind them. The flood lifted the Ark, and the mounting turbulent waters, which sages say were hot like those of hot springs, tossed the large craft about while trees were uprooted and buildings were swept away. Quickly the flood waters, the origin of which was both from above and beneath, inundated the world. Everything that breathed perished in the ravaging waters. The deluge was a type of *Mikvah* [bath/baptism] for the earth, and cleansed it from the defilement incurred through centuries of absorbing the spillage of innocent blood.

"And Noah went in, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him, into the ark" (v.7). Noah was "shut in" the Ark. Thus he was *shut in* to obedience, and therefore shut in to peace and safety. The sons of disobedience were shut out, **by their choice**, and were caught up in the ruin of the world.

"And they that went in, went in male and female of all flesh, as God had commanded him: and YHVH shut him in...and the waters increased, and bare up the ark..." (v. 16).

We see in the narrative of the Ark the truth that choice is ever the work, the daily errand, of man. Set before him is the broad way or the narrow, the Ark or the flood waters, the confinement of the Ark or the 'comforts' of a flooded home, the frail craft or flight to the mountain tops, leaning on his own understanding or trusting in YHVH. But Believers have made their choice. Our refuge is in Messiah Yeshua, and He bids *everyone* to come to Him (Rom. 3:22). When we come to Him by faith we are secure from judgment that comes upon a world convinced of its own safety and unconvinced of the warnings of YHVH's Word. One day His holy city, Jerusalem, will be a refuge also, as the prophet hath said: *"Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in. Thou wilt keep in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth Thee. Trust ye in YHVH forever: for in YHVH there is everlasting strength" (Isaiah 26:2-4).* When He knocks, open the door, invite Him in, close the door, and remain *shut in* with Him while storms rage outside...and enjoy the most blessed fellowship (Rev. 3:10).

3. *"But God remembered Noah...Now it came about in the six hundred and first year, in the first month...the water dried up from the earth" (B'resheet 8: 1, 13).*

During their confinement in the ark, Noah and his family cared for the animals which may have been divinely induced into some sort of hibernation for the voyage (see 1 Sam. 26:12). In time, YHVH remembered Noah and mercy prevailed as the seas began to recede. And so it is

written--*"Give thanks to YHVH, for He is good; For His loving-kindness is everlasting" (Ps. 118:1-2).*

The flood story, the narrative of the fulfillment of the divine Word spoken to Noah, provides us with four succinct truths: **A.** *"It is impossible for God to lie" (Heb. 6:18).* **B.** *"There is nothing too hard for YHVH" (Gen. 18:14).* **C.** *"It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb. 10:31).* **D.** *"...His mercy endureth forever" (Ezra 3:11).* Amen!

4. *"Then Noah built an altar to the Lord..." (B'resheet 8:20).* Noah was commanded to leave the ark and enter the world again. He went forth with his wife, his sons and their wives, and probably pitched their tents close to the ark, being apprehensive over the periodic afternoon showers. Noah built an altar to sacrifice the clean animals taken from the boat as burnt offerings to YHVH.

The earth was thereby sanctified as the smoke of the innocent sacrifices ascended heavenward. The first offering should always be the burnt offering. It speaks of complete consecration.

"And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, be fruitful..." (B'resheet 9:1).

YHVH blessed Noah and his family, and made a covenant with him called the Noahic Covenant. It was a covenant for humankind accompanied by a sacrifice and attested to by the appearance of a rainbow. The Noahic Covenant sanctioned the repopulation of the earth, eating animal flesh, protection of human life by judicially declaring it sacrosanct, execution as the punishment for murder [capital crime], and the institution of human government for societal order. Summarily, it provided divine permission and endorsement for the increase, protection, and sustenance of the human family, and affirmed YHVH's care and goodness for mankind. **We learn from the chapter that (a)** YHVH's grace is seen in His dealing with fallen man by way of covenant, **(b)** YHVH's faithfulness is seen in His adherence to His covenant despite the sinfulness and unfaithfulness of man, and **(c)** man's enduring hope is seen by him being placed under a covenant of mercy and grace. Yes, YHVH loves us.

"Noah, a man of the soil, proceeded to plant a vineyard. When he drank some of its wine, he became drunk..." (vs.20-21).

Wine is first mentioned here and it is associated with shame and sin. [Alcohol--*law of the first-mention.* We note that alcohol has been from the beginning associated with excess and trouble. Selah.] For sure, intoxicating beverages are the cause of much trouble, as we see in this episode of Noah and his sons, and thus Scripture exhorts abstinence from strong drink as the standard for leaders (Lev. 10:9; Jud. 13:4-7; Prov. 31:4; Nu. 6:3; Prov. 23:31; 1 Th. 5:6; Tit. 2:2).

Noah drank the wine and became drunk, and somehow, or for some reason, uncovered himself inside his tent. Ham, the father of Canaan, saw his father's *nakedness* and openly told his brothers Shem and Japheth. Once Noah recovered, he cursed Ham's son Canaan, but not Ham himself. Why? In Genesis 42:12 we might have a clue. The brothers of Joseph are accused of coming into Egypt to look at the "*nakedness of the land*"--to spy and uncover, as it were, and

gauge the land's weaknesses in order to accost it, overcome, and dominate. Thus, we could surmise that something happened in the tent that had to do with Ham spying Noah's "*nakedness*"--something perhaps involving an attempt by Ham to humiliate and gain domination or leverage over his father Noah and thereby achieve an upper hand in the family. His eagerness to show his brothers their father's condition smacks of braggadocio and confidence. Could it be that Ham, weary of his brothers' respected positions, sought to establish himself and especially his son Canaan as pre-eminent in the clan? Whatever the scheme may have been—and seemingly Canaan was implicated in some way in the sordid episode-- it did not accomplish any advantage for Ham. Instead, Ham's scheme failed badly. His son Canaan—possibly a troubled, spoiled youth and probably the apple of his father's eye--along with Canaan's generations, were cursed. Consequently for Ham there would be no dominion of his son's family over those of Shem or Japheth. "*Cursed be Canaan; A servant of servants he shall be to his brothers*" (v. 25). **Note:** The phrase—"saw the nakedness of his father" (Gen. 9:22)—may be referring to Ham uncovering the nakedness of Noah's wife, and having sexual relations with her that produced Canaan, who was subsequently cursed. We know that Noah had no foreign/angelic induced gnome/genetic imperfections, and we presume the same thing with confidence concerning his wife and the wives of his sons. Therefore, we believe Canaan was not born infected with nephilim DNA. In any case, this is the conjecture of some. Interested students may want to do their own research regarding this issue, and the matter of the nephilim/giants that appeared years later in the land of Canaan.

5. "*Now these are the records of the generation of Shem, Ham, and Japheth, the sons of Noah*" (B'resheet 10:1).

Here we have an important ethnological [national/racial] table, a tabulation [table of arrangement] of the sons of Noah, their descendants, and the designation of the seventy nations of the human race. The list is valuable for studying the history and geographical distributions of Noah's generations; it also enables the researchers to track the genealogical descent of the woman's seed, and check the fulfillments of Scriptural prophecies concerning the seventy nations of the earth. The register of names declares the early unity of the race. We have all come forth from common stock. The register also declares the division of the human race during the days of Peleg, and its geographical distribution to specific portions of the planet.

6. "Now the whole earth uses the same language and the same words. It came about as they journeyed...they said, Let us build for ourselves a city, and a tower whose top will reach into [make contact; social intercourse with] heaven [other-worldly dimensions, likely], and let us make for ourselves a name...So the Lord scattered them abroad...(B'resheet 11:1-4, 8). Following the flood, the conflict between the Kingdom of God and the kingdoms of the world recommenced. The earthly kingdoms lay under the diabolical power and persuasions, the dark strategies of the hidden regions populated by a vast satanic, supernatural, evil host. The fallout was rebellion by people against revealed truth. The ongoing clash between light and darkness is symbolized by the true narrative of Nimrod, a story of ambition. There we see the world's return to ungodliness, rebellion and the rejection of monotheism--the rule of the One True Elohim, the Creator. This was expressed in the building of the unholy city and tower on the Plains of Shinar by men migrating from the east. Eden, by then, was a distant memory. Before the flood it probably had been the antediluvian world's worship center where godly people, by offering a blood sacrifice, could draw near to the Shechinah presence that manifested between the Cherubim which had remained in the Garden. That day was gone. The next, fixed world worship center for the true Elohim would wait until Israel was settled and Solomon's Temple was commissioned.

The Tower of Babel [*Migdal Bavel* in Hebrew] was an enormous tower structure built and erected in the ancient city of Babylon, the capital of Nimrod's kingdom. The builders were ambitious and wanted to make for themselves a great "name," and build their own *world outreach worship center*, a new Eden, to glorify themselves and establish what would have become an oppressive, controlling world religion. It could possibly have been an attempt to establish a trans-dimensional portal into the nether world to contact fallen angels, which would have produced an unholy environment such as existed just prior to the flood. Some commentators tell us that Nimrod was actually a Nephilim. In any case, the affair was a humanistic, godless project that honored no authority other than its own. At completion, the demonically-inspired enterprise would have become, in all likelihood, the world capital for occultic crafts and spiritualistic sciences. These proud builders did not want to "*dwell in the tents of Shem*" (*Gen. 9:27*), but openly disdained Noah's prophesied spiritual pre-eminence of the line of Shem and probably hoped to preempt it. Or, they simply fell prey to the lust for glory and power resident and powerful within fallen human nature and were thereby driven forward in the rebellious, doomed enterprise.

We learn from Nimrod's display of arrogance in the face of YHVH that, if anyone must be ambitious, let him direct his passion/appetite towards sanctification and righteousness. Only holy pursuits prosper the souls and societies of men. "*We are ambassadors for the Messiah*" (*2 Cor.5:20*).

The people of one language and purpose started their work hopefully, and with determination and enthusiasm. According to the narrative, progress seems to have been made, but suddenly, *"they left off to build the city."* YHVH had come down to inspect their *"works of wood, hay, stubble"* and found them *"wanting,"* lacking the divine inspiration, characteristics, standards—falling short of the building code of His Kingdom. Thus, they were judged. The people were chastised, and their single language, which had unified them, was divided into many languages. Being unable to communicate as they once had, the people were scattered abroad. The unfinished work they left behind was called Babel, meaning "confusion." The name represents to this day the fruit of man's foolish rebellion against the Most High Elohim. Nations were then formed elsewhere and, we believe, all came under the authority of fallen angels. **Note:** Jewish historian Josephus (*Antiquities of the Jews*) declared that the tower was blown down by a *strong wind*.

There are lessons we can glean from the Tower of Babel episode that are worthy of our thoughtfulness. **First**, misguided ambition (a common trait of fallen man) leads to sin. The spirit behind the Tower of Babel was the confederate anti-Messiah spirit. It is in the world today, opposes the Torah and the Spirit of Truth, and fosters confusion and pride among men. It spins [distorts, misshapes] and maligns biblical values in society until right and wrong blend, good and bad become relative, truth becomes suspect, and man becomes the center of life, not YHVH. As this evil principality manipulates men and women into habitual sin, they become enlarged in their own estimation, and their faith in and opinion of Elohim is steadily diminished. He thus becomes inconsequential to them.

As this happens, all godly restraints against corruption are thrown off. The vitiation [erosion, loss, weakening] of faith occurs subtly and more easily than most may think. Believers must daily nurture their fellowship with their Redeemer to stay strong in faith, hope, and love. Hence, the saints are admonished: *"Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall"* (1 Cor. 10:12 KJV). We must always remain in the Spirit. **Secondly**, it is futile to try to resist the Almighty. He will cause His prophetic word to come to pass and His Kingdom to come forth regardless of what we think, say, or do. *"He that sitteth in heaven shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision"* (Ps. 2:4). Our resolution should be to cooperate with the Holy One of Israel and prosper! **Thirdly**, YHVH's power is unlimited, unabated, irresistible, and always effective. His Spirit's strength, energy, and mastery work effectually through His people to fulfill His purposes. Peter prayed concerning ministry in Jerusalem, *"...extend your hand to heal, and signs and wonders take place through the name of your holy servant Yeshua. And when they had prayed, the place where they had gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit [again!]."* (Acts 4:29-31). In this hour of the restoration of all Israel, we Saints need the supernatural power of the Spirit and His accompanying attributes of boldness and faith at least as much as did Peter and the disciples when he prayed. So, pray! **Fourthly**, YHVH's

ability to confound and scatter the tower builders is matched by His resolve and competence to effectively gather, re-educate, and reconcile into one, the two houses of Israel--Judah and Ephraim [i.e., make the *One New Man*]. *"Behold, I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel his fellows, and will put them with him, even the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they shall be one in My hand"* (Ezek 37:19). When Believers take their place in the Hebrew roots movement, return faithfully to the basics of their Hebraic heritage, support Judah and the land of Israel, and work toward the reconciliation of Messianic saints, they are participating in the fulfillment of prophecy. *"Then what had been spoken through Jeremiah the prophets was fulfilled..."* (Mt. 2:17. Also read Isa.46: 3-4; Jer. 30:3; Ezek. 37:15-23; Hos. 2: 14-20; 14:1-8). **Fifthly**, we should always be awed at YHWH's poetic justice. On one hand, at Babel the rebellious were given divided tongues that confused and scattered the people.

On the other hand, on the Day of Pentecost disciples were given divided cloven tongues and spoke what was heard as (or were) foreign languages that unified them in Messiah and in holy love. On one hand, the earthly clay Tower of Babel rose from the baked, cracked soil, and was soon cursed and abandoned. On the other hand, we see in the Book of Revelation the New Jerusalem, heavenly and golden, descending from heaven to crown the New Earth, blessed and prepared for the Bride of Yeshua. And what are the returning Israelites, who are being summoned from the nations and *from every tongue* [language], doing? Many are turning to the study of a single language [always a great means of unifying and identifying people with a culture]. That tongue is Hebrew. Amazing! Our Abba is very good in turning *upside-down-things* right side up--at the right time, in precisely the right way and in front of the faces of awe-struck people. *"Surely I will uphold you [turn you upright] with My righteous right hand"* (Isaiah 41:10). **Sixthly**, we learn that the Believer's job is to co-labor with the Almighty in building up the fallen tabernacle of David [reconciling the tribes and all Believers, and restoring the heritage of Israel] and thus help in preparing the way for the tabernacle of Elohim to be among men (Heb. 12:22; Rev. 21:3).

Consider: With the Tower of Babel fresh in our thinking, we must ask ourselves if the rapid and transformative development of today's manifold technology, with scientific advancements promising to transfigure humanity, is going to be visited by YHWH as was the Tower, before *modern technological transhumanist and paranormal capabilities* become too effectual? There are many ways the Almighty could employ to bring a crashing halt to man's plans to recreate himself and open earthly portals to demons.

7. "These are the records of the descendants of Shem" (B'resheit 11:10).

This section, stating the generations of Shem, "...reverts to **the main purpose** of the inspired narrative, which is to trace the onward development of the line of promise; and this it does by

carrying forward the genealogical history of the holy seed through ten generations [from Shem] until it reaches Abram." In this record we trace the continued separation of the Godly seed. One of the reasons for the scattering and positioning of people at Babel was that Israel would in time have her own land and sovereignty. We also take note in this chapter that life spans greatly and systematically decreased.

Whether the *shortened life span* is due to (a) the change of postdiluvian environmental conditions, (b) the deterioration of the human race in general, or (c) simply was ordained and engineered directly by Elohim [probably all three together] the diminishing life span serves a guilty and condemned race with regular notice that *"it is appointed unto all men to die once, and then the judgment."* Living nine-hundred years or more in today's world may not be a welcome prospect to everybody. [Eerdmans, Genesis, p. 170.]

8. *"Now these are the generations of Terah: Terah begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran begat Lot" (verse 11).*

Finally, we observe in the reading that a separation of the chosen, holy seed is occurring, and again that the life spans are shortening dramatically. Verses 10 through 32 unfolds a "genealogy of Shem and of Terah in order to set forth clearly the position of Abraham and that of his nephew Lot, and their connection with Ur of the Chaldees and Canaan. The chosen family is about to be separated from their country, but we are not told there was no light of God shining in Ur of the Chaldees. Probably there was the tradition of Shem's knowledge handed down [secured, maintained] through the generations. Arphaxad [Shem's son] was born two years after the flood; Salah, thirty-seven years [after]; Eber, sixty-seven years [after]; Peleg, one hundred and one years [following the flood]; Reu, one hundred and thirty-one years; Serug, one hundred and sixty-three years; Nahor, one hundred and ninety-three years; Terah, the father of Abram, two hundred and twenty-two years—not too great a length of time for the traditions [of the holy, pre-flood patriarchs] to be preserved [and passed along]. The call of Abram was not merely his separation from idolatry, but his consecration to the special vocation of founding the religious institutions which were connected to his family." [1] Shem carried, preserved, and disseminated the knowledge of Elohim, that his father Noah had taught him, into the new, postdiluvian world.

Haftorah

1. *"Shout for joy, O barren one, you who have borne no child; Break forth into joyful shouting and cry aloud, you who have travailed...enlarge the place of your tents...for you will spread abroad to the right and to the left..." (Isaiah 54:1-3).* Isaiah the prophet proclaimed judgments on Judah, Israel, and the nations, but also the blessing of all nations that would come through Messiah to restore Israel. His message was that through judgment the Almighty brings

repentance, salvation, righteousness, restoration and comfort. In the *haftarah*, Jerusalem is being compared, or characterized, as a woman devoid of children. Yet, despite this lamentable condition, she is enjoined to rejoice.

The reason for gladness is the promise that people will return and repopulate the city and towns. The prophet assures Jerusalem and Israel that Yahweh has remembered them, not forsaken them. The passage relates Jerusalem's and Israel's redemption to the promise Elohim made to Noah in our parsha: "...neither shall there again be a flood to destroy the earth" (*B'resheet* 9:11). In the same way, He said to Judah and the people of Jerusalem through the prophet Isaiah: "For the mountains may move and the hills might collapse, but My kindness shall not depart from you, neither shall the covenant of My peace collapse" (*Isa.* 54:10). **Part 3. Yeshua—The High Priest of Discipleship**

Yeshua does not fit into an earthly priesthood system, but "He has come to fulfill...that earthly system and to orient all our attention on Himself ministering for us in heaven." [2B] "But Yeshua, on the other hand, because He continues forever, hold His priesthood permanently. Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them" (*Heb.* 7:24-25).

1. "Make for yourself an ark of gopher wood" (*B'resheet* 9:14).

Noah was a man whose character was not shaped by the world around him or by his contemporaries. His heart was right before the Almighty and open to His voice. He did not tryst with the denizens of his debauched society. Noah was commanded to build an ark, a large vessel, according to specific details, for the safety of himself and his family from the oncoming judgment of flood waters. Mankind was under the sentence of death and this was YHWH's appointed means of deliverance and safety. "The Lord hath made known His salvation." The genealogical line of the prophesied woman's seed (*Gen.* 3:15) would be preserved in this way.

Noah's life teaches us: **A.** It is possible to be righteous and pure in an unclean, violent world. **B.** Only a person who is in regular, close communion with the Elohim of Israel will not be overcome by the subtle and corrosive sin/wickedness of the age. **C.** Faith is not alive and present where obedience to the Word is absent. Strong, growing, and enduring faith exists only in the environment of obedience (*Heb.* 11:8). Pious Noah was prompt in his obedience. He persevered in his peculiar construction work, and eventually was successful in finishing an enormous,

water-tight ark. It was the marvel of the region, probably a grand tourist attraction. May we, who trust Yeshua, simply believe His Word and walk in His light.

The object of faith for Messianic Israel is Messiah Yeshua, not just the doctrine of His salvation or the teaching of Hebrew roots. In other words, to "make yourself an ark" entails more than believing Yeshua is the Deliverer, it means actually taking refuge in Him by walking in His ways.

2. *"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me" (John 12:32).*

In a number of ways the Ark is a *type* of Yeshua. *"...and the waters increased, and bare up the ark, and it was lift [lifted] up above the earth" (B'resheet 7:17).* We will list a few:

A. The Ark was a refuge from the flood, the storm. Yeshua is our Refuge. *"Having been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him...reconciled to God...saved by His life" (Rom. 5:9-10).* **B.** Noah was invited into the Ark. *"Come into the ark..."* Yeshua invites men to His rest also. *"Come to Me, all you who are weary...and I will give you rest" (Mt. 11:28).* **C.** Noah and all that entered the Ark were secure. *"...and the Lord shut him in"* When we trust Yeshua for salvation we are "sealed with the Holy Spirit." He said, *"All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out" (John 6:37).* **D.** All that entered the Ark came into it by the same door. There was only one: *"...and set the [only] door of the ark in its side" (v. 16).*

Ultimately there are two classes of people, two alone. There are those who will meet judgment and those who are forgiven through faith in the blood of Yeshua. Our Passover Lamb is the only way to salvation and the only door to heaven. *"I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved" (John 10:9).*

Scripture unfolds and reveals clearly all matters concerning eternal life. The Master said, *"I am the way, the truth, and the life [His life was in His blood which was shed for us]. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6).* **Yeshua is our strong Ark.** All aboard!!

Part 4: The Holy Spirit—The Power of Discipleship

"But the anointing which you have received of Him abides in you..." (1 John 2:27). The Holy Spirit comes in to remain. "He will either be grieved, full of groaning and travail, or He will be there to lift you above the powers of darkness, transform you by His power, and take you to a place where you may be fully equipped."

The Holy Spirit (Ruach HaKodesh) was active in creation, as we have seen (B'resheet 1:2; Job 33:4). He imparted life to Elohim's creatures (B'resheet 2:7; Job 33:4; Ps. 104:30). He lives in

true followers of Yeshua (Rom. 8:11; 1 Cor. 6:15-20; 2 Cor. 3:3; Eph. 1:13; Heb. 6:4 1 Jn. 3:24; 4:13) and gives them "new beginnings."

1. "...and Elohim caused a wind to pass over the earth, and the water subsided" (B'reshet 8:1).

There are scholars/commentators who use the word *spirit* for *wind* in this verse. It is said the *wind/spirit* settled, and caused the waters to cease surging, closed the sources of the deluge, and thus loosed the flood to recede. On the first of Sivan, 150 days after the rain ended, the bottom of the Ark came to rest on the mountain range of Ararat. In the tenth month after the beginning of the flood the mountain tops appeared. Noah and his family waited, and left the Ark shortly afterwards when Elohm [He who controls nature] so commanded.

2. "Then Elohim spoke to Noah, saying, Go out of the ark..." (B'reshet 8:15-16).

Noah discerned the divine Voice telling him when to enter the ark, and Noah heard Him when Elohim told him to leave, also. ["Timing is everything," we have heard it said.] Noah heard and obeyed the voice of the Almighty. His obedience was immediate and demonstrated complete trust. As a result of his timely responses, enduring labor, and steadfast faith and patience, Noah's salvation and that of his household was assured. **Note:** Faith that transfigures the soul, revolutionizes character and priorities, and produces good works, is *saving faith*, according to James 2:14-17. One's faith should in some way also affect others. Paul, upon his conversion, intuitively knew that his conversion and faith were not simply a personal, private matter, but incorporated domestic and national responsibilities as well. "Lord, what would you have me to do?" Acts 9:6).

3. "But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come" (John 16:13).

Hearing the voice/word of the Lord and being led directly by His Spirit, as was Noah, are privileges of our redemption in Yeshua, and evidence of intimacy of fellowship. *Hearing* and *heeding* are also our duty...and joy. Because of this, the subject of "hearing the voice, or word, of the Spirit" is a sensible starting point for the year. During the *course* of the year we will discuss the Holy Spirit in relation to receiving divine revelation, functioning in His power, fellowshiping with Yeshua, blessing the Ecclesia-Kahal, understanding the sanctification of individual Believers, and ministering to sinners (unconverted).

The maturing sons of Elohim are to be directed by the Word of God and personally led by the Holy Spirit. This should be a way of life and service for Believers. Redeemed Israel should be *both* a Torah-honoring *and* a Spirit-led people. But not every Believer, for whatever reason, can or wants to hear the Almighty when He speaks. However you and I *can* hear His voice even at a

higher level if we so desire. He sincerely wants to communicate, as a divine Parent to His children, and is always ready for interaction with personal exhortations, edifications, instructions, and encouragements to impart to His beloved. Yeshua desires intimacy and regular close fellowship in personal exchanges with each of His cherished followers. Isaiah reveals the cry of YHVH for His people: *"Give ye ear, and hear my voice; hearken and hear my speech" (Isa. 28:23)*. He is ready for dialogue! The ministry of the Holy Spirit is one of communication! *"He will teach you..." (John 14:26)*. This is a favorable time to begin your journey of **(a)** cultivating

holy communications with Yeshua--both through the Word and the voice of the Set-Apart Spirit (Ruach HaKodesh), and **(b)** perfecting your discernment and response in being led by the Spirit. Have faith for new things. He will reveal Himself to you.

Yeshua said of the Holy Spirit, *"...I will send Him to you" (John 16:7)*. The coming of the Spirit to His followers was a foremost anticipation of the Messiah. Because the topic of the Holy Spirit is always so important and timely, this would be a very good year for us to pursue it in earnest, and as a result come to know Him *and* be more responsive to Him than ever before. With that purpose in mind, we will study the ministry and reality of the Holy Spirit week by week in our lessons, learn also about the manifest glory of Elohim, and practice functioning in His anointing in our table-class/small, friendly groups—Torah and Glory Discipleship Yeshivas.

There are several things to remember concerning hearing the voice of the Almighty and being led by the Spirit. [**Note:** His ministry includes teaching, comforting, transfiguring, empowering, and directing the Body of Messiah in life and ministry, through His gifts, fruit, administrations, and offices. He has a big job description.] Of course, He speaks, and communicates the Word of the Lord to the saints for their edification, instruction, and comfort. His voice/word can be heard audibly, within ourselves or without, as we have observed with Adam, Noah, the Patriarchs, and others. Today, however, His voice also takes the form of divinely illuminated personal words [each message or word is called a *rhema*: special word given; personal revelation] from Scripture, imparted impressions and ideas, and gifts of the Spirit (1 Cor. 12).

To communicate personally, the Spirit of Elohim will speak/stir/move within a Believer's regenerated, "born-again" spirit which He comes to indwell at the point of conversion to Yeshua. The Holy Spirit, through the re-born human spirit, will stir and communicate His mind to the soul [mind] of the Believer. He speaks Spirit to spirit, Mind to mind, Heart to heart, and in that way, Face to face. You will often feel His supernatural presence **(a)** rise up in you and give inspiration, **(b)** noticeably displace discouragement, **(c)** give you peace and hope, **(d)** provide fresh assurances and faith, and **(e)** lift your countenance. **Remember**, you are a Torah-honoring,

Spirit person. Obey the Word. Walk in the wisdom of His Torah. But also live under the influence/cloud of His Glory...the presence and anointing of the His Holy Spirit.

A. When the Ruach speaks to us [conveys to us a *knowing* of] His word, there will arise within us an *inward perceiving* accompanied by peace, rest, trust, confidence, assurance, and clarity, for example. Yeshua will be exalted. His voice/word is always in full agreement with Scripture and confirmed by witnesses when necessary. His peace within is the umpire which declares "safe" or "out" with regard to each thought, word, idea, and impression that bears upon the soul. [See: 1 Cor. 2:13; John 14:27; Isaiah 30:15; 2 Cor. 1:20; 13:1]

B. When the enemy (demonic influences) speaks, or brings impressions to us, the consequence of listening will usually be fear, unease, doubt of Scripture, conflict, confusion, agitation, restlessness, guilt, and the like. Further, Yeshua will not be magnified. [2 Tim. 1:7; James 3:16]

C. When the carnal/flesh nature speaks, and sends its messages, we can discern the voice by its fruit also: double-mindedness, carnality, pride, lust, timidity, fear, doubt (again), and hesitancy to believe Yahweh. Practice distinguishing between the various voices, thoughts, ideas, impressions, and words that come. They all contend daily for our attention and allegiance.

Since Yeshua desires to communicate directly with you by His Word and Spirit on an intimate, personal level, completely dedicate this year [by exercise, practice, confronting the questions] to hearing, learning, and responding to His voice. As you seek Him you will find yourself enjoying greater intimacy with your Redeemer. You will become more receptive to His growing anointing and joyful in His tangible presence through the Ruach too. By the end of your year-long commitment, you will be better empowered to fulfill your end-time role in His Body, Israel.

We want to stress the point that Believers in this hour should desire and expect our lives, ministries and assemblies to be characterized by the same presence and power of the Holy Spirit that were evident in the early Nazarene ecclesia. The Ruach's ministry was never intended to abate or cease with the passing of the original apostles, as some teach [cessationists].

The power, miracles, gifts, and inspired spiritual standards of the early Believers remain valid and are needed as much today as they were in the past. Redeemed Israel must represent the ministry of Yeshua in the fullness of the power of the Holy Spirit.

Glory Note: The glory of Elohim is the beauty of His divine goodness. It is His renown. He is worthy to be worshiped, praised and honored by His creation for His love, holiness, everlasting mercy. "...for God is love" (1 John 4:8). His glory is His resplendent magnificence made manifest

in a divine display of radiant light to be seen by witnesses. "...*God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all*" (1 John 1:5). His glory can fill the earth, but also fill a man. It can be a fire upon and a fire within: "*Then the cloud* [it was not a gray rain cloud. It was a radiant glory cloud] *covered the tent of meeting, and the* [Shechinah] *glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud had settled on it* [Spirit of glory], *and the glory* [tangible, weighty presence] *of the Lord* [YHWH]" *filled the tabernacle*" (Ex. 40:34-35). God's glory, as an outward manifestation, is tangible and can be felt like a weight. [There have been many people (as you probably know) who have experienced this glory by being held to the floor and resting under His *Kabod* ("weight") while the Spirit did a miraculous, life-changing work within them.

This is becoming more common today in gatherings of saints who are hungry for His touch.] Yahweh's glory can also be seen inwardly, by the fruit of the Spirit in man for instance. Yahweh's glory bears upon man, and transforms him both inwardly and outwardly, changing his behavior and sanctifying his demeanor. His glory produces good works because it is the "Essence" of Who He is--the eternal, infinite, omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent, absolutely pure Creator and King of the universe, and Redeemer of mankind. In Exodus, we read about the glory of YHWH coming and abiding both within and upon the tabernacle when it was erected by Moses (Exo. 40:34).

With regards to Believers today, His glory, as manifested by the Holy Spirit, is also: **A.** Within us. "*And there appeared unto them tongues of fire distributing themselves and they rested on each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance*" (Acts 2:3-4). With the regeneration by the Spirit, the convert to Messiah has the essence of the Torah written within the heart and mind. **B.** Upon us. "...*you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of Elohim rests on you*" (1 Peter 4:14). [Some manuscripts use the words: "...the Spirit of glory, and of power, and of Elohim..."] The Holy Spirit is the eternal Spirit of glory and power Who possesses the divine attributes of Elohim.

Kabod is the Hebrew word for "glory." It means weight, and refers to the substance or mass of an object, thing, or person. The *kabod*, or glory of Elohim is the glorious goodness of Yahweh's character, power, holiness, and love (1 John 4:16) made apparent. *Kabod* is His manifest presence laden and radiating with the substance of the goodness of the Most High.

"...*I pray You, show me Your glory!*" (Ex. 33:18). This was Moses' desire from the beginning, to know YHWH more intimately. Yahweh's reply was, "*I Myself will make all my goodness pass before you...*" In preparation for the revelation, He placed Moses into a cleft in a rock, a position of protection and stability. It symbolizes Yeshua. **Lesson:** We who trust the Messiah have been positioned in Him. He is the Glory and Goodness of the Eternal Elohim, the manifested Source of the Father's divine revelations and manifestations of Spirit and Truth. Let us call out as did

Moses..."show me!" We would do well to commit to one year of seeking greater intimacy with Him. There may well be a *cleft*, and a life-changing vision waiting for you.

We know YHVH is nearby to all people, for the inspired writer stated: *"That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him, though He be not far from every one of us: for in Him we live, and move, and have our being..."* (Heb. 17:27-28). Redeemed Israel's heritage is His Torah *and* His manifested glory! Hence, it is highly consequential to not only study Torah, but learn of and become intimate with the *"Spirit of glory and of God."*

"These are the records of the generations of Terah. Terah became the father of Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran became the father of Lot" (B'resheet 11:27).

A new branch, or subdivision, of genealogical history opens with the parsha's closing verses. Abram and Nahor married their brides, Sarai and Milcah. Both couples formed homes and lived in Ur. Nahor and Milcah eventually had children and settled in Haran. Abram and Sarai had no children, moved to Canaan, and there pitched their tent.

So we find the line of the promise going forward, but being narrowed also. What does this have to do with Noah? The parsha is about the preservation of the human race, and traces the history of the generations of man to them that carried the promise of the seed of the woman, the prophecy of a coming Redeemer Who would come and restore dominion back to man and divine order back to the earth.

Part 5: Overcoming—*The Outcome of Discipleship*

"In courageously pursuing such a course [of committed discipleship]—steadfastness in Messiah and His Kingdom—you will forge unshakable faith, you will find safety against the ill winds that blow, even shafts in the whirlwind, and you will feel the rock-like strength of our Redeemer, upon whom if you build your unflinching discipleship, you cannot fail or fall." [48] As you follow Messiah He strengthens your soul with boldness.

1. *"Therefore, leaving the elementary teachings about the Messiah let us press on to maturity [perfection], not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and faith toward God, of instructions about washings and laying on of hands, and the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment" (Heb. 6:1-2).*

Noah believed that the simple [elementary] command he had been given--to (a) preach and (b) build an Ark of wood had far reaching implications. Even when bothered by ridicule and rejection he pressed forward and brought his works to perfection in anticipation of profound

events to come. He had vision. So must redeemed Israelites today have vision. And we will obtain divine clarity by going forward in [doing, utilizing] what we have been given.

In the epistle the author summons the Hebrew Believers, many of whom were under pressure to return to Judaism, to not lag but go forward to perfection, to full spiritual growth and maturity in their faith, to a greater knowledge of Yeshua. This was their only remedy against apostasy into which some had fallen. The passage teaches wavering Believers that entry and progress in the Kingdom of Elohim entails the responsibility to grow in and move on with revealed truth and the Holy Spirit. Paul, in effect, told the Hebrew Believers that it was impossible for them to stand still in biblical faith and remain spiritually strong. They needed to see beyond the foundation of personal salvation and grasp the whole picture of YHWH's purpose, which was/is the restoration of Israel in the image of her Messiah. This restoration progresses as one person at a time grows up in the knowledge, practice, and likeness of Yeshua. To "*leave the elementary teachings*" of faith listed above does not mean we are to abandon sound foundational doctrine, but that we are to grow up from basic principles into deeper revelation of and intimacy with Yeshua, as a tree grows up from its roots while remaining attached to them.

The maturity in which Believers must make progress in these latter days is three fold: [Check yourself and your group out.] **First, maturity in knowledge.** The Hebrew roots movement and the teachings of Messianic Israel are leading people into a much greater understanding of the origin of their faith, an appreciation of the validity of the Torah, and a deeper knowledge of life of Messiah Yeshua. Further, Believers are learning about their biblical identity, destiny, and duty. This knowledge is spiritually transforming growing numbers of Christians, providing them with renewed faith and sense of purpose, and drawing them away from spiritually stifling institutionalized systems. **Secondly, maturity of experience.** Truth understood in the mind must pass into the heart and soul, and become spiritual convictions that dictate world view and behavior. Further, maturity includes passing from repentance, faith, and baptism to experiencing and enjoying the presence of the Messiah through the fullness of the Spirit, and encountering a revelation of the Father's love. **Thirdly, maturity is demonstrated by good works.** Community has a place in maturity. There is no true discipleship outside the context of service and fellowship. To our knowledge there is no office or ministry gift of "lone wolf" in the Ecclesia. Our personal salvation unites us with YHWH's community and His anointing in us means there is a place of service for each Believer in which to serve and grow. It is by committed, regular service that we are strengthened, learn to overcome, and bear the most fruit. Is service to others always easy? No. Will service bring transformation and fulfillment while glorifying Yeshua? Yes. You are saved. You know elementary teachings. Do you envision your role in the restoration of the kingdom, glory, and power of YHWH to all Israel? Yeshua desires His followers to separate themselves from the world and be distinguished as His disciples (2 Cor. 6:14-18),

purify themselves and not compromise with the old sinful, self-nature (2 Cor. 7:1). It is not possible to effectually participate in the glorious plans of YHWH and at the same time cooperate with the influences and temptations of Satan, the spirit of the age, or with the flesh. Hence, let us now rely upon His strength and, with faith, begin *"...perfecting holiness out of reverence for God."*

2. *"Now behold, I Myself do establish My covenant with you, and with your descendants after you..." (B'resheet 9:9).*

Noah and his family came to live in an entirely new environment when they disembarked from the Ark and stepped into the postdiluvian world. They rebuilt their lives and survived, though they were required to make significant adjustments. Transitions are not easy. This is true for all who move into a new world, or who go boldly forward into the things that Elohim is opening to his people. To remain inactive when YHWH's prophetic word is being fulfilled, or stay behind when He is summoning His chosen ones forward, results in loss, is foolhardy, and is reminiscent of eight of the *Ten Spies* of Numbers 13:25-29. In this hour of history YHWH is still restoring the neglected power of the Holy Spirit and, more recently, enlightening the rejected validity of Torah to the Body of Messiah world-wide. The House of Judah and the House of Ephraim [and their companions; Ezekiel 37:15-23] are gradually converging to form a Messianic Bride who loves both His instructions *and* His Spirit, and thus become biblically aligned to be transformed into a true, overcoming warrior people. This is happening now as the birth-pangs Yeshua spoke of in Matthew chapter twenty-four are occurring with increasing frequency. Growing up spiritually is no longer an option. It's a requirement! As it is written, *"...everyone who partakes only of milk [repetitive elementary teachings: i.e., personal success, prosperity, how to be happy, basic salvation truth, etc.] is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant. But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice [effort, exercise, study, and practice; this also pertains to learning to function in the gifts of the Spirit] have their sense trained to discern good [understand His Word and discern His voice] and evil" (Hebrews 5:14).* Infancy in faith and/or discipleship should never be a lasting condition for a Believer. This temporary stage of belief must be passed through and left behind by systematic orderly growth toward maturity in the Word and Spirit.

To purposely remain in a state of spiritual childhood is not only neglectful of divinely restored blessings of revelation and anointing, it is personally harmful, disrespectful, even sinful. Saints who are leaving their dependence upon the milk bottle--elementary doctrine, fundamentalism, aberrant (atypical; wrong) denominational doctrine which deny Hebraic truth and restrict the office of the Spirit--and reaching out for solid, nourishing food of Torah study and Spirit ministry are maturing [going on to perfection] in a balanced fashion. They will step into the necessary

role, the duty of effectively participating in the restoration of Israel and the reconciliation of the houses of Judah and Ephraim.

6. Conclusion

"For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh" (Romans 7:18). Apostle Paul's words are true, of course. We take notice that in our flesh, our carnal nature, dwells no good thing. How can people come to grips with this reality? "Isn't that what the salvation message is all about? It is not a correction or "straightening up" of the old man that needs to take place. It is his [its] ELIMINATION [flooding]! Except a seed fall to the ground, it will not live again."
[B5] Put on the *likeness of Yeshua*! Use discernment, and be led by the Spirit.

How do we put off the "old man?" Believers, by the regeneration of the Holy Spirit, have been raised with Christ. Therefore, we should act just as Jesus did when He was resurrected.

Notice: After His resurrection, Jesus left the tomb. So should we - we don't belong to the cold world and darkness any longer. **1.** "After His resurrection, Jesus spent His remaining time being with and ministering to His disciples. So should we - live our lives to be with and to serve one another. **2.** After His resurrection, Jesus lived in supernatural power with the ability to do impossible things. So should we - with the power and the enabling of the Holy Spirit. **3.** After His resurrection, Jesus looked forward to heaven, knowing He would soon enough ascend there. So should we - recognizing that our citizenship is in heaven." We are *in* the world but not **of** the world. [3]

"But, beloved, we are convinced of better things concerning you, and things that accompany salvation, though we are speaking in this way. For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you have shown toward His name, in having ministered and in still ministering to the saints. And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end, so that you will not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises" (Heb. 6:9-12).

This is the time for true disciples to throw off the old wineskins, partake of the new wine that is coming into the assembly, and become new wineskins fit for the Master's use in this time of restoration. Great and glorious times of revelation and transformation are ahead for the Body of Messiah! A convergence of the streams of Truth (Torah) and Spirit (Glory) is occurring of which we are going to be a part. He is elevating our heads and giving us new, broader vision, one of a holy and anointed Bride and a restored Israel. *"Now Elohim has not only raised up the Lord, but will also raise us up through His power" (1 Cor. 6:14).* The great guiding, controlling factor in the

lives of Believers is not our needs, our self-wants, or even the needs of others; it is the commandment (s) of our Redeemer and Master, Yeshua HaMashiach. Our goal is to be disciples who are true to His plans and purposes, as was our parsha subject, Noah, and become equipped to participate in them. ***Tamid kadima—Always forward.*** Shalom.

The Seven Study Questions

These will appear at the conclusion of every lesson.

The *lesson questions* are a **very important** aspect of the student's learning. All readers are strongly encouraged to take the time and include them in their study discipline. Prayerfully answer each one! They are intended to coax the student to rely upon interaction with the Holy Spirit, discern His voice, receive insight, and obtain prophetic enlightenment.

This process will assist each learner to (1) develop a vision for the restoration and reconciliation of the whole house of Israel, (2) grow in foundational knowledge of the Torah, (3) recover the principles, practice, and Holy Spirit power of the early, first-century Nazarene believers, and (4) experience and enjoy greater dimensions of the kingdom, power, and glory of Yeshua.

Note: The questions presented here are listed again at the conclusion of each lesson in both the *Torah Commentary Manuals* and the *Torah Discipleship Manuals*. **To repeat—be sure to follow through with them.**

1a. In your opinion, what is the main theme or teaching of each of the listed readings individually? Starting with the Torah: What is its title? What is the interpretation? What truth/idea does the interpretation of the title suggest? What is the Torah section's main truth, as you see it?

1b. What is the corresponding idea in the Haftorah? In the Brit Chadashah?

2. What is the outstanding, central idea or subject that runs through and unites all the individual readings, as you see it? What does it say about discipleship?

3. Find in the Gospels where and how Yeshua declares, demonstrates, exemplifies, or exhibits the parsha's central truth, and explain. Give chapter and verse. Will you follow Him in living the lesson's truths?

4. In what way was the glory of YHVH [manifestations of His goodness] revealed in the parsha lesson?

5. What does the parsha teach you about your Hebrew roots, your identity, your destiny, your duty?

6. In what way did the Holy Spirit/Ruach HaKodesh personally speak to you during prayer and study this week? Did He impress you about how to apply the parsha lesson directly to your life? Explain.

7. *"...because of practice [by reason of use] have their senses trained [exercised] to discern..."*
You and I are called to return to hearing the voice of Elohim and to functioning in the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Progressing in these vital areas will require spiritual hunger, faith, and practice. He is waiting for us to approach Him.

Ask the Holy Spirit to speak into your spirit/heart as you pray each day. Look for opportunities to lay hands on the sick, or to be used in prophesy. Faithfully record the prophetic words and experiences you receive, and be sure to share them with your brethren.

It is helpful to **share** your answers, insights, and revelations with your study group (table class). We recommend meeting regularly in a small group. This allows for healthy interaction and exchange, and militates against stagnation. Practice operating with your spiritual gifts under the anointing of the Holy Spirit while among your friendly, supportive peers. Allow for open participation in leading praise and worship. Give altar calls at your table for healing, refreshing, and prophetic words. These are effective ways for all present to mature in their calling and gifting. The non-threatening small group provides a favorable and encouraging environment in which to learn the ministry of the Spirit. You will do well.

Next-for the upcoming generations:

These parsha lessons will be crafted for younger readers. Be sure to use them.
Consider what is written in Deuteronomy 6: 6-7?

!. Youths' Version - Under construction.

2. Childrens' Version - Under construction.

Footnotes: 1A. On the Path of the Immortals, T. Horn; Introduction, Dr. M. Lake. 1B. The Bride of Christ, E. Chumney, p. 176. 2B. www.desireingod.org/message/our-high-priest. 3B. Greater Works, S.W., p.177. 4B. www.enduringword.com/commentaries/5103.htm. 5B.

www.meguiar.addr.com/judgment/htm. 1. Vineyard USA, B. Wagonner. 2. Ibid. 3. www.enduringword.com/commentaries/5103

Next:

Lech Lecha ("Go forth yourself")

Contenders' Voice

Discipleship Series

Book of Genesis/B'resheet

Lesson Three

Lech Lecha (*"Get yourself out"*)

Torah: Genesis/B'resheet 12:1-17:27

Haftorah: Isaiah/Yeshayahu 40:27-41:16

Brit Chadashah: Matthew/Mattityahu 1:22-23; Acts/Maaseh 7:1-8;
Romans/Romiyah 3:19-5:6

Lesson Sequence

1. Introduction: *The Call to Discipleship* **2.** Weekly Parsha: *The Torah—the Standard of Discipleship* **3.** Yeshua: *The High Priest of our Discipleship* **4.** The Holy

Spirit/Ruach ha Kodesh: *The Power of Discipleship* **5. Overcoming: *The Outcome of Discipleship*** **6. Conclusion**

Consider

“What is *transhumanism*? [The word] literally means “beyond human.” In the scientific world, it is the enhancement of the human intellect, body, and psychology. The goal is to use technology to create an indefinite, augmented human consciousness [i.e., cosmic consciousness] freeing us from the law of mortality and shattering Methuselah’s record of long life”—969 years.” [1A] Do you want to be ‘upgraded’ through nanotechnology, DNA manipulation, implanted artificial intelligence, a re-engineered brain, neural implants, and remote-control pharmaceuticals? The technology has arrived, and this *other-dimensionally inspired* adventurism is well underway. “For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah ” (Mt. 24:37). **Choose to be upgraded by His power. Pray and prepare for a visitation of His Spirit and a great spiritual awakening in the land!**

Part 1: Introduction—*The Call to Discipleship*

“It is a characteristic of our age that if people want any gods at all, they want them to be gods who do not demand much, comfortable gods, smooth gods who do not rock the boat...who pat our heads...these folks invoke the name of Jesus as one who was [is] this kind of ‘comfortable’ God. Really? Remember, it was He who said not only should we not break [His] commandments, but we should not even think about breaking them.” [1B] The King of Glory means exactly what He says! “If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me” (Mt. 16:24). Are you a *Torah and Glory* disciple of the King?

Last week review: In lesson Parsha *Noach* (“*Noah*”), we learned that after about 1650 years the human family line that ran from Adam to Noah had become physically and morally corrupted. First, some say that the corruption was the result of the intermarriages of the godly descendants of Seth with the unrighteous seed of Canaan. However, we think it was primarily because fallen angels had forced physical relations with human females that produced Nephilim, giants of old, abnormal beings who possessed super-human powers and were worshiped and feared by the people they corrupted, controlled and abused.

Noah alone was singled out by the Almighty as undefiled, righteous and trustworthy, and he was given the Word of deliverance. “Who is the man who fears the Lord? He will instruct him in the way he should choose” (Psalm 25:12). During this period, the concept of repentance was introduced to the corrupted antediluvian world. While Noah preached and the Ark was being

built, men and women were shown mercy and given plenty of time to repent (make *teshuvah*), turn from wrongdoing, and amend their lives even after committing sins that warranted immediate judgment. *Noach* is the story of the early civilization's rejection of grace, the resultant flood, and Noah's new life in the postdiluvian earth. Mankind was given a new beginning then, as are Believers today who place their faith in the living Ark, our Messiah Yeshua. *"For He rescued us from the domain [kingdom] of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins" (Col. 1:13).*

This week's discipleship lesson preview: The parsha commentary lesson is ***Lech Lecha*** ("*Go forth, yourself*"). It was said by the prominent hassidic rabbi, Lubavitcher Rebbe, that *Lech Lecha* ("*Go, to you*" or also "*to you, to you*")--"...are the most important words ever spoken in history.

With these words, God set Abraham on the *course* that would reverse the process of spiritual degeneration that humanity had fallen into ever since the expulsion from the Garden of Eden, a *course* that would eventually lead it to the Giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai." [Chabad. org.]

YHWH's call to Abraham, a call that included Sarah, revealed that:

(1) Elohim is accessible to those who seek Him. Abraham was no deist. He was monotheistic. He had learned of the One True Elohim from the lives and stories of his ancestors, and how He had encountered certain people who lived righteous lives. Abraham wanted to know this Elohim.

(2) In calling Abraham, YHVH transformed him from being a visionary into becoming His personal emissary, one who could speak with authority concerning the reality, the nearness, and the personality of the living Elohim, the One Whom he had sought. Thus, the descent of the divine, manifest presence and personal appearances of the Most High began on the earth.

Note: "In Hebrew *Lech/ Lecha* are the masculine and feminine forms of *to you*. So, it [*Lech Lecha*] literally means *to you, to you*. It makes sense though that both forms are used because the promises are to **Abraham (*lech*)** and to **Sarah (*lecha*)**. To you [both] I will give a son. To you [both] will be many nations. To you [both] a new name. To you, to your wife..." S. Barnett

The Spirit of God calls disciples. He says, "You! Get yourself out from your old religious ways and go to the ancient, original paths of faith, and you will find rest for your soul." See Jer. 6:16.

Part 2: Torah—*The Standard of Discipleship*

Parsha Lesson Three: *Lech Lecha* ("*Get yourself out*")

“...in Yeshua’s day there was another “law” that co-existed with the Torah. That “law” was called the “oral law.” Bible students [disciples] must know the difference between the teachings of the Torah and those of the *oral tradition*, because both were called “law.” The Torah was/is God’s [divinely inspired] Word; the oral law consisted of man’s thoughts, customs and traditions, and produced the tenets we call legalism. Yeshua spoke of this when He quoted from Isaiah 29:13: ‘...hypocrites...in vain do they worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.’” Therefore, it is important to learn, understand, and **honor His commandments**. [28]

Torah

The Torah is YHVH's book of instructions for mankind. Its many instructions, which will produce a prosperous life when followed. Some instructions overlap somewhat, yet serve perfectly to teach mankind how to relate to the Almighty, behave as individuals, and function successfully in a community. Intended as helps, many details are added [i.e., "*you shall have a full and just weight*"] on how to fulfill the main principles [i.e., "*love your neighbor*"].

The Hebrew names for the five Torah books are taken from the first words of the first verse of each book.

For instance, *B'resheet*, which is the Hebrew name of the first book, is the first word of Genesis: **1.** *B'resheet*, literally is "In the *beginning*." **2.** *Shemot* [Exodus] literally means, "these are the *names*." **3.** *Vayikra* [Leviticus] literally is "*He called to Moses...*" **4.** *Bamidbar* [Numbers], literally, "...YHVH spoke to Moses *in the wilderness*." **5.** *Devarim* [Deuteronomy], "...these are the *words...*"

We are more familiar with the Anglicized names which originated from the Greek language, but still convey the essential characteristic, or theme, of each Torah book: **(a)** Genesis: *Creation* **(b)** Exodus: *Departure*. **(c)** Leviticus: *Levitical and priestly regulations that apply to sacrifices and Temple service*. **(d)** Numbers: [*Arithmoi*; Greek] *Numbering of the Israelites at Sinai and many years later on the plain of Moab*. **(e)** Deuteronomy: "*Second law*." *Review of the Law/Commandments by Moses before his death*. The Torah scroll is most sacred to Jewish worshipers, and (at least) one is found in every synagogue. The scroll is called *sefer Torah*. When the Torah is bound in a book it is called *Chumash*.

1. *"Now the Lord said to Abram, Go forth from your country [or, 'go for yourself from your land'], and from your relatives and from your father's house, to a land which I will show you; and I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; and so you shall be a blessing; And I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed. So Abram went forth as the Lord had spoken to him..." (B'resheet 12:1-3).*

Abraham was a Chaldean. He alone--of all Terah's family, of all the descendants, of all the residents of Ur, of all the people on the earth--**received a personal summons** from the Most High to embark on a physical and spiritual journey, one that would result in the transformation of the spiritual nature of mankind. Noah was alive when he was born, so was Shem. From his ancestors Abraham surely learned about El Shaddai, the Creator, and, in all likelihood, spent time reaching out for greater knowledge. *"...you will find Me when you search for Me..."* He was divinely called to separate himself from his homeland, leave his extended family and home, and make a long, arduous journey through strange and hostile territory to an unknown land. Some translations render B'resheet 12:1 as: *"Go for yourself from your land..."* This can be paraphrased as: *"Go for your own benefit and your own good."* [1].

YHVH's call to Abraham distinguished him forever. The command was authoritative, perhaps even intimidating, but it was accompanied by a number of precious promises, wonderful assurances, that more than compensated for the difficulties and labors that the long endeavor would visit upon him. The divine summons provided a manifold [uniting various features] incentive and a sustaining measure of cheer for the senior citizen and patriarch. *"I will make of thee a great nation...will bless thee...make thy name great...thou shalt be a blessing..."* Abraham believed the promise, and *"...went forth as YHVH had spoken [directed]..."*

"God's command that Abraham and Sarah sever all ties with their past loved ones—when they were 75 and 65 years old—was one of ten [progressive] trials. As we already remarked, it is never easy for a person to start life over again, especially when he has achieved status and prosperity. By bringing Abraham to *Eretz Israel* and promising that the Land would become the heritage of his family, God was establishing the Land as the eternal patrimony of the Jewish [Israelite] people. There was further symbolism. Though Abraham and Sarah had many disciples, they were essentially alone; they could never blend into whatever culture surrounded them. Abraham was called a *Ivri*, from the [Hebrew] word [meaning], *the other side*. Literally this means that he came to Canaan from the other side of the Euphrates, but the Sages interpret the title in a deeper sense, too. He was on one side of a moral and spiritual divide, and the rest of the world was on the other. Righteous people must be ready to endure such isolation; popularity is pleasant but it is also a snare, because the natural desire to win approval of others can easily lead people to bend their principles.

Abraham and Sarah were now given the challenge of moving to the *other side*—not only of their native river, but of anyone who preferred not to acknowledge the sovereignty of God.” [1] Abraham and Sarah never returned to the land of their origin, but remained in Canaan. They were single-minded people. Yeshua said, *“No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God”* (Lk. 9:62). James confirmed the principle of steadfastness, declaring: *“A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.”* Hence Paul exhorts us today: *“...be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord”* (1 Cor. 15:58). We are *lvri* too.

The divine call which was heard and received by Abraham is a *type* of the Gospel call which goes forth into the earth to people today. The preached Word must always be received by faith. The faith of the patriarch, who submitted and responded to his heavenly call with alacrity [promptness], is our example of how we should all embrace the Word of God once we hear and discern it. Several characteristics of the faith of our father Abraham are worthy of pause and our consideration. **First**, Abraham's faith was obedient and produced works. He called his household together, packed, and departed from his home as soon as he was able. **Secondly**, as was Noah before him, Abraham was prompt, and responded without hand wringing or hesitation to the heavenly directive. There is no record of reluctance or complaint as the flock-master put YHVH's order into operation. **Thirdly**, his faith demonstrated intelligence and good reasoning. He left behind a dangerous and idol-infested culture, trading it in for the Almighty's strength, provision, protection, fellowship, and love. That's wisdom! *“Love not the world [system] neither the things that are in the world [do not become knit into it, and make one with the fallen world-system's values and moral fabric]”* (1 John 2:15). **Finally**, Abraham's faith was persevering. Abraham was patient. He was delayed in Haran, but was not diverted or distracted from his journey. Undaunted by the troubles of the road, he did not halt his forward progress until he entered Canaan.

These are the characteristics of biblical apostolic discipleship!

Faith must be sustained--renewed each day through prayer, study, and worship--to carry a believer successfully to the end of his/her journey, and to the fulfillment of a promise. It is not the one who *starts* his heavenly journey who is recognized and blessed as an **over-comer**, but the one who *completes* the faith journey. We are not among those who grow weary and give up. We understand that the *“weapons of our warfare”* operate best *in the fire*! What does this say to believers who have started their *journey of return* to their Hebraic heritage--the kingdom (*Hebraic; Israelite*) and the power (*Holy Spirit*) and the glory (*intimacy of His manifest presence*) of YHVH?

Do not be distracted, pressured, or persuaded from your heavenly call! Return all the way to where the Ruach HaKodsh is leading you. Our goals are a greater comprehension of Truth [more

Light] and the fullness of the Holy Spirit [more intimacy with Messiah]. If we just keep going forward, He will see to it that we succeed in entering into those blessings.

Abram passed into Canaan with Sarah, Lot, and their household, and came to Shechem.

2. *"The Lord appeared to Abraham and said, to your descendants I will give this land. So he built an altar there to the Lord..." (B'resheet 12:7).*

This is the first recorded instance of a *theophany* (pre-incarnate manifestation of the eternal Son, Yeshua) in the Torah, although Acts 7:2 indicates/suggests such a manifestation occurred in Ur of the Chaldees. [Note: Divine appearances to Abraham are seen in B'resheet 15:1 (vision); 17:1; 18:2,17,33; to Hagar: 16:7-14; 21:17-18; to Isaac: 26:2; to Jacob/Israel: 31:11-13; 32:24-30.] Abraham built an altar to sanctify the site, commemorate the visitation, and honor his Elohim, El Shaddai.

Note: the building of an altar or a religious structure in ancient times was a form of taking possession of a land or territory. The message of the custom remains the same today. It is a statement of dominance. The Al-Aqsa Mosque (Dome of the Rock) sits on the Temple Mount, the site of Solomon's Temple, and has a profile that was designed by the Moslems to dominate the skyline of Jerusalem. When Rome destroyed Israel's Temple, they erected their own religious temple on the site. In the 6th century that temple was replaced by a church. After the Arabs conquered Jerusalem in 638 C.E. the church was converted into Al-Aqsa Mosque. Following the 1948 war the Dome of the Rock was restored and thoroughly renovated by Jordan, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia. Now the Temple Mount is under Islamic authority and administration. With the enduring presence of the Al-Aqsa Mosque to encourage them, the Arab world now openly lays claim to the Temple mount, and even all Jerusalem and the land of Israel! However, this presumption will last only for a season. It will not endure. *"...to Me every knee will bow, every tongues will swear allegiance...all who are angry at Him will be put to shame. In the Lord all the offspring of Israel will be justified and will glory" (Isa. 45:23-24).*

In the Torah we do not read of the patriarchs building permanent houses for themselves, but we do see them building altars in the land. The land belongs to YHVH and He has given it for a home to His chosen people, the twelve tribes of Israel.

After building the altar, a famine caused Abraham and his family to go to Egypt. Fearing Elohim, Pharaoh treated Abraham very well, and the Patriarch ended up leaving Egypt even wealthier than when he had entered, with greatly increased herds, flocks, and goods.

Verses 10 through 20 describe Abraham's trek into Egypt. When the patriarch arrived in Canaan he discovered dry fields and an unproductive pagan population, not the stuff of his dreams. Yet it is common for people called by YHVH, Who *"having provided something better for them,"* to

first encounter undesirable circumstances when they start their journey. Man's ideals and expectations need to be dashed sometimes in order to perceive the elevated, loftier, better things Elohim has for them. Abraham's sojourn to and hope in Egypt is a testimony of his reliance on self and incompleteness of faith. He placed his family in a position of danger as he ventured forth on crooked pathways and deception--a worldly policy. In reading the account it seems Abraham was more concerned over his own safety than his wife's chastity. Indeed, she was eventually brought into the royal chambers of the pharaoh and YHVH had to intervene to rescue Abraham and Sarah from their foolishness. The narrative is a testimony to Elohim's faithfulness and protection. He went down into Egypt with His servant and his family, protected them, delivered them, and even prospered the entire house in spite of Abraham's blunder.

We are reminded that good people sometimes fall into sin and carnality. Yet, where sin abounds, the grace of Elohim abounds much more (Rom. 5:20). Abraham's conscience, we are sure,

convicted him but there was trouble awaiting him nonetheless. His faith would be perfected in the trials that would come.

Abraham and Israel (the nation) have similar histories. Both (a) went to Egypt because of a famine, (b) found Egypt to be a house of bondage in one sense or other, and (c) were protected by YHVH as the pharaoh in each case was subjected to divine interventions. Further, (d) Abraham and Israel went forth from Egypt with increase and spoil, and (e) upon their deliverance, went forward to Canaan. **Learn:** The Holy Land can suffer famine. Faithful saints have defects in faith. Believers make mistakes. But our Elohim, whose mercy endures forever, will provide help for recovery, and more.

3. "So Abram went up from Egypt to the Negev...and Lot with him" (B'resheit 13:1).

Lot [in Hebrew: *hidden, covered*], Abraham's nephew, was the son of Haran, Abraham's brother. He and his household went with Abraham, Sarah, and their family from Ur of the Chaldees into Canaan. Abraham was affectionate towards Lot. But when they could no longer dwell together in the same region of Canaan--because of their enlarged flocks, mingling animals, and quarreling shepherds--Abraham gave Lot the first choice of land to which his family could relocate and expand.

Lot looked at the well-watered lowland country [called *El Ghor*], the beautiful and fertile plain of the Jordan, and without great thoughtfulness chose it for his new home. Abraham was left with the hill country. On one hand, Lot's choice seemed a smart one. The land was lovely, had rich soil, was well irrigated, and promised to be very productive. But, on the other hand, there were serious drawbacks to his choice.

First, bad neighbors abounded in the region. The Jordanic Pentapolis was filled with heathens and moral derelicts of the worst stripe. While it is not possible to escape contact with corrupt people/society entirely, it is still wise for the righteous to keep as far off from wickedness as possible, especially of the type that infected Sodom (Rom. 1:18-24; 3:10-18; 6:23; 12:2; 1 Cor. 5:1, 6:17). Socializing, mingling, and inter-marrying between the godly and the ungodly had contributed to the ruin of the antediluvian world, we are told. This suggests a simple but very important principle to spiritual success--we are to *flee* temptation, not *flirt* with it. **Secondly**, there was present in and around Sodom a thick cloak of oppression, a spiritual ambiance of wickedness, a smog-like miasma of evil spirits that, as an unseen cloud of infected biting flies, afflicted the residents and contaminated the city. By living near Sodom, Lot should have realized that his pious, good nature would gradually deteriorate under the corrosive weight of the irresistible, contagious wickedness infecting his neighbors. *"He that walketh with wise men shall be wise; but the companion of fools shall be [end up] destroyed"* (Prov. 13:20). **Finally**, the likelihood of retaining family standards and happiness was small, while the potential for bitter sorrow was great. Lot, who was accustomed to being protected by stronger relatives, would not be a strong or protective father. We all know about the unhappy but predictable outcome of Lot's ill-considered choice.

Lot did not prayerfully calculate the moral hazards of his decision. Though he was commendable in some ways, his choice of land was based on covetousness and selfishness. With this in mind, New Covenant Israelites can certainly appreciate why Yeshua said, ***"Judge not according to appearance..."*** (John 7:24). Why not? Because, like they say, "all that glitters is not gold." We all face choices and sometimes must make difficult decisions. Hence, He offers us His eternal counsel for steering our courses. In everything, *"... seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness; and all these things [you need and want] will be added unto you [according to His time and wisdom, for your ultimate welfare and even the good of others]"* (Mt. 6:33).

In verses 14 through 18 we see YHWH's compensation. Abraham was generous toward Lot (verses 9-11) and did not strive with him over real estate. Afterwards YHWH spoke to the patriarch in a personal, gracious, magnanimous manner. In place of the Jordan plain, he received all Canaan as a perpetual possession. The Almighty promised Abraham seed, confirming that he would have descendants, multitudes of them.

Those who make sacrifices for the Most High and His purposes never come away as losers, only winners. Our Elohim is the ever-present Spectator of all the deeds of man, and takes note of those that are noble. Self-sacrifice is a kingdom virtue. *"He who would save his life must lose it."*

4. *"And it came to pass in the days of Amraphel king of Shinar...Arioeh...Chedorlaomor...and Tidal...that these made war with Bera, king of Sodom...Birsha king of Gommorah..."* (see B'resheet 14:1-13).

This episode begins around the eighty-fourth year of Abraham's life, **after Lot had become**--not just a resident of the Jordan plain, but **a citizen of Sodom**. Two forces of allied kings went to war. We believe war is justifiable at times, but victory may not always favor the best man-made causes. War can be the divine instrument of judgment and chastisement. *YHVH Sabaoth*, the Elohim of Hosts, however, will give favor and victory to whom He chooses. Nevertheless, with war there are always concurrent, collateral, and disastrous results where the innocent and uninvolved suffer along with the guilty and the combatants. Such happened with the family of Lot. He was at heart a righteous man, but he made an egregious blunder in moving into Sodom. He did not think in terms of one day being chastised. We note that sin and self-justification tend to dull the conscience and obscure moral vision. Compromise is an enemy. Lot had lived within the Jordan plain until the war took away his flocks and herds and left his barns empty. He and his family moved into Sodom but were quickly taken captive by the invading army and remained captives until Abraham and his trained militia rescued him. Upon his return to Jordan, he chose to move back in and find comfort and support in immoral Sodom, and hence subjected himself to their coming divine recompense. The city's invasion did not produce thoughtful repentance, or alert the family to a more severe judgment to come. YHVH proved Himself merciful to Lot on several occasions but divine grace was nevertheless not efficacious [not producing the desired result], as we know *"When Abram heard that his relative had been taken captive, he led out his trained men...and went in pursuit as far as Dan..." (B'resheet 14:14)*. Abraham had three-hundred and eighteen male servants who he trained in the knowledge of the One True Elohim--El-Elyon to him--and these he also equipped for conflict. He marched against the army that had kidnapped his family. By the grace of the Almighty, he succeeded in retrieving his nephew from Chedorlaomer's invading forces that had descended upon the Jordan valley, Sodom and other towns. Abraham demonstrated the generosity, compassion, and kindness of his character in his recovery of the short-sighted family member. A less noble person would not have extended and endangered himself in such a way. Sadly, after Lot had been rescued from the first judgment on Sodom, he returned to the carnal life of the wicked city and had to be rescued again!

After the destruction of Sodom, it was all downhill for the once favored relative of the patriarch. In his last estate we find him in a cave, drinking warm wine, and beguiled into cohabiting with his daughters. The offspring of the unholy liaisons were Moab and Ben-ammi [Ammon], whose descendants eventually became enemies of Moses and Israel, and resisted their entry into the Promised Land.

5. "And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; now he was a priest of El-Elyon [God Most High]. He blessed him and said, Blessed be Abram..." (B'resheet 14:18-19).

We believe Melchizedek was not a supernatural being, an angel, the Holy Spirit, or pre-incarnate Messiah Yeshua. [We understand that there are those who think Melchizedek was a pre-incarnate Messiah. There exist differing opinions.] Some sages affirm that he was Shem (but not some other early patriarch). But, he may have been a Canaanite of Shemite genealogy. In any case, we think he was a prince from Salem (which became Jerusalem) and functioned both as a king/monarch and a priest. It is apparent that Melchizedek was representing the primitive worship of the same God that Abraham, who was more advanced in his knowledge and faith, had sought and worshiped. Both men, when referring to the One True God, used the same name for Him, *El-Elyon*--“the Most High God” (Winner of battles) and “Possessor of heaven and earth”.

Melchizedek was regarded as king of Salem, and was accepted as a monarch who exemplified the qualities of righteousness and of peace (Heb. 7:2). He reigned over the very site on which the Temple would eventually reside. We judge that he was a meek and holy man, a person of excellence who was qualified to be a governor and a minister, a king and a priest of the Most High. In these ways he is a type of Messiah, our eternal King and High Priest (Heb. 7:4-28). Still, he remains a somewhat mysterious person. He is of unknown parentage, unrecorded genealogy, and unspecified background. He emerges very suddenly from historical obscurity onto the pages of Scripture, yet in divine timing. Melchizedek provided refreshment to the victorious but weary patriarch. The priestly benediction that he spoke over Abraham was invested with the authority and power of the Spirit of Elohim, and the praise Abraham gave Elohim in return for victory was genuine and heartfelt. Thus, Abraham honored the King of Salem--in front of the king of Sodom and his people, the many others who were there, and his household--with a tenth of the spoils of the battle. It was an act of worship as well as an acknowledgment of Melchizedek's position as minister of the Possessor of heaven and earth, *El-Elyon*.

6. *"After these things the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward" (B'resheet 15:1).*

After paying tithes to Melchizedek, Elohim spoke to Abraham again. YHVH's faithful servants will always have His favor, His ear, the approval of godly people, and the blessing of heaven upon them. We believe, in this case, the word “Lord” in the KJV is translated *YHVH-Debar*, a designation of the pre-incarnate Logos. It is used often in the chapter. It denotes that “YHVH manifested Himself by [audible] speech to His servant.” The Almighty sought to comfort His servant since he had just been through frightful circumstances, some of which would naturally cause worry and stress. *“Abram said, O Lord God, what will you give me, since I am childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer...this man will not be your heir, but one who will come forth from your own body...he believed in the Lord; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness” (B'resheet 15:2-6).*

This chapter contains a dialogue between the Almighty and His servant, Abraham. He may have been sitting under the stars on a clear evening contemplating his future, perhaps disappointed with the barrenness of Sarah, and a bit forlorn. Feeling his advancing age, Abraham probably wondered if he would have a biological heir. Then, suddenly and unexpectedly, "*...the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not...*" The warrior's countenance was immediately lifted by his Creator's words, we are sure.

The Almighty declared to Abraham that He was, is, and always will be his all-sufficient, always present Shield, his impregnable Fortress. Elohim also informed Abraham that He Himself would be his great recompense, that His divine friendship and favor would more than amply compensate for Abraham's disappointments and sacrifices. Then, knowing His servant's thoughts, El Elyon [The Mighty One] promised Abraham that an heir would come forth from his own loins. But the overriding message was not lost on the sojourner: Do not seek satisfaction, fulfillment, or happiness in earthly things, but rather in the Almighty Himself who provides them and who makes promises He fulfills.

To enlarge Abraham's vision [and give a hint of a future name change], Elohim "*brought him forth abroad*" and had him gaze intently into heaven, into the clear starry sky. We can surmise that YHVH opened his eyes and granted him miraculous, supernatural vision, enabling him to gaze on the many stars in their far-flung systems, and behold their incredible size, color, splendor, power, and radiance, by the thousands and thousands. It is likely that the patriarch was overwhelmed by the stupendous vision of the destiny of his seed. When the intended, divine impression had been indelibly emblazoned upon his soul, YHVH said to him, "*So shall your seed be.*"

Whether or not he *fell over* under divine power upon hearing the enormous promise, we do not know. But we *do* know that Abraham believed Elohim, "*...and He reckoned it to him as righteousness.*" He returned to his tent as a new man, filled with holy awe, excited about the future, and motivated with a divinely confirmed hope and strengthened faith. He had been rejuvenated by the Word of YHVH's mouth. "*He sent His Word and healed them, and delivered them...*" (Ps. 107:20).

He retired for the night, and rested with great satisfaction knowing that, despite whatever might transpire in history, his descendants would nevertheless not only become as numerous as the stars, but also as enduring and as varied and bright.

Abraham came to a place in his sojourning where the object of His faith was the unadulterated, unadorned Word of God, the promise of the seed, and he was therefore accepted as justified. The basis of his justification before the Almighty was solely his belief in the holy promise. Biblical faith is borne of the Spirit, and is a living assurance, a confidence, an inner knowing that

produces obedience, expectation, and good works. Saving faith takes on a supernatural quality when YHVH quickens a divine promise, gives a revelation, and illuminates a *rhema* word to a person's heart.

Some of the most needed words we will ever receive, words that will galvanize us to faith and action, will come to us individually, directly and personally from Him. Pray, read the Scriptures, and expect to hear His voice. God promised the land of Canaan to Abraham and confirmed the promise with the *Covenant Between the Parts* with him. The holy Land is promised to him as an eternal heritage.

7. *"O Lord God, how may I know that I will possess it? So He said to him, Bring Me a three year old heifer..." (read B'resheet 15:8-13).*

YHVH sealed the *Covenant Between the Parts* with Abraham as a visible and audible pledge of the fulfillment of the promise. Clean [kosher] animals were sacrificed, and a smoking furnace and burning lamp were in the midst, as emblems of the presence of YHVH. [Compare Abraham's covenant with the smoke and the fire that appeared on Sinai with Moses, and with the pillar of fire and smoke (cloud) in the wilderness.] *"On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, To your descendants I have given this land..." (v. 18).* This covenant with Abraham is everlasting, and established His descendants, the seed of the promise, as heirs to the Promised Land forever. *"And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between the pieces" (B'resheet 15:17-18).*

YHVH cut a covenant with Abraham. The great blessing of the covenant was the wonderful heritage—the land of Canaan, a better country for himself and his descendants. The covenant was a visible pledge for the fulfillment of the splendid promise. The covenant's symbols include the sacrificed animals as propitiatory offerings. They were the types of animals that would later be legislated for sacrifice at Sinai. There were also the smoking furnace and a burning lamp. They are compared to the smoke and fire on the Mount and the *pillar of fire and cloud* in the wilderness. The furnace and lamp were emblems of the presence of YHVH and point to the characteristics of divine justice and mercy. Thus, by way of visuals, spiritual vision, and audible words, Abraham was instructed concerning his justification, that it was not based on personal merit or belief in a living Deity, but upon faith in the promise and in the divinely appointed sacrifice which YHVH had deigned to accept for propitiation of human sin. *"And he believed in YHVH; and He counted it to him for righteousness."* The patriarch was shown that the security/reliability of Elohim fulfilling His covenant promises was based upon the everlasting covenant. The holy voice informed him that his descendants would be servants in a foreign land, ultimately they would inherit Canaan, and he himself would go to heavenly Canaan at a good, old age.

8. "Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children, and she had an Egyptian maid whose name was Hagar " (B'resheet 16:1).

Sarah remained barren. Although it had been hinted/intimated (B'resheet 15:4) that she would be the mother of Abram's child, she evidently grew impatient, wobbled in faith, and finally urged Abraham to take Hagar [the Egyptian handmaiden of Sarah] and cohabit with her. Sarah planned to raise the resulting child as her own. Though unjustified, this was a prevalent practice of that time. We observe though that the faith of neither Abraham or Sarah was perfected, but was being developed over time. Abram listened to Sarah and walked open-eyed into a second marriage. If he had paused and thought the liaison through, he would have perceived that the plan was not the counsel of YHVH. The results were sorrowful. *Conniving, self-excusing Sarah* became humiliated, *acquiescing Abram* garnered his own assorted miseries, and *insubordinate, proud Hagar* was oppressed and eventually sent away (with her son, Ishmael, by Abraham) thirteen years later, after Isaac was born. Eventually she was found by the angel of YHVH in the wilderness, a good distance from Abraham's tent, on her way back to Shur, Egypt's worldly, idolatrous city.

We learn from this that every saint, no matter how exalted, is subject to temptations which can come forth from the most unexpected places. Further, that trying to anticipate (guess) the blueprint of Divine will, and help out the Almighty's process with our own concocted schemes, often opens the door to what becomes *thorns in our sides*. Finally, no one can hide from the Almighty whose angels can be sent to any region, however remote, to retrieve a wandering one. The *fountain of water* by which Hagar was found speaks of the wells of Baca--spiritual refreshment that is always available to those who need spiritual consolation. Such are the disciples of Yeshua encouraged to be in this hour...wells and fountains of spiritual refreshment. Read Psalm 84:5-7.

Thirteen years later God appeared to his servant again, changed Abram's name to Abraham ("father of multitudes"), confirmed the promise of a child, and commanded him to circumcise every male of his house. He also changed Sarai's name to Sarah, ("princess"). They were both told Sarah would bear a son who would be called Isaac, a name that means "will laugh," and that His covenant would be established with him--Isaac. Sarah was also told she would become a mother of nations. And, YHVH promised to bless Ishmael and multiply him exceedingly.

9. "When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to Abram and said, I am God Almighty [El Shaddai]; Walk before Me and be blameless [dedicated to the will and purposes of El Shaddai, the Holy One of Israel]..." (B'resheet 17:1).

The covenant (of B'resheet 15:7-21) was renewed. Abraham was ninety-nine. Ishmael was thirteen. "El Shaddai," [who, of course, is El-Elyon] the eternal Being who blesses abundantly,

was the covenant's Author. [Note: YHVH appeared to Abraham as *El Shaddai*, the all-powerful Elohim. Nothing was/is impossible for Him. He fulfills His promises even when it seems there is no natural way to do so. "Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in age; Sarah was past childbearing" (Gen. 17:11).

Therefore, YHVH would bring forth Abraham's promised son, Isaac, by a miracle. See: vv. 15-19; 35:11; Isa. 13:6; Ro. 4:19; Heb. 11:12.] Abraham was responsible to "*walk before Me and be thou perfect.*" He was to pursue holiness and trust in the Word of Elohim. He was promised a seed, Isaac, land, and abundant blessing. The signs of the covenant would be the changed names of the principles, and circumcision.

The name changes—Abram to Abraham [father of many nations] and Sarai to Sarah [mother of nations]—signified the elevation of their spiritual status and the character of their destiny as kingdom representatives, and defined his and her relationship to natural and spiritual descendants. Circumcision was a sign that the seed was not to be merely a child of the flesh, but one of promise; not a statistical offspring of nature, but the chosen gift of grace. It served as a shadow of the perfect, sinless humanity of Messiah Yeshua suggesting the holy, undefiled character of his seed. It was thus a physical declaration of personal consecration. Hence, YHVH's covenant was being confirmed not with Abraham the Chaldean chieftain, but with Abraham the believer who had spent the last twenty four years learning in Elohim's school of *faith*-- line by line and precept by precept; a little additional clarity here, and little more illumination there; a little extra clearness of definition here, some extended revelation there, and so on (Isaiah 28:10). We follow that same basic, step-by-step pattern of growth in grace [sanctification—the spiritual journey from the Courtyard to the Most Holy Place] as did the patriarchs of old. That is why it is said so often that *faith works by patience*. Sanctification is a life-long process.

Verses 15 through 27 describe the completion of the covenant. Sarah is admitted with a new name, promise of great blessing, and a son of whom she would be the mother.

And Abraham rejoiced. Ishmael was excluded from the spiritual covenant line but was blessed with temporal blessings. And Abraham observed and ministered the rite of circumcision. His obedience was prompt, without complaint, and thorough.

Haftorah

This week's *Haftorah* features Abraham. It tells of God taking him "*from the ends of the earth*" to go to Canaan, where YHVH gave him a great victory over four kings. In the passage, the prophet Isaiah extols YHWH's greatness in the life of the patriarch, and thereby comforts Judah, and also warns the idolatrous nations of sin's consequences.

He tells the nations that, despite the greatness of Abraham, and his victories and blessedness, the idol-worshipping witnesses to his life did not repent and abandon their evil ways, as they should have; "...the craftsman [idol maker] strengthened the smith, the one who smoothes [perfects, polishes the idol] with the hammer..."

1. "Why do you say, O Jacob...My way is hidden from the Lord, and the justice due me escapes the notice of my God?" (Isa. 40:27).

Israel complained that Elohim was ignoring their circumstances, and that their efforts of righteousness were going unrewarded.

2. "Do not fear, for I am with you...I will strengthen you, surely I will help you...uphold you with my righteous right hand" (Isa. 41:10). Through the words of the prophet, Judah (and the House of Israel to the north) was promised divine help, strength, and victory over all enemies.

"But you will rejoice in YHVH, You will glory in the Holy One of Israel" (Isa. 41:16). They are told good days will return. There is a celebration following every trial and journey, long or short, for all those who trust and wait upon Him.

If you are in a place of trial, continue to walk before Him and be blameless (mature, led the Spirit). A victory celebration awaits you!

Part 3: Yeshua—The eternal High Priest of the Believers Discipleship

"For it is attested of Him [Yeshua Messiah], 'You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek' " (Heb .7:15-17). **Note:** "The Old Covenant tabernacle and priests and sacrifices were shadows. Now the reality has come and the shadows pass away...[Yeshua] is that one Priest who goes between us and God, and makes us right with God, and prays for us to God...[He] is not an ordinary, weak, sinful, dying priest like in the Old Covenant days. He is the Son of God—strong, sinless, with indestructible life." [3B] Keep in mind, Yeshua ministers in the true Tabernacle in heaven, the one which YHVH pitched. Its shadow was cast forth on Mount Sinai, and Moses copied it as a pattern for the earthy tabernacle.

1. "But My covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you at this season next year" (B'resheit 17:21).

Isaac, the only son of Abraham and Sarah, is a type of Yeshua, "the only Begotten from the Father" (John 1:14). Because He loved the world (people), Elohim gave "His only begotten Son..." (John 3:16). Isaac was an intimation/hint that the promised seed [representing the promise of YHVH (Gen. 3:15)] would be like Sarah's--supernatural in origin, the son of a

princess, offered up by his father, but of a far greater glory: *"God with us."* What is more, later in life Abraham sent His servant to his people to fetch a bride for his son, Isaac.

Likewise, today the Father has sent the Spirit to call out a *warrior-bride* from His people--a bride of fiery love and deeds of *dunamis* power who seizes with zeal and force the kingdom of God as a precious prize; a bride with great zeal for His Law, His ways, and the fullness of His Spirit; a bride drawn from Israel and the nations who receives more by loving more. That would be us! May our love and intimacy with Yeshua and His ways only abound and increase.

2. *"Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: 'Behold, the virgin shall be with child and shall bear a son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,' which translated means, 'God with us' "* (Matt. 1:22-23) Isaiah spoke the name, Immanuel, centuries before the birth of Yeshua, and thereby declared with force the divine dignity of the Messiah, the *eternal* Being. Matthew referenced the Old Covenant verse for his readers. The name is given in relation to the prophecy that a young virgin would conceive and give birth to a child, a son supernaturally born of a princess of the line of King David. This One would be *"God with man."* Yeshua fulfilled the written Word. The incarnation is a literal fact supported by much evidence. Yeshua was Elohim in the flesh who brought the divine, eternal Presence into the world. He came to fulfill one supreme task, to execute an incomparable work: to accomplish the redemption of man. *"God with man"* alone was found able and willing to stand up to the crisis, fulfill the Law, to endure the suffering, and to make atonement. Immanuel, "God with us," means Yeshua our Bridegroom, to Whom we are betrothed, will be with us forever.

But there are other names by which the Son is also known. The prophet Isaiah said, *"His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, The Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace"* (Isa. 9:6). Jeremiah referred to the coming Messiah as, "YHVH-Tsidkenu [YHVH "our righteousness"] (Jer. 23:5-6; 33:15-16). In Luke He is called, *"the Son of the Highest"* (1:32) and the *"Prophet of the Highest"* (1:76). These designations are titles for Yeshua by which He is not necessarily always called, but are descriptive of who He is to man.

Part 4: The Holy Spirit—*The Power of Discipleship*

"The baptism in the Spirit is to make us all one... 'by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body... and have all been made to drink into one Spirit' (1 Cor. 12:13). "It is God's intention that we speak the same thing. If we all have the full revelation of the Spirit of God, we will all see the same thing... When the Holy Spirit has full control, Christ is never divided. His body is not divided; there is no division. Schism and division are products of the carnal mind." It is important for disciples of Messiah to have the full manifestation of the Spirit in our midst. [4B]

Individual spiritual empowerment, which was commenced on Pentecost in Jerusalem so many centuries ago, has been made available to all followers/**disciples** of Yeshua HaMashiach. He anoints, purifies, and refines those who receive His Word and are yielded to Him. From Acts to Revelation the disciples of Yeshua ministered in the power of the Spirit. The *baptism/immersion in the Spirit* fills receiving Believers to over-flowing with the presence, power, inspiration and ability of Yeshua in this hour just as the heaven-sent encounter did with the early apostolic saints (Acts 1:8; 2:1-4, 42-47; 4:31; etc.).

1. *"Now the Lord said to Abraham, Go forth...So Abram went forth..." (B'resheet 12:1).*

Elohim speaks to (communicates with) common people like you and me. He can do this audibly, but often it is by His Spirit speaking into our spirits, revealing His Mind to our minds, and conveying His Heart to our hearts. Again, His word/voice comes to us in varying forms, such as dreams, visions, thoughts, ideas, prophecy, and from quickening the Scriptures (*rhema*). His word can be confirmed by two or three witnesses, holy counsel, a word of wisdom, discerning of spirits, and even circumstances. Our New Covenant duty is to watch, listen, and be in a state of expectation. He knows exactly what we need to hear and will speak an affectionate, uplifting, encouraging word in every season. He will come to you and me (He wants fellowship) with comforting words, as He did with Abraham, in every season of his life. In this way **He will** (a) impart new vision, (b) give fresh hope, (c) inspire faith, (d) bestow important instructions, (e) impart understanding and wisdom, (f) bring encouragement, or (g) give a prophetic word of exhortation for us to convey to another person. He says, *"I will guide you in the way of wisdom and lead you in straight paths"* (Prov. 4:11). We need to just believe and pay attention.

Believers must pass through spiritual stages, or phases, in developing knowledge and gaining experience with the Holy Spirit. Our faith journey is (should be) an upward progression of experience in Spirit and Truth toward greater "oneness" with Master Yeshua. The Feasts of Israel and the Tabernacle/Temple reveal to us the general stages of our journey into sanctification and the supernatural, divine transformation of our souls. This wonder takes place as we advance from the kingdom of darkness into (1) His Kingdom of Light. This is salvation. This is pictured by the Outer Court/Passover. Then, (2) we progress in the wisdom of His Torah and His Spirit's presence and power. This is the Holy Place/Pentecost. Finally (3), we go forward to His Glory, transfiguration, and oneness with His Presence. This represents the Holy of Holies/Sukkot. The point is this: We should want all the blessings of the kingdom, power, and glory of Elohim that are possible for us to obtain this side of heaven. Yeshua has already purchased redemption blessings for His people by His shed Blood and has also shown us the pathway to them. But let everyone be assured, such a quest for revelation from His Word, vision of His glory, intimate knowledge of His manifest presence, and transfiguration of soul, requires

the divine working of love, faith, obedience, true holiness, perseverance, service (yes, steadfast service) and faith.

We have listed nine basic, very fundamental "steps to glory" (so to speak) for growing in the knowledge and experience of the Holy Spirit. Four will be discussed in this parsha, *Lech Lecha*, and the remaining five will be presented next week in parsha *VaYera* ("*And He prepared*").

A. Our first phase of experience with the Almighty is our salvation. When we place faith in Yeshua and are converted, we are "born of the Spirit" and enter into His kingdom. Our spirits are regenerated/recreated by the power of YHVH through the Holy Spirit Who comes to dwell within us (John 3:3-8; Eph. 2:8-22; Titus 3:5; 1 John 3:9). Water baptism by immersion should follow true conversion. The believer experiences spiritual life for the first time. Old things pass, fade, disappear. Good things come about, arise and grow forth. Reality takes on a discernible spiritual dimension (2 Cor. 5:17). The convert must yield to and flow with the Spirit's upward, forward spiritual movement. Pause and meditate on this passage: *"But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, that shines brighter and brighter [illuminating direction, producing more fruit, insight, spiritual hunger and strength] until the full day. The way of the wicked is like darkness..."* (Proverbs 4:18-19).

B. Subsequent to the New Birth, we begin living a sanctified life, and should be "filled with the Spirit" daily (1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19). [**Note:** The Spirit of Elohim now resides within and empowers the believer's divinely regenerated spirit, in contrast to the "...*prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience*" (Eph. 2:2).] The Spirit will "fill" [provide a full blessing; satisfy] everyone according to (1) the extent of their desire for Him, (2) their compliance/obedience to the light/truth already received, (3) the degree of their yielding to His leading. This is of particular importance. Acts 4:8,31; 9:17; Eph. 5:18, 3:19).

C. Next (usually) there is the very important experience of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit, which is accompanied by the evidence of speaking with other tongues (Mt. 3:11; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4; 10:46; 19:6; 1 Cor. 12:10-30; 14:5-39). The baptism in the Holy Spirit is likened to an immersion resulting in the complete filling and overflowing of the believer/recipient in the presence and power of the Spirit. Speaking in tongues (one's personal, supernatural prayer language) is an integral part of the blessing. Speaking in tongues has proven to be the initial consequence of this dynamic Pentecostal-Messianic experience and Israelite heritage. A heightened sense of Elohim's presence, increased fervor in praise and worship, inspiration for sanctification, and bolder witness also accompany the blessing.

The Baptism in the Holy Spirit brings to us the grace to *speak in tongues*, which is the language of the Spirit. The fact that the Spirit uses the unruly, untamable human tongue to speak praises and utterances to the Almighty, while under the influence of the Spirit of Yeshua, is a sign of His

strength and the recipient's submission and yielding. Any attempt to ridicule or downplay this holy gift is grievous, detracts from the significance of the event, and actually hinders many people from receiving the completeness of the baptism in the Spirit. Removing "tongues" from this baptism leaves believers with an incomplete experience and a *"form of godliness but denying its power"* (2 Tim. 3:5). Only *Spirit-power* can produce godliness. Every believer must not only be filled, but must *overflow in the Spirit*. "Tongues" is the outward evidence that bears witness that an inner overflow has occurred! The baptism in the Spirit is also the doorway to operating in the gifts of the Spirit. Congregations that embrace the Holy Spirit, promote tongues, and are allowed to function in His ministry--while, of course, maintaining a high standard of holiness and reverence for the Word of Truth--simply have more divine power, sensitivity, and authority resident and working in their ministries than do others.

Therefore we must : **1.** Trust in Yeshua. **2.** Desire to be immersed in the Spirit. **3.** Pray and ask. **4.** Expect and receive. **5.** Go forth in bold witness. [Acts 1:4-5; 2:1-4; 4:31; and more.] Your eternal Father will give to his sincere children that for which they ask! *"Or if he is asked for an egg, he will not give a scorpion, will he? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him"* (Luke 11:12-13).

D. Apostle Paul boldly stated, *"I speak in tongues more than ye all"* (1 Cor. 14:18). This remark takes us to our next step. Once a believer has experienced using their personal prayer language [we are not talking about the *gift of tongues* spoken of in 1 Cor. 12:10], he/she would do well by releasing their prayer language and praying in tongues on a regular, daily basis.

There are many benefits associated with this holy practice, such as building up one's faith, developing sensitivity to His voice, enjoying communion with His presence, and more. The benefits of speaking/praying/singing in tongues daily, in prayer and in worship, will be covered more completely later in the year.

Part 5: Overcoming—The Outcome of Discipleship

Overcome means simple to "win a victory." An overcomer is one, then, who stands victoriously over his foe. "To *overcome* in the biblical sense means to live in the victory of Yeshua. It means to live in victory **over** the old nature and live in victory **under** the new nature. To overcome in Messiah, I must appropriate—in practical living—the victory purchased by Yeshua through His Redemption." 58 Discipleship requires warfare and a lifetime of making proper choices. The fruit, however—love, joy, peace, et al, is great! Our King provides the daily strength.

1. *"Now Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran" (B'resheit 12:4).*

Abram was told by YHVH to leave his comfortable, familiar home and proceed, under the Almighty's care and leading, to an unnamed land. There, he would become a great nation--numerically, spiritually, and influentially--and bless the earth.

The land to which Abraham was going would provide ample space for him, and be a better place for his family than populated, idol-infested Mesopotamia.

Note: Sometimes a fresh start requires moving to a new locality, away from the old haunts, bad companions, harmful familiarities, and temptations, to assure success.

Nevertheless, faith, complete trust in YHVH, and patience, would be absolutely required of Abraham. The patriarch's faith would be refined, tested, and strengthened under trials and stress so that the promises of the Most High concerning Abraham's descendants could become fully established.

Abraham and *faith* have come to be synonymous. He was seventy-five when he discerned the word of the One True Elohim--*"Go forth, yourself"*-- and we have seen how he was quick to respond. Abraham's response, and his life, teach Renewed Covenant Israel that saving faith is not a dreamy, mental exercise, but is connected to conduct and revealed by obedient deeds. Abraham—the father of overcomers in Messiah-- prevailed by faith and patience, and the land to which he and Sarah went belongs to their seed today. Faith is strength. Faith perseveres. Faith is demonstrated and active when overcomers speak and act on the Word of Elohim.

Beloved, your agenda this week is to meet with YHVH. Ask Him to reveal Himself to you, and experience Him loving you as you love and worship Him. We want our worship and praise times to be filled with His glory, and revelations of Yeshua, prophetic songs, and the things of His kingdom! Spend the time. Sing. Prophecy.

"Behold, the former have come to pass, now I declare new things; before they spring forth I proclaim them to you. Sing unto the Lord a new song..." (Isa. 42:9-10). In the passage Isaiah speaks of former prophecies as if they had been fulfilled. Israel had suffered in captivity, but the return and restoration of the people to their own land, which would be a new and amazing event in the history of the world, was being announced!

A new song was therefore being summoned, a song whose inspiration was the visitation of His everlasting mercy, and whose justification/purpose would be to prophetically proclaim the *"new things"* that YHVH was declaring, and praise Him before the nations even before the prophetic word came to pass. Isaiah announced that the merciful Governor of the universe would again

restore beloved little Israel, the covenant nation, and through it the nations of the earth would be blessed and rejoice.

The Song of the Lord [Prophetic Song] is a heavenly song, a musical utterance, coming into the earth in this hour of the prophesied restoration of all Israel, and it proclaims the good things of grace and mercy which are to come. [Good things are coming. Proclaim them now!] It carries the Presence of the Lord and is filled with His miraculous life and power,

Thus, it is always fresh, always burden-breaking, liberating, faith--building, and vision-extending. It is a gift of the Spirit. It can be recognized, received, and sung--**now**--on our nation, even as it will be in Zion. "...*the Lamb was standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand* [tested and proven]...*and they sang a new song before the throne...*" (Rev. 14:1-3).

Sing His *new song*, His heavenly anointed song now. Start by selecting a psalm. Sing it over Israel. As you hear His response, sense His inspiration/ impression/ first words, begin to sing directly under the unction of the Spirit. Yield to the Spirit and look for Yeshua to sing back to you. As the weeks pass you will grow in sensitivity and skill in this beautiful ministry, and perhaps someday sing the Song of the Lord from the hills of Israel.

Walk in the Light and love the brethren. Make your house a place of joyful prayer and praise this week. Join with others and minister to Yeshua. Corporate worship is powerful! You are an overcomer in Messiah!

6. Conclusion

*"Yeshua...said to the synagogue official, 'Do not be afraid any longer, only believe' " (Mark 5:37). Do not focus upon the past, but go forward. Press onward to the place of the inflow of the Spirit, the ground of submission, strength of soul, and rest. Where is that place? It is here: **"Only believe."** When we trust Yeshua, and allow Him to take "charge of the situation [whatever that may be], you are absolutely brought into everything that God has, because you dare to '**only believe**' what He says." 6B*

1. **"I am the Almighty; walk before Me and be thou perfect** [sincere, honest, upright]" (17:1). The chief characteristic of Abraham's life was faith (Heb. 9:6-8). His faith was based upon the promises made to him (B'reshet 12:7; 13:16; 15:5) by the eternal "I Am," Who was able to fulfill His Word. Before triumph however, there was a fall, the result of impatience (Ps. 27:14; 31:13-14) and immature faith (Mt. 4:14; 14:28-31).

The blessing was delayed (Num. 14:33), although not forsaken, as thirteen years passed. Then the Word of the Almighty came. It took the dual form of a mild rebuke and a clear precept. *"Walk before Me...be blameless [complete, having integrity]."* To you and me this word says: "Return to your first faith. In doing so, be perfect, not partial." See: Prov. 3:5; Mt. 17:20.

The life of faith is one of reverence to Yeshua and His will, way, and Word. It means separation and distinction from the world. Abraham was a stranger in the land. A life of faith includes becoming a trust, or a blessing for the sake of others. Such people are channels through which the blessings of the Almighty flow into the nations. Further, a life of faith produces a walk that will carry Believers into a future where the rewards for well-doing will be forth-coming in abundance. Let the Holy One of Israel carry you forward thru your pilgrimage on earth--with deliverances, victories, and blessings--just as He did with His friend, Abraham. Have faith. Be assured, Elohim has just as much interest in you personally as He did in the great Patriarch.

2. *"Then Abraham took Ishmael...and all the servants who were born in his house and all who were bought by his money...and circumcised the flesh of their foreskin in the very same day, as God had said to him" (B'resheet 17:23).* Abraham and his entire household submitted to the divinely appointed rite. This obedience presents to all believers, those of us who are members of New Covenant Israel, the necessity of submitting to any discomfort and inconvenience that is required to follow Yeshua, and participate in the re-gathering of the lost sheep of Israel, and restoration and reconciliation of the whole house of Israel. While doing this, we need never despair. Our King will bring the fulfillment of all His promises. *Go, you yourself*, for your own good and that of others; go further, all the way, as far as you can into His kingdom, power, and glory.

Seek Him: *"Let me see your glory."* His glory is in you and me by His Spirit. Therefore, pray and believe for His Presence to rise up and envelope your soul, O seeker, and fill you with His goodness and a revelation of His heart. We are children of the Most High and He desires for each of us to experience intimate spiritual communion with Him.

But remember, growth in spiritual strength takes "lifting." Be sure to complete your answers and exercises. They represent the "weights" that the Holy Spirit will use to equip you with a strong, well-proportioned, balanced, spiritual physique of Spirit and Truth.

The Seven Study Questions

These will appear at the conclusion of every lesson.

The *lesson questions* are a **very important** aspect of the student's learning. All readers are strongly encouraged to take the time and include them in their study discipline. Prayerfully answer each one! They are intended to coax the student to rely upon interaction with the Holy Spirit, discern His voice, receive insight, and obtain prophetic enlightenment.

This process will assist each learner to (1) develop a vision for the restoration and reconciliation of the whole house of Israel, (2) grow in foundational knowledge of the Torah, (3) recover the principles, practice, and Holy Spirit power of the early, first-century Nazarene believers, and (4) experience and enjoy greater dimensions of the kingdom, power, and glory of Yeshua.

Note: The questions presented here are listed again at the conclusion of each lesson in both the *Torah Commentary Manuals* and the *Torah Discipleship Manuals*. **To repeat—be sure to follow through with them.**

1a. In your opinion, what is the main theme or teaching of each of the listed readings individually? Starting with the Torah: What is its title? What is the interpretation? What truth/idea does the interpretation of the title suggest? What is the Torah section's main truth, as you see it?

1b. What is the corresponding idea in the Haftarah? In the Brit Chadashah?

2. What is the outstanding, central idea or subject that runs through and unites all the individual readings, as you see it? What does it say about discipleship?

3. Find in the Gospels where and how Yeshua declares, demonstrates, exemplifies, or exhibits the parsha's central truth, and explain. Give chapter and verse. Will you follow Him in living the lesson's truths?

4. In what way was the glory of YHVH [manifestations of His goodness] revealed in the parsha lesson?

5. What does the parsha teach you about your Hebrew roots, your identity, your destiny, your duty?

6. In what way did the Holy Spirit/Ruach HaKodesh personally speak to you during prayer and study this week? Did He impress you about how to apply the parsha lesson directly to your life? Explain.

7. *"...because of practice [by reason of use] have their senses trained [exercised] to discern..."*
You and I are called to return to hearing the voice of Elohim and to functioning in the ministry of

the Holy Spirit. Progressing in these vital areas will require spiritual hunger, faith, and practice. He is waiting for us to approach Him.

Expect the Holy Spirit to speak into your spirit/heart as you pray each day. Look for opportunities to lay hands on the sick, or to be used in prophesy. Faithfully record the prophetic words and experiences you receive, and be sure to share them with your brethren.

It is helpful to **share** your answers, insights, and revelations with your study group (table class). We recommend meeting regularly in a small group. This allows for healthy interaction and exchange, and militates against stagnation. Practice operating with your spiritual gifts under the anointing of the Holy Spirit while among your friendly, supportive peers.

Allow for open participation in leading praise and worship. Give altar calls at your table for healing, refreshing, and prophetic words. These are effective ways for all present to mature in their calling and gifting. The non-threatening small group provides a favorable and encouraging environment in which to learn the ministry of the Spirit. You will do well.

Next-for the upcoming generation:

The parsha lessons are being crafted and shortened for younger readers. Be sure to use them. Honor Yahweh's words in Deuteronomy 6: 6-7.

1. Youths' Version Under construction.

2. Childrens' Version Under construction.

Footnotes: 1A. Prophecy News Watch, Transhumanism—Methusaleh or Frankenstein, S. Schiller. 1B. www.lds.org/general-conference/2014/the-cost-and-blessing-of-discipleship, p.3. 2B. A Tale of the Covenants, K. Rogers, p.4. 3B. www.desireinggod.org/message/our-high-priest-is-the-son-of-god. 4B. Greater Works, S.W., p.347. 5B. www.goodnewsarticles.com p.1/20. 6B. Greater Works, S.W. p.555. 1. Chumash, Stone Edition, p.55. 2. Ibid. 3. Pulpit Commentary, Eerdmans, Genesis, p.240.

Va Yeira *"He appeared"*

Next

Contenders Voice

Discipleship Series

Book of Genesis/B'resheet

Lesson Four

Va Yeira (*"He appeared"*)

Torah: Genesis/B'resheet 18:1-22:24

Haftarah: 2 Kings/Melechim Bet 4:1-37

Brit Chadashah: Luke/Luka 17:26-37; Romans/Romiyah; 3:19-5:6;
Galatians/Galutya 4:21-31; Hebrews/Ivrim 6:13-20

Lesson Sequence

1. Introduction: *The Call to Discipleship* **2.** Weekly Parsha: *The Torah—The Standard of Discipleship* **3.** Yeshua: *The High Priest of our Discipleship* **4.** The Holy Spirit/Ruach ha Kodesh: *The Power of Discipleship* **5.** Overcoming: *The Outcome of Discipleship* **6.** Conclusion

Consider

“Today, however, many fear...that naught [nothing] but trouble lies ahead. It’s not just the daunting array of current geopolitical threats—wars, terrorism, de facto invasion by millions of illegal immigrants [many of whom carry ideological viruses], unpayable national debt and economic disintegration, 1984-style surveillance, and palpable and ever-increasing loss of freedom—all causing high anxiety over an uncertain future. It’s also a growing conviction that [progressive] government itself, whose primary reason for existence is to protect its citizens, has instead become American’s greatest nemesis.” [1A] **Still, we live by faith, not by fear.** Therefore, seek the LORD and believe for a miraculous spiritual turn-about in the land.

Part 1: Introduction—*The Call to Discipleship*

Disciple, identify yourself thoroughly with Messiah Yeshua, as did Paul who wrote, “*But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Messiah*” (Phil. 3:7). “It is so easy to get caught up in the blessings, the gifts, and all the ‘feel good’ aspects of life in the Spirit that we can forget that the call to discipleship in Christ is a call to discipline, self-denial, and sacrificial living. Many Christians hunger and clamor for the former but want nothing to do with the latter. Greater union [fellowship] with Yeshua requires both.” 1A Commit your life to Him by abiding in His commandments.

Last week's review: Parsha *Lech Lecha* (“Go forth, yourself”) is the first parsha devoted to the life of Abraham. It provides the biblical narrative of Abraham from the time of YHVH telling him to “Go forth from your country...” to the time he and all the males of his household were circumcised, just before the birth of Isaac, the child of promise. Two prominent themes that unite the Torah, Haftorah, and B'rit Chadashah portions of *Lech Lecha* are (1) faith, and (2) YHVH’s faithfulness to His Word of Promise. In the reading we observed the faith of Abraham mature through his trials, and saw how one's growth in grace is not an overnight phenomenon

but a lifelong process. *Faith* is the currency of the Kingdom of God because by it one procures the promises of the Most High.

By faith, Abraham saw his descendants becoming as numerous, enduring, and brilliant as the stars at night, and he was inspired to go forward. By faith, believers are the seed of Abraham and become grafted into Israel. Faith and patience work together to establish the will of the Almighty in the earth. For instance, the House of Israel, after about 2700 years of exile in the nations, is being re-gathered today back to her heritage--the Torah, Sabbath and the Feasts, national identification, restored fellowship with Judah, the Glory of YHVH, et al--fulfilling the promises made by YHWH's prophets long ago concerning their return and restoration in Spirit and truth. See: Isa. 11:11-14; 44:1-5; 59:20-21; Jer. 3:14-18; Ezek.36:24-25; 37:19-25; Hos. 1:10; 2:23; 3:5; 14:4-7; Joel 2:28-29; Obad. 1:17-21; Zech. 10:3-10. The life of Abraham, the *father of faith*, teaches his seed that as we wait in faith, His promise will not fail, but will--in His perfect timing--surely come to pass.

This week's discipleship lesson: *VaYera* ("And he appeared") is the second *parashat* that is devoted entirely to Abraham. It encompasses his life from his circumcision to the events on Mount Moriah, where he took his son Isaac to offer him up as a sacrifice to YHVH.

That there are two parshas that focus entirely on the times of Abraham suggests that there are two distinct phases to his life. Interestingly, "...Abraham repeated in parashiot Vayeira [parsha VaYera; this week] virtually everything he did in parashiot Lech Lecha [parsha Lech Lecha; last week].

Both parashiot open with him experiencing a revelation of God and receiving the promise of progeny; in both parshas, his wife Sarah is abducted by a gentile king; in both parashiot, he fathers a son, banishes Hagar, and enters into treaties; in both parashiot, his righteous behavior is contrasted with the immoral behavior of his nephew Lot; in both parashiot, he defends the cities of the plain--in Lech Lecha against human assailants, and in Vayeira against the divine decree brought about by the cities' own corruption.

It is as if Abraham had to repeat everything he experienced in his first parashah...in order to enter into a new level of divine consciousness and knowledge of YHVH."

[2] Circumcision, as the sign of the covenant, was the event that divided the patriarch's life into two spiritual periods. When Abraham complied with the command, the covenant was complete, and it appears his encounters with YHVH became more personal. *"Everyone therefore which heareth these words of Mine, and doeth them, shall be likened unto a wise man..."* (Matt. 7:24-29).

Reading and reflecting on the Scripture is not enough. Abraham heard and yielded to the command.

We [**Yeshua's disciples**] must also be found hearers *and* doers of His words—life-giving words which He brings to us from old, from eternity. In obedience there is fellowship. This is the way to hear His truth. There is no discipleship without obedience to our King's commandments.

Part 2: Torah—*The Standard of Discipleship*

Parsha Lesson Four: Va Yeira ("*He appeared*")

"Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, verily my Sabbaths ye shall keep" (Ex. 31:13 KJV). The Sabbath is a betrothal sign for believers in Yeshua, and a day for rest, healing, and renewal that refreshes us and makes us more effective for the upcoming week. It is a blessing. Thus, it is commanded in the Torah. But "there is a big difference in [between] the Torah's and oral law's Sabbath Laws. The Torah has six laws [instructions] regarding the Sabbath. The oral law has 1,530! This is a clear example of how adding to the Torah can get out of hand." 2B

Torah

"Then YHVH said to Moses, Write this in a book as a memorial and recite it to Joshua..." (Ex. 17:14). We believe the Torah is the Word of YHVH, and that it was given to Moses by direct communication from the Almighty. It is a work of the Eternal One and not of mankind. Therefore the Torah is different from any other work of literature. "For over two and one-half millennia the Torah has been the keystone of Jewish life, the starting point of Christianity, and the background of Islam.

As such it has played and continues to play a significant role in the world. Western nations especially are what they are in part because of this book. The reader will therefore do well to keep in mind that the Torah not only speaks of history but has made history by helping shape human thought.

"The Torah was always the possession of all Israel. It was addressed to the entire people who were to learn its contents and teach them diligently to their children, in particular. Psalm 19 and 119 testify to (a) the love which the Torah evoked and (b) the widespread concern with its teachings." [2]

Torah Scriptures that are used in orthodox public services are hand-written in Hebrew calligraphy with crowns on some letters, on parchment scrolls. This style of calligraphy is called *Stam*, which is an abbreviation/acrostic for (1) *Sifrei Torah* [Torah scrolls], (2) *Tefillin* [two small black boxes containing inscribed parchment, with straps; also called phylacteries.] and (3)

Mezuzot [inscribed parchment]. A pointer, called a *Yad* ("hand") is used to follow the reading instead of a human finger. In the synagogue the Torah scrolls are kept in a cabinet called the *ark*, which is an emblem of the Ark of the Covenant where the two tablets of Moses were stored.

The Torah remains the foundation of the Old Testament [the Scriptures from which Yeshua taught] and also of the Apostolic Writings, the New Testament. Its instructions were never abolished (Mt. 5:17) but contain the wisdom and precepts that, when honored, (1) produce a greater intimacy with Yeshua and (2) release a new dimension of His blessings into the lives of His followers. [Note: We will naturally honor the Torah when we truly *walk with* and are *led by* the Holy Spirit.] The Elohim of Israel is restoring the knowledge of the Torah to the whole Body of Messiah because He loves His people and wants us abiding safely within His ways, demonstrating righteousness, and living in His abundance.

1. *"Now the Lord appeared to him [Abraham] by the oaks of Mamre, while he was sitting at the tent door in the heat of the day" (B'resheet 18:1).* **Note:** The absence of the name of the patriarch in the above verse lends credence to the idea that the chapter should have begun at B'resheet 17:23, indicating that the renewed, open, more personal manifestation of Yahweh took place shortly after circumcision.

Sitting at the door of his tent in *"the heat of the day,"* having just eaten, Abraham **"looked"** [the word implies physical vision] and sees three figures approach, whom he perceives at first to be men. When they drew close, **"he saw them"** [this implies mental perception, or spiritual discernment], and recognized YHVH/Yeshua (in pre-incarnate form) among them. Abraham ran toward them. He fell on his knees, and then to his face, and lay completely prostrate on the ground as an act of salutation, reverence, and worship. His words were, *"My Lord [Adonai]."*

YHVH Himself along with two heavenly escorts had made their way to Abraham's home on an unannounced visit. It was noontide when they arrived, and Abraham reverently welcomed them and extended a gracious invitation, *"...pass not away...a little water...wash...rest yourselves...a piece of bread...comfort your hearts."* The flockmaster knew that by the arrival of the special guests at his doorstep he had a holy responsibility to discharge the most hospitable services. And thus he entertained his visitors, withholding no effort, enjoyment, expense or courtesy. At the end of the meal, the divine Being, foremost of the guests, and Who by then was most certainly standing forth as YHVH to Abraham and any gathered witnesses, made an authoritative announcement. *"And lo, Sarah thy wife will have a son."* Upon hearing this,

Abraham laughed, (probably) clapped his hands, and shouted, "Yes! At last!" But Sarah, who was standing by and listening, laughed [snickered skeptically] as if to say, "Yeah, sure. You've got to be kidding me." Just as there are these two ways of laughing, there are also two ways of receiving the word/promise of the Almighty.

One way is by **(a) faith**, which secures the promise. The other is by **(b) skepticism/unbelief**, which nullifies the promise's fulfillment. Fortunately, for our father and mother of the faith, and ultimately for us, the promise was confirmed and trust was encouraged by: **(1)** YHVH's reminder of His omnipotence: *"Is anything too hard for the Lord?"* **(2)** The promise being repeated: *"I will return to you, according to the time of life, and Sarah will have a son."* **(3)** The promise being affirmed by a display of divine insight, convicting Sarah's conscience and supernaturally displacing her skepticism with the gift of faith: *"And He said [to her with directness] nay, but you did laugh."* She was silenced. She perceived that He indeed had accurately searched out the secrets of her heart, that His word was true, and nothing was outside His reach. The fact of her conception is proof of her repentance, forgiveness, and faith. *"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word [personal rhema] of God" (Romans 10:8).*

Those of us who would desire to have and maintain a divine visitation, alone, in our homes, or in our congregations, would do well to look below the surface and examine Abraham's example of hospitality, which reveals his heart and priorities. With him we notice:

First, the divine guest was wanted and received joyously. Abraham was sincere in his desire to keep His visitor as long as possible and rapidly enlisted the assistance of his household in the effort.

Secondly, he was liberal, that is, he was very generous. Though Abraham characterized his hospitality in modest terms, we can assume the banquet was sumptuous, and that he entertained his visitors with the very best his tent could offer.

Thirdly, we believe Abraham was personally involved in the preparations, serving, and activities, and did not delegate these personal services or chief responsibilities to his three-hundred servants, or to faithful Eliezer, who was appointed over them.

More than likely, it was Abraham who [like Yeshua at the "Lord's Supper" (John 3:5)] girded himself for service, kept his guests' glasses filled and their plates full while his musicians played praise music softly in the background.

What more can we learn from the opening passage of the Torah portion? May these verses impart wisdom and understanding to your heart:

A. *"Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for some have entertained angels unaware"* (Heb. 13:2). B. *"Distributing to the necessity of the saints; given to hospitality"* (Rom. 12:13). C. *"God loveth a cheerful giver"* (2 Cor. 9:7). D. *"Perfect that which is lacking in your faith"* (1 Thess. 3:10). E. *"Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me"* (Rev. 3:20). Hospitality and generosity in believers are very attractive, endearing traits. We, His disciples, must cultivate them diligently for they bless God and man.

Abraham was endeavoring to honor El Elyon's directive, to *"...walk before Me and be perfect."* He therefore lived at an elevated spiritual level and experienced a theophany at Mamre—a physical manifestation of pre-incarnate Yeshua.

Thus, the narrative is historical, revealing a further incident in the progressive development of divine revelation for Abraham. His growth was moral in nature also, showing the virtues of faith, patience, reverence, humility.

It is spiritual in that the narrative points to Yeshua and hints at the incarnation, atonement, and the roles of prophet, priest, and king of the coming redeemer. It is inspirational and reveals that YHVH wants to visit and sup with His followers (Rev. 3:20).

2. *"Then the men [angels] turned away from there and went toward Sodom, while Abraham was still standing before YHVH. Abraham came near and said, 'Will you indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked?'"* (B'resheet 18:22-23).

As the "father of a multitude of nations," Abraham demonstrated compassion for the inhabitants of Sodom, sorrow over the prospect of judgment, and a continuing concern for the safety of his relatives--Lot and his family, who had returned to the wicked city. Actually, five cities were condemned to judgment. Sodom and Gomorrah were the most notorious among them.

In the story we are given an account of the interaction between YHVH and man. Abraham, as we have noted, was moved with concern for Lot and compassion for the residents of Sodom, and to intercede on their behalf.

The severity of the retribution about to be visited upon Sodom and Gomorrah, and thoughts about what miserable future could lay in store for the unhappy victims of the forthcoming calamity, filled Abraham's mercy-motivated heart with anguish. He thus "drew near" to YHVH, both physically and spiritually, trusting for divine acceptance and freedom of expression. He was reverent and humble, but fervent and persistent with his importuning. His prayer/argument was not based primarily upon the principle of mercy, but rested on the righteousness of the Most

High, and how His moral goodness could be expected to find a way for mercy to triumph over judgment.

At the end of the discourse [prayer should often be a discourse], Abraham received all he asked. *"And the Lord [YHVH] went His way [vanished]" (B'resheet 18:33).*

YHVH's character is revealed to us in the episode. We note He is (a) open to being approached and entreated, (b) not willing to bring harsh judgment or destruction, (c) will "spare" for the sake of righteousness, and (d) "does right" as the Judge of the whole earth. [3] Therefore disciple of Yeshua, with Abraham as your inspiration, make up your mind to persist in daily prayer.

3. *"Now the two angels came to Sodom in the evening as Lot was sitting in the gates of Sodom" (B'resheet 19:1).*

Lot was righteous to receive the "men" into his house for the evening. [Hospitality remains a middle-eastern custom.] The Jewish sage Rashi states that the angels came to deliver Lot and his family on Nissan 15, the date on which Passover would later fall.

Lot was a flickering, albeit unsteady light in Sodom, at least for a season. But he remained too long. We deduce that moral degradation had been occurring in the soul of Lot; otherwise he never could have remained so long in such an increasingly depraved place. Even a good man will eventually be undone and deteriorate spiritually if he remains in the company of evil. Unexpectedly to the residents, supernatural judgment fire came upon the cities, but Lot and his family were mercifully delivered. Contrary to the warning of the angel, Lot's wife looked back. She was nearly saved, almost safe. But in the end she gazed back to where her treasure was, where her affections were, and she was caught up in the overflow of judgment power and was lost (Heb. 10:26-27, 38; Mk. 12:24). *"...no one, after putting his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God" (Lk. 9:62).* As someone has said, Lot's wife was convinced...but she was not converted. Speaking to the Pharisees and Scribes, Yeshua said, *"These people honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far away from Me" (Mt. 15:8).*

4. *"Lot went up from Zoar, and stayed in the mountains, and his two daughters with him; for he was afraid to stay in Zoar; and he stayed in a cave [cavernous recesses abound in the Moab mountain range], he and his two daughters" (B'resheet 19:30).*

Lot was delivered. His righteous daughters [step-daughters, it has been suggested, if Lot later married a widow] sought children by their father. "Thinking that the rest of the world had been destroyed in the upheaval of Sodom--and that even Zoar had been spared only while they were there--they felt that it was their responsibility to save the human race by bearing children, even though the only living male was their own father.

The Torah does not label their actions as incestuous because they sincerely thought there was no other way to insure the propagation of the species [or to at least have children].

Because their intentions were pure, they merited that among their descendants would be Ruth, ancestress of David, and Naamah, queen of Solomon and mother of Rehoboam, his successor and the next link in the Davidic chain (*R'Bachya*). Lot, however, was not comparable to his daughters; his intentions were not at all sincere. Even though he was intoxicated and [somehow] unaware of what he was doing the first night, he knew in the morning what had happened (v. 37)--but allowed himself to be intoxicated again, knowing full well what the result would be (*Rashi*). Unlike his daughters, he knew from the angels that the upheaval was to affect only a limited group of cities, not the whole world." [4]

Lot ended up living in a cave because, in all likelihood, he was haunted by the specter of the fiery judgment. He [we believe] became paranoid, rejected the reproof of his conscience, descended into unbelief, and finally fled from his new city, Zoar to the surrounding mountains seeking solace. Further, he may have feared that the residents of Zoar would blame him for Sodom's destruction and rise up against him. In any case, his troubles followed close on his heels. Overcome by hopelessness and wine, he slumped into shame and then into oblivion. He died unnoticed. **Lesson:** It is foolish, even dangerous, to turn aside from the presence of the living Elohim and live away from Him and even the company of Godly people. Yeshua said, *"Abide in Me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me"* (Jn. 15:4).

"He sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow." Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed, but great mercy was shown to Abraham's family. YHVH always mixes judgment with mercy.

5. *"Now Abraham Journeyed from there toward the land of the Negev, and settled between Kadesh and Shur; then he sojourned in Gerar. Abraham said of Sarah, his wife, She is my sister. So Abimelech, king of Gerar sent and took Sarah"* (B'resheet 20: 1-2).

Abraham may have wanted to put distance between himself and the backslidden recluse Lot, who, we will assume, had become well known in the district and was ill-favored for producing offspring from his daughters. Abraham moved into the Philistia region of the populated cities of Kadesh and Shur. We are told it was there that Abimelech abducted Sarah to marry her, thinking she was Abraham's sister. [Note: The patriarch resorted to lying again—using a half-truth, a deliberate fraudulent act. He may have harbored a natural tendency toward deception. In any case, we are reminded that it is difficult to put to death a besetting sin.]

A rejuvenation of her youth and beauty, possibly in preparation for her to conceive and bear a child, caused the foreign king to desire her as a wife. The king was rebuked and warned by YHVH in a dream: *"...restore the man to his wife, for he is a prophet..."* (v. 7). Abimelech obeyed.

YHWH's dealing with mankind, His disciplines, chastisements, and judgments are not for His pleasure, but for the welfare and advancement of people. When He forgives He also blesses.

6. *"Then the Lord took note of [remembered] Sarah as He had said, and the Lord did for Sarah as He had promised. So Sarah conceived and bore a son to Abraham in his old age...Abraham called the name of his son...whom Sarah bore to him, Isaac " (B'resheet 21: 1-3).*

The promise for a son finally came to pass. Isaac was born to Abraham and Sarah when he was one-hundred and she, who had been barren from her youth, was ninety. Verses one through eight record the birth, circumcision, and weaning of Isaac, the son of promise. In the passage we notice the faithfulness of the Almighty, the obedient faith of Abraham and Sarah, and the revelation of the love and power of YHWH. Because of Isaac joy was spread throughout the entire household.

7. *"Now Sarah saw the son of Hagar Ishmael] mocking...Therefore she said to Abraham, Drive out this maid and her son, for the son of this maid shall not be an heir with my son Isaac...But God said to Abraham, Do not be distressed...for through your son Isaac your descendants shall be named" (B'resheet 21:9-12).*

"God comforted Abraham in two ways. He said that Sarah's directive was prophetic and in accordance with His will, and that--although Isaac is reckoned as Abraham's true son [heir of the promise]--Ishmael was [also] his offspring and would become a great nation in his own right." [5]

Ishmael was expelled from the family group because of his mockery and persecution of Isaac, from which Sarah developed an actual dislike of Hagar's son. [It is reckless to mock sanctified things or people.] Sarah recognized Isaac as the Elohim-appointed heir and would allow nothing to interfere with, threaten, reduce, or damage his position or destiny. YHWH reinforced the sentiments of Sarah and commanded Ishmael's removal. Although this was sorrowful to Abraham, he submitted to the will of the Almighty. Thus we note again that obedience is the first responsibility [moral obligation, charge] of faith. The separation of Ishmael from Isaac points to the ultimate separation of Believers from unbelievers, the Body of Messiah from the world, and the removal of the wicked from the congregation of the righteous (Psalm 1).

Hagar and Ishmael were thrust from their home, banished, and wandered about the wilderness. Heading toward Egypt (we assume) the forlorn duo left familiar pathways and became lost in the desert.

Exhausted after tracking aimlessly through the empty wasteland, the mother and son collapsed from weakness and thirst. On the verge of perishing the lad moaned, and, we assume, prayed. [Prayer usually occurs before deliverance manifests.] Weary, thirsty Hagar wept. And YHWH, ever pitiful and full of compassion, was listening and summoned an angel[*Maleach Elohim*, not

Maleach YHVH as found in 16:7-13; not a theophany] to provide encouraging, prophetic words for her. The Almighty then led Hagar to a well and abided with the couple. Though she was repelled and deserted by Abraham's family, Hagar and Ishmael were not deserted by Abraham's Elohim. YHVH's companionship proved to be more than sufficient compensation for the rejected mother and son. Their needs were satisfied. YHVH's personal company is the highest privilege and blessing for man. Thus, Believers should cultivate close fellowship with Him always. David repented for his sin with Bathsheba and hungered for a return of intimacy with YHVH. He cried out, *"Do not cast me away from Your presence, and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me"* (Psalm 51:11).

"...Abimeech and Phichol the chief captain of his host spoke unto Abraham saying, God is with you in all that thou doest..." (v. 22). Abraham and Abimelech [a common name among Philistine/Canaanite kings] were powerful princes who sought to co-exist in peace. Abimelech was probably intimidated by Abraham's increasing wealth and power and desired to secure for himself a peaceful relationship with the divinely favored man. The king's shepherds had taken Abraham's well.

The patriarch thought it was done by royal edict and rebuked the Canaanite king. An explanation eased the tensions and both men entered a covenant. Abraham called upon the name of YHVH, the everlasting Elohim, and peace was established. *"Blessed are the peacemakers."* Thus the time that Abraham, the worshiper of the true Elohim, *YHVH El Olam*, spent in the regions of Philistia brought some enlightenment to the people. Shouldn't we have the same spiritual impact where we do business? *"Now then we are ambassadors for Messiah, as though YHVH did beseech you by us..."* (2 Cor. 5:20).

8. *"Now it came about after these things that God tested Abraham, and said to him...Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you"* (B'resheet 22:1-2).

Abraham's unexpected ordeal, his great trial of faith, was announced by the Most High. He was to take his son Isaac and sacrifice him on an altar on Mount Moriah, which is the site of the Temple Mount today. Heaven's demand certainly astonished/dazed the patriarch. Severe in form, Abraham's trial declares to us that despite age, favor, and experience, no one is exempt from trials or is beyond testing. The patriarch's trial (or test) was overwhelming in its demand but needful in its design. "The great covenant blessing was still conditioned on the exercise by the patriarch of full-hearted trust in the naked [unadulterated] word of God. Not until that standpoint had been reached by Abraham in his spiritual development was he able to become the parent of Isaac; and now that Isaac was born there was still the danger lest Isaac, and *not* the naked word of God, should be the ground of the patriarch's confidence. Hence the necessity arose for testing whether Abraham could resign Isaac and yet [still] cling to the promise." [6]

Ultimately, our faith must not rest with experiences or circumstances, but with the pure Word of Elohim. Abraham, though grieved, obeyed without hesitation. *"...and Abraham built an altar...and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar...and took the knife to slay his son"* (B'resheit 22:9-10). Here is faith observed in full maturity. Abraham believed, because of the promise of an heir, that though Isaac should be sacrificed [if it actually happened], the Almighty would raise him up from the dead and the Word of Elohim would yet be fulfilled. *"And the angel of the Lord called out to him from heaven...lay not your hand upon the lad..."* (B'resheit 22:11). He *"staggered [stumbled, tripped] not at the promise"* (Rom. 4:20) and gained the victory. *"...and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket...and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son"* (verse 13). The father of our faith called the place *YHVH-Jireh*, which means, "YHVH will see to it" or "In the mount of the Lord [place of need] it will be provided [provision will be seen; need shall be satisfied]." Then the great promises of numerous, prosperous, and influential descendants, along with expanded territory, were renewed.

Observations in a nutshell: **A.** Trials will come throughout life, and they might get stronger as we grow older. **B.** We overcome evil by faith. It connects us to the promise and power of our Elohim. **C.** Our security and blessedness are related to our obedience to the truth we have been given...and readiness to move into greater light as it is shed on our paths. Greater light, if lived in, always provides for greater fellowship and intimacy with Yeshua. Thus, Abraham's great trial brought a great revelation. He was tried so the families of the earth could be blessed. Abraham's simple faith and calm obedience was reflected in Isaac quietly and peacefully carrying the wood, and thereby he is a type of Yeshua and the cross. On the way up the mount Abraham was, we believe, saying, "Elohim shall provide." His heart was being tested to the limit. *"And Abraham stretched forth his hand and took the knife."* Entire surrender! In an instant the angel appeared and deliverance was realized. A ram, YHVH's substitute and a type of Messiah Yeshua, was caught and held in a thicket, its head entangled by thorns. The provision for which Abraham had trusted was waiting. Revelation was the climax of the journey. Abraham came to know Elohim by a new name, *YHVH-Jireh*. "We know Him henceforth by the knowledge of that fact. *'YHVH-Jireh (The Lord will provide): as it is said to this day, in the mount of the Lord it shall be provided (or seen)'*" (v. 14). [7] It was not before the mount that the provision was seen, but on the mount.

Patience is the key to victory. The offering of Isaac on the mount was a divinely orchestrated precedent which served to prophesy the subsequent analogous act of atonement on Calvary. Abraham's offering of his son represents Elohim's wonderful provision for the entire world, a whole burnt offering for the sins of mankind by which men are redeemed and can experience true joy ("Isaac", laughter).

Five quick lessons drawn from the narrative: **A.** Believe His Word. **B.** Practice self-sacrifice. **C.** Live by faith not by sight. **D.** Give your best for Yeshua. **E.** Persevere!

Haftorah

The *haftorah* describes two miracles that are associated with the prophet Elisha, the man of the double-anointing (2 Kings 2:9--14). The first miracle involved a poor widow, a miraculous flow of oil into empty containers, and the great profit that came to the debt-burdened woman when she sold the oil. The second miracle concerns a childless woman who bears a son after Elisha had prophesied to her foretelling the joyful event.

1. *"Then he [Elisha] said, At this season next year you will embrace a son...the woman conceived and bore a son at that season the next year, as Elisha had said to her" (2 Kings 4:16-17).*

The prophet had proclaimed to the barren woman, "...a son shall be born to thee..." As was Sarah when she heard pre-incarnate Yeshua speak to Abraham about her having a son within one year [she laughed], the woman who heard the prophet was incredulous: *"Don't deceive me!"* She was reluctant to believe the man for fear her hope would not come to fulfillment. But the woman did conceive, and she bore a son exactly as Elisha had prophesied. The son was born in the following year, in the same season. This is an echo of Sarah and the miraculous events in the birth of Isaac.

2. *"So he called her. And when she came in to him, he said, Take up your son. Then she went in and fell at his feet and bowed herself to the ground, and she took up her son and went out" (2 Kings 4:36-37).*

When the child had grown he was reaping in the cornfield with his father when he succumbed to sunstroke, which was a common affliction in Israel during the time of harvest, and often fatal. The young man died and was laid in his bed. The mother hurried and fetched Elisha from his residing place on Mount Carmel, and they returned to her home and the body of her son. There the prophet **(a)** prayed and, following the example of his master (1 Kings 17:21) Elijah, **(b)** stretched himself over the young man to warm his body, and then **(c)** he breathed in the youngster's face. This speaks of the Spirit of God who alone can give life to the dead. We read in Genesis, *"The Lord God formed man...and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life..."*

Elisha's very personal actions were acts of faith. He persevered in his efforts and the boy came back to life. He was restored to his mother, who prostrated herself in thanksgiving before the prophet, then took up her son and left rejoicing.

The haftorah corresponds to the *sedra* (parsha) and emphasizes its lesson on faith. It also emphasizes the value of effort and intimacy. The emanation of a warm heart takes the coldness away from relationships and ceremonies, and transfers the same glow into the hearts of others.

Part 3: Yeshua—*The Eternal High Priest of the Believers Discipleship*

*"For it is fitting for us that we have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens; who **does not** need daily [as did the Levite priests] to offer up sacrifices...first for His own sins and then for the sins of the people, because He did this once for all when He offered up Himself" (Heb. 7:26-27). No other priest would be suitable or sufficient to make intercession for our reconciliation. Yeshua--perfectly righteous, free from transgression, and doing no violence, is our Advocate before the Father, mediating for mercy on others that He does not need. [3B]*

"...God canceled the law's accusations against those who respond to the Messiah in faith, accept His forgiveness and entrust their lives to Him. This does not mean that God's laws and commands are obsolete (Rom. 7:12,16; 1 Tim. 1:8). They still expose sin and point people to their need for a Messiah. In addition, God's laws and His standards of moral conduct are still valid for Messiah's followers. The difference is that now Messiah's followers have the desire and power—through the Holy Spirit—to meet "the righteous requirements of the law" (Rom. 8:4)—not to gain salvation or favor with God, but to demonstrate their love and gratitude to Him." [8]

1. *"Then Abraham raised his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns; and Abraham went and took the ram and offered him up for a burnt offering in the place of his son" (B'resheit 22:13).*

The reverence and faith of Abraham had been thoroughly demonstrated. YHVH accepted his willingness and intent to sacrifice Isaac as commensurate to actually performing the deed. A ram was substituted for Abraham's son.

The ram, as we know, points to Messiah Yeshua, Who, by the atoning sacrifice of Himself, has delivered believers from condemnation and eternal death. The surrender of Isaac by Abraham is a shadow that points to the love of the Father in not sparing His own Son, Yeshua. The deliverance of bound Isaac speaks of the resurrection of Yeshua *and* the new life in the Spirit of redeemed people.

2. *"The next day he [John] saw Yeshua coming to him and said, Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29).* It had already been revealed to John the Baptist

that Yeshua, over Whom the heavens opened, was pre-existent (*"Your throne was established from long ago; you are from all eternity," Psalm 93:2*), the eternal Son of God and Baptizer in the Holy Spirit.

The Baptist knew Yeshua was He Who had authority and power to minister the Holy Spirit even as he himself used water. Thus John had discerned in the character and life of Yeshua divine power and purpose when [after Yeshua had returned from the wilderness] he proclaimed, *"Behold the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"* Isaiah had prophesied centuries earlier concerning Yeshua: *"...He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter" (Isa. 53:7).*

The Messiah was the Lamb of God, not merely *a* lamb. Nor was He simply a Prophet, but **the** Savior, selected by the Father to fulfill all the types and shadows of the many sacrificed offerings before Him, and to carry away the sin of the world. As God's Lamb, He was **(a)** innocent, with no guilt of sin. *"...and behold, nothing deserving death has been done by Him."* (Lk. 23:15). He was **(b)** holy, and consecrated to His Father, saying, *"...what I see Him do..."* He was **(c)** meek, lowly, and patient in suffering, *"like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, so He did not open His mouth" (Isa. 53:7).*

The Apostle John wrote, *"We know that Yeshua Messiah was manifested to take away our sins" (1 John 3:5).* Not the sins of the Jews only, but He also *"taketh away"* those of the Gentiles as well, for we have read in the parsha what was said long ago to Abraham: *"And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed" (B'resheet 12:3).*

Part 4: The Holy Spirit—*The Power of Discipleship*

"Dreams, visions, words of knowledge, and miracles are what should be the norm for the Christian who is born from above and is walking in the power of the Spirit of the living God. Sadly, much of the [divine] supernatural has been left out of Christianity today [including the Hebrew Roots Movement] and has been replaced with programs, building projects, man-centered kingdom building, human talent, and everything else **but** what the early church [ecclesia, congregation of redeemed Israel] did, which was wait upon the Spirit of the living God." [48] Yeshua said, *"You will receive power."* Power is needed!

"...many signs and wonders were taking place among the people; and they were all in one accord...multitudes...were constantly added...they even carried the sick out into the streets..." (Acts 5:12-15). The Holy Spirit [Ruach HaKodesh] strengthens and unifies the Body of Messiah

through His supernatural activity, signs, wonders, and demonstrations. See Acts 4:30-33; 1 Cor. 2:4; 12:7-13; 14:1-33.

1. *"Then the angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time from heaven..." (B'resheet 22:15).*

Abraham heard the divine voice. So must we hear the divine voice today. We who trust Messiah and are "born-again" are blessed with that privilege and joy. *"Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hears My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me" (Rev. 3:20).*

This Scripture suggests that there are higher degrees, or levels, of spiritual hearing and intimacy than most people are accustomed to experiencing. But no matter at what level of hearing His holy, personal communications we may be, everyone can seek to attain a more acute, a more clear hearing capacity for His voice. We will derive great satisfaction from this increase. The saints live in the prophesied period characterized by *"an increase of knowledge,"* when there are many voices [communications, transmissions, visions, etc.] contending for our attention, and from them much confusion results. Nonetheless, disciples have a clear call to pick up and process *His* signals and words in this hour of restoration of Spirit and Torah to the Body of Messiah.

Accordingly, YHVH, who loves His children, is openly inviting us to attain a greater knowledge of and experience with Him that transcends the increase of worldly knowledge. As we seek to discern His voice He will perfect our spiritual hearing and give us a revelation of His glory and love. Therefore, as you are still fresh in your one-year pilgrimage through the *Torah and Glory Discipleship Series*, practice listening while in study and prayer, and develop discernment. Both are imperative for our times.

Keep in mind, His voice/word can be heard literally, audibly, from within or without. But usually the voice/word of the Holy Spirit [Ruach HaKodesh] takes other forms, including: a quiet but enduring impression or idea, divinely illuminated words from Scripture, a sense, feeling, or quickened intuition, an inward knowing, prophecies, visions, dreams, gifts of the Spirit, and more. The Holy Spirit is known to speak quietly, but powerfully and persistently, within our [believers] regenerated, born-again spirits, and from there into our hearts and minds.

He illuminates our reasoning and perception, sensitizes our emotions, clarifies inner visions, gives revelation, and awakens greater consciousness of the reality and presence of Yeshua. He prompts us with His still small voice, the voice of intimacy, gives guidance through recurring impressions, sharpens our wits and senses when necessary, and quickens our discernment. All this and more He does for the purposes of (a) encouraging and leading us in His way, and (b) developing closer fellowship with Him.

As mentioned, often the Holy Spirit uses the Scriptures to alert us to anointed, timely words. He also will use the anointed words and counsel of other people, and will direct us through circumstances too. What a Comforter! He will inform, confirm, convince and instruct through a display of signs and wonders which are as needed today in ministry as they were in the day of Peter and Paul. He (not "It") will guide our thoughts through our spirits, and even affect our conscious minds when we are not fully cognizant or aware of His guiding influence. Yet, in every occasion His strong but gentle touch is intended to lead us spiritually to green pastures of truth, deep waters of power, fully-prepared tables of provision, overflowing cups of refreshing, fresh anointing, new wine of joy, victory, healing, goodness and mercy--as we yield to His truth and leading.

Obedying the Word and following the Spirit are critical for forward-moving disciples in these latter days. We are bombarded moment by moment by non-holy influences--ungodly voices, words, writings, and more--that are *counterfeits of truth* and contrary to Elohim's covenant Word. A satanic flood of lies literally inundates the world now and brazenly competes with, and even dares to emulate, YHWH's communication.

Thus, it is clear that we *must* learn to hear Him and discern His holy voice, His signals, even as a football team needs to focus and hear the signals of the quarterback in the midst of a loud, clamorous stadium. Therefore, throughout the year we will teach on the vital topics of the (1) ministry, gifts, fruit, voice, and leading of the Holy Spirit, and (2) the Glory of God.

Steps to the Glory--biblical ways to refresh, strengthen, and sensitize yourself spiritually--are continued from last week:

E. When you are confident with your prayer language, the next step for developing a lifestyle and ministry with the Spirit is to learn all about the *gifts of the Spirit* [also called "*spirituals*"]. There are nine supernatural gifts, or "workings," of the Spirit. Three are called *inspiration* gifts. They include the gift of tongues, interpretation of tongues, and prophecy.

Three are *revelation* gifts. They include the word of knowledge, the word of wisdom, and the discerning of spirits. And three are *power* gifts. These are the gift of faith, the working of miracles, and the gifts of healing. A good place to learn to flow in the Spirit's gifting is with the inspiration gifts mentioned above, particularly prophecy.

The gift of prophecy is received by (1) the direct, spontaneous inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and (2) by faith. In this operation, the Holy Spirit's presence and power move within the disciple's regenerated spirit, and through it into the person's mind to impart an idea, a thought, a revelation, or an exhortation from the heart of Elohim. Then the Spirit gently inspires/quicken/influences that person to speak forth what they sensed or heard--that is, the divinely given thought or impression--and put it into words of edification. The *gift of tongues*

and *interpretation* of tongues operate similarly. The gifts of tongues [not the personal prayer language], interpretation, and prophecy are not always the first experiences one will have with the gifts of the Spirit, but these are usually the best with which to start and develop only because they are often the easiest to discern and flow in with regularity. Laying hands on the sick and praying for the activation of the gifts of healing is another area in which a believer can develop faith and practice the ministry of the Spirit. We will learn as we go. Prayer and practice are required. Do not be afraid of failure or mistakes. The more you step out in faith, the more you will see the Spirit begin to come up beside you and manifest His felt, tangible anointing and gifts. *"But solid food is for the mature [those empowered and led by the Spirit], who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil" (Heb. 5:14).* A small group of believers meeting in a Torah/Bible study is a good place to practice spiritual hearing and responding. Faith and skill need to be developed in ministering the gifts of the Spirit. He also uses the *laying on of hands* by a prophetic presbytery for imparting and activating His gifts.

Note: Inspiration gifts can and will function through faith, without an initial, noticeable nudge of inspiration from the Ruach. This happens when a saint prays, and then steps out in faith to speak a word of edification, exhortation, and comfort from the mind of the Messiah, and when doing so is met and uplifted by the anointing and inspired word which arise in response to true faith.

Two things are necessary for those who want to step into this realm of enhanced anointing: **(1)** An earnest desire to please YHVH and bless people. **(2)** Faith. Believers who are afraid of making mistakes--because they will occur from time to time--will not remain long in supernatural ministry. *"Be it unto you according to your faith."* Caution can morph into fear and be an impediment to learning to minister in the gifts of the Spirit. Unfortunately, caution (in excess) and disinterest are common hindrances found in numerous Christian and Messianic congregations. The lack of spiritual gifts operating in their meetings is noticeable.

F. Next, begin singing in the Spirit, using your prayer language individually and while worshipping with others, corporately. This is a pleasant, effectual means of worship and an effective way to practice flowing in the Spirit. When doing so, listen for the Masters voice singing back. You can read more about *singing in the Spirit* in *Section Four* each week (1 Cor. 14:12; James 5:13).

G. Practice prophesying by prayer and faith, as well as under the Ruach's unexpected, unsolicited inspiration (Rom. 12:6; 1 Cor. 14:1,39). And look for opportunities to use the gifts. Remember, we are talking about functioning with the gift of prophecy, not trying to fill the office of a prophet. The inspiration gifts are best developed and exercised under the supervision and counsel of godly, experienced believers. Small groups are recommended.

H. Rest regularly in His Presence. *"I will meditate on Your precepts" (Psalm 119:15)*. Put on worship music and soak in His Glory. Let Him lead you to still waters and quiet resting places where you can be away from disturbances for a while, and discern and enjoy His personal fellowship. Listen for His still small voice within you to speak words of love. Rejoice in His company and practice remaining in the communion of the Spirit. *"Be still and know [by faith and experience] that I am God" (Ps. 46:10)*. When His Presence manifests and becomes tangible, expect to hear from Him and then give thanksgiving for healing and wisdom.

I. Hunger to experience the reality of Yeshua through the Spirit on a daily basis. Your hunger and mine will pretty much determine how resolutely we press into the kingdom as well as our level of Holy Spirit manifestation. Pray earnestly to experience a revelation of the Father's love, and wait for His response. This experience has healed and inspired multitudes of believers. Ask for a baptism in His joy. Pray for His Glory to pass before you (Ex. 33:18-19; 34:5-6).

Yeshua has already opened the way into the presence of the Most High. The Temple veil has been torn from top to bottom teaching us that the Holy of Holies—the place of His manifest glorious presence—has been opened up to the saints (Mt. 27:52). Hence, it is written: *"By a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh; and since we have a great High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith..." (Heb. 10:20)*.

Glory Note: *"For how then can it be known that I have found favor in your sight, I and your people? Is it not by your going with us, so that we, I and your people, may be distinguished from all the other people who are upon the face of the earth?" (Ex. 33:16)*. It is the dynamic presence of YHVH, His glory upon and among the people of Israel, that transfigures us and distinguishes us from other people. *"And it came about when the priests came from the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of YHVH...for the glory of YHVH filled the house" (1 Kings 8:10)*. Solomon's Temple, despite its beauty and splendor, was just a large, expensive building until Elohim personally moved in and consecrated it with His glory (see also Ex. 40:34). It is the same with us and our meetings. A.W. Tozer wrote: "If God were to take the Holy Spirit out of this world, much of what the church [Ecclesia/Body of Messiah/Messianic] is doing would go right on, and nobody would know the difference." [9] What do you think about that? We think that all believers must be filled with Yeshua's **(a)** Torah, **(b)** Spirit *and* **(c)** reside under His glory [the power of His presence and goodness] to remain sanctified and different from the world. We must encounter him as did the priests who dedicated Solomon's Temple.

"There is a [harmful] tendency in our society [and in its institutions, i.e. religion] to elevate knowledge and education above experience. Knowledge is much easier to go toward than is experience. Why? Because knowledge in itself demands nothing of us except understanding. But experience demands engagement in a way knowledge does not. It's not enough to grow in

our understanding of God. We must also grow in our revelation and experience of Him." [10] Let us remember, Abraham had both knowledge *and* experiences with El Shaddai. Abimelech said of him: "*God is with thee in all you do*" (B'resheet 21:22).

And remember also that in all things His Word is our reliable guide and standard of faith and practice.

Part 5: Overcoming—*The Outcome of Discipleship*

"Work hard to show the results of your salvation, obeying God with deep reverence and fear" (Phil. 2:12). Overcoming for the disciples requires confrontation and involves spiritual warfare. We must stand and live in the victory of Messiah Yeshua by honoring YHVH's Word and Spirit. That means we reject the old carnal nature and yield to the new, Spirit-generated nature and bear fruit. Yeshua does not do this for us. We must do this ourselves. For disciples who proclaim Messiah, overcoming is necessary in order to reign with Him in His Kingdom. Such holy living starts now! [5B]

1. *"The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished" (2 Pet. 2:4-11).*

In the Epistle, Peter talks about true prophets who were led by the Holy Spirit, and then gives warning to his readers concerning false teachers and false prophets, men who *"wore rough garments to deceive."* The Almighty Judge of the Universe distinguishes between the *godly*--those who revere His Law and respond to His love as revealed in the Gospel, and the

unjust--those who have no true respect for Him or His Law of righteousness. Peter gives examples of divine wrath against false teachers and prophets, even all who offend, by citing the judgments of the angels that sinned, the antediluvian world, and Sodom and Gomorrah.

Godly disciples are not exempted from trials and temptations but are delivered out of [through] them. The examples of this truth are Noah and Lot.

Abraham had experienced divine deliverances also during his travels. And he learned the value of obedience afresh when he complied with YHVH's command regarding circumcision. It was after the circumcision episode that *"He appeared"* to Abraham in a new, profound and personal way, assuring him with prophetic words and thereby elevating him to a new level of spiritual life and faith.

The effect of Abraham's divine face-to-face encounter was life-long, and it strengthened him for victory in the hour of his great test, which was the ultimate purpose and climax of his long life of

faith--the offering up Isaac. Of course, Isaac was submissive to his father and was himself delivered by the hand of YHVH.

Lesson: Only by boldly *"going forth"* [*Lech Lecha*] into that to which we are called will we position ourselves to see with spiritual eyes and encounter a greater vision--*"And He appeared"* [*VaYera*]-of the Elohim of Israel.

2. *"Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone"* (James 2:14-24).

It was by his *works* [obedience] that Abraham's faith *"was made perfect."* The outstanding example of his faith producing works of obedience was seen in the willingness of the patriarch to sacrifice his son Isaac. *"Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son on the altar?"* Again, works of obedience are proof of a living faith.

Hearing His Voice and obedience.

"The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the [whole] person; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple" (Ps. 19:7 AMP). Prayer--being privileged to talk to and hear from the Almighty--is one of the greatest blessings of being a disciple. We are not necessarily ordered to seek Him, but we are given the opportunity and incentive. Talking to and hearing from YHVH through the Spirit is how we co-labor with Him to see His plans and purposes for our lives come to pass. Prayer is a way people can come into His dynamic manifest presence, and position themselves to hear His voice. Communications with God and remaining in dynamic fellowship with Him by faith need not be difficult. It should become natural and easy, like breathing.

"You shall walk after the Lord your God and [reverently] fear Him...and obey His voice (Deut. 13:4 AMP). Talking to YHVH and hearing from Him effectually require that believers obey what it is they hear. The quality of our fellowship and the strength of our faith are affected by our obedience. Therefore, practicing in hearing His voice and following His exhortations are part of growing spiritually intimate with Elohim. Sometimes we make mistakes in discerning His voice. So what? As children, when we learned to walk, we sometimes fell and skinned our knees. But we learned nonetheless. It is this way in the kingdom. Walk in faith and do not fear. He will hold us up—pick us up, as He teaches us.

Disciples can Sing the Song of the Lord--prophetic songs, and overcome temptation.

"Sing unto the Lord a new song; play skillfully with a shout of joy" (Ps. 33:3). This is a psalm of praise and thanksgiving written during the reign of David, according to the Septuagint. It is an exhortation to exuberance. The Scriptures say, *"God is a Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and truth"* (John 4:24). Our praise and worship must be based on sacred truth, and be spiritual. That means it should relate to, be inspired by, and filled with the Spirit. It

should be both natural and supernatural in essence, pertain to Scriptural values, and extol and exalt YHVH. Keep in mind that fervor and exhilaration are favorable. Our worship is to be both spiritual and physical, having not only inner expression, but outer, material [physical] expression as well, in order to completely incorporate our entire being of body, soul, and spirit.

The Elohim who gave us our spirits has also created our minds, emotions, eyes, ears, voices, and bodies. Our call is to worship Him resoundingly, with our entire nature. Hence the Psalms encourage readers to praise, rejoice, sing, dance, play loudly, shout, twirl, and express their love and thanksgiving with unabashed emotional and physical enthusiasm; and to worship in adoration while lifting up holy hands, and in the Spirit with the sound of His prophetic voice singing in the midst of the congregation. The *new song*, given by inspiration and led by the Spirit stirring the inner man of the worshiper, brings with itself the reason which motivates us, and that reminds us that praise and worship are both a privilege, joy, and a duty. The *new song* will speak of the goodness, faithfulness, power, and glory of our Elohim. It will also proclaim His love and mercy. It will extol the omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience of the One Who created time, controls nature and history, is in all places at once (Prov. 15:3), and reads the thoughts of men and sets their foolish counsel at naught. The new song exalts Yeshua, fills us with faith and enthusiasm, incorporates the whole man, and draws us closer in oneness to Him.

The heavenly, prophetic *new song* becomes the *song of the Lord* when, through the Agency of the Spirit, the worshiper sings the actual response from Yeshua [exhortation, edification, and comfort] back to the worshiping congregation/group. Therefore, dear reader, play and sing boldly, both in the Spirit and with understanding. Ask Him to sing through you and bless Israel. Defeat darkness.

Part 6: Conclusion

*"For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases Him" (Phil. 2:13). Abraham heard and **obeyed the call** of El Shaddai, the Almighty One. Yeshua [calls and] empowers all His disciples to go and do likewise." [68]*

"The representative man [such as Abraham...and the modern returning Israelite, you and me] holds a special position towards God, not for his sake alone, but as the depository [a place where something is placed for safekeeping] of the [holy] blessing...we are called to be the channel through which blessings flow...we walk in the light towards a future which shall abundantly reward patient continuance in well doing." [11]

1. *"By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance, and he went out, not knowing where he was going" (Heb. 11:8).*

We are each called, like Abraham, to hear God's voice, believe His Word, and obey! *"In the latter days [now] you will return to YHVH your Elohim and listen to His voice" (Deut. 4:30)*. What's more, we are in the prophetic time frame when the Holy One of Israel is ready and poised to speak to whoever is ready to listen. Seek Him for more intimate, personal encounters. He says, *"...incline [train, learn to hear, lean towards Me] your ears [He wants both of them] to the words [written and spoken] of My mouth" (Ps. 78:1)*. He has a word for you. A message.

2. *"And they shall be as mighty men...I will strengthen the house of Judah, and I will save the house of Joseph, and I will bring them again [make them to dwell] to place them...and they of Ephraim shall be like a mighty man, and their heart shall rejoice as through wine [they will go forth to battle cheerfully, refreshed, and their households will be joyful with the reports of victory]...I will hiss [this is a reference to a kind of whistle used by a shepherd to call his particular flock together] for them, and gather them; for I have redeemed them: and they shall increase as they have increased...and I will strengthen them in the Lord; and they shall walk up and down in His Name, saith the Lord" (Zech. 10:5-8,12)*.

Judah will be restored and Ephraim will be raised up, not discarded and forgotten. Yeshua is calling for all His sheep to return from the nations and the unbiblical religious traditions to which they have been scattered and in which they have squatted, and return to their identity and heritage. Two increases are prophesied.

Ephraim was *increased greatly in physical numbers* while they were lost among the nations, but in their return to the Father's house they will be greatly *increased in the strength of the Lord*. To be strengthened in the strength of YHVH is our greatest blessing. His strength is multifaceted, and refracts--as light coming through a prism--into physical, emotional, mental, moral, spiritual, tribal, individual and national empowerments. His strength, which also supernaturally imparts faith and vision through His Word and Spirit, enables His saints to *"walk up and down in His Name."*

The pathway of life can be both dangerous and difficult *and* peaceful and prosperous, even simultaneously. But however dreary or delightful stretches might be, life's road can only be walked victoriously when we *"we walk up and down"* its undulating roadway in all the redemption blessings Yeshua's shed blood has purchased and His glorious Name represents. *"The strength of the Lord"* includes sanctification, righteousness, the Spirit's presence and power, healing, provision, protection, guidance, goodness, mercy, victory over enemies, the fruit of the Spirit, and more! In this way, Judah and Ephraim--even everyone grafted into Israel through faith in Messiah Yeshua--become a corporate example and witness to the restoration of all Israel. May we forsake the names of pride, greed, intellectualism, materialism, humanism, sensuality, and individualism. Let us, who belong to the Messiah join together in the faith of Abraham, rejoice and be glad as we pray and work for the restoration of Israel. Remember, we

have "a name which is above every name: That at the name of Yeshua every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess the Yeshua Messiah is Lord, to the glory of Elohim the Father" (Phil. 2:9-10). May His glory appear among us as we meet to minister unto Him, enter His presence, and grow in His likeness.

The Seven Study Questions

These will appear at the conclusion of every lesson.

The *lesson questions* are **a very important** aspect of the student's learning. All readers are strongly encouraged to take the time and include them in their study discipline. Prayerfully answer each one! They are intended to coax the student to rely upon interaction with the Holy Spirit, discern His voice, receive insight, and obtain prophetic enlightenment.

This process will assist each learner to (1) develop a vision for the restoration and reconciliation of the whole house of Israel, (2) grow in foundational knowledge of the Torah, (3) recover the principles, practice, and Holy Spirit power of the early, first-century Nazarene believers, and (4) experience and enjoy greater dimensions of the kingdom, power, and glory of Yeshua.

Note: The questions presented here are listed again at the conclusion of each lesson in both the *Torah Commentary Manuals* and the *Torah Discipleship Manuals*. **To repeat—be sure to follow through with them.**

1a. In your opinion, what is the main theme or teaching of each of the listed readings individually? Starting with the Torah: What is its title? What is the interpretation? What truth/idea does the interpretation of the title suggest? What is the Torah section's main truth, as you see it?

1b. What is the corresponding idea in the Haftorah? In the Brit Chadashah?

2. What is the outstanding, central idea or subject that runs through and unites all the individual readings, as you see it? What does it say about discipleship?

3. Find in the Gospels where and how Yeshua declares, demonstrates, exemplifies, or exhibits the parsha's central truth, and explain. Give chapter and verse. Will you follow Him in living the lesson's truths?

4. In what way was the glory of YHVH [manifestations of His goodness] revealed in the parsha

lesson?

5. What does the parsha teach you about your Hebrew roots, your identity, your destiny, your duty?

6. In what way did the Holy Spirit/Ruach HaKodesh personally speak to you during prayer and study this week? Did He impress you about how to apply the parsha lesson directly to your life? Explain.

7. *"...because of practice [by reason of use] have their senses trained [exercised] to discern..."*
You and I are called to return to hearing the voice of Elohim and to functioning in the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Progressing in these vital areas will require spiritual hunger, faith, and practice. He is waiting for us to approach Him.

Ask the Holy Spirit to speak into your spirit/heart as you pray each day. Look for opportunities to lay hands on the sick, or to be used in prophesy. Faithfully record the prophetic words and experiences you receive, and be sure to share them with your brethren.

It is helpful to **share** your answers, insights, and revelations with your study group (table class). We recommend meeting regularly in a small group. This allows for healthy interaction and exchange, and militates against stagnation. Practice operating with your spiritual gifts under the anointing of the Holy Spirit while among your friendly, supportive peers. Allow for open participation in leading praise and worship. Give altar calls at your table for healing, refreshing, and prophetic words. These are effective ways for all present to mature in their calling and gifting. The non-threatening small group provides a favorable and encouraging environment in which to learn the ministry of the Spirit. You will do well.

Next-for the upcoming generation:

The parsha lessons are being crafted and shortened for younger readers. Be sure to use them. Deuteronomy 6: 6-7?

1. Youth Version - Under construction.

2. Childrens' Version - Under construction.

Tamid Kadima-Always Forward. Shalom.

Footnotes: 1. Reference unrecovered. 2. VaYera, Chumash, Stone Edition. 3. Adapted from Pulpit Comm., Eerdmans, p. 247. 4. YaYera, Chumash, Stone edition, p.90. 5. Pulpit Comm., Eerdmans, Gen. 21:9-14, pgs. 224-225. 6. Pulpit Comm., Eerdmans, p.286. 7. Ibid, p. 289. 8. FireBible, Hendrickson, p. 1737. 9. Herald of His Coming. 10. Ibid. 11. Pulpit Comm., Eerdmans. 1A. The Snapping of the American Mind, Introduction, D. Kupelian. 1B. Practicing His Presence, J.W. Goll, p. 161. 2B. A Tale of Two Covenant, K.R. 3B. Matthew Henry, Hebrews. , 4B. Days of Chaos, L.A. Marsulli. 5B. New Living Translation. 6B. Ibid.

Chayei Sarah ("Life of Sarah")

Next

Contenders Voice

Discipleship Series

Book of Genesis/B'reshet

Lesson Five

Chayei Sarah (*"Sarah's life"*)

Torah: Genesis/*B'eresheit* 23:1-25:18

Haftorah: 1 Kings/*Melechim Alef* 1:1-31

Brit Chadashah: Matthew/*Mattityahu* 8:19-22; 27:3-10; Luke/*Luka* 9:57-62

Lesson Sequence

1. Introduction: *The Call to Discipleship* **2.** Weekly Parsha: *The Torah—The Standard of Discipleship* **3.** Yeshua: *The High Priest of our Discipleship* **4.** The Holy Spirit/Ruach ha Kodesh: *The Power of Discipleship* **5.** Overcoming: *The Outcome of Discipleship* **6.** Conclusion

Consider

“As the days of Noah were...” (Matt. 24:37). “The implication is, just as it was before the flood when the...Nephilim were powerful upon the earth (Gen. 6:4), mankind would experience an end-times renaissance of the [presence and] influence of these entities...Speaking of the last days, Daniel said (2:43): *‘They shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cling to one another, even as iron mixed with clay.’* The final and most fearful sign heralding the Lord’s Second Coming would be the return of the Nephilim, the appearance upon earth of beings from the Principality of the Air...” [1A] May we remember, according to Genesis 3:15, that Satan has seed—offspring, non-human progeny—hybrids opposed to Messiah. They manifested in the early ages of the earth and fouled mankind in an effort to block the entry of the Seed of the woman, our Redeemer, from coming. Are we being told that the re-emergence of these that *“mingle”*, who will bring overwhelming deception, is at hand? **Whatever may come forth, abide in His Word! There, in the secret place of Psalm 91, no weapon formed against you will prosper.** And expect His glory to be poured upon the land. The nation is poised for revival.

Part 1: Introduction—*The Call to Discipleship*

Do you want to commit to becoming a bono-fide disciple of Yeshua? Really? Then “...know full well that the road leading to the Promised Land ‘flowing with milk and honey’ of necessity runs by way of Mount Sinai, flowing with ‘thou shalt’ and ‘thou shalt not.’” [1B] It is written: *“The one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him” (1 John 5:24).*

Last week: In *VaYera* (:"*And He appeared*") Abraham received an unexpected, personal visitation at his tent from the Holy One of Israel and two angels. He interceded for the righteous of Sodom and Gomorrah, and went to Mount Moriah by divine edict intending to sacrifice his son, Isaac. At the mount Elohim substituted a ram for the patriarch's son, and Abraham received a deeper revelation of the Almighty, that of Him being *YHVH-Jireh*, which interpreted means, "*In the mount the Lord [His provision] shall be seen.*" Basically, His Name tells us that at the point/moment of our need His provision will come forth. The Almighty revealed Himself to Abraham (and to us) as "Provider". Paul confirmed that designation when he wrote to the generous Philippian believers, "*But my Elohim shall provide all your need according to His riches in glory by Messiah Yeshua* " (Phil. 4:19). We learned from *VaYera* that personal faith and one's revelation of YHVH are progressive in their development, and they keep growing throughout the life of a progressing servant of YHVH/a disciple of Yeshua.

This week's discipleship lesson: *Chayei Sarah* opens with the death of Sarah and closes with the death of Abraham. Old age had overtaken them at their respective times, but not before they had fulfilled their service and accomplished YHWH's will for them. They were both examples of the "*good and faithful servant*" referenced in Matthew's Gospel, chapter twenty five. We are not judged based upon our accomplishments, but upon our faithfulness. "*Moreover it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful*" (1 Cor. 4:2). We learn from the lives and deaths of Abraham and Sarah that the true estimate of a servant's life and influence is found in his/her relationship to YHVH and His Word. A servant is a "minister," not a "lord." The word minister originally referred to someone being an "under-rower" on a large boat, a common sailor who manned an oar and who was usually found among the lower class of workers. *Ministers* were about equal to "steerage" class people who slept in the dank, lower level of the boat's hull that was below the waterline. **Yeshua's disciples** today would do well to remember that we are mere servants of the Messiah, under-rowers, who have no authority or power of our own other than what we receive from Him. We are only equal, not superior, to those we serve. Disciples are therefore stewards, and our chief requirement and qualification is faithfulness--loyal service to Yeshua and His flock. It is to this that we have been summoned.

Abraham and Sarah were the first Hebrews, true pioneers and settlers in Canaan, and faithful stewards of His promise. They are illustrations of faithfulness, our examples of the faith, service, and patience required of Israelites to obtain the promises of YHVH and bear fruit that endures even after death (Hebrews 11:8-12). Parsha *Chayei Sarah* ("*Life of Sarah*") includes these momentous events: the death of Sarah, the marriage of Isaac to Rebecca, Abraham's reunion with Hagar [Keturah], the subsequent birth of six more sons, and finally, Abraham's death and burial.

Part 2: Torah—*The Standard of Discipleship*

Parsha Lesson Five: Chayei Sarah (*"Sarah's life"*)

There are those who want liberty from the Law of the Almighty, preferring carnal license. They are **not** disciples of Yeshua. The Kingdom of YHVH cannot be separated from its standards. To live in His kingdom now is to live by His teaching now. *"By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments" (1 John 2)*. Believers, it seems, become easily fascinated by secondary interests. However, the one who is truly led by the Spirit he will end up at the LORD's commandments, His instructions for a holy and successful life.

Torah

We have learned that *the Torah* consists of the first five books of the Tanakh, or Old Testament. Further, we have seen that *Torah* also refers to the oral tradition, or the oral law, that has been passed down through the generations since Moses received the Commandments from YHVH on Mount Sinai. *Torah* also refers to the whole body of Jewish religious writings, commentaries, and teachings.

The Jewish Bible consists of the Torah, the Prophets, and the Writings, twenty-four books in all. The Christian Bible includes the New Testament, which is also called the Apostolic Scriptures. The Talmud refers to the vast collection of Jewish Oral Law, religious instructions, and traditions.

The Torah contains 613 commandments, many of which pertain to individual and domestic behavior. Thus, while it deals with concepts of God and profound existential issues, the Torah is imminently practical as well. It puts focus on the family as the center of Torah society. For instance, in Exodus 20:12 we read: *"Honor your father and your mother in order that your days shall be lengthened upon the land that the Lord God has given you."*

In Hebrew this is called *kibbud av v'em*. Good works, kind words, kindness in general, charity, visitation, mercy, and hospitality are principles of good personal behavior extolled by the Torah. The essence of the Torah is expressed by what we commonly call "the Golden Rule." Yeshua Messiah spoke of it in Matthew 7:12 where He said, *"In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the law and the prophets."*

Paul summarized the Torah's principles for personal and public life in Ephesians 5:1, where he wrote: *"Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; and walk in love, as Messiah also*

hath loved us, and has given Himself for us as an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor."

Love is the core of the Law (Instructions for life). To be a follower of God is expected to be an imitator of Him. It means to do what He does, as He does it, *because* He does it. This did Yeshua. *"The Son can do nothing of himself but what He sees the Father do: for what things soever He does, these also do the Son likewise"* (John 5:19). Yeshua is the Living Torah

1. *"And Sarah was an hundred and seven and twenty years old: there were the years of Sarah's life" (B'resheet 23:1).*

Sarah was the beloved and faithful wife of Abraham, the mother of the promised seed, Isaac, and is considered today as the spiritual mother of all believers. When she died she was 127 years old; Isaac was thirty-seven at the time. She is the only woman whose age is mentioned in Scripture. One rabbinic writer said her age revealed that Sarah had the exuberance of a seven year old, the beauty of a twenty-year old, and the wisdom of an one-hundred year old. In any case, she was a woman of faith, even as her husband was a man of faith. *"By faith also Sarah herself received strength to conceive seed, even when she was past age..." (Heb.11:11).* She died in Canaan, in YHVH's land, her inheritance.

Abraham had lived as a wanderer and pilgrim in Canaan, but with the death of Sarah, he actually purchased land for a sepulcher. The *friend of El Shaddai* desired to acquire a proper burial site, a sepulcher befitting the greatness of his wife. He found such a site at the *Cave of Machpelah*, which means "double," or having two chambers. [The name suggests that couples would be entombed there.] With the cooperation of the children of Heth, who was the son of Canaan, the son of Ham, Abraham negotiated with the wealthy owner, Ephron, and paid what is considered an exorbitant price for the property. It was a practical and necessary acquisition, but also an act of faith in the promise of Elohim (Genesis 12:1-3; 15:17-18). Abraham paid silver for the Cave of Machpelah in which he buried Sarah, and the cave and field became a token, or pledge, *"...the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not [yet] seen,"* of the whole land which his seed would one day possess.

"Sarah died in Kiriath-arba which is Hebron in the land of Canaan" (verse 2).

An interesting comment from the Chumash, Stone Edition, page 107: "The city [Kiriath-arba] was so named because four giants lived there (see Numbers 13:22); or the name was given

prophetically because four illustrious couples would be buried there: Adam and Eve, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca, and Jacob and Leah (Rashi)."

Thus was the death and burial of the Matriarch Sarah. As noted, she was an aged woman, a princess, wife of Abraham, and mother of the promised seed. She was doubly blessed. In time, Abraham, Rebecca, Isaac, Leah, and Jacob were laid to rest in the cave. Only Rachel of the great patriarchal family is absent.

After the burial of Sarah, Abraham turned his attention to another important family matter, that of finding a wife befitting the heir to the promise, his son Isaac.

The good result of honoring instructions:

2. *"And Abraham was old...and said unto his eldest servant of his house that ruled over all he had...I will make thee swear by the Lord...go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac" (B'resheet 24:1-4).*

The legacy of Sarah had to be perpetuated, and the promised seed must be propagated. These were the deep concerns of Abraham. He knew it was time to find a suitable wife for Isaac. But Abraham was protective of his house, and determined to keep his only heir, Isaac, secure in the land of Canaan, close by his family camping and grazing grounds. The patriarch would not send off his own, only son of promise into the world of the Chaldeans to find himself a wife, lest he become *"...turned back again to Egypt" (Luke 9:63)*. Abraham remembered well **(a)** the idolatry in Chaldea, and **(b)** the outcome of his nephew Lot, who had strayed from sound wisdom and flirted with the corruption of Sodom.

The divine call that had brought Abraham from Mesopotamia would not be recklessly jeopardized. The sacred inheritance would not be endangered by exposing Isaac to the temptation of remaining in "the old country" in case his new wife refused to return with him to Canaan. So he instead placed his trusted servant Eliezer under a solemn oath--*"Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh"*--to find and fetch an appropriate wife from Abraham's own people, among whom there was still knowledge of the One True Elohim, and bring her back to Canaan and his son, Isaac.

He was careful to have this accomplished while Isaac remained in the land, as he was the only divinely appointed heir to the soil. Under no conditions would Isaac be permitted to marry a daughter of the Canaanites, an already doomed, pagan race. Abraham was a man of faith and had confidence the mission would be successful and blessed.

Learn: True faith, based on the Word of God, has clearer sight than do sense and reason. May our steps be guided by the Spirit, as was the mind of Abraham and the heart of his chief servant. Eliezer was a trusted messenger, steward over the property of the patriarch, and obedient, as becomes a servant. He was also very wise, as would be expected for a man of his age. Foremost, he was a man of prayer and faith. **Note:** Eliezer is a type of the Holy Spirit **(a)**

Who has quickened and guided the Zionist movement and the restoration of the Jews to the land of Israel, and (b) Who the Father has sent to gather from the nations, restore, equip, and return to the Father's house the Bride of Messiah Yeshua. The Spirit is currently restoring many believers who are in covenant with YHVH through faith in the blood of Messiah to the knowledge of their faith's Hebraic origins, their Israelite identity and responsibilities, and their heritage of the Spirit and Torah of YHVH. From this perspective, Rebecca is a type of the Bride.

The world's wisdom, which had called out to Lot from the gates of Sodom and Gomorrah, would have told Abraham to find a wife for Isaac from among the Canaanite pagans, and thus, through ungodly alliances, gain stronger footing and favor in the promised land. But Abraham was influenced and led by the Spirit of YHVH to obtain a wife for his son from his brother's family, and success for the venture would be granted to him. Abraham had learned from the episode of Hagar and Ishmael that *faith* in the Almighty, YHVH-Yireh, must always be dominant over personal expediency [governance by self-interest].

3. *"And he said, O Lord God of my master Abraham, I pray thee...And it came to pass, before he [Eliezer, Abraham's servant] had done speaking that, behold, Rebecca came out" (B'resheit 24:12-14).*

Eliezer arrived at his destination, Nahor in Haran, close to the hour of sunset when the maidens went forth to draw water from the public well. He likely spent much of his traveling time praying for wisdom and discernment, and in communion with the Elohim of Abraham. He was not looking for a girl of wealth or of a high social position for Isaac, but for one of modest means who was familiar with the work of a household. He was looking primarily for good character. With reverent humility and simplicity he prayed for kindness to be shown to his master, Abraham, and left himself out of the prayer altogether. The divine response was shown as Rebekah came forth and kindly offered to water Eliezer's camels. Her appearance, kindness, and offer of hospitality convinced Abraham's servant that she was YHVH's choice for Isaac, and he bowed and worshiped the Almighty with thanksgiving.

"In everything give thanks: for this is the will of Elohim in Messiah Yeshua concerning you" (1 Th. 5:18).

Note: YHVH is as willing and eager to answer our prayers as He was to answer those of Eliezer, servant of Abraham. By prayer, seemingly insurmountable difficulties can be overcome.

Eliezer greeted Rebekah, explained his mission, and gave her gifts. She then ran to tell Laban her brother of her encounter. When he saw the bracelets of gold upon Rebekah's hands, Laban rushed out to bring Eliezer back to his tent to entertain him. He was a hospitable man--*"Come thou in, blessed of the Lord"*--but, like the rest of us, not immune to covetousness. With

reverence for Elohim, Abraham's servant related the account of his venture, which Laban and Bethuel acknowledged as directed by the Almighty.

Eliezer's proposal, the first speech recorded in the Bible, was admirable and persuasive. The bride's relatives consented to his request, and agreed to the union. They were richly rewarded with expensive gifts, and a meal was served. In the end, Rebekah agreed to leave with Eliezer (*"I will go"*), accompany him to Canaan, and become Isaac's wife. A fraternal benediction was spoken over her as her family sent her away: *"...be thou the mother of thousands of millions, and let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate them"* (v. 60). It complimented the similar prophetic blessing given to Abraham--*"I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the seashore"* (B'resheet 22:17)—which would be fulfilled through Isaac's and Rebekah's offspring.

The whole venture went better than the loyal servant would have expected, and therefore he recognized the hand, mercy, and favor of the Most High in guiding him and bringing success to his undertaking. Whatever our challenges may be, let us follow the example of Eliezer and lay them before YHVH, because He loves us and has redeemed us, and will continue His support of us. Further, when we make our supplications for the welfare of others, the advancement of His Kingdom, the restoration of Israel, and the reconciliation of Judah and Ephraim, he will send an answer of peace, as He did for Eliezer (Phil.4:6-7).

4. *"...the servant took Rebecca, and went his way. And Isaac came...And Rebecca lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she lighted off the camel...the servant told Isaac all things that he had done. And Isaac brought her into his mother's Sarah's tent, and took Rebecca, and she became his wife..."* (B'resheet 24:62-67).

As the camel train carrying Rebekah drew near to Abraham's home, Isaac was in the field, his place of regular prayer and fellowship with YHVH. [Note: His example is a divine exhortation for the reader to similarly enter into daily prayer and meditation in the Scriptures, *and* enjoy the communion of the Spirit. These sweet and profitable disciplines provide great spiritual enrichment and protection for the soul of the maturing saint.] Isaac mourned his mother but also anticipated the arrival of a bride he had never met.

Hence, he had been earnestly praying, beseeching the Most High for a suitable, compatible mate. While he was praying the answer was arriving. Isaac *"brought her into his mother Sarah's tent."* She became his wife and was loved and invested with all the matronly honors and privileges as the new matriarch of the house. Both Sarah and Rebekah were women of faith, modesty, humble service, strength, and they were protectors and guardians of their homes.

5. *"Then again, Abraham took a wife...Keturah. And she bare him Zimran, and Jokshan, and Medan, and Midian, and Ishbak, and Shuah. And Abraham gave all he had to Isaac" (B'resheet 25: 1-2, 5).*

Note: This passage is more of a footnote to the narrative. It was written to preserve a tradition concerning Israel's relationship with its Arab neighbors. It is also regarded by some as an allusion to the frankincense trade between Arabia and Canaan and Egypt. It does not seem to reinforce the uniqueness/specialness of Isaac's birth. However, we proceed with our comment assuming we are to read this brief section at the *pashat* [literal] level of interpretation.

Abraham took a second wife [or concubine; *pilgash*]. Some people think she was Hagar, who had returned to the region with Ishmael. But her name is given as Keturah [Hebrew origin; means *incense*; the name was revived by the Puritans]. We believe she was probably a servant to the family, as was once Hagar. In any case, Abraham's vitality and reproductive powers, which were rejuvenated for the conception of Isaac, apparently continued undiminished. *"For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance [irrevocable]" (Romans 11:29).* He and Keturah had six sons. Nevertheless, Isaac, Abraham's son with Sarah, was constituted as his heir in compliance with the counsel of Yahweh.

6. *"And these are the days of the years of Abraham's life...ane hundred threescore and fifteen years. Then Abraham gave up the ghost, and died in a good old age, an old man, and full of years...and his [eldest sons] son Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah..." (B'resheet 25:7-9).*

The patriarch lived to a good old age and his end was peaceful. *"...Abraham gave up the ghost [or, "...breathed out his spirit into the arms of Elohim]" (B'resheet 25:8).* The passing of others is described in the same way: Isaac (ch. 35:29), Jacob (ch. 49:33), David (Psalm 31:5), and Yeshua (Luke 23:46). He was buried in the promised land, in his own tomb, close to the remains of Sarah, in the Cave of Machpelah.

7. *"And it came to pass after the death of Abraham, that God blessed his son Isaac [enriched Isaac with great temporal and material prosperity]..." (B'resheet 25:11).*

"Although Abraham had many descendants, he carefully distinguishes the line of divine blessing. His peaceful end at 175 years set the seal upon a long life of faith and fellowship with God. His two sons, Isaac and Ishmael, although they lived apart, came together to meet at their father's grave. The influence of such a character as Abraham's is very elevating, even in the sphere of the world. Ishmael was not entirely forgotten, but Isaac, as the true heir of Abraham, hands on [was chosen to pass on] the blessing of the covenant." [1]

8. *"Now these are the generations of Ishmael, Abraham's son, whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah's handmaid, bare unto Abraham" (B'resheet 25:12).*

Isaac and Rebekah continue the story of redemption. After the death and burial of Abraham, Ishmael had no significant personal role in the ongoing story of the patriarchs or in the history of Israel. Ishmael was a prince in the world. His name means, "God Hears," and it thereby proclaims perpetually that the Almighty is essentially a Hearer of prayer, and is not far from them that cry out to Him (21:17). Even those scattered, who are far off, He will hear: "...if My people, who are called by My Name, will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their lanre" (2 Chron. 7:14).

The name was a fitting designation for Ishmael. **A.** YHVH heard the afflictions of his mother before his birth. **B.** At his birth, Abraham believed the report of Hagar regarding the testimony of the angel. **C.** When the lad laid beneath the shrub in the wilderness, YHVH heard his cry (Beresheit 21:17). Ishmael's days were numbered at 137 years when he died, and he was gathered to his people, going into the unseen ether/realm to be in the society of like-minded souls and kindred spirits. It is certain that at death the good and the wicked will be separated and gathered to their respective, suitable places. Ishmael was not the heir of promise. Thus, the descendants of Abraham's eldest son, though they developed and arose to historical importance, are listed...but the redemption story goes forth with Isaac.

Haftorah

1. *"Now King David was old and stricken in years..." (1 Kings 1:1).*

Our *haftorah* reinforces the natural progression of life observed in the Torah portion, that of the son ascending to the place of his father, and the mother replaced by the daughter-in-law. The passage details King David growing old and tired. We read how His health was failing and he was perpetually cold. Abishag, a young maiden, was employed to provide bodily warmth for the weakening monarch. Adonijah, one of King David' sons, a spoiled, pampered but gifted youth, was nevertheless soured by a disregard for the rights of others, and vain ambition; *"I will be king."*

He conspired with an undiscerning, unfaithful priest named Abiathar and other base fellows and made plans to illegally ascend to his father's throne in the anticipated event of David's death, even though the king intended for Solomon to be his heir and succeed him. *"Then King David answered, and said, Call me Bath-sheba...I swear unto thee...Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me...he shall sit upon my throne in my stead" (1 Kings. 1:28-30).* Nathan and Bath-sheba warned David, and with his agreement and the assistance of the faithful priest

Zadok, they thwarted the rebellious son's scheme. Solomon--the one who had been chosen by David in the first place--ended up on the throne of his father.

Abraham had sons as did David, two of which (we know) were Ishmael and Isaac. But Isaac, his son by Sarah, was selected by the Almighty as the heir of Abraham (B'resheet 15:4; 17:15-21; 21:10). There was no attempt on the part of Ishmael to preempt his brother Isaac and seize his father's estate and power. The promises of the covenant would follow Isaac's genealogy. Abraham distinguished Isaac by giving him material and spiritual possessions, and by keeping Isaac with him, under his tutelage and care, while the other sons were sent away with lesser gifts. Thus, "...Abraham gave all that he had unto Isaac" (B'resheet 25:5), including religious instructions, and by these he constituted Isaac his heir according to divine appointment. **Learn:** A father or mother *makes a living* for his/her family best by bringing into the home, week-by-week, along with the paycheck, a full measure of instruction on the Spirit and Truth of Yeshua. **Part 3: Yeshua—The Eternal High Priest of the Believers Discipleship**

"Now the main point in what has been said is this: we have such a high priest, who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens, a minister in the sanctuary and in the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched, not man" (Heb. 8:1-2). Yeshua deals directly with our eternal Father in heaven! "This is the final, ultimate reality: God the Father and His eternal Son interacting in love and holiness for our eternal salvation." [B4]

Yeshua, the Living Torah, declared: *"I did not come to abolish but fulfill" (Mt. 5:17).*

"...everything that [Yeshua] spoke was the Word of God because, after all, He is fully God (Jn.1:1, 18; 10:30; 1 Jn. 5:20). Luke, the writer of the third Gospel (i.e., the 'good message,' story of God, one of the four written firsthand accounts of the life of [Messiah]: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) states clearly that when people heard [Yeshua] they heard the Word of God (Luke 5:1). Notice that while the OT prophets usually began their message with some form of *'This is what YHVH says,'* [Yeshua] introduced His sayings with *'I tell you...'* (e.g., Mt. 5:18, 20, 22, 32, 39; 11:22, 24; Mk. 9:1; 10:15; Lk. 10:12; 12:4; Jn. 5:19; 6:26; 8:34). He had divine (i.e., of God) authority within Himself to speak the Word of God. It is so important to listen to Jesus' words that He Himself says, *'whoever hears My word and believes on Him who sent Me has eternal life and will not be condemned (Jn. 5:24).* [Yeshua] is so closely identified with the Word of God that He actually is called 'the Word' (John 1:1, 14; 1 John 1:1; Rev. 19:13-16). [2]

1. *"And it came to pass, that, as they went in the way, a certain man said unto Him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. And Yeshua said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man hath nowhere to lay His head" (from Luke 9:57-62).*

While He journeyed to Jerusalem Yeshua was approached by many people, some of whom wanted to be enlisted in his service and included among his disciples. In this passage, three actual incidents of men inquiring about the Messiah are grouped to serve as examples of how Yeshua replied to such people, and by doing so reveals the nature of Abrahamic faith. The would-be followers of the Master were told in simple, straightforward terms what was required of those who offered to be included in His service and company. The same standard was required of Abraham when he first heard the call to go to a new land many centuries earlier--commitment. Using the backdrop of the churlish rejection Yeshua had just received from Samaritan villagers to emphasize His point, He said to the first man, *"...but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head."*

Comforts and ease were not priorities in His service, nor were such things likely. To the second He said, *"Let the dead bury their dead."* Yeshua told the man to go and preach at once. The family funeral would only cause him to delay and then probably neglect the divine summons altogether. To the third man, who wanted to return to bid his family good-bye, He spoke of the danger of looking back: *"No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."* Returning to bid farewell to relatives could result in giving a farewell to Messiah...forever. *"Today if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts..." (Heb. 3:7-8).*

His responses to the three individuals and their separate domestic circumstances plainly revealed that discipleship was demanding and included--along with certain rewards and satisfactions--privations and self-sacrifice.

Loyalty to His commands and purposes took precedence over personal interests, and even home and domestic duties. The overly cautious, the impulsive who do not count the cost, the ungenerous, and those whose ardor cools over time, would not stand the test. *"...some seeds fell by the wayside...stony places..." (Mt. 13:4-5).*

Disciples, those who want to really follow Yeshua, must live in faith and dependence upon the Almighty as did father Abraham and mother Sarah. Like Yeshua, they had no house or permanent place to rest their heads when they obeyed Elohim and set forth on their journey from Haran. But they were resolute and did not allow the lure of physical comforts or the demands and pressures of worldly society to discourage, divert, or delay them. The true descendants of Abraham and Sarah will walk, even if they stumble and fall from time-to-time, in the patriarch's and matriarch's faith-footprints. Yeshua said to those who challenged Him, who proudly declared they were free from any bondage because Abraham was their father, *"If you*

were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham" (John 8:39). Yeshua did not encourage everyone who approached Him. Many who wanted to follow Him did not understand what becoming His disciple entailed. "But seek first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness..." (Mt. 6:33). Yeshua's phrasing presents **two aspects of seeking**. The **first** is external, exhorting the believer to seek the spread and restoration of the Kingdom of Elohim, and promote His worship. The **second** is the call to seek personal, behavioral conformity to the Master's Kingdom standard of righteousness. Both are of fundamental importance to Messianic believers, and both were priorities in the patriarch's life.

Today, those who would be Yeshua's disciples [children of Abraham], will have to endure in their commitment to the Messiah. But by their faithfulness they will mature spiritually and become blessed like Abraham with:

- (a) increased works of faith, even "*greater works than these*" (Jn. 14:12),
- (b) growing openness to spiritual revelation,
- (c) ease of discerning the divine voice,
- (d) development of greater moral acuity,
- (e) reception of dreams and visions, (f) unhindered receptivity of the Holy Spirit's anointing, His gifts and fruit, (g) a hunger and thirst for righteousness, and (possibly) (h) entertainment of heavenly messengers. To be blessed like Abraham we must walk in the *faith footprints* of Abraham. Commitment!

Part 4: The Holy Spirit—*The Power of Discipleship*

The Pharisee Paul became a fervent disciple and a very effective apostle for Yeshua. He possessed a powerful intellect and was well educated. He was tireless as a follower of Messiah and carried the Gospel to the ends of the Roman Empire. "Most significant, perhaps, was the undeniably supernatural nature of Paul's ministry. Everywhere he went, Paul's ministry manifested the power of the Holy Spirit." [B4] "*Now God worked unusual miracles by the hands of Paul*" (Acts 19:11-12).

Yeshua will receive the Holy Spirit and you will receive the Holy Spirit.

and the new birth (John 3). Yeshua wants His people clothed with power in order to most effectively communicate the Gospel. He is our Baptizer. The Greek word for power is *dunamis*. *Dunamis* indicates more than strength and ability. The word suggests power in action and at work, and includes authority to cast out demons and anointing to heal the sick. As a matter of fact, these two works are regarded as essential signs that should be manifested through

believers that boldly carry the message of the Kingdom of God (Lk. 4:14, 18, 36; 5:17; 6:199:1-2; Acts 6:8; 8:4-8, 12-13; 10:38; 14:3; 19:8-12). Hence, the power that is referred to in Acts 1:8 should accompany our preaching and teaching. Believers are, after all, His representatives on earth. We must follow the pattern He placed before us. See Acts 1:4.

1. *"Here O Israel! The Lord [YHVH] is our God [Elohim; plural], the Lord [YHVH] is one [Echad]! You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your sons..." (Deut. 6:4).*

The *Shema* affirms both the oneness and unity of YHVH, the only living Elohim. It informs the reader that YHVH is One, a Plurality in unity. [*Elohim, meaning "god,"* is a masculine, plural Hebrew word.] At the time the *Shema* was written by Moses, the heathen pagan world surrounding Israel was full of Baals, Jupiters, Asheroths, and other idols and heathen deities. But the Elohim Who covenanted with Israel was declared to be One, the invisible [unseen] Absolute, indivisible [one] Creator and Ruler of the Universe, and He Who had been worshiped before the fall of man.

In His Word He makes Himself known as the infinite One, the eternal Source Who (a) alone is to be worshiped, (b) alone must be depended upon, and (c) alone has the Word that must be obeyed. The *Shema* was (and remains) a statement of truth that stood against and refuted the false "faiths" which surrounded the children of Israel, and clearly affirmed there is but one great supreme Creator, Who is Master of heaven and earth. His Name is YHVH. Further, this vital truth was to be diligently taught to the children of every Israelite generation, ours included. **Note:** The sacred Name of Elohim appears as four Hebrew letters in the Hebrew Scriptures: *Yud, hey, vav, hey*, and is represented by the first letters of each, spelling YHVH. The four letters are called the *tetragrammaton*. In the Hebrew it's written right to left: *Echad YHWH Eloheinu YHVH Yisrael Shma*.

The declaration of the unity/oneness of YHVH opposed polytheism, pantheism, and other local and national idols and false gods that proliferated in the ancient world. In the *Shema*, Elohim declares that He alone is to be loved and honored, with undivided loyalty, with the totality of man's mental and physical energies and resources. Where love exists, there will be obedience. Where there is compliance to His truth, there will be abundant life for Israel. When His people live in victory and in the abundance of liberty, He is glorified...and pleased.

Thus our Elohim, YHVH, is One. He is a Plurality of Manifestation in indivisible, perfect Unity. Scripture teaches that He lives and manifests as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, yet He is One, *Echad*. YHVH, our Creator and Redeemer, has revealed Himself as the Father, Who is the Source of the Word, the Begetter. He is Elohim the Son, Yeshua, Who is the Word made flesh, the

Begotten. He has existed with the Father for eternity. In Yeshua HaMashiach all the fullness of Elohim/deity lives/divinity abides in bodily form. Elohim is also revealed as the Holy Spirit Who proceeds from the Father and is divine and eternal.

The word "ruach" (or *ruwach*) was used in the Old Testament when talking about the Spirit. The word means *wind*. In the New Testament the word for spirit in Greek is "pneuma", which means *breath, or breeze*.

Though we may think of the Holy Spirit/Ruach HaKodesh as the Breath of Elohim, the Ruach is **not** an impersonal "thing" or "force" or an "it." The Ruach is *He*, the manifestation of the infinite Elohim! He is divine, alive, and sent to regenerate, indwell and empower the saints. His purpose is to have an intimate relationship with believers, exalt the Messiah, administrate and lead the Ecclesia, and impart truth and understanding to His people.

The Holy Spirit/Ruach HaKodesh is: **A.** Omnipotent-all powerful. Luke 1:35. **B.** Omnipresent-everywhere at once. Ps. 139:7. **C.** Omniscient-all knowing. 1 Cor. 2:10. **D.** Eternal. Hebrew 9:14. **E.** Elohim. Acts 5:3-4. **F.** Given to us. *"You shall receive power after the Holy Spirit is come upon you; and you shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth" (Acts 1:8).*

There are over 450 references to the Ruach HaKodesh in the Bible. From the beginning of HolyScripture (Genesis) right on through to the end (Revelation) the Ruach HaKodesh has been intimately involved with creation and redemption. He is the inspiration and power behind the Hebrew roots movement, and the awakening and return of the House of Ephraim/Israel to his historical Hebraic heritage. Further, it is the Spirit Who will bring to pass the restoration of all Israel and reconciliation between Judah and Ephraim. In this hour of the believers' spiritual awakening, repentance, and return to the Father's house, it is obvious our vital need as a people of the Spirit is to know Him, hear Him, experience His power, and be led by Him.

This sections reference sample is not exhaustive: Genesis/B'resheit 1:1-3,26; 3:22; 11:7; Ex. 20:3; 1 Sam. 10:10; 19:20; 23:2; 2 Sam. 23:2; 32:2; 1 Kings 22:24; Neh. 9:30; Zech. 2:10; 4:6; 7:12; Job 33:4; Ps. 51:11; 104:30; 139:7; Isa. 6:3,8; 34:16; 48:16; 61:1; 63:10-11; Micah 2:7; Mt. 3:16; 17:2; 28:18-20; Mark 1:1-12; 9:2; Luke 1:35; 3:21-22; 4:14-19; John 1:1,14,18; 14:26; 15:26; 17:20-22; Acts 2:32-33; 5:3-4; Rom. 8:11; 1 Cor. 3:16; 12:4-6; 2 Cor. 13:14; Gal. 4:6; Eph. 4:4-6; Phil. 2:6; Col. 1:16; 2:9; 1 Pet. 1:2; Rev. 4:8-11; 10:6).

Glory Note: *"The Lord, the God of heaven Who took me from my father's house and from the land of my birth, and who spoke to me..." (B'resheit 24:7).* Abraham was distinguished from his contemporaries in that he was honored with divine visitations and communications. His faith and obedience to the word of Elohim kept him in a place of receptivity to the voice of the Almighty.

A long list of other notable, consecrated people in the Bible also heard His voice and experienced His glory, and significant, fruitful ministries were birthed and anointed from the encounters. Should not such life-changing, ministry-birthing, divine encounters, visions, and revelations be desired and experienced by the saints in these turbulent days of restoration also? Yes!

Of course they should! So let us go forward, prepare our hearts and spiritually align ourselves [with His commandments] to experience the expressed glory of our Elohim, and become familiar with His voice. This is important. It will not be knowledge or liturgy that finally unites and reconciles Judah and Ephraim, even though shared customs will allow us to gravitate toward one another and coexist more closely. But seamless family reconciliation and completed bonding will occur only when both houses experience the manifest glory of Elohim within and upon us, and we receive a new and profound revelation of the Holy One of Israel that fuses us [blends; melts together; makes indissoluble] into one united house in the revelation knowledge of Him. *"...the evil of the children of Israel [Ephraim] and he children of Judah...I will gather them out of all countries, to which I have driven them in mine anger...I will bring them again to this place [Israel]...and I will give them one heart and one way" (from Jer. 32:32-39).*

A heightened comprehension of Him *and* of the Word will transform and unite the brethren in Spirit and truth. Divisions will dissolve in the glory. Then there will be no more family rivalry or dissension.

"And when I saw it [the vision; the display of divine glory; the kabod: the brilliant expression and tangible weight of His presence laden with His riches, goodness, love, power, and holiness], I fell on my face and heard a voice speaking" (Ezek. 1:28). Ezekiel was of the priestly line of Aaron. But by the visitation of YHVH he was elevated to the office of prophet also.

Returning Israelites, in order to more thoroughly/completely represent the Kingdom of God and serve men, should have their own transforming visions of Elohim, as well as personal encounters with the Spirit. Otherwise, the servant who is disinterested in, unfamiliar and inexperienced with, or simply insensitive to the Holy Spirit will tend to provide only intellectual, formal, liturgical ministry, void of the greater impartation of life provided by the Holy Spirit and His empowerment. In the last days we are told the Spirit will be poured out on all flesh, and *"your sons and your daughters will prophesy...your young men shall see visions..."* (see Joel 2:28-29).

This looks like an invitation to latter day saints to come under the heavenly fountain of outpouring and receive repeated and increasingly more copious Spirit baptisms and the concomitant personal transformations. It's a "get ready" call suggesting Abba wants to "elevate" His people into new realms of His Spirit and with fresh anointing for new levels ("greater

works") of ministry. Would you like to be elevated to the throne of grace and experience His glory?

What would you rather have, a divine vision and His voice to inaugurate your ministry/life as did Ezekiel [encounter experiences], or a degree and handshake only [education alone]? Preparation for service is absolutely necessary and is very good. We do not in any fashion minimize study. But study and teachings should prepare and position us for holy experiences. Simply put, divine visitation by Yeshua is more inspiring and empowering than academics and liturgy, and therefore much better. Can we command, manipulate, or in some way earn a visitation, or receive a divine encounter with our formulas, codes, or demands, while being disobedient or by remaining lukewarm? Of course not. Our motive must be to know Him intimately, not just know about Him. We want to become like Him, because we love him. Intimacy starts by knowing and complying with His Word. Paul writes, *"That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death"* (Phil. 3:10). The more we honor His truth and are being conformed to His likeness—this means we learn to die to our self-life--the better we shall come to know him. As we've stated, intellectual knowledge alone for life and ministry is not enough.

The knowledge of Messiah, His power, sufferings, and daily dying to self of which Paul writes is not wholly gained by sermons, or reading and study. It is acquired by direct, personal communion with Yeshua, and service. *"...they marveled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Yeshua"* (Acts 4:13). The degree of likeness to which Paul alluded is attainable only through intimate union with Messiah in the Word, and is accentuated and accelerated by communion with the Spirit. Education with experience. Service is an integral part.

The Hebrew roots movement has several purposes. One of them is to prepare and spiritually position believers through the restoration of Hebraic truth for entering into and abiding under greater intensities of His manifest presence and anointing. We have come to a juncture in restoration history where it's time to seek and experience visitations of His glory for the supernatural transformation and equipping of all Israel. Again, complying with the whole counsel of YHVH, properly understood and obeyed, is our starting point. *"Then you shall call upon Me, and ye shall go and pray unto Me, and I will hearken unto you. And you shall seek me and find me, when you search for Me with all your heart"* (Jer. 29:12-13).

In the passage, the beleaguered prophet Jeremiah turns his thoughts to those from Judah who have already been taken into captivity. He informed the captives in Babylon that after seventy years they would be re-gathered and restored to Israel.

They are told that when the time for release approaches, they were to "go to the place where prayer is made" and enter into common prayer for the fulfillment of the promise. This historical example is an encouragement for us living today. We believe the Body of Messiah is on the verge of a great spiritual revival and our nation is in need of another great awakening. Keep in mind, another spiritual awakening in our country (and others) is possible, even though we are under the lengthening shadow of divine discipline. An awakening would reap an unrivaled harvest of souls, restore multitudes to their Hebraic roots, and garner even broader support of Israel. The *kairos* time has arrived for us to seek His face for an unprecedented visitation of Elohim's glory to our nation. **If** our motive includes **(a)** love for Him, **(b)** a sincere desire to know Him **(c)** and to become like Him, **(d)** willingness to turn from false doctrine and paganism (repent!) and obey all His revealed truth/commandments, and **(e)** to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom, **then** we have positioned ourselves well for His blessing.

When such motivated Messianic Israelites start to sincerely seek Him with persistent prayer and fasting for a fresh, world-wide outpouring of His Spirit, we will experience the greatest individual and corporate visitation in history. This is our heritage and the call for the hour into which we are entering.

Ezekiel was overwhelmed by the glory of Elohim. He fell on his face while the Word of YHVH was emblazoned upon his soul. When he later arose, the encounter had made him into a different man, a man of the Spirit, an anointed prophet and seer, prepared for the demands of the calling set before him.

Part 5: Overcoming—*The Outcome of Discipleship*

Do not confuse 'overcoming' with salvation. You are saved by grace through faith in Messiah Y'shua. But "once saved you must work out your salvation...through life-long choices...in practical living. We can overcome because His victory has already been won and is secure. Through [working out our] salvation we actually possess His victory." [B5] Stand your ground in faith! *"Do not tremble...the LORD...is with wherever you go" (Jos.1).*

1. "...and Abraham came to mourn for Sarah, and to weep for her" (B'resheet 23:2).

Chayei Sarah, which means the "life of Sarah", curiously begins with her death, burial, and Abraham's mourning. The Torah section then concludes with Abraham's death. What are we to make of this? Yeshua's words provide for us a hint. *"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it dies, it bringeth forth much fruit" (John 12:24).* The Messiah here references His death and resurrection, and the everlasting,

glorious fruit of salvation and spiritual restoration that would bless many people as a result of His Atonement. The same idea is hinted at when He said to His followers, *"If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself [die to himself], and take up his cross, and follow Me [in newness of life]" (Mk. 8:34)*. We find the principle of greater *life continuing after death* demonstrated in the account of Sarah.

2. *"And she shall be a mother of nations [literally: she shall become nations]..." (B'resheit 17:16)*.

In this passage YHVH completes the covenant He started with Abraham with a name change for Sarai, the promise to her of a son, and that nations would come from her. Isaac was born when she was old, however the progress of the promise of multitudes halted until Sarah passed away. Rebekah arrived soon after Sarah's death and burial in the Cave of Machpelah.

And through Isaac and his wife Rebekah, the promise of Sarah's life found renewal and fulfillment as her seed was multiplied. As her generations went forth, the promise of nations and kings eventually was fulfilled.

However, the fruit of her rich life of loyalty, strength, and faith--(a) the continuation of the covenant line, and (b) multitudes of descendants, nations, and kings--would become a reality after she was dead. To this day the *"life of Sarah"* blesses the earth. And her Seed has triumphed over the grave and hell!

"You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that you should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain; that whatsoever you ask the Father in My name, He may give you" (John 15:16). **What is a good life, then?** It is: *"That your fruit should remain [continue, and grow]."*

It is a life that bears good fruit, and honors YHVH. Such a life leaves behind blessed seed/people who themselves go on to bear good fruit, enrich their families and communities, and honor the Almighty. This describes the "life of Sarah" which went forth and blossomed after her death.

The story informs us that Abraham died one-hundred years after his entry into Canaan. Isaac was the son for whom God's blessing (Gen. 12:1-3) was reserved. **3.** *"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord" (read 1 Corinthians 15:50-58)*.

Paul exhorted the Corinthian believers. The apostle encouraged them to maintain a life of faith, steadfast and immovable faith, and to abound in the work of the Master Yeshua. Their life's labor was not in vain, he insisted, because their good works pleased YHVH, favorably affected others, blessed the doers themselves, and would be ultimately rewarded with triumph over death.

Overcome the works of the flesh and temptations through hearing and doing His Word!

"From of old no one has heard nor perceived by the ear, nor has the eye seen a God besides You, Who works and shows Himself active on behalf of him who [earnestly] waits for Him" (Isaiah 64:4 AMP).

When we pray, trust, and wait (not necessarily a long time) for Him to respond to us, the Holy Spirit will lead us into exciting and amazing experiences in prayer and intercession. It is wise to be so occupied. We will wait in line for coffee and a donut, or for a seat in a fancy restaurant, or to go on a carnival ride, but we tend not to wait often enough in prayer to experience His voice/leading. It is profitable to spend time waiting on the Most High.

"The counsel of YHWH standeth forever, the thoughts of His heart to all generations" (Psalm 33:11).

YHWH's voice has been available to all generations for those believers who take the time to listen. To wait on Him means that we first admit we need His divine help moment-by-moment to do what is right in His sight. We are not to strain to hear an audible voice, for He speaks in many ways, but we certainly want that *sensing in the spirit*, the inner witness in the heart, concerning the Spirit's leading and confirmations. Sometimes His leading may turn you from your plans. If so, cheerfully yield. You may be in for a great, life-changing adventure.

Part 6: Conclusion

"And he said, O Lord God of my master Abraham, I pray thee, send me good speed this day, and show kindness unto my master Abraham" (B'resheet 24:12). Eliezer, Abraham's beloved and rusted servant, was sent on a mission by his master to find a wife for Isaac among his master's relatives in his home country. He commenced the endeavor with prayer. He asked the Almighty Elohim of Abraham to *"cause to meet, or come before me, what I need."* The servant's piety, child-like faith, and concern for his master are truly commendable. He set forth from Hebron with his drivers and camels laden with choice gifts, and headed north up the Jordan valley to Haran. He soon arrived at the city of Nahor, stopped by the community well, and with simplicity prayed again. The answer was immediate. *"And it came to pass, before he was done speaking [in his heart], that, behold, Rebekah came out."*

Eliezer represents the attitude of prayer and supplication which returning Israelite disciples of Messiah could demonstrate in their own difficulties and challenges, and in the up-and-down pathways of their pilgrimages. His attitude revealed (1) true reverence, (2) faith, and (3) concern for his master's son's bride. Such sanctified faculties and focus assure prompt responses from heaven. *"The effectual fervent prayer [petition] of a righteous [consecrated, believing] man avails much [has power]" (James 5:16).* Where prayer and supplication are born of intimacy

with YHWH, heaven opens, angels ascend and descend bringing blessing and assistance, and answers can come forth right before one's face.

So it will be as Yeshua's disciples pray to receive the *Song of the Lord*, which is, as a matter of fact, a petition purposed to uplift the Bride and bless the Master. The sacred ministry should and can become an important aspect of every believer's ministry, and every assembly's ministry, with Yeshua. The Song of the Lord is a new song, but with an exchange taking place--a dialogue--between He who is worshiped and the worshiper. It is supernatural, given by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, spontaneous, and sung and played by a yielded human vessel. It is a truly edifying worship activity, and is even revelatory and instructive.

Singing prophetic songs--of which is the Song of the Lord--is definitely an uplifting form of worship, and should not be ignored since it is of great value *and* within reach of us all. It releases a prophetic anointing upon individual and corporate worship and therefore carries with it exhortation, edification, encouragement, and even instruction and guidance. The Song of the Lord can also incorporate within its framework the gifts of the Spirit. It will bless the Body of Messiah with joy and strength, and exalt Messiah. Thus, the new song must not only be desired, it must be understood and practiced. "*But my horn shalt thou exalt like the horn of a unicorn; I shall be anointed with fresh oil* [vigor and power for service]" (Psalm 92:10).

Psalm 92 is a song for the Sabbath Day. We are told it was sung in the Temple during the morning service at the time the drink offering took place. It was also sung on the second day of Sukkot. It is a psalm of praise and thanksgiving. In it, the psalmist--speaking prophetically for Israel--does not merely hope, but affirms that he (and YHWH's faithful ones) will be anointed with fresh [the best and most pure] oil.

He is declaring that the presence of the Most High will bring fresh soul vigor and power to His people, resulting in victory over their enemies. **Observe:** The psalmist's confidence rested solely on Elohim's faithfulness.

Disciples today can affirm their faith and promise in song with the same confidence. "*I* [and all my compatriots] *shall be anointed with fresh oil.*" Fresh oil? Yes, the Spirit! For what? To receive vigor and strength for body, soul, and spirit, and divine empowerment for life and service. How

will "fresh oil" come? For one thing, fresh oil [new anointing] is poured out with prophetic songs such as the Song of the Lord/Bridegroom.

The grounds for our faith to flow with Holy Spirit inspired, prophetic, spirit-energizing songs are: **(1)** We are united with Messiah, the anointed One, the Bridegroom and Participant/Singer in the Song of the Lord (Jer. 33:11; Zeph. 3:17; Heb. 2:11-12). "*Of His fullness we receive.*" **(2)** The Ruach HaKodesh dwells within us, along with His voice/word. "*...the Spirit of God dwelleth in*

you" (1 Cor. 3:16). (3) The promises and faithfulness of the Holy One of Israel, Who forever loves us. *"How much more will your Father [Abba] give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him" (Luke 11:13).*

Like the psalmist above, Eliezer the servant also prayed with expectation. He positioned himself near the well and prayed. Then Rebekah showed up! Thus Abraham's household and seed was ordered, invigorated, and strengthened with the arrival of the fresh "life" of the new matriarch.

The O.T. types are examples for our encouragement today. Let us, who are returning to the Father's house, also position ourselves at the well [His upwelling, manifest, tangible presence] with praise and worship in the Spirit and prophetically affirm, as did the psalmist, *"I [we] shall be anointed."* Prophetic songs, even the Song of the Lord, will begin to show up to renew and refresh us. *"Ask, and it shall be given you" (Mt. 7:7).* We can go further into the heart of YHWH with our worship. Start by singing in the Spirit, with your prayer language. Step out in faith. Position yourself by the Well of Life—in the Spirit. Pray!

And let the anointing, the wind, the fire of the Spirit meet you. Come under a fresh anointing. He loves you. You are His beloved.

"This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and you will not fulfill the lust of the flesh" (Gal. 5:16).

For us disciples, living the life of Sarah, a life that bears fruit which endures, is commensurate with the exhortation of Paul to the Galatians to *"walk in the Spirit,"* which is to live in closeness with and true affection for the moral and spiritual life of the Spirit and remain dependent upon Him.

This means that, individually as well as corporately, the prompting of the Spirit is our guide and the grace of the Spirit is our strength in the course of everyday life.

"For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other..." (Gal. 5:17)

"The spiritual conflict within believers involves the whole person—mind, body, and spirit. The struggle is whether they will give in to their own sinful inclinations and again submit to sin's control, or whether they will surrender to the Spirit's demands and continue under [Messiah's] authority and control (v. 16; Rom. 8:4-14).

The battlefield is within Christians [Messianic Believers] themselves, and the conflict will continue throughout their earthly lives if they are to eventually reign with Messiah (Ro. 7:7-25; 2 Tim. 2:12; Rev. 12:11; Eph. 6:11). However, by relying on the power of the Holy Spirit and by following His guidance a Christian [a disciple] will overcome his or her own ungodly desires and

win the battle over the sinful nature [i.e., overcome].” [3] As disciples yield, the Spirit will produce for us a life that bears fruit, a life legacy that remains and enriches the earth. In this way we share with Sarah in her life.

The Seven Study Questions

These will appear at the conclusion of every lesson.

The *lesson questions* are **a very important** aspect of the student’s learning. All readers are strongly encouraged to take the time and include them in their study discipline. Prayerfully answer each one! They are intended to coax the student to rely upon interaction with the Holy Spirit, discern His voice, receive insight, and obtain prophetic enlightenment.

This process will assist each learner to (1) develop a vision for the restoration and reconciliation of the whole house of Israel, (2) grow in foundational knowledge of the Torah, (3) recover the principles, practice, and Holy Spirit power of the early, first-century Nazarene believers, and (4) experience and enjoy greater dimensions of the kingdom, power, and glory of Yeshua.

Note: The questions presented here are listed again at the conclusion of each lesson in both the *Torah Commentary Manuals* and the *Torah Discipleship Manuals*. **To repeat—be sure to follow through with them.**

1a. In your opinion, what is the main theme or teaching of each of the listed readings individually? Starting with the Torah: What is its title? What is the interpretation? What truth/idea does the interpretation of the title suggest? What is the Torah section's main truth, as you see it?

1b. What is the corresponding idea in the Haftarah? In the Brit Chadashah?

2. What is the outstanding, central idea or subject that runs through and unites all the individual readings, as you see it? What does it say about discipleship?

3. Find in the Gospels where and how Yeshua declares, demonstrates, exemplifies, or exhibits the parsha's central truth, and explain. Give chapter and verse. Will you follow Him in living the lesson’s truths?

4. In what way was the glory of YHVH [manifestations of His goodness] revealed in the parsha

lesson?

5. What does the parsha teach you about your Hebrew roots, your identity, your destiny, your duty?

6. In what way did the Holy Spirit/Ruach HaKodesh personally speak to you during prayer and study this week? Did He impress you about how to apply the parsha lesson directly to your life? Explain.

7. *"...because of practice [by reason of use] have their senses trained [exercised] to discern..."*
You and I are called to return to hearing the voice of Elohim and to functioning in the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Progressing in these vital areas will require spiritual hunger, faith, and practice. He is waiting for us to approach Him.

Ask the Holy Spirit to speak into your spirit/heart as you pray each day. Look for opportunities to lay hands on the sick, or to be used in prophesy. Faithfully record the prophetic words and experiences you receive, and be sure to share them with your brethren.

It is helpful to **share** your answers, insights, and revelations with your study group (table class). We recommend meeting regularly in a small group. This allows for healthy interaction and exchange, and militates against stagnation. Practice operating with your spiritual gifts under the anointing of the Holy Spirit while among your friendly, supportive peers. Allow for open participation in leading praise and worship. Give altar calls at your table for healing, refreshing, and prophetic words. These are effective ways for all present to mature in their calling and gifting. The non-threatening small group provides a favorable and encouraging environment in which to learn the ministry of the Spirit. You will do well.

Next-for the upcoming generation:

Parsha lessons are being crafted and shortened for younger readers. Be sure to use them. Deuteronomy 6: 6-7?

!. Youths' Version - Under construction.

2. Childrens' Version - Under construction.

Footnotes: 1. R., The Book of Genesis, Pulpit Commentary, Eerdmans, pg.315. 2. FireBible, Student Edition, Life Pub. Intern., p. 950. 3. Misc. not retrievable. 1A. Earth's Earliest Ages, G.H. Pember, Introduction. 1B. www.lds.org/general-conference/2014/04/the-cost-and-blessing, p. 4. 2B. none. 3B. www.desiringgod.org/messages/Our-high-priest-is-the-son-of-god-forever. 4B.

Speaking in Tongues, M. Chavda, p. 104. 5B. Adapted from www.goodnewsarticles.com. P.3.
6B. None.

Toldot (“History”)

Next

Contenders Voice

Discipleship Series

Book of Genesis/B'reshet

Lesson Six

Toldot (“History”)

Torah: Genesis/*B'reshet* 25:19-28:9

Haftarah: Joshua/*Yahoshua* 1:7-15; Malachi/*Malachi* 1:1-2:7

Brit Chadashah: Matthew/*Mattityahu* 1:1-17; Romans/*Romiyah* 9:6-16;
Hebrews/*Ivrim* 12:14-17

Lesson Sequence

1. Introduction: *The Call to Discipleship* **2.** Weekly Parsha: *The Torah—the Standard of Discipleship* **3.** Yeshua: *The High Priest of our Discipleship* **4.** The Holy Spirit/Ruach ha Kodesh: *The Power of Discipleship* **5.** Overcoming: *The Outcome of Discipleship* **6.** Conclusion

Selah

“Just as they did not see fit to honor God any longer, God gave them over...” (Rom. 1:28). “The description that best fits modern America is *fascist*. While this description might strike some people as extreme or even kooky, anyone who considers the historical definition of a fascist regime sees that fascist may be the most accurate label to define the current American system. Under a fascist system property is nominally held in private hands and the economy is officially ‘free.’ All appearances to the contrary, however, the economy in a fascist system is carefully controlled by the government through a labyrinth of taxes and regulations. This government control is usually exercised for the benefit of an economic elite that works to perpetuate the power of the existing political class.” [1A] Our Judeo-Christian ethics have become vitiated, and we are now a mammon oriented nation that is morphing into a police state. But we have a divine Redeemer. Therefore we can expect great things anyway, **“because greater is He who is in you** [Yeshua, by His Word and Spirit] **than he** [the evil one] **who is in the world” (1 John 4:4).**

Part 1: Introduction—*The Call to Discipleship*

"A pupil [disciple] is not above his teacher; but everyone, after he has been fully trained, will be like his teacher" (Luke 6:40). A disciple's desire is to become like the master (teacher) to whom he has joined himself. It is YHVH's will that believers do so—that is, become conformed to the image of His eternal Son, Yeshua. "For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image [spiritual likeness, moral character] of His Son..." (Romans 8:29). Abide in His truth and let the His Spirit transform you.

YHVH is jealous for you. You are His beloved disciple. His love never stops flowing to you, and to me also. *Tamid kadima*—Always forward!

Last week: *"And Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac" (Gen. 25:5).* Last week in *Chayei Sarah* ("Life of Sarah") we read about Sarah's death when she was 127 years old. She was buried in the Cave of Machpelah which was purchased by her husband. Years later Abraham also passed away, but at the age of 175.

The two had many descendants yet were careful to distinguish the line of blessing with Isaac. Abraham's and Sarah's lives were characterized by faith and obedience to YHVH's Word. Isaac and Ishmael came together one last time and gathered with the family at the gravesite of the patriarch to place him in his sepulcher.

Ishmael would be blessed, but Isaac was the true heir of Abraham and was handed the covenant blessing to carry forward. Isaac married Rebecca and the prophetic promise of Sarah's life would find expression through their generations.

This week's discipleship lesson: With Parsha *Toldot*, the Genesis narrative progresses from focusing on the pilgrimage of Abraham and Sarah to the purposes of YHVH for the growing family (generations) with whom He covenanted. *"And I will make you a great nation" (Genesis 12:2).*

The story commences with Isaac who was born in Canaan and never set foot outside the land of promise, but was married to Rebecca three years after his mother's death, when he was forty. *Toldot* means "generations" or "offspring." The word refers to that which a person generates, or produces--legacy. The "toldot" of Isaac [*Yitzchak*] and Rebecca [*Rivka*] were Esau [*Esav*] and Jacob [*Yaakov*]. Thus, the parsha includes the births and events of Jacob and Esau, Jacob receiving his father's blessing, Esau's anger and desire for revenge, and Jacob leaving for Haran to (a) flee Esau's wrath and to (b) find a wife among his people.

Discipleship training begins in the family unit of society. The home is where **disciples** prepare a new generation of godly believers.

The disciple's first social responsibility is, therefore, not becoming wealthy but training up the children of the house in Scripture truth, and not to leave this important duty solely to outside institutions, i.e., Sunday School.

Believers have generally ignored this vital obligation, and thus have not honored YHWH's foremost precept: *"These words which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your sons [and daughters] and talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up" (Deut. 6:6-7).*

Disciples of the Messiah are appointed, and accountable, to this responsibility as the first order of business in establishing a moral and prosperous *toldot*.

Part 2: Torah—*The Standard of Discipleship*

Parsha Lesson Six: Toldot (*"History"*)

"For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD is our king; He will save us" (Isaiah 33:22). 'Who do we call LORD? Yeshua! We call Yeshua "LORD." He is our Lawgiver. He is our King. He is our Savior. Here is what Yeshua our Lord, Lawgiver, King and Savior said about the commandments when He lived with us on earth. "If you love Me, keep My commandments" (John 14:15). Keep whose commandments? 'MY' commandments. Who is 'my?' It is Yeshua. He was referring to the commandments He had given almost 1,500 years before at Mount Sinai."[2B]

Torah

We understand that *the Torah* [Written Law], in the strictest sense, consists of the first five books of the Bible; B'resheet, Shemoth, Vayiqra, Bamidbar, and Devarim. And *Torah*, in the wider, extended sense refers to all Jewish teachings, including the Oral Law. The Oral Law consists of oral teachings and explanations of the Torah [Written Law] that were verbally passed down over the centuries. These were eventually compiled by sages into written form. Thus, the Oral Law comprises the legal commentary on the written Torah and expounds on the meaning and purpose of its precepts. The Oral Law attempts to explain the manner in which the Torah commandments should be fulfilled/performed. The oral teachings were written and collected first in what is called the *Mishnah (repetition)*. Later, commentaries were written expounding

upon the Mishnah. These are known as the *Gemara* (completion). Today, the collection/compilation of the writings on oral law, customs, and traditions found in the *Mishnah* and *Gemara*, is known as the *Talmud* (teaching, instruction), a central text of Judaism. *Midrash* (interpretation) refers to dozens of books that have been written over the years that expound upon the *Tanahk*. All of these are designed to help people in their *halachah*, "the way to walk" before the Almighty and perform good works.

Thus, there are the (a) written instructions consisting of the Torah, and (b) the vast oral instructions which have been recorded in the Talmud. We believe the oral instructions contain wisdom, but that it is the *Tanahk* [Torah, Prophets, and Writings] that is divinely inspired.

"All Scripture is inspired by God..." (2 Tim. 3:16). The Greek word used for "God-breathed" is *theopneustos*: *theos*, which means "God," and *pneo*, which means "to breath." The word *Scripture* in this verse refers primarily to the Old Covenant writings. But in the time of Paul there is evidence that some apostolic writings were also viewed as inspired and authoritative. Scripture is YHVH's original message to humanity, the infallible revelation of Himself and His redemption for man. Its foundation or root is, of course, the Torah.

1. *"And these are the generations of Isaac, Abraham's son: Abraham begat Isaac. And Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebecca to wife..." (B'resheet 25:19).*

Of the three patriarchs, Isaac was the only one who did not undergo a name change. Hence, it appears that Elohim was basically pleased with Isaac as he was, and with his life, and thus no correction or radical reformation was required of him.

2. *"And Isaac entreated [pleaded with] the Lord for his wife, because she was barren: and the Lord was entreated of him, and Rebecca his wife conceived" (B'resheet 25:21).*

For twenty years Isaac and Rebecca had no children. The continued barrenness of Rebecca reminds us of two things: **A.** That *"children are the heritage of the Lord" (Psalm 127:3)*. Keep in mind, the strength and prosperity of a state or nation is related to the abundance of well-nurtured children. Hence, the reward from On High is the progeny of the womb. **B.** That the seed, or children, of the promise/covenant are not just a random result of nature but are of the grace and gifting of the Almighty One of Israel. His people have been known by Him from eternity and their times and seasons are in His hand.

Jacob had become disappointed because his wife bore him no children, so he entered into fervent intercession and *"intreated YHVH for his wife."* He also joined in prayer *with* his wife, coming up beside her in united supplications. They had both known of the power and faithfulness that YHVH had demonstrated in the lives of Abraham and Sarah, and being made hopeful, became unified in seeking His face. The principle revealed here encourages us: *"That if*

two of you shall agree on earth...ask...it shall be done..." (Mt. 18:19). [Also see Ezekiel 37:15-23.] Isaac and Rebecca turn to their Source, the Omnipotent One of Israel. "...with people this is impossible, but with God all things are possible" (Mt. 19:26). Both believed, remembering that at one time Sarah had been in their place, "...and herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of child when she was past age, because she judged Him faithful, who had promised" (Heb. 11:11). YHVH responded to the sincere, heartfelt supplications and fervent prayer that flowed unrelentingly from their tent, and His power prevailed over human infirmity and weakness. Rebecca became pregnant.

3. *"So she went to inquire of the Lord. And the Lord said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people will be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger" (B'resheet 25:23).*

Rebekah inquired of the Lord concerning her unborn children who struggled in her womb. She could have gone through the Shemite, Melchisedek, or a prophet (one who heard from YHVH as did Abraham and Isaac), or she may have sought the Almighty Himself for revelation, insight, and comfort. Scripture says: *"I sought the Lord, and He heard me, and delivered me out of my fears...this poor man cried, and the Lord heard him and saved him out of all his troubles" (Psalm 34:4-6). YHVH responded by sending His prophetic Word. He will hearken to and be a Help for the seeker. "Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble; He saved them out of their distresses. He sent His word and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions" (Ps. 107:19-20).*

Rebecca received the answer to her query. She was bold, impatient, yet reverent and faith-filled. YHVH spoke to her, possibly in the form of a dream. *"Two nations are in your womb; And two peoples will be separated from your body..." (Gen. 25:23).* The prophetic answer helped prepare her for the future. Rebecca gave birth to un-identical twins, Esau and Jacob. Esau became a *"cunning hunter"* and was favored by Isaac, pleasing him with his outgoing, aggressive, and boisterous nature. Jacob, on the other hand, was a *"dweller in tents"* and was favored by Rebecca.

We are entering a new era in the holy history of Israel. The focus is shifting from the faith and character development of individuals, i.e., Abraham and Isaac, to the unfolding purposes and design of the Almighty for the covenant family. Always observable in the working of YHWH's covenant are (a) divine interposition [YHVH intervening for His people by placing Himself between them and their enemies], (b) supernatural assistance for human frailty and weakness, and (c) the Word of prophecy.

4. *"And Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birthright" (B'resheet 25:31).*

Esau and Jacob were diverse in nature. One, Esau, was a man of action, impulsive. The other, Jacob, was a studious, more intellectual person. When they had grown, Jacob took advantage of Esau as he came home one day from the field, tired and famished. He manipulated the thirsty and exhausted hunter to sell his birthright, to exchange it for a bowl of stew. *"Sell me this day..."* The exacting offer was accepted. *"...what profit shall this birthright do to me?"* These reckless, foolish words revealed Esau's ignorance and disinterest for holy spiritual things, and exposed his (a) lack of prophetic foresight and (b) narrowness of vision for his future. Jacob secured the promise: *"Swear to me this day..."* And Esau agreed, clearly and verbally. Words are important. So Jacob got the birthright and Esau got the pottage. Esau is a type of the person of the world who rejects the Gospel but accepts a carnal fragment of the world from the devil in exchange.

We are among a new generation (*toldot*) of believers that is being raised up by Elohim for this hour of return and restoration. Our *toldot* will become spiritually mature and led by the Spirit, not by the deceptive words of the enemy sent to beguile and deceive us. Nor will we be dominated by unbridled carnal appetites which so effectively divert us from our heritage of experiencing the Spirit and living with the truth of Elohim. We are (a) listening to the Holy Spirit speaking from within our regenerated human spirit [Spirit to spirit], which He indwells, and thereby into our minds by word or impression, and (b) training/tuning our souls [exercising our senses]--which we will regard as our intellect, emotions, intuition, and will--to discern and properly interpret the sound, word, impression, vision, dream, leading of the Spirit...and then appropriately respond. We are to be armed with both education and experience in the Spirit.

5. *"And there was famine in the Land...and the Lord appeared unto him [Isaac], and said, Go not down into Egypt [it would be unfitting for Isaac to dwell outside Canaan]...sojourn in this Land and I will bless thee...Now Isaac sowed in that land and reaped in the same year a hundred fold, and the Lord blessed him [as He had promised]. And the man waxed great and went forward [continued to do well]...and the Philistines envied him"* (See *B'resheit* 26: 1-3, 12-14).

There was a famine in the land, and Isaac and Rebecca left Beersheba and went to Gerar, which was still under the authority of the dynasty of King Abimelech. YHVH appeared to him there, and commanded him not to go down to Egypt but to remain in the land of promise. Then He confirmed the Abrahamic Covenant to Isaac and his seed. *"I will be with thee...and will bless thee...and will give all these countries, and will perform the oath which I sware unto Abraham...and I will make thy seed to multiply...because that Abraham obeyed My voice."* Thus Isaac remained in Gerar. Soon the men of the region became fascinated with the attractiveness of Rebecca and inquired about her. Fearful of their motives, Isaac chose to follow the example of his father, and took refuge in a fabrication. He declared Rebecca to be his sister. It was a deliberate and dangerous lie. Isaac imperiled the honor of his wife and subjected Abimelech to a gross misunderstanding and temptation.

Further, the falsehood was unnecessary. YHWH had just appeared to Isaac and assured him that He would be with him, for care and protection. How quickly we [believers] forget. The whole affair was an inconsistency on the part of Isaac. Notwithstanding, the lie was detected and reproved. Abimelech harbored no resentment but warned his countrymen to respect the couple and their house. Isn't it encouraging to know our Elohim is always looking out for His people. Concerning the covenant promises He assures us, saying, *"Be not afraid [and act foolishly], only believe."*

Abraham's family was nomadic, but Isaac still had to be settled for periods of time in various parts of the land for the welfare of his flocks and herds. Isaac increased as a herdsman *and* farmer as he worked hard in Canaan. Unbothered by a severe drought, he sowed his dry fields in faith and he reaped a hundredfold return!

It has been correctly said that the harvest of the planter depends more on the favor and goodness of YHWH than in the excellence of the seed and skill of the plowman. *"I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase" (1 Cor. 3:6-7).* Isaac became very great and prospered despite difficulties, and the surrounding Philistines became very envious...and a bit apprehensive.

The people who reverence YHWH, as did Isaac, have assurance that He will hear their cry in the time of need, and come and save them, and not just for their sakes only but for the land in which they live. When the inhabitants of a country honor YHWH and praise Him for His goodness, their fields will be blessed (Psalm 1), and *"then shall the earth yield her increase"*

(Ps.67:6). Psalm 85:9 emphasizes the point. *"Surely His salvation is nigh them that fear [obey] Him, that [His] glory [goodness] may dwell in the land."*

The salvation of all Israel and His glory magnified upon the land were related. The evidence of His glory resting on the Land was manifested in two ways.

First, there was physical restoration, prosperity, morality, and worship of YHWH in the Land. **Secondly**, there was the manifestation of the true Shechinah--the tangible, weighty, glorious presence of Elohim of Israel in the Temple. *"...blessed [happy, and to be envied] are you; for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you..." (1 Peter 4:14).* He will come, revive, and restore all them that turn to Him. Take a moment. By faith, envision His glory resting upon your home, your labor, and your sowing. See Psalm 1:1-4 and Deuteronomy 28:1-14.

6. *"And he removed from thence, and digged another well; and for that they strove not: and he called the name of it Rehoboth..." (B'resheet 26:22).*

Isaac is featured prominently in this parsha only, unlike Abraham and Jacob who are figured prominently in a total of six. This is possibly because Isaac was a simple man and, it seems, more passive than his father. He involved himself in no new family industries/enterprises, fought no great battles, was non-political, had no extra wives, took no concubines, and was generally at peace with his neighbors. He was, however, proactive in his well digging activities.

Aggressive Philistines, jealous of Isaac's abundance, confiscated his first two wells in a covert but clumsy and inept, devil-inspired attempt to hinder him and drive him from Canaan. But Isaac quietly persisted, and the last well he dug (third) remained in his control. Isaac's bothersome neighbors finally left him alone, and abandoned his pasture land to stew in their jealousy over his divinely orchestrated prosperity.

Note: "...the three wells...correspond to the three temples, the two that were destroyed, and the eternal one yet to be built. The first well, named *Esek*, or *contention* alludes to the First Temple which fell victim to the strife of nations that finally destroyed it. The second well, named *Sitnah*, or *hindrance*, *enmity*, a harsher name than *Esek*, alludes to the Second Temple period, when the enmity of Israel's enemies was longer lasting and more virulent. The third well, *Rehoboth*, or *spaciousness*, alludes to the future Temple, the era when strife and enmity will be things of the past."^[1]

We observe in Scriptures that frail and sinful man has been, from the beginning, capable of interfering with the work of YHVH by throwing up hindrances and creating roadblocks to its success. Such carnal human works are presumptuous but permitted because their consequence can be positive. The result of such difficulties can include—

(a) rekindled hope that YHVH will take up the cause Himself, and

(b) increased, fervent prayer, because the nature of life's circumstances and events profoundly affect our personal lives. In any event, it is the will of YHVH to test, develop, transform, and strengthen His people with trials, bothersome hindrances, and struggles of different sorts, and then, at the most favorable time, to bring them through to victory. Isaac's unfriendly neighboring herdsmen worked against him, just as the heathen kings fought with Abraham, but both pilgrims learned the way to victory in all occasions was **trust** in YHVH and **perseverance** in His covenant. Have some of your wells failed? His River flows from the Throne of Grace to you and *it* never fails. Try again. Dig another *well* and sing, "*Spring up O well.*"

Today, Elohim calls for repentance, and Ephraim/House of Israel, whose ancestors were sown into the nations (Hos. 1:4) is hearing and responding by forsaking their unholy mixture of man's traditions with YHWH's truth, and returning to the faith, power, practice, and identity of his

fore-fathers. "...return O faithless Israel, declares the Lord...only acknowledge your iniquity...and I will bring you to Zion" (Jer. 3:11-14).

Believers who are returning to Abba's house will certainly face varied obstacles as did Abraham and Isaac in their pilgrimages. Repentant Ephraimites [non-Jewish Israelite believers and companions] will need to give up some old habits and associations, endure some ridicule, trust YHVH, and persevere in the journey home.

People, even well-meaning ones, can become hindrances in a believer's transition/cross-over to their Hebraic heritage. Historically, restoration movements have always produced challenges and difficulties for the spiritually advancing participants.

The Hebrew roots renewal is no stranger to such struggles and excesses that confuse, divert, hinder, and discourage people. The anti-Messiah spirit comes to plug up the wells [renewal ministries/teaching efforts/restoration efforts/etc.] that we dig also. Nevertheless, they all must be dealt with and overcome. The road back to Zion is inspiring, energizing, educational, transformative, and exciting, but it is demanding and replete with various hindrances and ambushments too. Again we stress our formula for success--*persevere and trust*. To repent [make *teshuvah*] means to turn around--not just make a course correction away from sin and toward better behavior--but to turn around completely [no compromise] and *go all the way* back to the beginning, to the place of His presence, power, and practice. That's revival!

7. *"And the Lord appeared to him the same night, and said, I am the God of Abraham...fear not, for I am with thee, and will bless thee, and multiply thy seed for my servant Abraham's sake. And he built an altar there and called upon the name of the Lord..." (B'resheet 26:24-25).*

Leaving Rehoboth, Isaac proceeded to Beersheba, and YHVH appeared to Isaac on the night of his arrival in a dream or vision. This constituted Isaac's second personal divine visitation. **A.** The Most High revealed His presence. Similar experiences are taking place among Yeshua's people in increasing numbers today, and even to those who have not heard the Gospel. **B.** He comforted His servant and repeated the promises. Isaac showed faith and thanksgiving by building an altar, and he publically celebrated and worshiped in the midst of his household. Then Isaac pitched his tent and dug a well. Learn: **(1)** His visitations, the kind for which we often pray, will be suited to our needs. **(2)** When a man's ways please the Lord, He will make even His enemies to be at peace with him.

8. *"Now it came about, when Isaac was old and His eyes were to dim to see, that he called his older son Esau and said to him...hunt game for me...prepare a savory dish...that my soul may bless you before I die" (B'resheet 27:1-4).* We begin the story of the theft of Isaac's blessing, a treachery perpetuated by the perceptive and bold Rebekah and her favorite son, cunning Jacob, on Isaac. The story makes us more aware of the rancor and hostilities that existed within the

family. The blessing of the father over the firstborn was highly esteemed, irrevocable, and effective. In the end, immediately following the audacious masquerade, it was Jacob who came under the favorable prophecy of his father.

"Therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine: let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee: cursed be everyone that curses thee, and blessed be everyone that blesses thee" (B'resheet 27:28-29).

Esau had married two Hittite women and the union grieved his parents. Isaac was old and apparently blind (cataracts perhaps). So, in an effort to bolster his son's sagging family standing before he passed, Isaac expressed his intention in blessing the lad. Esau went hunting for venison to feed his father in preparation for receiving the paternal blessing of the firstborn. Rebekah, who was sizing up the proceedings, acted quickly on behalf of Jacob. She took advantage of Esau's absence to prepare a similar goat stew. Then she convinced and helped Jacob to masquerade as Esau and present Isaac with the domestic meal, which Jacob did. This was a very risky undertaking, the discovery of which would invite a rebuke, or even a curse. Isaac was surprised that the meal was prepared so soon, and questioned Jacob, "...so quickly, my son...?"

Jacob could have given himself away prior to actually receiving the coveted paternal blessing when he answered the question of his father Isaac, "YHVH your Elohim sent me good speed." It is very likely that the worldly Esau did not speak in the refined, spiritual fashion of his brother. "The voice [especially the wording] is Jacob's..." Isaac responded. [Some commentators say their voices were similar.] Why did Isaac seek to bless Esau? He knew about the prophetic words Rebekah had received years earlier from Elohim, and what they foretold: "...two nations are in thy womb...two manners of people...one shall be stronger...the elder shall serve the younger." He nevertheless intended to bless Esau because he was the first-born son and his favorite.

Therefore, Isaac may not have attached the same importance to the words as did Rebecca. Or, perhaps he had simply forgotten the divine oracle. Maybe he figured the prophesy did not affect/influence the transference of the covenant blessing. Or, he felt it primarily concerned his sons' descendants, and not them directly. He also understood the nature of each son, and thus may have been suspicious concerning who was really speaking to him.

And with his childhood memories of Ishmael always alive in his mind, it is possible that Isaac was unsure, or somewhat reluctant, about passing the precious spiritual legacy--the promise of the holy land as an eternal possession, a great multitude of descendants, prosperity, dominion over enemies, seed that would bless the nations--to uncaring, unappreciative, carnal, Esau. Despite these considerations, following some short questioning of Jacob the patriarch went

forward anyway with his intentions. After finishing his meal, and (probably) a full goblet of wine, *and* being driven by fatherly partiality, Isaac reached forth his hands, and spoke out *and thus activated* the benediction over whom he chose to believe was Esau. And thus Jacob ended up with the blessing of the first-born *and* affirmation as heir of the promise. After returning, discovering the ploy, and protesting loudly and at length, Esau received a lesser prophecy with which he was definitely not pleased. Evidently, there were two different but appropriate blessings rising in the bosom of the patriarch and waiting to be spoken forth. By the providence of the Almighty, the spiritual one was given to Jacob, and a worldly one was reserved for Esau. To these prophetic blessings the patriarch gave birth and life by speaking them out.

Learn: Jacob had sown deception, and would therefore reap from the deception of another for twenty years, and even from his sons later. "...*whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap*" (Gal. 6:7). Notwithstanding, the gifts and calling of Elohim are without repentance [recall]. In spite of the perceptions and plans of man, the divine oracle given to Rebecca went forward in fulfillment.

Note: "The birthright blessing and the father's words were legally binding in Near Eastern law. It seems that Isaac either forgot or ignored YHWH's word that the older son, Esau, would serve the younger son, Jacob (25:23). He also disregarded the fact that Esau had married two ungodly women." [FireBible, p. 66.] Thus, it seems that Isaac did not appear to be very attentive to the Almighty's will in this whole affair.

Esau came in the tent after Jacob was blessed, discovered the trickery and its results, and wept. His tears, we are told, were from anger and personal loss, not for true sorrow over sinful choices. "...*that there be no immoral or godless person like Esau, who sold his own birthright for a single meal. For you know that even afterwards, when he desired to inherit a blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it with tears*" (Heb. 12:16-17).

The story of Esau reminds us that we all have to face the consequences of sinful and foolish choices. See 2 Samuel 12:7-14.

9. "And Isaac called Jacob, and blessed him, and charged him, Thou shall **not** take a wife from the daughters of Canaan. Arise, go to Padan-aram..." (B'resheet 28:1-2).

Yet, the next chapter suggests the idea that Isaac was indeed fully aware of the eventual ascendancy of his younger son, if for no other reason that he knew his divinely inspired prophetic blessing would come to pass. As Jacob departed for Paddan-aram, Isaac, without hesitancy, pronounced yet *another* (double, completed) blessing upon him, "May He *also* give you the blessing of Abraham, to you and to your descendants, that you may possess the land of your sojourning, which God gave to Abraham" (Gen. 28:4). Why did Jacob prevail in history? The

person, family, or nation that is spiritual, and thus leavened with divine wisdom and favor, will always master physical and worldly reality. What is more, the people who understand and adhere to their prophetic destiny—one that is planned, declared and thus secured by YHWH Himself—are blessed. The man *with* YHWH is much distinguished from the man *without* YHWH. Thus, as we read further in Genesis we-

(a) observe Jacob—who was motivated and sustained by the promises of Abraham and Isaac--visited from heaven and receiving confirmation of the Abrahamic covenant, experiencing spiritual transformation, and becoming Israel. And we also

(b) observe Esau, who was inattentive to the importance/significance of the prophetic picture, followed his own devices, remained Esau ...and became Edom. Thus we see two men from the same home with two motivations, two prophecies, two paths, and two remarkably different destinies.

The importance for us of understanding prophecy is that it: (a) warns us of judgment, (b) gives direction by enabling disciples to recognize the remnant's proclaimed end-times destiny, (c) enables us to position ourselves in the purpose, power, and place of the flow of God's restorative strength, and thereby (d) encourages us to participate in a meaningful way in the fulfillment of the restoration of all Israel. Further, prophecy (e) stirs us to repent and prepare for Messiah's coming. [Jer. 16: 14-15; 30:7; Mt. 24:21; Isa. 11:11-16.] Understanding the basics of latter days prophecy: (f) helps protect believers from deception. (Rev. 1:1-3; 3:3) (g) urges watchfulness. (Mt. 24:36-44) (h) causes attentiveness and obedience to the Word and the Spirit. (Mt. 25:1-13) (i) creates within the disciple a *sense of urgency* that "*the kingdom of God is at hand*" (Mk:1:14-15), and therefore motivates renewed interest in putting our houses [Judah and Ephraim] in order. Prophecy (j) inspires confidence and courage in pursuing fulfillment of restoration Scriptures. "*So then, faith comes from hearing and hearing from the Word of God*" (Rom. 10:17). (k) It gives cheer for our pilgrimage to Zion. "...*I go to prepare a place for you*" (John 14:2). (l) Prophecy fortifies determination. "...*forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before* [prophetic promises and revealed destiny], *I press toward the mark...*" (Phil. 3:13-14).

Prophecy provides us with knowledge of our destiny *and* divine inspiration with which to prepare and pursue its unfolding. The prophetic Word for the Ecclesia today forecasts the restoration of the Tabernacle of David. It is the pathway to YHWH's greater glory, and it is to this pathway latter-days disciples are called. Jacob's journey to Padan-aram, undertaken in obedience to his parents wishes, is an example of transformation and favor that is experienced when someone follows divine directives. He journeyed on a prophetic pathway that possessed certain life-fulfilling, positive characteristics. Should not our journeys be similar? They will be if

our pathways are in accordance with His prophetic Word. *"And He will make your paths straight" (Prov. 3:6).*

The road Jacob embarked upon was much different than Esau's way of sorrow and shame. Jacob's journey was:

A pathway of purpose: Jacob's domestic conditions had deteriorated quickly and he was in need of advancing to a place where he could recover and mature toward his potential and destiny. Prophecy says, *"...this is the way, walk ye in it..." (Isa. 30:21).*

A pathway of duty: A good son obeys his father and mother. *"...hears the instruction of his father and forsakes not the law of his mother" (Prov. 1:8).* Returning Israelites also have responsibilities to their Israelite family and land of origin.

A pathway of blessing: Jacob received two powerful, prophetic benedictions pronounced over him, instilling direction and confidence for his arduous journey. *"...for blessed are they that keep My ways" (Prov. 8:32).*

A pathway of promise: When Jacob left his parents in Beersheba he took with him on his long journey the great and precious promises of (a) a blessed seed, (b) a multitude of descendants, and (c) an inheritance that he and his family would acquire in the course of time. Believers also have promises that encourage us in our pathway through life, including 1 Peter 1:4 which says, *"Blessed be the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved for you in heaven."*

A pathway of hope: Jacob was, no doubt, downcast and dispirited when he bid goodbye to his mother and father, and left home. [*Herald of His Coming*] Remember, he was a man of the tent, not the outdoors, and was accustomed to the constant company, instructions, pampering and protection of his parents. Yet, he was sustained by the hope of the prophetic benedictions and the prospect of an affectionate wife and children as implied in the promise. With hope, Jacob went forward. We do also. *"...to lay hold upon the hope [eternal life, abundant life, covenant promises] set before us: which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast..." (Heb. 6:18-19).* Hope does not calm or remove the storm, rather hope holds fast the vessel in the storm.

One might ask, what motivates and guides modern Ephraim/non-Jewish believers on the pathway of repentance and return to his Hebraic life and ministry? It is a revelatory understanding; knowledge, inspiration, and passion that the Spirit gives through prophesy. He is revealing that the time frame in which we live is (a) the hour of recovery of their relationship

with YHVH. That's exciting! *"Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek YHVH their Elohim, and David their king; and shall fear the Lord and His goodness in the latter days"* (Hos. 3:5). And it is **(b)** the hour of restoration of their heritage. *"In those days the house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel, and they shall come together out of the land of the north to the land that I have given for an inheritance unto your fathers"* (Jer. 3:18). It is also **(c)** the hour of end-times and deception when safety and strength will be needed by the saints, a time when abiding in the commandments of YHVH is requisite. The American evangelical self-oriented gospel must be forsaken in favor of the Israel-focused, Messiah-oriented Hebraic gospel of the Kingdom.

So, we discover what is it that connects true *prosperity* and *meaning* to life? It is understanding and incorporating the prophetic word into one's existence. The man who distains and scorns his prophetic opportunity, or does not fully adhere to it, will miss his destiny and highest blessing, we believe.

Finally, prophecy is important because it reveals the Elohim of Israel. *"Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, my counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure"* (Isa. 46:9-10).

With this in mind, what should be our response? **First:** Be watchful and pray! [Intercede for America and Israel.] *"Take ye heed, watch and pray..."* (Mk 13:33). **Next:** Be diligent and become spiritually mature! [Walk in both the Spirit and Truth.] *"...giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity"* (2 Peter 1:5-9). **Then:** Become educated and discerning! [Know your identity and heritage, and embrace them.] *"Study..."* (2 Tim. 2:15). **And:** Be filled and empowered! [Be His prepared witness and ambassador.] *"But you shall receive power after that the Holy Spirit has come upon you: and you shall be witnesses..."* (Acts 1:8).

In a nutshell: The importance of understanding prophecy is that it informs us, the new generation of awakening Israelites, about **(a)** who we are, **(b)** where we are, **(c)** why we are where we are, and then **(d)** points to where we should be going. Today, prophecy directs us to the blessed pathway of *"the restoration of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began"* (Acts 3:21).

10. *"And Esau, seeing that the daughters of Canaan pleased not Isaac his father; then went Esau unto Ishmael, and took...the daughter of Ishmael...to be his wife"* (B'resheit 28:8-9).

The last verses of the parsha represent two domestic lives, one with and one without reverence for YHVH. The separation and divergent destinies of the two men, Jacob and Esau and their two

"generations," are forecast by their marriages. One domestic life enjoys residing under the blessing of Elohim, but the other is founded apart from wisdom, and exposed to disorder. The true blessing, that of the Abraham covenant, has already been promised and provided. The heir, Jacob, has to be separated and sent away.

He will learn by trial and error how to live by faith and prosper under the blessing. He will grow spiritually and mature in unfamiliar circumstances in order to fulfill his destiny. But Esau, the one who rejected and scorned the birthright, will never recover the blessing or even be completely restored to favor with his parents through his own efforts. Esau never stopped to think things through. Marriage apart from parental blessing and devoid of faith can be an unwise proposition.

And polygamy was only allowed (tolerated, as was divorce). It existed apart from the overt approval of YHVH. Thus, Esau remained the same. **Note:** The "Pathway" points [above] are not quoted, but are rewritten, adjusted material based on a pattern found in Genesis, Eerdmans Pulpit Commentary, Vol. 1, 19th century homiletics, p.348.

Haftorah

1. *"I have loved you, saith the Lord. Yet ye say, Wherein have you loved us? Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the Lord: yet I loved Jacob..." (read Malachi 1:1-14).* [See Romans 9:6-13. It is our New Testament Scripture for this lesson which references Jacob and Esau also.]

The two central figures of *Toldot*, Esau and Jacob, are featured in the haftorah reading. The enduring and conspicuous love YHVH has for the children of Jacob is highlighted by the prophet and compared to the retribution with which He will judge the people of Esau who oppressed and persecuted the descendants/generations of Jacob. Yet Malachi declared that Israel was not thankful, and showed YHVH no gratitude for all the demonstrations of His love.

The people and the priests had become offenders who offered unholy, defective sacrifices and thus profaned the Temple. Regarding worship, they said, *"...what a weariness it is..."*

The priests and people "...had no personal joy in God, so they could have no joy in the routine of God's worship. The sadness of the restored Judaism of the exiles was that, to a large extent, it was a restoration of Jewish formalities without the restoration of that spiritual life [Spirit-life] which would have vitalized the formalities. And still the weariness men feel at the length of Christian services, etc., is the revelation [product] of their wrong mood, of their lost personal joy in God their Savior." [2] The Word without a proper emphasis upon the Spirit becomes dry. The Hebrew roots movement is not immune to this misjudgment. There is however a divine remedy to *weariness of soul*, a condition that will eventually arise from religion, and it is daily within our reach. It is the fullness of the Holy Spirit, accompanied by regular, fresh baptisms in

His power, joy, and love. We must not minimize or disregard the importance of the Holy Spirit's dynamic presence and activity in our lives and meetings, but rather invite Him, accommodate Him, and nurture His works.

Part 3: Yeshua—*The Eternal High Priest of the Believers Discipleship*

"But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry" (Heb. 8:6). Read Hebrews 7 and 8, and know that "we [disciples, five wise virgins] have a great High Priest, Yeshua ha Mashiach, who came into the world as the Son of God, lived a sinless life, offered Himself as a perfect sacrifice for the sins of His people, rose to everlasting life at the right hand of the majesty of God, and there loves us and prays for us and bids us draw near to God through Him. He did not come to fit in to the old system of priestly sacrifices. He came to fulfil them and end them." [38] Minister your praise to Him.

Yeshua is the Living Torah. Thus He "...did not come to abolish but fulfill" (Mt. 5:17).

"And the glory of YHVH shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of YHVH hath spoken it" (Isa. 40:5).

Isaiah prophesied that the glory of God would be in Messiah when He came and all mankind would see it. John 1:14 and Hebrews 1:3 declare that Yeshua fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy through the many Old Testament prophecies He fulfilled during His earthly life and the fact that the Master's bond with the glory of YHVH was undeniable and indissoluble. The glory and power of Messiah's authoritative miracle ministry was one way He revealed God's glory (Jn. 2:11; 11:44-44). On the Mount He was transfigured in the bright "Shechinah" glory cloud, a visible demonstration of the glory of the Most High (Mt. 17:5). Paul referred to Yeshua as *"the Lord of glory"* (1 Cor. 2:8). James writes of Him as *"our glorious Lord, Yeshua HaMashiach"* (James 2:1). Yeshua spoke of His death as the beginning of His glorification (John 12:23-24). Forty days after His resurrection, Messiah ascended in glory (Acts 1:9), is now exalted in the glory of His Father and will return "...with power and great glory" (Mt. 24:30; Mk. 14:62).

1. *"The book [title for the first seventeen verses; a single-skin scroll called a *biblion*] of the generation [toldot] of Yeshua Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham. And Abraham begat Isaac; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat Judah and his brethren" (Matt. 1:1-2).*

The first chapter of Matthew we read a brief genealogy of Yeshua given for our benefit. It is the human pedigree, or ancestry, of our Messiah. David had many sons and descendants, and Abraham had even more, but Yeshua is *the* Son, and in this way He is *the* Son of *man*. The

genealogy indicates He is (a) the Seed promised in the Abrahamic Covenant, and (b) the Seed to whom the promises of the covenant are promised.

The Almighty One of Israel made His covenant with Abraham and his Seed. *"Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Messiah...And if ye be Messiah's, then are ye Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise" (Gal. 3:16,29).*

The fact that Yeshua was legally a descendant of King David is established in Matthew's genealogy. His gospel traces "the family history of his earthly father, Joseph, who was from the family line of King David. Although Yeshua was conceived by a miraculous act by the Holy Spirit, in earthly terms He was still formally registered as Joseph's son, which meant He was legally a son of David.

Yeshua's family history outlined in Luke's Gospel (Lk. 3:23) traces Yeshua's ancestry through the males on His mother Mary's side (she was also from David's family line). Luke stresses that Yeshua is the flesh and blood (i.e. physical "offspring") of Mary, emphasizing His humanity—the fact that He was one of us (Rom. 1:3).

In this way the Gospel writers show how Yeshua had both a legal and biological claim as the true Messiah—the Christ." [3]

"Therefore, if anyone is in Messiah, he is a new creature; the old things [are] passed away [the ancient things that are associated with the old man; the power of the old life]; behold, new things [the whole sphere, nature, character, and view of life; passion for Messiah; new spiritual standing] have come" (2 Cor. 5:17).

How blessed we are, who, through faith in Him, are the seed(s) of the covenant. Election is through faith. "Yeshua, in His incarnation, became 'the Beginning of the [new] creation [a new generation; *toldot*] of God.' He is the 'Firstborn of every creature,' viz. the Head, and Archetype of that new creation which will consist of those who are 'born again' of Him." [4]

Part 4: The Holy Spirit—*The Power of Discipleship*

"That is the pattern of Pentecost. The Spirit came with power and united 120 believers [disciples] in that upper room. They began to speak in tongues and went out into the streets where people from every part of the Roman Empire heard the gospel in their own language. Through the power of the Spirit, 3,000 of them came to [Messiah] that day, and the same Spirit brought them into unity with the other believers." [48] Know that the Holy Spirit brings power *and* unity to the disciples.

1. "...for John baptized in water, but you will be baptized with (in) the Holy Spirit not many days from now" (Acts 1:5). Yeshua wanted His disciples to live with faith, power, and close fellowship, and sent the Holy Spirit to accomplish in the Saints the divine work of intimacy and trust in Yeshua. The Holy Spirit exalts and magnifies Messiah. He empowers us to know Yeshua without reserve, believe Him, obey Him, follow Him, bear witness of Him, and grow in His likeness.

This is sanctification, and it is a life-long process that only the Holy Spirit can accomplish. For this reason the Savior promised, "*Ye shall receive power [for all this wonderful work], after that the Holy Spirit has come upon you*" (Acts 1:8). This promise is written for us. The power we are promised *and* that we all need for effective ministry--participation in the fulfillment of Scripture in the last days--has been placed into us; "*...the Spirit of truth...He abides with you and shall be in you*" (Jn. 14:17). Amazing!

It is our joy *and* duty to receive this promise of the Spirit and His empowerment, and if necessary pray and wait for such divine professions just as Sarah and Rebekah did, and the 120 disciples in Jerusalem. He wants us to know Him by Scripture, and, more intimately, by experiencing the fulfillment of His promises to us, including being filled with His Spirit.

Receiving the Spirit is not an option, it is a privilege and duty. Our nation's moral and spiritual condition demands that the Body of Messiah get an infilling of the power of the Spirit, because only then can we minister as did Paul, who said, "*...and my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power...*" (1 Cor. 2:4). Then there are Peter and John, who, after they were rebuked by the Jews for preaching Messiah in the power of the Spirit and being involved in a miraculous healing, returned with gladness to their companions. They had seen from experience both the *vital need for* and the *splendid results in* incorporating both the Word **and** the ministry of the Spirit in service. Effective witnessing requires having "*the Spirit of the Lord*" energizing disciples for proclaiming "*release for the captives*" and in setting "*free those who are oppressed*". Accordingly, Peter prayed in Acts 4:30-31, "*And now Lord, take note of their threats, and grant that your bond-servants may speak your word with all confidence, while you extend your hand to heal, and signs and wonders [don't play these down] take place through the name of your holy servant Jesus.*"

Here's the point: It's time to begin to really know the Holy Spirit personally, not just about Him. He is Elohim, divine, alive, personal. He comes to reveal and exalt Yeshua, illuminate the Scriptures, teach all [not some] things, and bring truth to remembrance and understanding.

The Holy Spirit distributes gifts to people, and imparts power for life and ministry. He is not a *thing*, or an *it*, or a *force*, or some mystic *energy*, or *breeze*, or anything less than living deity. Thus, He should be regarded with respect and reverence. When we are regenerated/born-again

He actually comes to indwell us, to live in us! *"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own" (1 Cor. 6:19).*

Let's take a moment therefore and mention some of the Spirit's personal qualities....

A. The Holy Spirit has an independent intellect. He is omniscient! *"But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God" (1 Cor. 2:10).*

B. The Holy Spirit has knowledge, and teaches. *"Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God" (1 Cor. 2:11).*

C. The Holy Spirit has emotions. *"And grieve [lupeo-Greek; to make sad or sorrowful, heavy of heart] not the Holy Spirit of God, where by ye are sealed unto the day of redemption" (Eph. 4:30).*

D. The Holy Spirit has His own will and makes decisions. *"Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia [pronounced froog-ee'-ah] and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia" (Acts 16:6).*

E. The Holy Spirit loves. *"Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that you strive together with me in your prayers to God for me" (Rom. 15:30. See also: Rom. 5:5; Gal.5:22).*

F. The Holy Spirit has a voice and speaks. *"...the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul..'" (Acts 13: 2). Also, "This is what the Spirit says..." (Acts 21:11).*

G. The Holy Spirit has wisdom and leads. *"For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God" (Rom. 8:14).*

And: *"...but you know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you" (John 14:17).* The Spirit/Ruach is our supernatural Helper sent to indwell and empower us for overcoming.

Part 5: Overcoming—The Outcome of Discipleship

"The Bride of Messiah is an overcomer. There are two primary things we overcome. First, the Bride of Messiah [true disciples] overcomes the desires of the human flesh. Secondly, the Bride of Messiah overcomes the ways and values of the world's system. Both the desire of the flesh and the ways of the world's system seek to dominate and control the lives of believers [disciples] by imposing their values upon them. The evil force who is behind the desires of the flesh and the ways of the world is Satan." [5B]
"Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good" (Romans 12:21).

1. *"And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the eventide..." (B'resheet 24:63).* Isaac is the first protagonist [hero] of *Toldot*, and represents the second generation of promise from Abraham. He was the prophesied child of Abraham's and Sarah's old age. We deduce that they prayed over him and trained him up carefully for his future role in perpetuating their vision and heritage. Abraham actually trained many people. Isaac trained one, his son Jacob who would sit and listen. Esau and Jacob were the children of Rebecca's and his union, but only one was trained up willingly in the Word of El Elyon. Isaac teaches us the value of striving for spiritual growth, and persistence in godliness.

2. *"For now YHVH has made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land" (B'resheet 26:22).*

Isaac was a patient, perseverant, and pious man, and thus he prospered. He was industrious, and YHVH blessed him. The Philistines were jealous of his prosperity. The monarch Abimelech, who apparently judged the character of other men by his own, saw Isaac as a growing threat whose wealth would urge him to seek dominion over the region. But Abraham's son prospered without causing injury to anyone. He was patient. When Abimelech ordered Isaac from his region, he left. When Philistines filled his wells with dirt, he, without rancor, dug them out again. When herdsmen from Gerar argued with Isaac's men over a spring, he yielded it and sought another spring, and all the while his livestock, flocks and herds kept increasing. *"YHVH lifteth up the meek..." (Psalm 147:6).* Isaac did not entertain self-pity or allow himself to become discouraged. He was also perseverant, and attended to his business steadily. Most of all, Isaac was reverent before YHVH, and recognized the hand of the Almighty in subduing his enemies and bringing him to a restful place at Rehoboth.

Disciples learn: **A.** Diligence leads to prosperity (Prov. 6:6). **B.** Material wealth can sometimes be lost by hastily going to court instead of simply submitting to unfairness (Mt. 5:25). **C.** YHVH must be praised for the manifold goodness bestowed upon our lives (Psalm 150:2). **D.** The Holy

One of Israel does only wondrous things for His people! *"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights..." (James 1:17).*

Some insights we draw from Isaac's life, with the domestic drama produced by his two sons, Jacob and Esau, and the divergent paths of life upon which they embarked—Jacob's path of blessing and Esau's path of dejection and alienation—include:

(1) YHVH's visitations in the lives of His people are always well-timed and tailored to their needs and circumstances. He is ever watching over us (Prov. 15:3). (2) When His faithful servant's ways are pleasing to Elohim, He will make his enemies to be at peace with him (Prov. 16:7). (3) A wise child makes his father and mother glad, but a foolish child brings parents heartache (Prov. 10:1).

(4) The Almighty will never fail His people though they be subjected to trials and surrounded by troubles. *"You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies..."* (5) The blessing of YHVH's covenant is not according to human will or effort, but upon Him who shows mercy. *"Remember, O Lord, your great mercy and love, for they are of old"* (Ps.25:6).

*"I...appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain" (John 15:16). Those who are called should persevere in their faith, and minister thoroughly to those they serve and teach, in order to raise up a *toldot* in the Torah and glory of YHVH. The new generation becomes their *legacy*, their good fruit that remains faithful also in service, preaching, and training disciples.*

1. *"But whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows, and saying, we have piped unto you, and ye have not danced: we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented. For John (the Baptist) came neither eating nor drinking and they say, He hath a devil. The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold, a man gluttonous and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. But wisdom is justified of her children."*

There are generations of humanity, races, and nations. There are generations of spiritual awakening, restoration, renewal and those of spiritual and moral decline. They can even coexist in different stages and in the same eras of history. Among these generations there are family lineages that seem blessed above others. Compare, for instance, the family tree of the great preacher, Jonathan Edwards, with that of his contemporary, Max Jukes, a thief and drunkard, both of whom lived in a time of spiritual awakening in America. The Edwards family tree prospered and bore good fruit—fruit that remained. The Jukes family tree was barren, a troubled and unproductive lineage. Yeshua brought the message of the Kingdom, a *testing message* one could say, to a generation to whom He did not give a favorable estimate. He quickly observed that the generation to whom He spoke in general resisted Him and made His work difficult. Nevertheless, Yeshua, as compassionate as He was, and even John the Baptist, as stern as he was, did not adjust their messages to please people. Neither should we. Are we making efforts to gather crowds (seeker friendly) **or** to equip true disciples (Spirit friendly)?

The people of our generation need the unadulterated Word of YHVH preached and confirmed with all the fruit and gifts of the Spirit in bountiful display. Loud music and flashing lights in "the church"—trying to conform the Gospel of the Kingdom to worldly standards, styles, and jargon, and make it more acceptable to the public--will **never** accomplish kingdom purposes. John was

a demanding, threatening, exciting preacher, blunt in his speaking. He attracted crowds, for a season. Some of the people who gathered around him were earnest. Most however were like immature adult-children who reacted with excitement and wonder only to eventually tire and grow bored, like many do of the solemnity of a funeral, and fall back to their fickleness and fleshly indulgences.

Yeshua did not attempt to frighten people. He attracted them with His compassion, powerful preaching and teaching, and help. It could be accurately stated that He was the great *Joy-giver* to them who believed. Nonetheless, many of His listeners eventually tired of Him, even as children tire after playing at a wedding. The obstinate generation of Jews that Yeshua addressed were not happy with John ["he's harsh, legalistic, demanding, gloomy"] and wanted him to be as they desired. These sulky people were also unhappy with Yeshua ["He drinks and eats too much, and visits tax-collectors."] and wanted the Master to do and teach as they wished. They did not have their way with either John or Yeshua. John's ministry was arranged and upheld by divine wisdom. The life and ministry of Yeshua were also established and upheld by the divine Spirit of Wisdom. Time has proven to discerning generations the wisdom of their methods.

Judgment starts in this world upon a generation that refuses truth and is completed in the *hereafter*, the world to come. It has been said the *commendation* of the good is the *condemnation* of the bad. The verse says, "...wisdom is justified of her children." Yeshua is divine Wisdom personified and true disciples of Yeshua are "*children of wisdom*" (*Hebrews 11:13*). Such children include the tax collectors and sinners who believed and embraced the teachings of Messiah that the Scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees rejected.

The children of wisdom discern and follow the ways of wisdom, whether that wisdom is demonstrated in the methods and messages of John or Yeshua. "Those only truly justify Christ [Messiah, the anointed One], 'the Wisdom of God,' [are those] who receive wisdom from Him and exercise it in union with Him...Wisdom is justified of her children when the fruits of wisdom bear testimony before men to the excellence of the principles that gave them birth. The children of wisdom are charged with the very character of apostolic-Nazarene faith. It depends

upon them to extend or diminish its influence in the world." [6] Wisdom justifies her children. That means wisdom vindicates, absolves, defends, proves, and shows to be right, its adherents/followers, and also rewards them. We are called to be a generation [toldot] displaying His wisdom.

2. "*And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not*" (*Gal. 6:9*). Much depends on personal perseverance. We foresee great things on the horizon for Yeshua's people, His true followers. New opportunities and blessings await each of us who are part of the generation that labors toward the restoration of the kingdom, power, and glory of

YHVH to all Israel. Our hope is for a world impacting, transformative spiritual revival to come upon the Body of Messiah! Outpourings of the Holy Spirit and unprecedented manifestations of His glory are welling up in some places in response to prayer. This is good, especially if such visitations are poised for release over the nations. We need to understand the times; how to proceed. Each one of us must continue to do his/her part in seeking His face and not let up! Pray for wisdom (James 1:5).

3. "But you are a chosen generation..." (1 Pet. 2:9).

Peter was addressing the believers [descendants of the House of Israel] of Asia Minor, exiles of the dispersion who were suffering for their faith. They had been *lo ammi* [no people] for many centuries. But by the mercy and compassion of Elohim through the New Covenant, the exiles believed the Gospel, were brought back into covenant with YHVH, and became *ammi* [My people], the people of Elohim (Hos. 2:1-23). In the passage the apostle Peter declares they are *chosen*. We are among the chosen people also, that "chosen generation" whose work in this hour is to seek His face in a unified, consistent effort for the needed fresh, end-times outpouring of His Spirit. *"If two of you shall agree..."* Is it time to come together in prayer? Yes. It's the *kairos* time. We are the *kairos* generation.

Tamid Kadima-Always Forward.

Questions: Be sure to review and answer the questions in the Introduction. And share the Gospel this week, to the Jew first, and to the Greek. Romans 1:16; Acts 9:20-22.

The Seven Study Questions

These will appear at the conclusion of every lesson.

The *lesson questions* are **a very important** aspect of the student's learning. All readers are strongly encouraged to take the time and include them in their study discipline. Prayerfully answer each one! They are intended to coax the student to rely upon interaction with the Holy Spirit, discern His voice, receive insight, and obtain prophetic enlightenment.

This process will assist each learner to (1) develop a vision for the restoration and reconciliation of the whole house of Israel, (2) grow in foundational knowledge of the Torah, (3) recover the principles, practice, and Holy Spirit power of the early, first-century Nazarene believers, and (4) experience and enjoy greater dimensions of the kingdom, power, and glory of Yeshua.

Note: The questions presented here are listed again at the conclusion of each lesson in both the *Torah Commentary Manuals* and the *Torah Discipleship Manuals*. **To repeat—be sure to follow through with them.**

1a. In your opinion, what is the main theme or teaching of each of the listed readings individually? Starting with the Torah: What is its title? What is the interpretation? What truth/idea does the interpretation of the title suggest? What is the Torah section's main truth, as you see it?

1b. What is the corresponding idea in the Haftarah? In the Brit Chadashah?

2. What is the outstanding, central idea or subject that runs through and unites all the individual readings, as you see it? What does it say about discipleship?

3. Find in the Gospels where and how Yeshua declares, demonstrates, exemplifies, or exhibits the parsha's central truth, and explains. Give chapter and verse. Will you follow Him in living the lesson's truths?

4. In what way was the glory of YHVH [manifestations of His goodness] revealed in the parsha lesson?

5. What does the parsha teach you about your Hebrew roots, your identity, your destiny, your duty?

6. In what way did the Holy Spirit/Ruach HaKodesh personally speak to you during prayer and study this week? Did He impress you about how to apply the parsha lesson directly to your life? Explain.

7. *"...because of practice [by reason of use] have their senses trained [exercised] to discern..."*
You and I are called to return to hearing the voice of Elohim and to functioning in the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Progressing in these vital areas will require spiritual hunger, faith, and practice. He is waiting for us to approach Him.

Ask the Holy Spirit to speak into your spirit/heart as you pray each day. Look for opportunities to lay hands on the sick, or to be used in prophesy. Faithfully record the prophetic words and experiences you receive, and be sure to share them with your brethren.

It is helpful to **share** your answers, insights, and revelations with your study group (table class). We recommend meeting regularly in a small group. This allows for healthy interaction and exchange, and militates against stagnation. Practice operating with your spiritual gifts under the anointing of the Holy Spirit while among your friendly, supportive peers. Allow for open participation in leading praise and worship. Give altar calls at your table for healing, refreshing,

and prophetic words. These are effective ways for all present to mature in their calling and gifting. The non-threatening small group provides a favorable and encouraging environment in which to learn the ministry of the Spirit. You will do well.

Next-for the upcoming generation:

Parsha lessons are being crafted and shortened for younger readers. Be sure to use them. Fulfill Deuteronomy 6: 6-7.

1. Youths' Version - Under construction.

2. Childrens' Version - Under construction.

Footnotes: 1.Chumash, Stone Edition, B'resheet. 2. The Power of His Presence, Packer, p. 26. 3. Pulpit Commentary, Genesis, Eerdmans. 4. Ibid. 5. Ibid, p. 135. 6. Ibid, p. 464. 1A. Battlefield America, Forward, r. Paul, Loc. 221. 1B. None 2B. A Tale of Two Covenant, K. Rogers, p. 6. 3B. www.desringgod.org/messages. 4B. The Hidden Power of Speaking in Tongues, M. Chavda, p. 80-81. 5B. The Bride of Christ, E. Chumney, p. 227.

Va Yetzei ("He went out")

Next

Contender's Voice

Discipleship Series

Book of Genesis/B'resheit

Lesson Seven

Va Yetzei (“He went out”)

Torah: Genesis/B'resheit 28:10-32:2

Haftorah: Hosea/Yahoshua 12:12-14:10

Brit Chadashah: Matthew/Mattityahu 1:18-25; John/Yochanan 1:43-51

Lesson Sequence

1. Introduction: *The Call to Discipleship* **2.** Weekly Parsha: *The Torah—The Standard of Discipleship* **3.** Yeshua: *The High Priest of our Discipleship* **4.** The Holy Spirit/Ruach ha Kodesh: *The Power of Discipleship* **5.** Overcoming: *The Outcome of Discipleship* **6.** Conclusion

Consider

“Many have maintained that the Gospel has set aside the instructions and principles of the Torah [relegating them to irrelevance], so that believers are under no obligation to obey it [them]. Such was the doctrine of the Nicolaitans so severely reprobated [rebuked] by Christ [see Revelation 2:15]. They suppose that Christ [Messiah] has delivered them from the Law, and given them the Spirit, and that the leading of the Spirit is now their rule of life, instead of the Law of God...[The two are actually the same.] This doctrine represents Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit as having taken up arms openly against the government [kingdom] of God...The liberty of the Gospel does not consist of being free from doing what the Law requires, but of a

man's being in such a state of mind that doing it is a pleasure, instead of a burden." [1A] *"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter"* (Matthew 7:21). **Take Him at His Word. And here's another truth: "Where sin abounds grace does much more abound."** This exhorts us, despite discouraging conditions, to seek His face and pray with faith. He has made it clear that we can expect good things yet. *"God causes all things to work together for good..."* (Rom. 8:28).

Part 1: Introduction—*The Call to Discipleship*

"For the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you [all over] again..." (Hebrews 5). Once a person becomes saved, and is born of the Spirit through faith in Messiah Yeshua as personal Savior and Lord, that person becomes a disciple, a student of Yeshua and the Word of Elohim. The disciple is meant to be a learner and practitioner of the ways and values of the Kingdom of God. Thus we—His followers, are called to study and show ourselves approved, grow, and become teachers too. Are you only a convert, or a true disciple?

Last week review: *"When Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob [again], and sent him away to Padan-aram to take a wife from thence, and that he blessed him and gave him a charge...and that Jacob obeyed his father and his mother...then went Esau to Ishmael..."* (Gen. 28:6-9).

In the previous parsha, *Toldot* ("generations" or "history"), Jacob was blessed by Isaac (again) as he separated from his family (and domestic stress) *"and he went out"* to find a wife. Esau finally realized, by observing the reaction of his father and mother, that he had blundered badly in marrying two Canaanite women and thus sought a wife from the people of Ishmael in a tardy and ineffective attempt to regain his parents' favor. The *difference* in the spiritual character of the two men, which would prevent their comradeship and keep them apart from this point onward, is illuminated by their vastly differing responses to their parents' wishes for their marriages. May we remember this and emulate Jacob, that our own generations will also live under the domestic blessing of our parents and Elohim. *"Honor thy father and thy mother that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee"* (Ex. 20:12).

This week' discipleship lesson preview: *VaYetze* ("And he went out") is the first of the last six parshas in Genesis, and all of them feature Jacob prominently, who was the last of the patriarchs. In the Torah, the Israelites are referred to as *Benei Yisrael*, which means "the descendants of Israel". *Israel* is Jacob's other, divinely given name. Though Jacob's children--twelve sons and one daughter--were not perfect people, they were nevertheless raised and educated in the knowledge of YHVH. There were no departures among their ranks to

other gods. For this reason Jacob [Israel] is known as the eponymous father of the Israelite people. [*eponymous*—an adjective: of, relating to, or being the person for whom something is or is believed to be named.]

As Jacob journeyed—he traveled on the same road that Eliezer, Abraham's servant, traveled decades earlier to meet Rebekah—he came to Bethel. There he spent the night, and *"...he dreamed. And behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven* [**Note:** The ladder is said to represent Torah, the bridge that rightly connects heaven and earth. This is the Messiah. *"In the beginning was the Word."*

The ladder or staircase is also said to represent Mt. Sinai where the Torah was given to the whole family.]...*and behold the angels of God* [ministers to the heirs of salvation]...*and behold, the Lord stood above it* [revealing the grace and mercy present in the Old Covenant, and the open pathway of direct, personal approach into His presence to be unveiled in the New Testament]" (*Gen. 28:12-13*). Heaven was opened over Jacob. A divine visitation and holy words of assurance encouraged the lonely traveler. *"Your descendants will become like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out* [break forth, like a flood, especially after Israel is divided and dispersed to the nations]...*and in you and in your descendants* [seed] *shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And behold, I am with thee..."* (*Gen. 28:14-15*). This affirmation of the covenant YHWH had made with Abraham and Isaac was the beginning of personal and direct communications with which the Almighty One of Israel favored Jacob.

Note: Jacob's sons, despite being very troublesome, did not abandon their father's faith and go to other gods. Their father was faithful; a steady example. Likewise, **disciples today** who follow Yeshua faithfully as they "go out" and face life, will likewise find their children remaining loyal to their Creator and Redeemer. He has designated us to go forth and bear fruit that remains. It is a call to (a) bless others and (b) experience His transforming power in the process. Selah.

Part 2: Torah—*The Standard of Discipleship*

Parsha Lesson Seven: Va Yetzei ("He went out")

"The Jewish people regard the Torah as a matchless gift, as did the New Covenant apostles: 'All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, so the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work' (2 Timothy 3:16-17). In this passage, the words *all Scripture* refer to—and affirm the value of—all of the Old Covenant, including the Law of Moses. The New Covenant Scriptures did not yet exist in canonized form, so the writer of 2 Timothy could not have referred to them." [28] The laws/instructions of the Old Covenant enlighten and equip disciples for service in Yeshua's Kingdom.

Torah

*"For I am the Lord your God. **Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy**" (Lev. 11:44).* The Torah includes Elohim's instructions for Israel, and all mankind for that matter, on how to live peacefully and prosperously with one another individually as well as in community. The details are important. For instance, we are commanded to love Elohim (Deut. 6:5) and also to love our neighbor (Lev. 19:18), but are not left alone with these general commandments. Details which describe and define godly behavior and heart attitude begin to show up in the Ten Commandments (Ex. 20:1-17), and are introduced further in the rest of the instructions for life found in the Torah. Producing a holy life of knowing and honoring the Most High, and blessing our neighbor, are the goals of the commandments.

The five books of the Torah--B'resheet, Shemoth, Wayiqra, Bamidbar, and Devarim--are divided into fifty-four weekly readings called *parashah*. The word means "portion." [The plural form is *parashat*.] *Parashah (or parsha)* thus refers to a portion, or section, of a biblical book. The name or title of the parsha is taken from one of the first words in its opening verse. The title of the parsha usually holds significance as to the essence of the portion. Because there are 54 parashat, two portions are doubled so the reading cycle can be completed in 52 weeks.

The division of the Torah books into *parashat* is not dependent or based on chapter or verse numbers as we understand them, but upon a systematic schedule provided by Maimonides in *Mishnah Torah* and based upon respected Masoretic [official Tanakh] principles. This way, every person reads the same section each week, and the Torah is read through completely each year. The study of the Torah is important for everyone. Its origin is divine, and therefore its application is universal and infinite.

Note: "It has been evident to numerous biblical scholars that often [usually, most of the time] believers (including preachers) interpret the Bible through the lens of their culture. This has resulted in many beliefs, doctrines, and practices prevalent in the church that are not in accord with the clear teaching of Scripture. Sadly, this is often the case with the evangelical church in the United States. Since the United States is so influential, American evangelicals have exported a gospel replete with an American paradigm that is not in line with the Hebraic paradigm of Scripture. Consequently, in the U.S. pulpit preaching can [does] come across more like the "American Dream" than sound, biblical teaching..." [www.prophecynewswatch.com.,8/15/14]

1. *"And Jacob went from Beersheba, and went toward Haran. He lighted upon [came to] a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of that place and put them down for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep. And he dreamed..." (B'resheet 28:10-12).*

For many years Jacob had grown up and lived in his mother's and father's tent, insulated from the spiritual corruption and moral wickedness of the world around him. Then, in **(a)** obedience to Isaac's commandment to seek a wife, and in **(b)** compliance to Rebecca's counsel to flee from Esau, he began his exile to Haran where he would spend twenty years working for a family relative, the crafty and greedy Laban.

During the first night of his trip, YHVH spoke to Jacob in a dream. The visitation and promise of the Almighty, we are sure, lifted and sustained him during his journey.

2. *"...I am YHVH Elohim of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: The land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed. And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth...and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And behold, I am with thee...and will bring thee again into this land...Jacob awaked out of his sleep..." (Gen.28:13-16).* Jacob came to a suitable place to rest, fore-chosen by YHVH, and located three miles north of Jerusalem in the hills of Ephraim. He took of the stones in the area and used them—not so much as a pillow, but more likely as a head marker. Then Jacob, though tired, homesick, and wondering about the benediction of his father, lay down and slept. As he did, Jacob received a divinely sent glorious dream.

There appeared to him a great staircase (ladder) connecting heaven and earth, confirming the fact that there occurs real communication between God (in His glory) and man (even in his fallen condition). Angels, messengers of YHVH, were ascending and descending the ladder, or staircase.

We believe the staircase is primarily a type of Messiah, the one Mediator between Elohim and man. The Lord stood above, at the head of the staircase, an exalted position which was not intended to represent/showcase YHVH's power and position as far above man's, but to affirm the special superintendence and care of the Elohim of Abraham and Isaac over His chosen people. He went on to **(a)** proclaim His personal Name, YHVH, **(b)** to affirm to the sleeper that he was heir to the covenant with Jacob's fathers, and **(c)** to renew to Jacob the promises He had earlier made with him (verses 13-15).

The traveler awoke and was astonished because, though he thought he had been alone, he was in fact surrounded by a heavenly company of an unseen world. Isn't this how it is with believers today? Of course it is! *"For He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways" (Psalm 91:11).*

3. *"So Jacob arose early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put under his head and set it on a pillar and poured oil on the top. He called the name of the place Bethel..." (B'resheet 28:18-19).*

As a result of the wonderful, celestial dream, a powerful sense of the supernatural presence of YHVH filled Jacob's soul with reverence and awe. *"This is none other but the house of God."* He commemorated the special site by building a memorial of stone and anointing it with oil, and called the place Beth-el [Elohim's house]. There Jacob vowed, *"If Elohim will be with me, and will keep me...then YHVH will be my Elohim"* (verses 20-21).

This was a statement of faith and anticipation of enjoying divine companionship, provision, protection, favor, and salvation. All believers may anticipate these blessings in life as they follow His ways. YHVH loves us just as much as he loves Jacob. He is the loving God of the living.

Note: Oil is a symbol of the Holy Spirit. Symbols (or metaphors) tell us something of what the Spirit and His operations are like, and they include oil, water, fire, wine, wind, a river, and a dove. We will discuss all of these in another parsha. In this section we will come to know the Holy Spirit/Ruach HaKodesh better as we look at some of the Spirit's attributes and ministry. Keep in mind that we want to know the Holy Spirit through experience as well as by instruction. He will exalt Yeshua in all things and always draw us closer to Him, into a more intimate and sublime union with Him.

The Holy Spirit is holy, set apart, and likewise leads us into holiness and sanctification. His testimony will always agree with Scripture, of which He is the Author. Though He is omnipotent, the Ruach/Spirit is gentle also, and will not shove/push, pressure or hurry anyone. May Yeshua's disciples learn to discern and follow His impressions and urgings.

Two important aspects of knowing someone are (a) discerning his/her attributes and (b) understanding what he does. Therefore, in this parsha we are going to look at some of the things the Holy Spirit does; we are going to discuss His purpose and His work. You will notice that in all He does His primary purposes are to exalt Yeshua, illuminate the Torah (Pentateuch, and all divine revelation) and edify believers.

Keep in mind also, an impersonal *"it,"* a *"weight (kabod),"* or a *"force"* cannot do the supernatural things we will mention, only Elohim is so able. Therefore, we encourage each student, as you read the following Scriptures, to expect the Holy Spirit to bear witness with you of His closeness and to begin to minister through you as sanctified conduits of His anointing.

A. *"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you"* (Jn. 14:26). The Spirit teaches. He instructs you about the things of the Almighty. He reminds us.

B. *"But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me" (John 15:26). He speaks the YHVH's truth, and gives testimony of Yehsua ha Mashiach.*

C. *"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come" (John 16:3). He guides us in our study of the Torah and throughout Scriptures, and through them imparts knowledge and revelation, and He inspires intimacy with our Redeemer.*

D. *"And when he will come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment" (John 16:8). He convicts the conscience, reveals sin, convinces of error; corrects us.*

E. *"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit Himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God" (Rom. 8:26-27).*

He prays for you, on your behalf and through you on behalf of others. He provides a personal prayer language for Yeshua's disciples through the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

F. *"As they ministered unto the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them" (Acts 13:2). The Spirit is the Administrator. He directs, gives orders and commands. He is strong and decisive.*

G. *"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which He has purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28). He makes appointments. He establishes the saints in their service and gifting.*

H. *"...in whom also after that ye believed [trusted Messiah], ye were sealed by that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory" (Eph. 1:13-14). He seals [secures, confirms, ratifies] the promise (s) of YHVH into the believer's heart. Thus He develops faith.*

I. *"But you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness...but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Rom. 8: 9-14).*

He molds/shapes/fashions the life of every believer to conform to the life of Messiah.

J. *"But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be the Spirit of God dwell in you" (Rom. 8:9; Also see: John 14:17). He indwells—actually lives within--each believer and is a personal Counselor and Comforter forever. Disciples have the glory of YHVH within. "You are blessed..."*

The Holy Spirit has been sent so we, Yeshua's disciples, can enter into, live in, and demonstrate increasingly the Kingdom of Elohim. We grieve the Holy Spirit with our anger, malice, slander, and unbelief.

We please Him when we acknowledge His presence with sensitivity, yielded wills, forgiveness for others, faith, and gentleness. He is our Comforter. He exalts the Master. Let's get to know Him better. In the next parsha we will discuss His ministry/work/purpose further as these are revealed through His symbols.

Parsha commentary continued:

"And Jacob vowed a vow saying, If you will be with me [as You promised] and keep me in the way that I go...then shall YHVH be my God" (see B'resheet 28:20-22).

Thus, Jacob resolved to build an altar upon his successful return to Bethel, and consecrate one tenth (a tithe) of his increase to Elohim. Jacob's liberality in giving is not often matched by today's believers. But when one considers the blessings produced by generous giving into Elohim's purposes it is surprising that giving ten percent of one's increase is not regularly surpassed by the saints.

4. *"Then Jacob went on his journey and came into the land of the people of the east" (Genesis/B'resheet 29:1).*

Jacob came into Mesopotamia, which is about 450 miles from Beersheba. There the man had a providential meeting with some shepherds at a well, a meeting that resulted in him being introduced to the lovely shepherdess, Rachel. It was a romantic adventure for Jacob, a providential sighting, a discovery of a pearl of great price in the field. *"Jacob told Rachel...that he was Rebecca's son, and she ran and told her father."* Then Laban, Rachel's father, ran to embrace Jacob with kindness and affection, and invited him to his house. Jacob stayed with his uncle and tended his flocks and herds to fulfill a seven-year contract in order to marry Rachel. During this period a new aspect of Jacob's character would be developed. He would not resort to craft and cunning for his bride, but would labor honestly and diligently with self-sacrificing love.

5. *"...he took Leah his daughter, and brought her to him; and he went in unto her...And Jacob did so, and fulfilled her week: and he [Laban] gave him Rachel his daughter to wife also" (B'resheet from 29:21-28).*

It was love at first sight. "*And Jacob loved Rachel.*" Jacob had no property or wealth at hand with which to purchase the maid, after the custom of the east. But Laban thought it wise to form an alliance within the broad network of relatives and offered an arrangement to Jacob. In exchange for seven years of service he could have Rachel. Jacob accepted the terms. The labor of caring for Laban's flocks and herds was hard but he rendered his services faithfully. When the compact was completed, Jacob wanted his wages--Rachel.

Laban arranged a marriage festival, but deceived Jacob and gave him Leah, the older sister, instead. It was a form of righteous retribution. Having deceived one brother, Jacob became the victim of deception by another "brother" [family member]. The deceiver was deceived. A week later, after agreeing to work seven more years, Jacob married Rachel also.

Rachel was given Bilhah (meaning "bashful" or "modest") as a maid. Jacob "*loved Rachel more than Leah,*" implying that he did have affections for the older daughter. The seven years of labor cunningly enacted upon Jacob by Laban for Leah was the second fraud practiced by his father-in-law.

Jacob can be seen in the narrative as a type of Messiah, and Rachel as the Body of Messiah.

Jacob loved Rachel, served for her, and was obedient to his commitment to obtain her. Yeshua also served that He might unite us with Himself. "Marriage, the earthly tie, is used as a type. No mere removal of condemnation satisfied that [His great] love, nor even our being made happy; He became such as we are, that we might become such as He is. The Church/Ecclesia is His Bride (Eph. 5:27; Rev. 21:9), sharer of His kingdom (Rev. 3:21; 20:4), of His blessedness and glory (Jn. 17:22-24). And all this belongs to the humblest and weakest member. [Also]...a union in this life (Jn. 15:4), peace in committing all cares to Him, even our own steadfastness (Jn. 10:28; Rom. 8:35; Heb. 13:6)." Such are the blessings of Messiah's affections for His betrothed." From: M., Book of Genesis, Eerdmans Pulpit Commentary.

6. "*And Leah conceived, and bore a son, and she called his name Reuben*" (B'resheit 29:33).

Jacob loved Rachel, but Leah was thrust upon him against his will. While Leah was never despised, she knew she was second in Jacob's affections and this realization was painful to her. But Rachel was barren, and this was a hard affliction for *her* to bear, especially since fruitfulness belonged to Leah, who gave birth to six sons. She expressed her gratitude for YHWH's favor toward her in their names: *Reuben* (see, a son), *Simeon* (hearing), *Levi* (joined), *Judah* (praise), *Issachar* (there is reward), and *Zebulun* (dwelling). Afterwards, Leah gave birth to a daughter, *Dinah* (judgment). Bilhah bore Jacob two sons: *Dan* (judge) and *Naphtali* (my wrestling). Zilpah gave birth also, to *Gad* (good fortune) and *Asher* (happy).

It is apparent that (a) Rachel's evident lack of prayer and faith, her impatience and anger with Jacob, her jealousy over Leah's child-bearing and (b) Leah's resentment of her and lack of sympathy, contributed to the bitterness, competition, and envy that eventually arose to affect the relationship of the sisters. The schism developed over the years and the resulting gulf between them continued in the lives of their descendants. There was the rivalry between Joseph (Rachel's son and Jacob's favorite) and his brothers (Leah's sons), who sold him into slavery. Moses, who was Leah's descendent, delivered Israel out of Egypt, but Joshua (Rachel's descendent) led the nation into Canaan. King Saul, the first king of Israel, was a descendent of Rachel, and was killed in battle. He was replaced by David, a seed of Leah. The divide continued and eventually the Kingdom of Israel was separated into (a) the Davidic kingdom, the House of Judah, and (b) the Northern Kingdom, the House of Ephraim/Israel. In these latter days of the New Covenant this historical development is being turned around (Mt. 15:28), as the prophesied restoration of Israel and the reconciliation of Judah and Ephraim are underway and progressing (Isa. 11:11-14; 27:13; Obadiah 1:17-21; Zech. 10:3-10; 13:2-5 Jer. 3:14-18; 23:3,7-8; 30:10; 31:4-10; 33:7,23-26; Ezek. 36:24-29; 37:16-28; 39:25-28; 40:1-47:12; 47:13-48:29; Hos. 1:10; 2:17-20; Amos 9:9).

Thus Rachel and Leah spawned an unholy rivalry among the seed of Israel. The root of envy sprung forth. It is seen in the Body of Messiah today when believers criticize and find fault with fruitful works and movements of which they are not part. Multiple wives, and weddings without love, bring sorrow and easily produce sin. And, as we are well aware, sin is contagious.

"And when Rachel saw that she bore Jacob no children, Rachel envied [was red-faced] her sister, and said unto Jacob, Give me children or else I die" (see B'resheit 30:1-13).

Rachel was envious of Leah and gave Jacob her maid, Bilhah, so that Rachel might boast children from her. Motherhood by proxy was the intention. This was a popular custom in that day. The scheme worked. Bilhah conceived and bore a son. Not willing to show grace to the younger sister, or be outdone, Leah, green-eyed with jealousy, copied her sister and offered Jacob her maid, who also conceived.

Competition between the two sisters became envy. Envy produced animosity and family tensions that would spread as the clan grew. Hence, sin, when not dealt with, eventually spreads and contaminates a household and society.

The antidote to schisms? May we be willing to rejoice with others in their success, and always show mercy to our relatives. These are vital for maintaining attitudes of kindness in family relationships.

7. *"And God remembered Rachel, and...opened her womb...she conceived and bare a son; and said, God hath taken away my reproach...she called his name Joseph..." (B'resheet 30:22-24).*

Elohim remembered Rachel, as He had Leah earlier (Gen. 29:31), and so her childless estate did not continue as long as had those of Sarah or Rebekah. During her wait, though, Rachel had come to understand that any children of hers would be a gift from the Almighty, and would not be the outcome of human efforts, such as bargaining with mandrakes. [Note: Mandrakes were thought to be a stimulant for conception; an aphrodisiac. From *mandragoro*, a Greek word. Used also as an anesthetic, laxative, and for various cures.] She named her son Joseph, meaning "he shall add", making reference to a hope of another child. She said *"May the Lord give me [add to me] another son" (verse 24).*

The girl who had clung to her family idols when leaving Laban's home had become emancipated [freed, delivered] from her illusions, and had risen to a higher spiritual awareness, that YHWH--she had called on His name--the personal, covenant Elohim of Abraham and Isaac, was also *her* Source, upon Whom she was dependent for offspring.

Rachel came to see that the growth, welfare and stability of her family rested solely on YHWH's favor and faithfulness. He had heard her prayer and brought forth the birth of Joseph. Benjamin would be His next answer.

8. *"And Laban said unto him...stay...and the man [Jacob] increased exceedingly..." (B'resheet 30:27, 43).*

After fourteen years of service, Jacob wanted to leave Haran with his family and return home. He made a respectful request of Laban. But Laban was a hindrance and wanted to continue profiting from Jacob's qualities as a herdsman and flock-master, upon whom rested the favor of

El Elyon, Elohim of Abraham. He offered Jacob a contract of six more years of service in exchange for all the spotted, speckled, ringstraked, and brown animals Laban's flocks could produce during that time. In an act of faith, Jacob agreed and took the job.

Jacob's heaven-inspired strategy of animal husbandry worked and he ended up prospering well above his greedy employer, whose avarice and jealousy had over time extinguished his affections for Jacob. He eventually surpassed Laban, despite his father's in-law multifold interference, in the possession of strong and healthy flocks and herds.

Laban, after experiencing some increase in the early years of Jacob's labor, fell victim to greed, and the lust for ever-greater material prosperity. Jacob, on the other hand, demonstrated the wisdom of trusting YHWH in all things, even in secular, mundane business matters. The advantage is always found with trusting the Almighty.

"Seek first the kingdom, His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added unto you" (Mt. 6:33).

The first object for a disciple's pursuit is the kingdom of God, i.e., His rule (or will) established in his conduct and relations. We are created for Elohim. His righteousness is His character. We are called to serve YHVH and become like Him. As we do, earthly and heavenly things, with peace, are added to us.

9. *"And he heard the words of Laban's sons, saying, Jacob hath taken away all that was our father's..." (B'resheit 31:1).*

Laban had been complaining in his tent to his family about Jacob's success, and attributing it to scurrilous, under-handed management of his flocks. His listening sons were persuaded. They greatly exaggerated their father's false accusations. Jacob quickly discerned the changing disposition of his father-in-law (and his family) as no longer friendly, and YHVH used the deteriorating situation to direct Jacob's thinking to the prospect of returning to the land of his inheritance. The love for his family and homeland was still deeply rooted in his heart. YHVH's appointed path of safety for Jacob [He has appointed paths for each of us] was that one which led back to Canaan. *"In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He [emphatic-Himself, by His power] shall direct thy paths [they shall come under God's direction, prosper, be virtuous, be divinely guarded, and come to a successful conclusion]" (Prov. 3:6).* Jacob was motivated, as are we often, by both human and divine causes.

10. *"I am the God of bethel, where thou anointed the pillar and where thou vowed a vow unto Me: now arise, get thee out from this land, and return to the land of thy kindred..." (B'resheit 31:3).*

Jacob would have left too early had he not agreed to work six more years for Laban. At the end of twenty years in Haran it is YHVH's time for him to depart. Jacob arose quickly, put things in order, gathered his family, and *"stole away unawares to Laban, the Syrian."* He left by stealth, fleeing from his uncle. Laban, who was unhappy with Jacob's increased wealth and his own diminished position, angrily pursued him. [Note: Many people are amiable with others only as long as they see themselves as superior, or more successful, and they thus remain content with God. But when others ascend, or are promoted, the once-friendly people become uncomfortable, and usually resentful, secretly envious.] While underway for six days, Laban is warned by the Almighty in a dream at night. He was told not to discourage or hinder Jacob's plans to return to Canaan.

On the seventh day Laban, Jacob, and the whole family meet in a field. Laban launched into a harangue and Jacob rebuked and corrected him in response. An agreeable settlement was reached as Laban's anger subsided, and the two made a covenant of peace on Mount Gal-Ed [Gilead]. We observe in the story YHWH's continual care for His people demonstrated by His visitations to both Jacob and Laban.

"...then Rachel stole the household idols that were her father's. And Jacob deceived Laban the Aramean by not telling him that he was fleeing" (B'resheet 31:19).

Jacob left Canaan and Laban secretly, probably during the busy shearing season, and traveled west with his family and belongings. Rachel took along her fathers "images" [idols] secretly. The first mention of images is associated with heathen worship and Nimrod, an idolater (Josh. 24:2). Laban referred to his images as gods (v. 30) even though he and his house supposedly knew about the Lord [Elohim]. His use of these idols was a corruption of true worship; a departure from the practice of Abel, Seth, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, and Isaac. This indicates that Laban's soul did not remain in harmony with the presence and word of YHVH. The world's influence pulled his attention earthward and his worship of El Shaddai weakened, and Laban was eventually persuaded to material, pagan forms.

The images were called *teraphim*. Of different sizes and materials, the idols resembled humans. Laban's life and character were negatively impacted by the integration of "images" into his faith. In chapter twenty-four we first read of Laban as friendly, honest, and hospitable. But years later he meets with Jacob. We read of him as becoming deceitful, greedy, and unconcerned about the welfare of his nephew.

In *B'resheet 24:50-51* he acknowledges YHVH as the Lord and Guide of life. However, in this parsha we read that Laban refers to El Shaddai, the Lord, not as his God but as the God of Jacob's father, and mentions "my gods." The love of honor and wealth had pushed Elohim away; removed Him from first place in Laban's life and thoughts. See Psalm 10:4 and Phil. 3:19. The result? Worship and faith, we believe, became for Laban a matter of times or seasons [obligatory Sunday church-going], but not a matter of daily life and practice. Thus there was no positive, holy spiritual power favorably working for him or his house. So it is often in this hour with the Ecclesia, the Body of Messiah today. Attention and reliance upon external aids, liturgies, and

programs, even great visuals, lights, performances and symbols, can pre-empt the presence of God and hide His face. *"You shall not make for yourself any graven image" (Sh'mot 20:4).*

11. *"And Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him" (B'resheet 32:1).*

Jacob continued on his way home with his large family and herds and was met by the angels of Elohim. *"He named that place Mahanaim."* *Mahanaim* means "two hosts", or double defense, one in front and another behind. Jacob was encouraged with the placement of angelic wall around his household, but was nevertheless very apprehensive about his meeting with Esau. Still, faith in YHWH's promise and power, along with prayer, prepared him inwardly and urged him forward to Canaan.

Jacob's hardships were in reality opportunities that had helped make him ready for his greater destiny. *"And he went out"* (VaYetze) so he could come back richer, stronger, more compassionate, and changed. Jacob returned from his assignment, his journey, a different and better man. *"Follow Me, and I will make you [to become] fishers of men"* (Mt. 4:19).

Haftorah

1. *"Ephraim feedeth on wind...the Lord also has a controversy with Judah, and will punish Jacob according to his ways...Ephraim provoked Him to anger most bitterly; therefore shall he leave his blood [bloodguilt] upon him, and his reproach shall his Lord return unto him"* (from Hosea 12:1-2; 13-14:9). [Verses 2 and 3 directly reference Jacob and VaYetze.]

Ephraim [tribes of the Northern Kingdom] was reproved by the prophet for the vain, unprofitable course they chose, a course that was contrary to their own best interests. Judah was included in the rebuke.

In the passage, the goodness and faithfulness of YHVH, Who had blessed and prospered the patriarch Jacob, is held forth as an incentive, as a guarantee of similar blessings for recalcitrant Ephraim and Judah if they repented and returned to Him.

"In the manner of acquisition of wealth, Ephraim conjoined deceit and oppression. He was dishonest in trade. He oppressed the poor. He was a better imitator of Jacob in his act of laying hold of his brother's heel than in earnestness in wrestling with an angel. He inherited the evil, not the good, traits in the character of his progenitor. He was a 'Jacob,' and not an 'Israel'." [1]

Ephraim [the Ten Tribes of the northern kingdom/the House of Israel] had followed his own worldly counsel, and acted as if the longsuffering of YHVH was interminable and His mercy was unconditional. He had said, like the Laodicean Church, *"I am rich, and increased with goods..."* and did not perceive that he was really *"wretched, and miserable..."* (Rev. 3:17). Ephraim chose heathen altars and ignored the prophets' inspired counsel to *"buy gold tried in fire"*, and anoint their eyes to see with understanding. But the people remained entrenched in their delusion. Their immorality, dishonesty, and carnal and idolatrous infatuation with the calves they worshiped and kissed led to their ruin. Israel began looking like Canaan of old, completely exposed to the unrestricted, malevolent machinations of fallen entities which came and went freely from the realms of darkness.

Reduced to a state of pitiful weakness, Assyria threatened them and the desperate Ten Tribes looked to Egypt, the land of their ancient bondage, for asylum. But they were rejected and their hope was dashed. Because of their stubbornness and folly, the rich places of the Northern Kingdom--Shiloh, Shechem, Ebal and Gerizim, Sharon, Carmel, and the Valley of Jezreel--would be over-run and possessed by Assyria. The Northern Kingdom would be scattered to the

nations. Sin had held fast its grip on Ephraim, and he refused to "return" to Torah so YHVH could "heal his backsliding." Yet, YHVH's mercy seasons [moderates] His judgment. His love for Israel while it was a new-born nation was always conspicuous, but in the period of Ephraim's moral and spiritual corruption and decay it seemed even more wonderful. His denunciations dissolve as His deep love and tenderness are revealed, and followed by prophetic promises of blessings. "I will heal their backsliding...love them...be as dew unto Israel..." (Hosea 14:4-5). The Elohim of Israel loves Jacob's descendants with undiminished love.

Part 3: Yeshua—*The Eternal High Priest of the Believers Discipleship*

"As the Holy Spirit converges Israel with the *Church* [proper terms—Ecclesia or Called-out Assembly] in the Messianic Warrior Bride, a passion for His laws will be restored in holy love...not legalism...but of love-struck obedience to the Bridegroom-King. If our hearts beat with His, we grieve too greatly over disobedience to choose it. From the joy we experience of His presence and pleasure in us, we cannot help but want to obey. As believers [disciples] connect more and more with redeemed Israel, over time a dynamic ministry of God's laws will be revived." [38] Our High Priest Yeshua is also the Kingdom's Lawgiver.

Yeshua is the Living Torah!

"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law and the Prophets..."

The Law referred to in the verse comprises the first five books of the Old Covenant. The "Prophets" include (a) the former prophets—Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings, (b) the latter (or major) prophets—Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel, and (c) the twelve minor prophets that complete the Old Testament. The Writings, which are also prophetic (Mt. 13:35; Ps. 78:2), comprise the remainder of the Old Covenant. Thus the Law and the Prophets encompass the Old Covenant.

It is YHVH's will that the truth, standards, and principles of His Law [His teaching; instructions for life] would be fulfilled in the lives of Yeshua's followers (Rom. 3:31; 8:4). "Because of their faith in and love for the Messiah, His followers want to live by His laws and standards (Rom. 16:25-26; Heb. 10:16).

For them, it is not simply a matter of duty, but desire and gratitude. This desire comes as a result of God's grace (i.e., undeserved favor, love, and enablement (Rom. 5:21) and His Holy Spirit living in them...the Spirit's work is crucial because [willing and happy] outward obedience to God's Instructions comes from the inner transformation of a person's heart and spirit." [2]

The Old Covenant foreshadows [describes, points to] what Yeshua HaMashiach would accomplish and fulfill. His disciples willingly choose to comply and submit to Yeshua's leadership. By doing so they become *"the servants of righteousness"* (see Romans 6:18-22), co-laboring with the Spirit for the (a) allying of the House of Judah and the House of Joseph, and (b) the restoration of the kingdom, power, and glory of YHVH to all Israel.

1. *"And He said to him, Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see the heavens opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man" (John 1:43-51).*

The ladder of Jacob's dream (Genesis 28:10-13) symbolizes Mount Sinai and the giving of the Torah, which is the "written bridge" [ladder] connecting heaven and earth. Going further, Yeshua is the Living Torah, Who is therefore the "Living Bridge" [Ladder] between and joining man and Elohim.

In the passage Yeshua was speaking to Nathanael, who had followed the summons of Philip to come to see Yeshua, the son of Joseph of Nazareth. The Master references Jacob's dream at Beth El. He informs Nathaniel that He is the true Ladder [Sullam] to Heaven, the appointed means of fellowship with Elohim, the *Sha'ar Hashamayim*--the Way to heaven (John 14:6). As Jacob had perceived that he was in the presence of God at Beth El, so Nathaniel realized he was in the glorious presence of YHVH by way of fellowship with the Messiah.

Nathaniel had been referred to by the Master as guileless, *"an Israelite indeed."* The title was given to Jacob and has been assumed by generations of descendants, not all of whom are like Nathaniel. He remains a commendable example of a true Israelite, and his character actually attracted the attention of Yeshua.

Nathaniel was genuine in his devotion and transparently sincere. He exhibited an honest inquiry after truth, and welcomed new light. Nathanael possessed intelligence *and* faith. He discerned

the Messiah and promptly and respectfully confessed, *"Thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel."* Relating to Jacob's dream, Yeshua responded to Nathanael's confession, *"You shall see greater things than these...you will see the heavens opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man."*

In the spiritual sense, His disciples would realize that they had been brought into a holy relationship with Yeshua the divine Son and, therefore, with heaven also, the place of blessing and righteousness, the Throne of grace, and the abode of holy angels.

The promise also refers to the Second Coming. The dream which came to Jacob on a restless night can now be, because of the atonement and resurrection of Yeshua, the daily experience of His disciples. Heaven, access to the Father's throne and heart, and the regular ministry of

angels, have been opened up (Heb. 4:16). Thus, Messiah's words comprised (a) a prophecy concerning His Second Coming in the clouds of Glory, and (b) a promise for a closer fellowship, of nearer acquaintance, of more intimate relationship, and of brighter and more profound visions of His Person, power, and office.

It is a promise and an encouragement to us also, that there are coming greater revelations of His Divinity, Glory, and Messiahship. Yeshua promised, "a clear view [perception, vision, discernment] of the communication between heaven and earth of which Yeshua is the Medium.

'You shall see heaven open...' The heaven was not merely open, but it was *opened*, and opened *by the Messiah*. This was one of the first acts of His redeeming intervention. It was closed by man's sin, [but] opened by the Son of Man's grace. Heaven is ever open to the 'Son of man,' and ever open to faith in Him. Jacob saw the communication between heaven and earth in the ladder. Yeshua is the reality of his vision.

Angels ascend and descend on and through Him. Every prayer goes up and every blessing comes down from heaven through him. Through Him, our High Priest and Intercessor, there is free trade carried on between heaven and earth." [3] Our Abba loves His people and wants to bless us with revelations of His eternal Son, Yeshua. We must have faith and hunger. Then we will be rewarded by learning great things, seeing great things...and even greater things (Heb. 11:6).

Part 4: The Holy Spirit—*The Power of Discipleship*

"I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, even to give to each man according to his ways, according to the results of his deeds" (Jer. 17:10). "Apart from the discerning and searching work of the Holy Spirit, we are unable to know what [sin, corruption, pride, deception, et al] is in our own hearts. But it matters what [the Spirit reveals] is in the heart because the matters of the heart are the issues of life within us all." [4B]. Ask the Spirit to search you daily.

"God's Word, as revealed in the Bible, clearly teaches that the Messiah wants the lives and ministries of His followers to be characterized by supernatural works. Just like Yeshua, those that spread the message of forgiveness and eternal life through faith in Messiah should perform miracles in His Name as evidence the God's kingdom is active and accessible on earth (see Mt. 10:1; Mk. 3:14-15; Lk. 9:2; 10:17; Jn. 14:12). [Believers] do not do these works on their own.

As Yeshua's representatives on earth, they carry His authority (see Mt. 28:18-20; 2 Cor. 5:20), and they operate in the power of His Holy Spirit so that whatever they do can bring honor to

Yeshua. He told His followers that after He left and the Holy Spirit came to empower them, they would do even greater miracles than He did (Jn. 14:12).

This refers to the fact that Messiah's followers would spread His message to a greater degree and reach more people over time, but it also refers to the magnitude of supernatural ministry that would take place. The key to doing 'greater things,' however, is having faith in Messiah.

The miracles that Messiah's followers [**disciples**] perform are not to anyone else's credit because it is still Yeshua doing the ministry and miracles through them." [4]

1. *"And YHVH said unto Jacob, Return to the land of your fathers..." (B'resheet 31:3).* The Holy Spirit is the Promise of the Father for the comfort and empowerment of the saints. Among many other things, the Spirit's power is revealed as He: **A.** Leads (Mt. 4:1; Mk. 1:12; Lk. 4:1; 2:27; Rom. 8:14; Acts 8:29). **B.** Releases His anointing (Lk. 4:14). **C.** Speaks into us, to us, and through us (Mt. 10:20; Acts 1:16; 2:4; 13:2; 28:25; Heb. 3:7). He is our Comforter and Helper. He

is also our Leader and Teacher. He wants to communicate with us. His voice brings supernatural life and vitality to the hearers, helps us to prepare for the future, and inspires and enables us to bear His fruit and gifts. He can correspond with us--instruct and inform us through natural means also, such as through human counsel, circumstances, past experiences, and things of the physical realm.

But the emphasis in our study is hearing, discerning, and properly responding to the Spirit's divine supernatural voice and inspiration as they come directly from Him when He ministers to us.

Two things are necessary for spiritual maturity in this realm: **First:** Regular, planned sessions for listening to the Holy Spirit speaking, by word or impression, into our regenerated human spirit [Spirit to spirit] which He indwells. **Second:** Consistent training/tuning/exercising our souls--which we will regard as the seat of our intellect, emotions, will, and (possibly) intuition--to discern and properly interpret and appropriately respond to the sound, word, impression, vision, dream--the leading of the Spirit.

Review: Included among the forms that His voice/word/communication may come to us as, are: **(a)** His actual voice, 1 Sam. 3:2-11; 1 Kings 19:1; **(b)** divinely illuminated Scriptures, 2 Tim. 3:16; **(c)** His inner witness, Rom. 2:15; 8:16; 1 John 5:8; **(d)** inspiration and revelation gifts, 1 Cor. 12:1-11; **(e)** Spirit-birthing ideas, thoughts, and desires, Dan. 2:29; 4:5; Micah 5:4; Prov. 12:5; Ps. 37:4; **(f)** visions, Joel. 2:28; **(g)** dreams, Gen. 42:9; Dan. 1:17; Joel 2:28. He will speak to/within us as we read, pray, worship, and wait upon Him. It is important to keep in mind, regarding the Spirit's voice [whatever the mode it takes] and His inward leading, that they are divine in origin, supernatural, usually spontaneous, and individualized.

"And behold, the Lord stood above it and said, I am the Lord God of the father Abraham, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed..." (B'eresheit 28:13).

YHVH came not just to announce his Name but to personally renew to Jacob the holy, precious promises that He had earlier/previously given to his fathers, and to thus open up the way for further communication with him. His voice came in the *form of a dream*. Two significant things:

(1) Jacob is told/heard that the small piece of land on which he lay--and that small piece represented the entire land of Canaan--will be given to him, and to his descendants. (2) Since the site of his dream (Bethel, meaning House of Elohim) was a type of the whole *promised land*, it foretold that the whole land would be filled/fused with the holiness of the Set-Apart One of Israel. The Land is anointed. We believe the people gathered back to Israel will one day be baptized in YHVH's glory and be melded in the furnace of His holy love into a united, purified, restored nation. In the light of this statement read and ponder the following verses: Isaiah 11:13; Jeremiah 3:14-15; Ezekiel 36:24-29; Amos 9:11; Zechariah 13:2-5.

Many people hear His voice at some time or other and are not always conscious of it, but regular communication with Elohim is highly desirable and possible. We have heard enough from our own hearts and minds, and chased long enough what our eyes have coveted. We need to be separated [*"and he went out"*] from our old lifestyles, ecclesiastical religions, worldliness, and other impediments [hindrances], and embark afresh upon His pathways of righteousness as did our father Jacob. We can receive dreams, visions, and hear from Him also. The Holy One of Israel will speak to us that which needs to be heard, and His voice, as we have already shared this week, is discernible and can take different forms. A look at Elijah will be helpful in our discussion.

"...stand on the mount...and the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains...but the Lord was not in the wind: and after the wind and earthquake...and after the earthquake a fire...and after the fire a still small voice" (1 Kings 19:11-12).

In chapter nineteen Ahab recounts to the headstrong, imperious Jezebel all of the events of Elijah's astounding, supernatural, divinely orchestrated victory over her false prophets, and she is filled with humiliation...and seething rage.

One would think that after hearing such an amazing testimony of the reality and power of YHVH, that conviction and repentance would have shortly followed. Not so with Jezebel. Her blind eyes and stony heart were inured [hardened], left immune to any evidence and grace of the Most High. She took out the ancient equivalent of a "contract" on Elijah, who, upon hearing about it, fled for the hills. Elijah went on a forty day journey to Horeb, where Moses had

encountered the "burning bush", and probably within sight of where the law was given. It was holy ground. There, he retired to a cave, perhaps the location from where Moses witnessed the Shechinah. Out of his zeal for the honor of Elohim, Elijah interceded against the apostasy of Israel. [We are called to love *our* enemies, *not* the resolute enemies of YHWH.] The Almighty had Elijah, a man of action, stand on the mount and then passed by the prophet to answer him with signs concerning Israel, and spoke through frightening visions.

First there was "*a great and strong wind that rent the mountain...and broke the rocks...*" This was a vision of wrath coming on the rulers and people through invasion of an army. The **second** vision was, "*...after the wind an earthquake.*" This was a vision of civil and ecclesiastical revolution. The **third** vision was, "*...after the earthquake a fire.*" This was a vision/symbol of immediate divine judgment from Elohim. De. 4:24; Ps. 18:12-14; Jer. 48:45.

Then, after the fire, "*...a still small voice,*" as from a caring parent desiring to comfort and assure a son.

Despite the powerful, attention-arresting visions, Elijah still heard YHWH's assuring, supportive divine voice. He covered his face in his mantle (prayer shawl), "*and he went out*" [Va Yetze] and stood at the entry to the cave and listened as YHWH spoke to him.

The still small, gentle voice was as a patient parent lovingly directing a child. Elijah was comforted as YHWH responded to his heartfelt intercession with calm instructions regarding how Israel would be brought to repentance and to restoration. Thus the prophet was assured and comforted.

Elijah was (1) to go to Damascus on his way back to Israel and "*anoint Hazael to be king over Syria.*" He would be the strong invading wind to come upon the rocks and mountains of Israel. Elijah was (2) then to anoint Jehu "*...to be king over Israel.*" He would become the earthquake of revolution. Jehu would bring judgment and destruction on the whole house of Ahab and on the Baal worshipers. Next, Elijah was (3) to go to "*Elisha son of Shaphat*", the personification of righteous, fiery judgment, and anoint him to be the prophet who would succeed Elijah. Elisha would speak with words of holy anointing and break the yoke of the enemy. The powerful signs impressed Elijah, but the heart and intimacy of YHWH were not in them. Judgment is necessary for order, but YHWH "*delights in mercy.*" (4) Only in the "*still small voice*" directing him, not in the frightful visions and prophetic signs, does Elijah inwardly, in the silence of his soul, experience the personal love, and gracious, merciful goodness of the Creator.

Dreams, visions, and signs are ways our Elohim has communicated with people through the ages. But it is not winds that divide the Red Sea, or manna that appears from heaven, or earthquakes that engulf people and bring down walls that produce closeness and intimacy between YHWH and His people. The above forms are impressive and needed at certain times,

but it is hearing/sensing and knowing His still small voice within our spirit, and in our soul, that confirms He is Abba.

As you study, wrap yourself in your mantle and wait upon His still small voice to speak into your spirit, and to arise in your mind/consciousness, and stir your heart.

Part 5: Overcoming—*The Outcome of Discipleship*

"Then He said to them, 'Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed...' (Luke 12:15). "There are certain characters in the Bible who could have had great [fruit-bearing] ministries had they passed the test of mammon. Gehazi [a disciple of Elisha] could have inherited the powerful prophetic anointing of Elisha had he not been greedy for Naaman's gifts of garments and silver. God's judgment fell swiftly upon the covetous Gehazi. Instead of becoming a prophet, Gehazi ended up a leper." [5B] But we overcome!

1. *"Behold, I am with you and will help you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you..." (B'resheet 28:15).* When Jacob started on his journey from his comfortable home, he embarked on an arduous pathway that would lead to the fulfillment of his destiny. In the beginning, he had not yet developed the habit/lifestyle of faith as had his grandfather, Abraham, before him.

However, just as he had rested on the rock at Bethel, so he would learn to depend upon and trust the "Rock of Ages," the Holy One of Israel, in the times ahead. YHVH had been with Jacob all his life, had orchestrated his circumstances, and the night of Jacob's dream promised to bring him back to his homeland.

Pre-incarnate Yeshua standing at the top of the ladder/staircase of Jacob's dream was a confirmation, an assertion, of His superintendence over Jacob's life and over all who put their faith in Him. Elohim is love, and love provides for oversight and care.

Overcomers will hear His Voice more clearly:

"O Elohim, You are my El; early will I seek you" (Psalm 63:1 RS).

It is smart to seek YHVH early. We have His promise: *"He who seeks, finds."* Nevertheless, believers often struggle for long periods in difficult circumstances before we think seriously about talking to the Almighty and waiting for His voice to direct us.

He tells us to cast our burdens upon Him (1 Peter 5:7), yet we carry them ourselves and make life more difficult than it needs to be (or already is). Prayer is powerful and should be our first response, not our last. He would have us talk to Him and listen for His reply.

“Be still and know that I am Elohim” (Psalm 46:10 RS).

Most people seem to prefer talking to listening. The habit is hard to change. Thus, much prayer consists of believers talking to Elolim, but not pausing to discern His voice. “For many people, listening is an ability that must be developed and practiced. Sometimes this means sitting quietly in God’s presence without saying anything.

We should practice listening! One way to do this is to ask God if there is anyone He wants you to bless—and then be still and listen. You will be surprised at how quickly He responds by placing someone on your heart.” [5]

Part 6: Conclusion

*“Thou wilt keep [him] in perfect peace, [whose] mind [is] stayed [on thee]; because he trusteth in thee” (Isaiah 26:3). “One thing that is sorely lacking in the lives of many Christians/believers today is a daily, continuous sense or awareness of the presence of God. Busyness of life, the allure of the world, and undisciplined lifestyles all serve to desensitize us to the LORD’s presence. Learning to focus on Messiah in the midst of daily life is a challenge we all face.” [6B] Therefore, we encourage the Master’s **disciples** to give praise to Him, be filled with His Spirit, and walk in His light—persisting daily. “...the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son” (2 John 9).*

1. *“Jacob departed...and went toward Haran. He encountered the place and spent the night there...” (see B’resheit 28:10-11, Chumash, Stone Edition).* “This place was Mount Moriah, the site where Abraham bound Isaac on the Altar and where the Temple would later stand. Sages interpret the term which usually means *encountered*, to have the less common meaning *prayed*, so that Jacob’s primary encounter was not with a geographical location, but with God.” [6]

For disciples to seek to meet with YHVH, individually and corporately, is wisdom. To encounter Him in a dream or a vision results in both a personal and prophetic blessing. The prophet directed Israel to call a meeting. He cried out to the backslidden nation, *“Blow the trumpet in Zion” (read Joel 2:1-12)*. Joel envisioned judgment, gloominess, and calamity coming upon Zion and called for the people to sound the shofar and gather in repentance. *“Turn ye unto Me with all your heart.”*

In the nations today people meet for many reasons—political, commercial, athletic, entertainment, protest, and more. But the meeting we need most is for all classes to gather before YHVH in repentance and prayer. Amos said, *“Prepare to meet thy God” (Amos 4:12)*. This

is an admonition that should be considered more often. We will all stand before our Redeemer and it is profitable to keep this day in view. This is our time to meet daily with our Elohim. In our pilgrimage in the wilderness we come to certain harsh, stony areas all the time, but we, like Jacob, can find YHVH revealing Himself in those barren places.

Jacob is a type of each one of us who is returning to our Hebraic heritage. The ladder in his dream points to the cross of atonement which was situated on earth and still reaches into heaven, for it was the divine Mediator who was sacrificed upon it. He now stands above the cross and speaks to the heirs of salvations and says. *"I will never leave you."* In our journeys may our daily times of praise, prayer, and study become divine encounters with Elohim at the gates of glory.

2. *"And he went out."*

Jacob's life teaches every believer that each of us has a comfortable or familiar past, an old life, a family, or even a religion we must separate from in order to go forward and accept the challenge of pursuing YHVH's prophetic word and make our own contribution to the restoration of all things spoken of by the prophets (Acts 3:21). When Jacob went out to face his tests of faith and pursue his destiny, Elohim's voice spoke to him, personally assuring Jacob that the Most High would be in continual attendance with him in his pilgrimage, just as He was with his fathers. As Jacob was sent by Isaac, we each are sent by Yeshua. He has spoken the same encouragement to us: *Go ye therefore...and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world"* (Mt. 28:18-20). On our own treks through life, we believers may also trust in supernatural protection and provision as we press forward in our appointed service. Take heart and persevere in good works. As with Jacob, our enemies/obstacles are really opportunities for our growth, transformation, advancement, and victory, by virtue of His power [the Spirit is our personal Guide and Comforter] and redemption promises which are our portion today. Without trials and challenges (short or long) we tend to atrophy morally and spiritually. What would have become of Jacob without Esau and Laban? What would have happened to David if there had been no Goliath, or Saul? Where would much of the Apostolic Scriptures be if it were not for Paul's prison? How could John have written the Revelation [the consummation of all things] without his exile on Patmos? Hence, right behind your own trial/struggle is an open door to your destiny too.

Therefore, disciples of Yeshua, press forward in faith. *"No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper..."* (Isa. 54:17). And remember, the "double host" is assigned to us as well. *"The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear Him, and rescues them"* (Psalm 34:7). And, *"For He will give His angels charge concerning you, to guard you in all your ways. They will bear you up in their hands..."* (Psalm 91:11-12).

3. "We are, as Elohim's workmanship, created unto good works" (Eph. 2:10).

Scripture always exhorts the saints forward, encouraging us to continue in good works, which for Messianic Israelites [more accurately--*Natsarim*; from *natsar*, meaning "watchmen"] includes the restoration of the kingdom of Israel and the reconciliation of Judah and Ephraim. We are aware that friction with the world, the ingratitude of people, the coldness of secular society and its general opposition to righteousness, along with physical and emotional fatigue, wear upon our moral and spiritual commitments as returning Israelite disciples.

But we persevere in our journey, for great are our expectations for the times ahead, which include a spiritual awakening in our nation, revival of Spirit and truth for the Body of Messiah, an unprecedented outpouring of the Holy Spirit, a great harvest of Jewish people into the Kingdom of God, and a restored and returned army of born-again, Spirit-filled Ephraimites returning to their spiritual heritage! Great will be the rewards of our individual and corporate efforts. "And let us not be weary in well-doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Gal. 6:9).

Tamid Kadima-Always Forward. Shalom.

The Seven Study Questions

These will appear at the conclusion of every lesson.

The *lesson questions* are **a very important** aspect of the student's learning. All readers are strongly encouraged to take the time and include them in their study discipline. Prayerfully answer each one! They are intended to coax the student to rely upon interaction with the Holy Spirit, discern His voice, receive insight, and obtain prophetic enlightenment.

This process will assist each learner to (1) develop a vision for the restoration and reconciliation of the whole house of Israel, (2) grow in foundational knowledge of the Torah, (3) recover the principles, practice, and Holy Spirit power of the early, first-century Nazarene believers, and (4) experience and enjoy greater dimensions of the kingdom, power, and glory of Yeshua.

Note: The questions presented here are listed again at the conclusion of each lesson in both the *Torah Commentary Manuals* and the *Torah Discipleship Manuals*. **To repeat--be sure to follow through with them.**

1a. In your opinion, what is the main theme or teaching of each of the listed readings individually? Starting with the Torah: What is its title? What is the interpretation? What

truth/idea does the interpretation of the title suggest? What is the Torah section's main truth, as you see it?

1b. What is the corresponding idea in the Haftarah? In the Brit Chadashah?

2. What is the outstanding, central idea or subject that runs through and unites all the individual readings, as you see it? What does it say about discipleship?

3. Find in the Gospels where and how Yeshua declares, demonstrates, exemplifies, or exhibits the parsha's central truth, and explain. Give chapter and verse. Will you follow Him in living the lesson's truths?

4. In what way was the glory of YHVH [manifestations of His goodness] revealed in the parsha lesson?

5. What does the parsha teach you about your Hebrew roots, your identity, your destiny, your duty?

6. In what way did the Holy Spirit/Ruach HaKodesh personally speak to you during prayer and study this week? Did He impress you about how to apply the parsha lesson directly to your life? Explain.

7. *"...because of practice [by reason of use] have their senses trained [exercised] to discern..."*
You and I are called to return to hearing the voice of Elohim and to functioning in the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Progressing in these vital areas will require spiritual hunger, faith, and practice. He is waiting for us to approach Him.

Ask the Holy Spirit to speak into your spirit/heart as you pray each day. Look for opportunities to lay hands on the sick, or to be used in prophesy. Faithfully record the prophetic words and experiences you receive, and be sure to share them with your brethren.

Groups

It is helpful to **share** your answers, insights, and revelations with your study group (table class). We recommend meeting regularly in a small group. This allows for healthy interaction and exchange, and militates against stagnation. Practice operating with your spiritual gifts under the anointing of the Holy Spirit while among your friendly, supportive peers. Allow for open participation in leading praise and worship. Give altar calls at your table for healing, refreshing, and prophetic words. These are effective ways for all present to mature in their calling and gifting. The non-threatening small group provides a favorable and encouraging environment in which to learn the ministry of the Spirit. You will do well.

Next -for the upcoming generation

The parsha lessons are being crafted and shortened for younger readers. Be sure to use them. Teach the new generation! See Deuteronomy 6: 6-7.

1. Youths' Version Page

2. Childrens' Version Page

Footnotes: 1. Chumash, Stone Edition, B'resheet. 2. FireBible, Life Publishers International, p. 1275. 3. Pulpit Commentary, Gospel of John, Eerdmans. 4. Signs of Believers, FireBible, p. 1377. 5. Hearing from God Each Morning, Faith Words, J. Meyers, p.27. 6. Chumash, Stone Edition. 144-145. Also: 1A. Israel's Anointing, S. Treplinsky, *Charles Finney, 1837, p. 95*. 1B. None. 2B. Israel's Anointing, S. Teplisky, p. 97. 3B. Ibid, p. 96. 4B. Search the Scriptures: Out of Darkness, b. Baruch, Kindle. 5B. The Spiritual seasons of Life, D. Swan, p. 105. 6B. The Lost Art of Practicing His Presence, J. Goll.

VaYishlach "(And he sent")

Next

Contender's Voice

Discipleship Series

Book of Genesis/B'resheit

Lesson Eight

VaYishlach ("He sent")

Torah: Genesis//B'resheit 32:3-36:43

Haftorah: Hosea/Hoshea 11:7-12:12; Joshua/Yahoshua 11:5-19

Brit Chadashah: 1 Corinthians/Qorintyah alef 5:1-13; Revelation/Gilyahna 7:1-12

Lesson Sequence

1. Introduction: *The Call to Discipleship* **2.** Weekly Parsha: *The Torah—the Standard of Discipleship* **3.** Yeshua: *The High Priest of our Discipleship* **4.** The Holy Spirit/Ruach ha Kodesh: *The Power of Discipleship* **5.** Overcoming: *The Outcome of Discipleship* **6.** Conclusion

Consider

"Our nation has been turned over to darkness and now embraces the lie as if it were the truth. Absolute deceit occurs every day within the corridors of power, inside our government, and inside the corporate world. Every part of our society has been...corrupted, and in this corruption the destructive forces of sin and death have affected all of us. This is all part of the strong delusion that God has cast down on the nations who [should know better but] refuse to

hear Him.” [1A] *“For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish hearts were darkened” (Romans 1:21).* May His people not shrink back to unbelief in spite of deceptions. Pray and believe that the Almighty will pour out His Spirit, power, and righteousness on the nation, and deliver us from the lying spirit and apostasy. **He will reveal His glory and power, and bring restoration.**

1. Introduction—*The Call to Discipleship*

“Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple” (Luke 14:27). “The cross was not an implement of irritation or inconvenience. The cross was an implement of slow, tortuous death. Yeshua here is looking at the process of daily death to selfish desires and of the willingness to bear reproach for His name’s sake. Since our Savior suffered the rejection and agony of the cross, if we [truly] follow [obey] Him, we must be prepared for the same treatment.” [18] The world will not praise, applaud, promote, or love *true* disciples of Yeshua. We are of *His* Kingdom.

Last week's review: In Parsha *VaYetze* (“*And he went*”) we read about Jacob leaving his comfortable home and familiar surroundings to go forth to find a wife in Mesopotamia, the home of his relatives, and take the first steps toward fulfilling his destiny. We read about his marriage to Leah and Rachel, their handmaidens, and the children the four women bore him. Also, we observed that while working for Laban, Jacob had prospered but eventually fled from Padan-aram with his family. Offended, Laban pursued him. But YHVH warned Laban in a dream not to speak to Jacob “*either good or bad*”, which literally means “from good to bad”. In other words, when Laban caught up to Jacob as he returned to Canaan, he was not to go from an insincere peaceful, misleading greeting to harsh, violent accusations, or say anything in an attempt to manipulate, persuade, or reverse Jacob from his path. Laban was hostile toward Jacob but divine intervention took the edge off his anger and thus their tense meeting evolved into an amicable agreement.

Laban returned to his home and Jacob went forward unobstructed. Again we are encouraged by the Torah's story by reading about yet another demonstration of Elohim's unannounced, behind the scenes protection and care for His people as they journey forward, trusting Him. **This week's discipleship lesson preview:** In Parsha *VaYishlach* (“*And he sent*”) Jacob's flight back from

Padan-aram to Beersheba did not go as he had first envisioned, we are sure. In a nutshell, the message of his return to Canaan could be described thusly: *"A man's heart deviseth his way: but the Lord directeth his steps"* (Proverbs 16:9). This word applies to all of us from the house of Ephraim who are returning to our Hebraic identity, being restored to our biblical heritage, and growing in Spirit and Torah truth. In our pilgrimage YHVH deserves the glory because He is the One, by His mercy and faithfulness, who provides the heart with inspiration, imparts vision, implants sanctified ideas, sustains motivation, and gives us daily guidance in our restoration journey. **This week**, as we read about the miraculous events that took place in Jacob's return home, we will be inspired to *"trust in YHVH with all thine heart [to remain in the light of divine truth no matter what we feel or see], lean not to your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths"* (Prov. 3:5-6).

Disciples of Yeshua live under the direction of the Scriptures and the Holy Spirit. The conditions for us walking in divine guidance are: (1) *Self-surrender*-which means allowing Him to enlighten our intellect and discern His wisdom from our own; (2) *whole-hearted faith*-which means having an honest intent to acknowledge and follow His will; (3) *prophetic vision*-which is the enablement to perceive and hold fast to the object of faith despite the ups and downs, twists and turns, detours and delays found on the pathway of faith and obedience. The title of this week's parsha is *Va Yishlach*-("And he sent"). In its narrative we will read about Jacob's journey toward spiritual maturity and active, whole-hearted faith.

Part 2: Torah—The Standard of Discipleship

Parsha Lesson Eight: Va Yishlach ("He sent")

"Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one. [YHVH is our Elohim. YHVH is one.] You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart [see Jeremiah 31:33]. You shall teach them diligently to your sons [children] and talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way..." (Deut. 6:4-7). Unfortunately, believers have not taken this commandment seriously. And, hence, each generation has strayed progressively further from the Scriptures and faith in Messiah.

Torah

We have included a brief comment from the Jewish Virtual Library which cites the basic reason for the Oral Law. We include it only as a means for better understanding and appreciating our Jewish brethren, and their perception and love for the Torah. Although we believe the Oral Law

contains wisdom, meaningful traditions, and helpful teachings (James 1:5), we maintain that only the Written Law, the Torah, is divinely and completely inspired (Ex. 24:1-4; Deut. 4:2; 2 Tim. 3:16). "The Written Law is another name for the Torah.

The Oral Law is a legal commentary on the Torah, explaining how its commandments are to be carried out. Common sense suggests that some sort of oral tradition was always needed to accompany the Written Law...For example, the fourth of the Ten Commandments ordains, *'Remember the Sabbath to make it holy'* (Exodus 20:8). From the Sabbath's inclusion in the Ten Commandments, it is clear that the Torah regards it as the signature holy day of Israel, and an important holiday of rest. Yet, when one looks for the specific biblical laws regulating how to observe the day, one finds only injunctions against lighting a fire, going away from one's dwelling, cutting down a tree, and plowing and harvesting. Would merely refraining from these few activities fulfill the biblical command to make the Sabbath holy? Indeed, the Sabbath rituals that are most commonly associated with holiness--lighting of candles, reciting the *kiddish*, and the reading of the weekly Torah portion are not found in the Torah, but in the Oral Law." [2] The oral tradition attempts to clarify Torah commandments and explain practical applications of the Written Law, but we believe it is not equal to, or on the same spiritual level as the divinely inspired Torah Books. Therefore, we are *free* to honor the wisdom and truth we find in the oral tradition, but we are *bound* to obey Scripture. *"You shall not add to the word which I command you...you shall not add thereunto, nor diminish from it"* (Deut. 4:2; 12:32).

With this in mind, as New Covenant believers returning to the study of the Torah, may we remember to *always be led by the Holy Spirit* in how we obey and to what traditions we should accept into our practice of faith. Most importantly, may our studies always develop within us stronger faith, hope, and love...and bring us into deeper intimacy and fellowship with Yeshua.

1. *"Then Jacob sent messengers before him to his brother Esau in the land of Seir, the country of Edom"* (B'resheit 32:3). **Note:** In the following verses the disciple will observe, among other things: **(a)** the ministry of angels, **(b)** the courage and wisdom that is inspired by faith in YHWH, **(c)** the power and importance of prayer, and **(d)** the value of presenting gifts (generosity).

After the episode with Laban, Jacob was headed southward to the Jabbok River when angels, the messengers of Elohim, intercepted him [fell in with him] and informed him that Esau was nearby. The angelic company was not merely a vision but a supernatural manifestation of heavenly ministers. Jacob recognized them as Elohim's host, *Mahaneh Elohim*; i.e., the camp or the army of God, in contrast to the *Mahanoth* of Jacob; i.e., the house or band of Jacob. He named the place *Mahanaim*, plural--meaning two armies or camps, one before and one behind. The heavenly escort is an emblem of angelic guardianship which *"encampeth round about them that fear the Lord, and delivereth them"* and *"keepeth them in all their ways"* (Psalms 34 and 91). They obviously informed Jacob of Esau's approach, which knowledge enabled Jacob to send

messengers before him and his family to intercept Esau at Seir, and speak to him concerning Jacob's return. [Note: Seir means the "rough or bristling mountain" and was originally occupied by the Horite people. Afterwards Seir became Edom, the homeland of Esau and his descendants. Edom eventually became *Idumea*, a Greek word meaning, "pertaining to Edom."]

The messengers returned and told Jacob that Esau was coming with four hundred men. Jacob naturally feared possible hostile consequences. So Isaac's son did his utmost. He dutifully and wisely divided up his people, and also the herds and flocks, into two camps for protection, and then prayed humbly and fervently. *"Deliver me I pray thee..."*

Jacob did all he could do under the circumstances to prepare and protect his family against the advancing threat. He fulfilled his domestic duty and, at the same time, made a gesture to assuage [appease, pacify] his brother of the errors and ills of the past.

2. *"Jacob said, 'Oh God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, O Lord..." (32:9).*

When the messengers returned and reported to Jacob that Esau was coming attended by 400 armed men, it was proof that Esau had become a powerful chieftain. It is probable that he was already invading and occupying the region of the Horites with his small army, and living by the sword in Seir when Jacob arrived in the region. Esau had not yet removed himself entirely from Canaan. That he was approaching with such a formidable force, even though his intentions were probably not antagonistic, caused Jacob to dread the worst. *"Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed [perplexed]" (v. 7).* He thus prayed with humility and intensity unto the personal God of Abraham and Isaac, Who, Jacob remembered, had made the wonderful promises to his fathers of which he was the heir.

Jacob prayed with faith. The threatening circumstances before him were beyond his reach or ability to handle. So he called upon the One Who promised him, *"I will surely do you good, and make your seed as the sand of the sea" (V. 12).*

Afterwards Jacob sent a series of gifts, flocks and herds, to (a) soften the temperament of Esau (whom he had not seen for twenty years) and lift his countenance [enlist favor], and (b) show respect to his elder brother through gracious and courteous words, *"...my master (lord)" (v. 18).* [Kindness works wonders.] Then he sent his family over the Jabbok tributary, now called Way Zerka, or Blue River, which flows into the Jordan near Shechem. Jacob remained on the north side of Jabbok.

Jacob was wise and his experiences had given him understanding of human nature. He had learned that kindness could soften a hard heart. *"I will appease him with the present."* A repetition of generous presents would act upon Esau in the same way as a blacksmith's

hammer, through repeated strikes, shapes the posture of hot iron. There would be a noted affect.

May we learn that friendships, even receptivity to the Gospel, are usually won or restored through kind words, and deeds of grace and mercy.

3. *"Then Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him..." (see B'resheit 32:24-32).*

Note: In verses 24-32 we witness the mysterious wrestling match between Jacob and a man who we interpret as the visible, physical representation of the invisible Elohim, YHVH. The contest was indeed a physical effort, but a struggle of the soul of Jacob also occurred. That there was an inner conflict is made apparent by his prayers and tears. See Hosea 12:4.

The scene in the verses above took place on the north side of the Jabbok river at night, where Jacob remained alone, communing in the solitude of his soul with Elohim and making supplication and confession. It was at that time, when Jacob was intensely engaged in fervent, earnest prayer, that suddenly the heavenly visitor approached and the physical struggle began. In Hosea 12:4 the "man" is called an angel. He is recognized as Elohim by Jacob (verse 30), who sought a blessing from Him. The two wrestled until dawn. **[Note:** The linguistics in the narrative indicate that this was a bona-fide physical contest between YHVH and Jacob. It could be regarded as intense spiritual fellowship by which Jacob finally identified completely with YHVH. Also, some commentators believe Jacob's opponent was not divine, but whoever it was he had the authority to change the patriarch's name!] At last persistent Jacob, who became physically de-commissioned with a hip displacement and thereby was left without physical or personal wrestling resources, reverted back to supplication/prayer. When Jacob was at his weakest, most desperate condition, by the grace of Elohim, he secured the blessing and the name Israel from the lips of the Almighty. *"For when I am weak, I am strong" (2 Cor. 12:10).* [Paul is speaking of the great grace of God.]

One meaning of the word *Israel* is "for thou hast contended with Elohim." Jacob had begun at last to understand his self-reliance and personal striving were of themselves insufficient, even troublesome to Elohim's purposes. He was the heir of the Covenant and the appointed steward of glorious, divine promises. As such, the weapons of his spiritual warfare could not be carnal, but spiritual and thus mighty through Elohim. Jacob's destiny, of which his new name was an emblem, would only be accomplished through his faithful reliance upon YHVH. May we—who are Holy Spirit born, grafted-in believers—be reminded that we are Israel also (Romans 11), and it is the same with us. It will always be: *"Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith YHVH Sabaoth" (Zechariah 4:6).*

Jacob continued on his way from the encounter having a new level of intimacy with the Almighty. His faith, intense desire for God's best blessing, and importunity had prevailed. "No

more Jacob, the crafty, but Israel, God's prince (see Rev. 1:6). The token of victory over distrust, self-will, self-confidence. In knowledge of poverty is wealth (Mt. 5:3); in knowledge of weakness, strength (2 Cor. 12:10). The name is offered to all. The means, persevering prayer; but prayer not to force our will upon God, but that trust may be so entire that our wills may in all things embrace His." [M, Genesis, Eerdmans, p. 398]

4. *"Then Jacob lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, Esau was coming..." (B'resheit 33:1).* Jacob went forth as one who has been encouraged and refreshed, endued by a revelation and spiritual transformation by YHVH. His plan of repetitious gestures of kindness and humility, along with gracious words, worked favorably with his brother. The two men met. Esau "...ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him..." (v. 3), apparently harboring no bitterness. He accepted Jacob's gifts evidently out of courtesy, and offered to escort him to his destination, or at least to leave his men behind to help him on the way. [Note: "When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him" (Prov. 16:7).]

But Jacob, still in the after-glow of divine visitation and not desiring worldly company, declined the fellowship and assistance of Esau with simple excuses. It is true that Esau had shown kind and honest behavior toward Jacob, but he was still a "profane person" who would end up living away from his family of origin, and outside of the Holy Land. After meeting with Esau, in order to assure his family's privacy, Jacob secretly changed his route of return. He decided to enter Canaan by way of the Jordan instead, and he drove his herds toward Shechem, the first stop-over of his grandfather, Abraham. The decision to delay at Shechem was a mistake. He was in Canaan but not at Bethel, which YHVH identified Himself with when He spoke to him about leaving Laban. His journey was not completed, but he pitched his family tent anyway, and built an altar to thank YHVH for a safe trip to his homeland, and settled.

Jacob had matured during his exile but still had not become perfected in faith as had his grandfather Abraham during his life-journey, a holy pilgrimage which took the patriarch to the great test on Mount Moriah. The residue of Jacob's self-reliance is evidenced by his manipulation of circumstances to evade Esau's prolonged company. Jacob's spiritual maturing had born fruit, but the perfecting of his faith and patience would continue later at Bethel, and finally reach maturity as he sojourned in Egypt. Do not be discouraged if your faith and *halacha* [a disciple's walk with Yeshua] are not yet perfected [whose are?] because, as we are noticing in the parsha, sanctification is a life-long process.

Jacob, by his human nature a "supplanter/heel grabber", but by grace the heir of the Abrahamic covenant, is an example of the combination of the *natural* and the *supernatural* co-laboring together in Elohim's management of his life. He was naturally crafty, yet in some instances his cunning plans were divinely assisted when they represented the higher purpose of YHVH. We have read: **A.** *"And the man increased exceedingly."* He manipulated Laban's herds for his own

profit and his cunning efforts were blessed and successful. **B.** *"And Jacob went his way and the angels of God met him."* As Jacob hastily journeyed he was, without solicitation on his part, divinely escorted. **C.** *"And he said thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel."* After having carefully arranged for his meeting with Esau, Jacob received yet another blessing in time for his family reunion, this time directly from YHVVH.

As "Israel" [meaning *Elohim preserves*], his plans to gain favor with Esau worked. Thus we see that the employment of a man's regular, ordinary faculties, abilities, and talents are often used in connection with the Almighty as He guides, protects, and blesses His chosen ones, and leads them on to their destinies, and to His purposes.

The increase and favor that had come upon Jacob was added by YHVVH directly in answer to his prayer, obedience to YHVVH's Word, and maturing faith. The greatest blessing is spiritual prosperity, for all other healthful success [benefit, attainment, advantage] comes forth and is stabilized by it. *"Beloved, I pray that in all things you may prosper and be in good health just as [in proportion to] your soul prospers"* (3 John v. 2). John wrote to Gaius and other brethren wishing that they would *prosper* with a healthy body to house a good mind, and by these to enter into sound fortunes.

The lower *material* prosperity--money for instance, which anyone can earn--is not to be favored above the higher *spiritual* prosperity--peace and fellowship with YHVVH, which cannot be earned but are only received by faith that produces obedience to His Word. Divine prosperity is exemplified by a soul filled with faith, hope, and love, those enduring qualities that enrich, extend, and actually make possible an enduring healthy, fruitful, successful and joyful life. *"...but godliness is profitable in all things..."* (1 Tim. 4:8).

Note: The words *prosperity* and *prosper* have evolved over time. For example, *euodoo*, the Greek word for prosper found in 3 John 2, is translated "to help on the road; to succeed in reaching; to succeed in business affairs; to have a prosperous journey." The word prosperity also stems from the same root word for *shalom*, which is translated, "peace; safe; welfare; health; favour." Based on these definitions, we see that biblical prosperity involves success in every area of life--total well-being. [3]

Some lessons we can glean from the story of Jacob's return to Canaan are: **(1)** Human plans and efforts do not *bring to pass* or *prevent from coming to pass* Elohim's purposes and plans. Jacob represents the people of Elohim [disciples of Yeshua] who are appointed unto victory, but it is Elohim Who is faithful to watch over His elect, Who brings such success and victory to pass for each of us. Zechariah reminds us, *"...not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the Lord of Hosts"* (Zech. 4:6). We must remain dependent on Him in order to fulfill our destinies. **(2)** Effectual, prevailing prayer, to which we must regularly resort, is: **First**, the prayer of faith. **Next**,

it is the prayer of importuning. **Finally**, it is the prayer of intense desire. *"I will not let thee go, except thou bless me."* **And** let it be said, it is *the* prayer that readily moves the heart and hand of the Almighty.

When we are on the road of Elohim's commandments and making our way to a better country--the Kingdom of Heaven--we can expect helpful divine visitations/encounters as did our fore-fathers in the faith. Pray to receive them. The Almighty is no respecter of persons. Holy experiences with His manifest, tangible presence should be expected and highly desired. A visitation of His glory can do more for/in a believer [transform, deliver, empower, equip, enlighten] in just a few moments than can years of religious training.

Scripture is full of such divine occurrences which are openly and generously revealed, written for us as examples and encouragements. Therefore, seek Him as Jacob did on the north bank of the Jabbok, and do not let go of Him... *"except thou bless me."*

"The 'prince' who has been lifted by the grace of God out of the humiliation of his fear and shame to the height of His favor at the throne of the Most High now reveals princely power. He takes captive Esau's heart; he blesses him in the name of God, he bestows his gifts upon him." [R., Eerdmans Pulpit Commentary, Genesis] Thus the brothers met, conversed, were reconciled, and then parted company amicably.

Esau returned to Mount Seir and Jacob journeyed to Succoth. Sometime later he moved on to Shechem. Let us remember from our story the power of kindness in disarming anger and breaking down opposition. *"A soft answer turns away wrath..."* and, *"By long forbearing is a prince persuaded, and a soft tongue breaketh the bone [of contention]"* (Psalm Proverbs 15:1 and 25:15).

5. *"Now Jacob came safely to the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan...then he erected there an altar and called it El-Elohe-Israel" (B'resheet 33:18-20).*

Jacob and Esau had met, were reconciled, and then separated from one another. Esau traveled to Mount Seir, ultimately withdrawing from Canaan altogether at a later date. Jacob traveled to Succoth. There he and his family built booths/coverings for the cattle and stayed for a considerable period.

Later he moved to Shechem where he purchased a field (without employing trickery), and built an altar to YHVH that he named, *El-elohe-Israel*, which means "the altar of the God of Israel". Jacob was then acting as the priest of his house by affectionately remembering and honoring the Elohim of his fathers, who had delivered his family from ruin.

6. *"And Dinah the daughter of Leah...went out to see the daughters of the land (B'resheet 34:1).*

Dinah was indiscrete. Curious and vain, she was lured to mingle and flirt with the surrounding pagan people. Being about the age of marriage, she may also have been wondering about finding a husband. The prince of the region, Shechem, the son of an Amorite, became infatuated with Dinah and in a fit of unrestrained passion dishonored [raped] her. When Jacob and his sons learned of the gross violation they grieved over the incident, and the boys, especially Simeon and Levi, became exceedingly angry. The two, assisted to some extent by the other sons, attacked the city and massacred the men while they were recovering from circumcision [read the passage], and took the spoils which included woman, children, and all livestock.

Their great anger is understandable but it was no excuse for the mayhem and excessive violence. Jacob scolded the sons for their rage and cruelty and complained that he would be despised in the land for the vengeful action, but the rebuke was weak. Shechem had abused and wronged Dinah. However he did love her, did not disdain or shun her, and was willing to be circumcised in order to marry her. Apparently he did not intend to treat her like a harlot. Nevertheless, there is a place for strong, retributive justice to compensate for the crime, but in this case the punishment visited upon the city was excessive. Everyone suffered immensely. The narrative teaches us that unrestrained anger fosters excess and produces wrong-doing and trouble of many sorts. An angry temperament is a hindrance to the work of Messiah. *"Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down on your wrath...let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice" (Eph. 4:26,31)*. Let us not provide the enemy with a stronghold from which to operate. Yeshua said, *"Judge not according to appearance [with a heat impulse], but judge righteous judgment [with a calm spirit, a cool head]" (Jn. 7:24)*.

Dinah's curiosity about the Shechemite neighbors led her into mingling with them, and she ended up being shamed. A cruel and heavy-handed reaction followed by revengeful brothers. Because he feared for his family's extermination at the hand of the outraged people of the region, Jacob prayed for divine assistance and fled. This is the last we hear of Dinah's life in Scripture.

We can learn **several lessons** from the narrative including: **A.** There is always a danger in mingling with worldliness. We are warned to not love the world or be enticed with its baubles, beads and trinkets. *"Love not the world..."* **B.** Unbridled lust bears bitter fruit and leads to destruction. **C.** Good men can fall into wickedness when calm, godly counsel is rejected and they are left to their own passions. **D.** The massacre of the Shechemites shows us again that the innocent often suffer along with the guilty. **E.** Jacob's name was dishonored more by his sons' reckless revenge than it was by Dinah's misfortune. It is true that, sometimes, a man's worst foes and difficulties are found within his own household. Hence, YHVH's counsel for New

Covenant leaders is found in 2 Timothy 3:1-16: *"A bishop [leader, elder, spiritual father, so forth] then must be...one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection...moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil."* This is the standard for which we aim.

Some commentaries say that Dinah had a son by Sheshem, and that Simeon married her—but was not intimate with her—in order to remove her shame. It seems likely, if that's the case, that Dinah went into Egypt with the family years later.

7. *"Then God said to Jacob, Arise, go to Bethel and live there, and make an altar there to God who appeared to you when you first fled from your brother Esau" (Gen. 35:1).*

After twenty years Jacob returned to Bethel to fulfill his vow (which did not lose force as the years passed) and he built an altar there. Elohim [possibly visibly again] spoke (**a**) affirming Jacob's new name, Israel, and (**b**) re-confirming the covenant. *"...be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins; and the land I gave Abraham and Isaac, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed after thee will I give the land" (Gen. 35:12).* Abraham and Isaac had only one son of promise each. However, now, through Jacob-Israel, the time for increase had arrived. [**Note:** *Israel* refers to Jacob, the descendants of Jacob, and the Northern Kingdom. Israel also points to regenerated, born-again, grafted-in Believers, the Jewish State, and Yeshua, Who is the perfect, quintessential Israelite. *Israel* means: *God preserves.*] Thus we are cheered and reassured by the patriarch's visitation and family growth. **First**, because we are reminded that our Elohim never forgets or ignores His people or His promises. He fulfills His Word. **Secondly**, because sometimes He will speak directly and personally to remind us and encourage us in our duty. **Therefore**, let us all who are called by the name of Israel appreciate the privilege and importance of hearing the voice of YHVH and of being led by His Word. But someone might ask, is it *that* important to listen? Can't we "returnees" just wait around for the translation [rapture] and in the meantime do our own thing? Absolutely not! Paul enforces our answer clearly in Ephesians. We have been made alive in Messiah, and *"...are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them" (Eph. 2:10).* It has been said that a life without a commitment to duty is empty, bereft of satisfaction and joy. Solomon, after years of seeking every kind of education, carnal pleasure and indulgence, finally wrote, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the sum of wisdom: *"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty [joy, contentment, fulfillment, reward, self-actualization, reason for being] of man" (Ecc. 12:13).*

In your opinion, what are the prepared "good works" [divine decrees] in which those of the House of Israel (His restoration workmanship) should walk? List them. Returning to Hebraic

truth, supporting Israel, esteeming the Spirit, knowing His voice, being led by Him, service, and giving generously and regularly certainly would qualify.

A person may experience the power, inspiration, and leading of the Holy Spirit in different ways, including through the gifts of the Spirit, signs and wonders, in the conscience, by inner and open visions, dreams, and through the still small voice mentioned earlier. Keep in mind, when one is *born-again* through faith in Yeshua, the Spirit (**a**) regenerates [recreates/revitalizes] his human spirit, then (**b**) enters it with His life, power, and voice to dwell/remain therein, and (**c**) communicates/bears witness with us primarily from that [Holy of Holies] position.

His words, thoughts, ideas, leadings, impressions, confirmations, et al, engage the soul--which we will regard as composed of mind (all levels), heart, and will--to direct, comfort, edify, and encourage. The Holy Spirit will also alert and awaken believers to truth and falsehood. He provides discernment concerning the dependability of external counsel, circumstances, and other worldly communications and stimuli that impress our senses.

Elohim graciously gave us the Holy Spirit for divine fellowship, and so we could have intimate communication with Him from within. [John 16:7.] Intimacy, hearing Him within, is the most desirable, personal means of hearing however. If we are outside of the intimate (whisper) range--dull of hearing and discerning because of hearts that have waxed gross through sin, unbelief, apathy, immorality--then louder, external ways can be effective to gain our attention. In Kings 19 Elijah heard from YHVH in external, spectacular signs but also by His still small voice. It was by the voice within that the prophet experienced true personal fellowship with the Almighty, a sweet assurance of affection based on a covenant relationship.

The prophet was greatly encouraged. Because Yeshua ascended after His resurrection and sent the promise of the Father, the Spirit, nothing less than personal, divine, supernatural fellowship and guidance is our holy inheritance in the Messiah. *"Hear and understand"* (Mt. 15:10). Receive **all** that He has purchased and provided for you through His atonement! The New Covenant is the covenant of the Spirit.

Yeshua spoke in parables to the crowds because, *"...they see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand"* (Mt. 13:13). Judah, Ephraim, and their companions must not be found so ill-conditioned and slow in these exciting and demanding days of the restoration of the Tabernacle of David. Let us sight the reasons why some of us are dull of hearing His voice and seeing His visions, and be then finished with excuses altogether and grow up.

First, many believers simply do not listen to or look for His voice or revelation when in prayer. They just talk. Prayer and study are supposed to be dialogues. **Secondly**, many lead lives that are overly/un-necessarily busy, and like Martha of Scripture are upset, preoccupied, distracted about unimportant details and carnal amusements. **Thirdly**, there are the "voice-stifling" snares

of unbelief and disinterest. **Fourthly**, there are the fear of mistakes and inability in dealing with innocent errors, (such as does occur with the Saints functioning in the gift of prophecy, for instance). This attitude impedes hearing and responding to the voice of YHVH. **Fifthly**, many are content with expanding their knowledge only, but not with experiencing His manifest glory, in spite of the fact that such encounters are absolutely necessary for strong, balanced spiritual growth. Servant-leaders must avoid the pitfalls of apathy and intellectualism. Otherwise, these leaders will cause stumbling, and become barriers harassing [interdicting, interfering with] those trying to enter further into the kingdom, power, and goodness of Elohim.

Finally, one more point is necessary to make about the Spirit's *internal witness*. It is true He will lead you internally, from within your re-born, recreated spirit, and His voice/word will resonate and leaven your mind and heart with His Mind alerting you to His ideas and feelings concerning your walk of faith. But He is Elohim, and therefore His ways are above our ways. His understanding is higher than is our understanding. He can even lead you when you are not conscious/cognizant of His influence and control. With that in mind, carefully maintain your daily priestly devotions of prayer, study, and worship, and commit your way to Him. In this way, you will always end up in the right place at the right time--as you walk in obedience to His Word/Torah (all divine revelation). The *holy family* provides us with an example. "...*there went out a decree...that all the world should be taxed...and Joseph went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto...Bethlehem...to be taxed [or so he thought] with Mary*" (Luke 2:1,4,5). The righteous couple went forth toward the fulfillment of ancient prophetic Scripture, unaware they were being led by the Spirit. Joseph and Mary were small (albeit important), precisely positioned cogs in the great machinery of prophecy that the hand of YHVH was slowly turning, so that they, without fully comprehending the divine orchestration of events, would end up in just the prophesied place at just the right time! Yeshua was born in Bethlehem, as prophesied in Micah 5:3-4.

Go forward like Jacob in developing your fellowship with Yeshua and His Father, your Abba. Listen for the voice of the Almighty and share with others your experience. Do not fear making mistakes. Spiritual growth is a life-long process and none of us has "arrived". If you are sincere, He will protect and deliver you even from mistakes. "...*for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance [performance], but the Lord looketh on the heart [the desire for communion]*" (1 Sam. 16:7).

Continuing with the parsha Scriptures: "*Then Jacob said...put away your strange gods...change your garments...and let us arise and go to Bethel. And I will make there an altar unto Elohim*" (verses 2-3).

Jacob went forth to Bethel. The crime of his sons made his removal from the land necessary. Further, his direction was a direct invitation from heaven. He was to build an altar on the same

spot where he had received his dream of the ladder and angels. It was fitting that Jacob's entire family should worship YHVH with sincerity and purity of heart. All the hidden idols and unholy objects, even such things as garments and earrings brought from Haran or gathered at Shechem, were discarded. The removal of strange figurines from Jacob's family and servants, along with their washings and putting on of clean clothing, symbolized their consecration as they prepared for the journey to Bethel. In this way he went forward. The troop was unmolested as they journeyed to Luz. In a short time the family arrived safely at Bethel.

8. *"Then God appeared to Jacob again when he came from Padan-aram, and He blessed him. God said to him...you shall no longer be called Jacob, But Israel shall be your name" (B're. 35:9).*

As we've noted, Jacob had his company put away all heathen icons and images, and they journeyed to Luz in the land of Canaan. There he built an altar, and he called the place *El-beth-el*, meaning "God of the House of God." He was blessed with the appearance of Elohim. This was a visible manifestation, not just audible voice as at Shechem, or a dream, as at Bethel earlier. YHVH further blessed the patriarch with a renewal of the promises of the covenant and confirmed the name, *Israel*. This confirmation of the name of Israel was YHVH's assurance to Jacob that his seed would prosper, all the covenant promises would, in the end, be fulfilled, and His descendants would one day stand triumphantly upon Mount Zion with Messiah. In the chapter we also read of Rachel's death after giving birth to Benjamin, and her being buried in Bethlehem. The passage includes the shameful and sorrowful incident of Reuben lying with Bilhah, Jacob's concubine. This was an incident from which Reuben never recovered.

Some things the story of Jacob's return to Bethel teaches:

A. Good people need to listen, and be reminded and re-encouraged by the Almighty of their responsibilities. **B.** True worship is established upon faith, heart purification, repentance and reformation. [**Note:** Singing and dancing are an aspect of worship, but there is more. True worship sanctifies the believer and transforms him. In this verse Yeshua describes what could be called true worship: *"If anyone would come after Me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me"* (Mt. 16:24). Worship is giving pre-eminence to Yeshua in all things, privately and publicly.] **C.** YHVH is well able to protect and provide for His people as they walk in His appointed paths. **D.** Believers are not exempt or kept from the afflictions and troubles of life. We must endure to the end. **E.** The Elohim of Israel loves His people and forgets none of His promises. He must not be lightly esteemed, overlooked or forgotten by whom He loves and remembers—us! **9.** *"Now there were twelve sons of Jacob...And Jacob came to Isaac his father unto Mamre, which is Hebron...And the days of Isaac were a hundred and fourscore years. And Isaac breathed his last and died, and was gathered to his people, an old man of ripe age..." (from 35:16-28).*

Jacob needed the spiritual uplifting that resulted from his confrontation with pre-incarnate Yeshua at the Jabbok. Yet his trials in the school of faith would continue.

A. There was *"on the way to Ephrath"* the death of Rachel, whom he buried in a lonely grave. A pillar was erected over the site in order to show his deep affection and mark the resting-place of a beloved ancestress of Israel. **B.** There was the grotesque sin of Reuben, which was his incest with Bilhah. It was a sin punishable by death according to the Torah. *"Israel heard"* of the affair. Burdened with deep grief and shame over the transgression between his wife and first-born son, and wondering if this horrible episode would bring an end to YHWH's mercies on his house, Jacob did not rant or curse but remained speechless, sullen in silence. We are reminded of Yeshua's humility: *"...and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth"* (Isa. 53:7). The School of Messiah, in which we are being made conformable to His likeness, has two required majors for graduation. They are: **(1)** Learning the power of His resurrection, and **(2)** learning the fellowship of His sufferings [trials, struggles, difficulties, etc.]. See Phil. 3:10-11. Jacob serves as our example and inspiration. **C.** There was also the death of Isaac, Jacob's father. Isaac stayed alive long enough to enjoy the return of his son at Mamre. His end was peaceful and he was honored with a reverent and respectful funeral with both his sons in attendance.

"Now these are the generations of Esau [Hairy], who is Edom [Red]" (B'resheit 36:1). The chapter details the descendants of Esau. He had three wives. He took his wives, family, servants, and all that pertained to him and left Canaan altogether.

Though Jacob and Esau had flocks and herds that needed space, the most compelling reason for Esau's withdrawal from Canaan was his sense that **(a)** the decision of YHVH was opposed to him remaining and, **(b)** what's more, that the land had indeed been given to his brother's by the will of Providence.

10. *"Then Esau took his wives and his sons and his daughters and all his household and his livestock...cattle and all his goods which he acquired in the land of Canaan and went to another land away from his brother Jacob" (36:6-7).*

Esau removed his house from Canaan peacefully and permanently, and settled in Edom, east of Jacob. He grew into a numerous and mixed people who prospered and eventually developed a national government.

Esau became an exiled people also, for they originated in Canaan but developed into a nation entirely outside its borders. Only the house of Jacob, YHVH's heirs of promise, remained within the boundaries of the land of promise. In the end we observe that, in the world and as well as in the Kingdom, the last can often become first and the first last (Luke 13:30). One thing is certain though—the heirs of the covenant will, sooner or later, obtain their full and lasting inheritance.

Haftorah

1. *"If you go up high like an eagle, and if you place your nest among the stars, from there I will bring you down, says the Lord...and the house of Jacob will be fire and the house of Joseph a flame, and the house of Esau shall become stubble..." (Obad. 1:4, 17).* Obadiah's ministry covered a period of about eight years. He confirmed the promises of deliverance and restoration for Israel. Edom, who was treacherous with Judah, was given no promise of restoration to follow after its punishment.

The Book of Obadiah highlights the **divine law of retribution**: *"...as thou hast done...so it shall be unto thee"* (V. 15). The root of the conflict between the two nations is found in the original relationship between Jacob and Esau.

Part 3: Yeshua—*The Eternal High Priest of the Believers Discipleship*

"Surely our griefs [sickness] He Himself bore, and our sorrow [pains] He carried...He was pierced through for our transgressions, and was crushed for our iniquities; the chastening for our well-being [shalom, peace] fell on Him, and by His scourging we are healed" (Isaiah 53:4-5). Our High Priest has provided for all our needs through His atonement, resurrection, ascension to the Right Hand of Glory, and intercession! Offer Him praise!

"He appointed twelve—designating them apostles—that they might be with Him..." (Mk.3:14).

"The **primary call of a disciple** (i.e., a disciplined learner and devoted follower of Messiah) is to 'be with' Yeshua—to develop a close personal relationship with Him. Serving YHVH's purposes involves instruction and practice of various ministries, but these things must [best] flow out of time spent with Yeshua. Anyone who desires to serve Messiah must first practice His presence (Jn. 15:26-27; Acts 4: 13)...out of a deep relationship with Messiah comes the power and sensitivity to [most] effectively serve and minister for Him." [4]

1. *"And He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, O My Father..." (Mt. 26:36-46).*

Jacob was very distressed upon hearing the messengers' report concerning Esau's approach. He cried out, *"O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac..." (B'resheet 32:9).* His travail reminds us of Yeshua praying in the Garden of Gethsemane. *"Oh My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me: Nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt"* (v. 46). Fully aware of the coming suffering, the physical, mental, and emotional agony He would have to endure by taking upon Himself the sins of humanity, Yeshua went to a place for solitary prayer, a place to which He had resorted before, the Garden. He was accompanied by His three closest

disciples, James, John, and Peter. Leaving them behind a short distance, Messiah proceeded to a quiet spot. *"My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with Me."*

Isaiah reveals the Messiah as *"a man of sorrows"* (Isa. 53:3), but He was also a Man of gladness, and there was much joy in His life. In John we read, *"These things I have spoken unto you that my joy might remain in you..."* (Jn. 15:11). In the Scroll it is written of Yeshua: *"I delight to do thy will, O My God..."* (See Ps. 40:7-8). A life of purity, of blessing men and of obeying the Almighty, produces happiness that the world cannot bestow.

So it was with the Master. His joy was full, yet He also had sorrows that we cannot fully comprehend, whose source was the dark cloud of sin that permeates and covers the world.

It is an indescribable evil that carnal men cannot feel with much sensitivity, but the holy, unflawed Lamb of God could, and did, as He bore its entire heinous, disease-producing, soul-damning, polluted weight on the cross. He endured the shame through prayer and submission to the Father's will.

The fruit of Messiah's sorrow--obtaining a name above every name, securing the salvation of man, and winning a full victory over Satan, sickness, and sin--was by submission to His father's will. His everlasting reward will be complete with the transfiguration of all Israel as the Bride of Messiah, His eternal companion who will be like Him, and without spot or wrinkle.

Part 4: The Holy Spirit—*The Power of Discipleship*

"The most powerful Being in the universe adores you...this is the confidence the Spirit offers us. Messiah redeemed us from the curse we were under so that we could receive the promise of the Holy Spirit. The "promised Spirit" is not a small promise. Yeshua suffered a grueling death so that [we] could have the amazing gift of the Holy Spirit. How dare we take this for granted. And this Spirit is not a remote force. He takes up residence in our lives, in our very bodies, and by doing so brings with Him a deep level of security." [4B] *"...for if I do not go away, the Helper [Paracletos--Comforter, Advocate, Intercessor] will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you"* (Jn. 16:7). Therefore, welcome Him as your Teacher and Guide throughout your life. He is the Administrator of the Body of Messiah in the earth.

"But you shall receive power..." (Acts 1:8).

"The Spirit is not a passive power that we can wield as we choose. The Spirit is God [Elohim], a Being who requires that we submit ourselves to be led by Him. Do you really want to be led?

Even people who are natural leaders don't get to lead the Spirit. Everyone is called to be led by Him." [J.C., Forgotten God]

"These signs will accompany those who believe..." (Mark 16:17).

The signs and wonders accomplished through **true disciples** of Messiah (Luke 10:17; Acts 5:12; 6:8; 14:3) confirm that the Gospel message [the "Good News" of Messiah's atonement and resurrection] is true and endorsed by supernatural, divine, providential power. Signs by the Spirit show openly that "...God's kingdom (His ultimate power, authority, purpose and way of life) has come to earth in a powerful and supernatural way. Miracles and supernatural signs done in Yeshua's name (i.e., as His representatives, with His authority) also reveal that Jesus is alive, active, present and working through His people (see John 10:25; Acts 10:38).

We, Messiah's followers, "...are not only to bring the message of God's kingdom (28:19-20; Mk 16:15-16; Lk. 24:47) but also the power of the kingdom." A signs and wonders ministry "reveals the completeness of Messiah's salvation, which is able to liberate and heal the entire being—body, soul, and spirit (Isaiah 53)." [5] *"...go...heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils..." (Mt.10:7-8).*

The New Covenant indicates that signs and wonders are not *giftings* restricted to a few special people, but have been made available through the Holy Spirit to all believers who obey Him, proclaim His truth, and trust His promises. If the gifts and works of the Spirit are not manifesting in our assemblies, whether they are large or small, it is not the failing of Yeshua by any means.

The failure indicates a possible shortage of faith, a lack of interest, or maybe an incomplete perception of duty on the part of his followers (Mt. 17:14-21). Messiah Yeshua has taught us that as we remain loyal to Him, His authority, power, and manifest presence will always remain with us as we do warfare with the kingdom of darkness (Mt. 28:18-20; Lk. 24:47-49; Eph. 6:10-18).

1. *"Then they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit" (Acts 8:15).*

It is our role as followers of the Messiah is to personally, intimately know our Elohim, and to become the priests and witnesses of our generation. For this reason Yeshua said, *"All power is given unto Me in heaven and earth, go ye therefore...You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and [thus supernaturally empowered and enabled, equipped] you shall be [sanctified, set-apart, anointed] witnesses [disciples and teachers] unto Me..." (Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 1:8).* Yeshua made the promise that Believers would receive victorious power by the Spirit coming upon them, realizing we would need the Spirit to be truly effective disciples and workers in His harvest.

It is our duty to have such divine power, the Holy Spirit Himself, come upon us. We must keep in mind that our heritage as born-again, grafted-in Israelites is not only to return to our Hebrew roots, whole-word truth and apostolic traditions—that is, the glory and power of YHVH as revealed in His Torah!

To know the Holy Spirit better it would be helpful to know the symbols used to represent Him. They teach us important truths about Him by shedding light upon His personality, actions, and functions. The symbols include:

A. Water: Symbolizes refreshing, washing, and strength [flood], and what is more, it is crucial for existence. *"For by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit" (1 Cor. 12:13).* Also, *"...out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this he spoke of the Spirit, which they that believe in him should receive: for the Holy Spirit was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified" (Jn. 7:38-39).*

The Spirit is absolutely necessary for the maintenance of our spiritual lives. Water symbolizes birth, life, and life-giving functions. Jesus said, *"...a man must be born of water and the Spirit..." (John 3:5).*

Note: The term *"born of water"* in the verse could reference natural birth or possibly John's water baptism of repentance. The point Yeshua is making is that entry into the Kingdom is not possible through human effort. The Kingdom of God is entered only by repentance and the new birth, the spiritual birth accomplished by the Holy Spirit through faith.

Water can be seen as descriptive of the Holy Spirit imparting life and refreshing to the spiritually dead. *"Holy Spirit and fire"* is a similar phrase referencing the function of providing life accompanied by enlightenment, energy, zeal, and the burning away/elimination of dross.

B. Oil: Signifies anointing with oil done by holy men to confirm, position, and empower a person to an office. This *type* of the Spirit symbolizes the healing and authorizing functions of the Spirit. For example in the Old Testament priests, kings, and prophets were anointed with oil. *"Then thou shall take anointing oil and pour it upon his head, and anoint him" (Ex.29:7).* Aaron and his sons were consecrated in this way. *"But you have an anointing from the Holy One...the anointing which you have received of him abideth in you..." (1 Jn. 2:20, 27).*

Likewise, Yeshua has anointed and consecrated us to our N.T. priesthood role by the Spirit. At His baptism by John the Baptist, Yeshua Himself received the fullness of the Holy Spirit. Later He said in Capernaum, *"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me for He hath anointed me..." (Lk. 4:18).* The Spirit lubricates [eases friction and resistance in] all areas of a yielded Believer's life and

ministry. The Good Shepherd stands ready to anoint our heads with fresh oil daily. See Psalm 23 and James 5:14.

C. Fire: Signifies divine energy, zeal, illumination, light, empowerment (to witness), and the burning away/purging of dross in the Believer's soul, as functions of the Holy Spirit. *"And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit..." (Acts 2:3-4).* It is written of Messiah Yeshua, *"He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire" (Mt. 3:11).* Fire warms, purifies, and illuminates. In the Old Covenant we read, *"And the Lord [YHVH] went before them...by a pillar of fire by night" (Ex. 16:21).*

D. Dove: Yeshua came up from the waters of baptism and the *Spirit*, in the form of a dove, descended and lit upon Him. *"...and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him" (Mt. 3:16).* The Holy Spirit is a gentle, persistent, and powerful Comforter. But as a dove, His work and Word can be callously shooed away, and thereby leave Him grieved, quenched, and resisted. He will not come forth in His fullness where His ministry is ignored or rejected. The dove also represents the purity and peace of the Spirit.

E. Wind: The Spirit, like a *"wind that blows where it will" (Jn. 3:8)*, cannot be seen or controlled by man, and His arrival in power on the Day of Pentecost is described as *"a sound from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind" (Acts 2:4).* In the creation account, the divine power of the Spirit of God [Ruach Elohim], like a holy wind or breath, was the initial movement of Elohim for life and order in the chaotic world, *"moved upon the face of the waters" (Gen. 1:2).*

The Spirit was the initial revitalizing presence of Elohim in the earth. The word "Ruach", which we know is interpreted, Spirit, means *wind, breeze or breath*, and symbolizes strength. Pray for His breezes to refresh you regularly.

F. Cloud: The Holy Spirit came upon Mary [Miriam] and over-shadowed her. *"...the Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the highest shall overshadow thee..." (Lk. 1:35).* And the *"cloud came and over-shadowed" Yeshua, Peter, John, and James on the Mount of Transfiguration. [Lk. 9:34]* When the Israelites left Egypt, *"the Lord [YHVH] went before them by day in a pillar of cloud, to lead them [in] the way..." (Exodus 13:21).* Further, the Spirit manifests the glory of YHVH. *"...they looked toward the wilderness, and behold, the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud" (Ex. 16:10).* The Spirit, as a holy cloud leads, covers, provides outpouring, and protection. Remain under His cloud (Ps. 91).

As we each walk in the light He provides for us, we shall experience the multi-faceted work of the Holy Spirit in our lives, go on to bear fruit, and develop in the likeness of Yeshua. The Spirit

has been sent to gather and bring forth a prepared, sanctified, Torah-centered and Ruach-honoring Bride.

Glory Note: *"Then I arose, and went forth into the plain: and behold, the glory of the Lord stood there, as the glory which I saw by the River Chebar: And I fell on my face" (Read Ezek. 3:22-23).*

Ezekiel was commanded to withdraw from Tel-Abib and go to a certain valley where he could retire into undistracted, undisturbed communion with the Most High. *"I will there talk with thee."* The prophet went forth to the assigned destination and beheld the glory of YHVH, and His visions. *"Behold, the glory of the Lord stood there."*

What was the effect of the divine visitation of glory upon Ezekiel? *"And I fell on my face as dead."* He was humbled. Every revelation a person receives of YHVH's glory and majesty always produces a revelation of Yeshua's greatness and the recipient's own inferiority and spiritual poverty. The Messiah said, *"He [the Spirit] shall glorify Me" (Jn. 16:14).*

Such self-perception is actually healthy, for it tends towards obedience with thanksgiving and is conducive to sensitivity in hearing and understanding more clearly the word of the Lord. Visions of His glory are the heritage of all Redeemed Israel and we are encouraged to believe for them. *"He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me: and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest [reveal] Myself to him" (John 14:21).*

Part 5: Overcoming—The Outcome of Discipleship

*"To 'overcome' [walk in victory over temptation and sin] in this world is no minor matter, because it requires us to truly believe in Jesus and to follow Him faithfully to the end, keeping that faith and that belief intact in spite of all the trials and temptations of this world. Persecution and trouble, the worries of the world and the deceptiveness of wealth (among just a few notable causes) have led many to abandon their good intentions, their good walk with Jesus, and, eventually, their faith." [5B] Thus, Yeshua commanded His eleven disciples to *make disciples*, not casual converts.*

1. *"Then Jacob sent messengers..." (B'resheet 32:3).*

Jacob had to leave comfort and familiarity behind as he went forward in his journey of faith. He found along the entire way that both blessings and tribulations, of one sort or another, were always present with him. When returning from Aram where he had faced numerous struggles, Jacob found his family threatened with yet another problem--the approach of his brother Esau

and his four-hundred man army. The prospect of a happy reunion with his father, Isaac, was marred by the prospect of an unhappy reunion with his brother, Esau. Such is the nature of life.

Good times and not-so-good times generally run concurrently. Some say life consists of mountains and valleys, highs and lows, ups and downs. A few others say life is like a railroad track, where one rail represents the blessing and the other rail represents the sorrow [trials, struggles, et al] of life, and both run together and are always present in life to one degree or another. We favor the latter view and think it is supported by Scriptures. *"He prepares a table for me [blessings] in the midst [presence] of my enemies [amid sorrow, trials, troubles]."* (Ps. 23:5). Jacob became an overcomer through prayer and obedience. He learned to cope with the negative and rejoice in the positive, and he thus continued forward to fulfill his destiny. Wherever our tracks lead, if we will not become discouraged with the trailing *"little foxes"*, but follow Jacob's example of persistence in pressing into the Kingdom of God and submitting to His instructions in all things, we will fulfill our destinies and prevail over our enemies also.

Overcomer disciples--you can hear His Voice!

"Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser: teach a just man, and he will increase in learning" (Proverbs 9:9).

Elohim loves us too much to allow us to stay in the same spiritual place and condition for long, or settle in familiar comfort zones. He wants His people to continually grow stronger in faith, and move into deeper and more intimate fellowship with Him.

When we sense something stirring within us, a sanctified idea or feeling that suggests a change in coming, we need to seek Abba, ask what is happening, and wait upon His answer. Our time of prayer and study is vitally important to our growth in grace and spiritual maturity. Little changes He might want us to make in our lives can produce big results.

"Now therefore, I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, show me now thy way, that I may know thee [increasingly and progressively], that I may find grace in thy sight..." (Exo. 33:13).

The prayer of Moses is ours also. The more time we spend in His presence, the better we will come to know Him, the more sensitive we will be to His love and will, and the more like Him we will become. YHWH told Moses he had found favor in His sight (v. 12).

In other words, "Ask whatever you desire and it will be done for you." [See John 15:7, 16.] Moses wanted to know YHWH more intimately and his prayer was answered. May that same desire burn in us. We can hear Him and know Him to the extent we want. It just takes time.

Part 6: Conclusion

'If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples.'" What this phrase "truly my disciples" implies is that there are disciples who are not truly disciples. The word "truly" means "really"—"really my disciples." In other words, there are real and unreal disciples. There are authentic and inauthentic disciples. There is discipleship that is merely outward, and discipleship that goes down to the root." [6B] Which are you? *"If you abide in [obey] My Word"* is the test. True disciples have great hope and are positioned for victory and blessing.

On our own pilgrimages through life, we disciples of the King of Glory may also trust in supernatural protection and provision as we walk in our light and press forward in our appointed service. Take heart and persevere in good works. As it was with Jacob, our enemies and obstacles are really opportunities for our growth, transformation, advancement, and victory. Overcoming enemies is accomplished through faith in Yeshua's redeeming Blood and His redemption promises, and by the power of His Spirit. We should not fear trials and challenges [the second rail]. They will come.

Without them, though, we tend to atrophy morally and spiritually. What would have become of Jacob without Esau and Laban? What would have happened to David if there had been no Goliath, or Saul, or Nathan? Where would much of the Apostolic Scriptures be if it were not for Paul's prison? How could John have written the Revelation [the consummation of all things] without his exile on Patmos? Hence, right behind our own trials and struggles is an open door to our destinies too. Therefore, press forward in faith. *"No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper..." (Isa. 54:17)*. And remember, the "double host" is assigned to us as well. *"The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear Him, and rescues them" (Psalm 34:7)*. And, *"For He will give His angels charge concerning you, to guard you in all your ways. They will bear you up in their hands..." (Psalm 91:11-12)*.

1. *"Blessed is the man who does not walk after the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of the scornors! But his delight is in the law of the Lord...his leaf shall not wither..." (Read Psalm 1).*

Jacob walked in righteousness and faith. Likewise, if our delight is in pleasing YHVH and honoring His Word, whatever we put our hand to He will cause to prosper. The blessedness alluded to in Psalm One includes (a) the fruit of righteousness—peace, (b) having true purpose—doing God's will, (c) citizenry in a chosen society—Israel, (d) enjoying moral and spiritual advancement—our pathway is upward and onward in His strength and character, (e)

usefulness—doing good and bearing fruit [the unrepentant wicked are intrinsically worthless, dead, unserviceable], and (f) having His eternal love within—being attracted to YHWH’s divine Instructions. “There is nothing in the world worth living for, but doing good and finishing God’s work—doing the work Messiah did.” [Brainerd. W.F., Eerdmans, p. 9.] His blessedness is the vigor of the soul. *“Whatever he does shall prosper.”*

2. *“Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!” (Psalm 133:1).* True corporate unity occurs through the presence and work of the Holy Spirit. He is the Substance Who bonds **disciples** together in faith and practice. A great outpouring and harvest are on the horizon for this generation if we will pray and seek Him. With a national spiritual awakening there will arise a multitude of believers who will awaken and return to their Hebraic heritage solely through the power of God. *“Not might, not by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord” (Zech. 4:6).* The much needed visitation will come forth and bond the Body of Messiah together in a fresh and glorious revelation of the glory of Yeshua. **Disciples be assured.** YHWH will accomplish His purposes. Faith grows by trials and delays, yet in the end the heirs of the covenant will certainly obtain their inheritance.

The Seven Study Questions

These will appear at the conclusion of every lesson.

The *lesson questions* are a **very important** aspect of the student’s learning. All readers are strongly encouraged to take the time and include them in their study discipline. Prayerfully answer each one! They are intended to coax the student to rely upon interaction with the Holy Spirit, discern His voice, receive insight, and obtain prophetic enlightenment.

This process will assist each learner to (1) develop a vision for the restoration and reconciliation of the whole house of Israel, (2) grow in foundational knowledge of the Torah, (3) recover the principles, practice, and Holy Spirit power of the early, first-century Nazarene believers, and (4) experience and enjoy greater dimensions of the kingdom, power, and glory of Yeshua.

Note: The questions presented here are listed again at the conclusion of each lesson in both the *Torah Commentary Manuals* and the *Torah Discipleship Manuals*. **To repeat—be sure to follow through with them.**

1a. In your opinion, what is the main theme or teaching of each of the listed readings individually? Starting with the Torah: What is its title? What is the interpretation? What

truth/idea does the interpretation of the title suggest? What is the Torah section's main truth, as you see it?

1b. What is the corresponding idea in the Haftarah? In the Brit Chadashah?

2. What is the outstanding, central idea or subject that runs through and unites all the individual readings, as you see it? What does it say about discipleship?

3. Find in the Gospels where and how Yeshua declares, demonstrates, exemplifies, or exhibits the parsha's central truth, and explains. Give chapter and verse. Will you follow Him in living the lesson's truths?

4. In what way was the glory of YHVH [manifestations of His goodness] revealed in the parsha lesson?

5. What does the parsha teach you about your Hebrew roots, your identity, your destiny, your duty?

6. In what way did the Holy Spirit/Ruach HaKodesh personally speak to you during prayer and study this week? Did He impress you about how to apply the parsha lesson directly to your life? Explain.

7. *"...because of practice [by reason of use] have their senses trained [exercised] to discern..."*
You and I are called to return to hearing the voice of Elohim and to functioning in the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Progressing in these vital areas will require spiritual hunger, faith, and practice. He is waiting for us to approach Him.

Ask the Holy Spirit to speak into your spirit/heart as you pray each day. Look for opportunities to lay hands on the sick, or to be used in prophecy. Faithfully record the prophetic words and experiences you receive, and be sure to share them with your brethren.

It is helpful to **share** your answers, insights, and revelations with your study group (table class). We recommend meeting regularly in a small group. This allows for healthy interaction and exchange, and militates against stagnation. Practice operating with your spiritual gifts under the anointing of the Holy Spirit while among your friendly, supportive peers. Allow for open participation in leading praise and worship.

Give altar calls at your table for healing, refreshing, and prophetic words. These are effective ways for all present to mature in their calling and gifting. The non-threatening small group provides a favorable and encouraging environment in which to learn the ministry of the Spirit. You will do well.

Next-for the upcoming generation:

The parsha lessons are being crafted and shortened for younger readers. Be sure to use them. Deuteronomy 6: 6-7?

1. Youths' Version Page

2. Childrens' Version Page

Tamid Kadima—Always Forward. Shalom.

Footnotes: 1. Pulpit Commentary, Eerdmans, Kings, p. 450. 2. Reference unrecorded. 3. Hosea, Pulpit Commentary, Eerdmans. 4. FireBible, Student Edition, Henderson, Life Publishers International, p. 1346. 5. Ibid, p. 1377. 1A. Search the Scriptures: Out of the Darkness, B. Baruch. 1B. <https://bible.org/series/lesson-70-cost-discipleship-luke>. 2B. Deut. 6. 3B. Isaiah 53:4-5. 4B. F. Chan. 5B. ichthys.com/mail-victory.htm. 6B. www.desiringgod.org/messages.

VaYeshev (“And he settled”)

Next

Contender's Voice

Discipleship Series

Book of Genesis/B'resheit

Lesson Nine

VaYeshev (*"And he settled"*)

Torah: Genesis/B'resheit 37:1-40:23

Haftorah: Amos/Ahmos 2:6-3:8

Brit Chadashah: Matthew/Mattityahu 3:23; Acts/Measeh 7:9-16

Lesson Sequence

1. Introduction: *The Call to Discipleship* **2.** Weekly Parsha: *The Torah—the Standard of Discipleship* **3.** Yeshua: *The High Priest of our Discipleship* **4.** The Holy Spirit/Ruach ha Kodesh: *The Power of Discipleship* **5.** Overcoming: *The Outcome of Discipleship* **6.** Conclusion

Consider

"We have this uproar from Christians in the U.S. about the removal of the Ten Commandments monument, and yet they don't even keep God's Ten Commandments. [For one thing] they reject the 7th day Sabbath of the 4th commandment, in favor of Rome's day of the sun! When you tell them that we should be keeping the 4th commandment exactly as stated, they reply by saying the ten commandments are no longer on stone, they are written in our hearts. And yet they now complain about this

piece of stone being removed! Anyone see the hypocrisy in that?" [1A] *"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy" (Exodus 20:8).*

No more pretending and stumbling. Rather, we become wise and *"beware the leaven of...hypocrisy" (Luke 12:1).* Believers--turn to sincerity, humility, obedience. YHWH has promised to pour out His glory and bring healing to the land whose people repent and seek Him! 2 Chronicles 7:14 is still applicable, and clearly instructs us to turn from our own ways to His!

Part 1: Introduction—*The Call to Discipleship*

"If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will [as you believe and live it] make you free [from the power of sin]" (John 8:31). A student, or disciple, of Yeshua will continue in the study and practice of the Word of God. Keep in mind that obedience and love for Messiah are connected. *"This is love, that we walk according to His commandments" (2 John 1:6).* Simple. No dispensational research or profound midrash is needed to understand the statement.

Last week's TGDS lesson: *"And Isaac gave up the ghost and died, and was gathered unto his people, being old and full of days: and his sons Esau and Jacob buried him" (Gen. 35:29).* The previous parsha, *VaYishlach ("And he sent")*, ends with the death of Isaac and a brief account of Esau. Jacob's pilgrimage from Beersheba to Haran (*VaYetze*) and back again (*VaYishlach*) had been tumultuous but the Almighty had preserved and prospered him at every turn. Jacob arrived home in time to enjoy the company of his father, Isaac, before the elderly man died. Isaac was a blessed man and had reached a good, old age before he passed. He came to a decent end and was honored with a respectful funeral. Jacob and Esau buried him in the Cave of Machpelah in Canaan beside the remains of Abraham and Sarah, which lay in repose awaiting the resurrection of the justified. With Jacob and his family by his side, Isaac's spirit joined those of his father and mother in a better country (Isa. 33:17).

This week's TGDS lesson: In *VaYeshev ("And he settled")* Jacob returns to and settles with his family, herds, and wealth in the land of his father in Canaan. He had spiritually and physically overcome major adversaries during his journey--Laban, Esau, and Shechem, and was therefore respected, even feared, among the surrounding populations. It would seem that after twenty years of struggling he looked forward to a peaceful pastoral existence with his family growing in the truth of his fathers. The restful serenity alluded to in the first verse lasted, we are told, for

only nine years. The parsha opens with Jacob's short-lived tranquility about to be shattered. The jealousy that had simmered between the first ten brothers and Joseph would break out into open conflict. Joseph would be sold into slavery, deception would over-shadow and depress the family, and Jacob would remain inconsolable for years. As the narrative shifts to Egypt, Jacob begins to fade into the background of the story and does not figure prominently again until the end of Genesis when he brings his prophetic benedictions upon his twelve children and two grand-children. In *VaYeshev*, Joseph emerges as the primary character of the account and the featured representative of the Kingdom of Elohim.

Those called to discipleship--summoned to follow the King of Glory, take notice: As you read, you will observe once again that it is the Most High Who orchestrates human events, often behind the scenes. And despite how difficult or hopeless things may appear, His solution to every problem and satisfaction of every need is close at hand to them who trust Him. Life may have its vicissitudes [ups and downs], but YHVH's Word is a sure anchor.

In the end [*VaYechi*, the last Genesis parsha lesson], after suffering various ordeals, Jacob emerges with divinely refined character, stabilized in faith, and a recipient of heavenly peace and satisfaction in life. *"For all the promises of God in Him [Yeshua] are yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us" (2 Cor. 1:20). Yeshua has passed by and called you to follow Him.* Remain steadfast forever!

Part 2: Torah—*The Standard of Discipleship*

Parsha Lesson Nine: *VaYeshev* ("And he settled")

"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near...Prepare the way for the Lord, make His paths straight" (Mt. 3:2-3). This is the prophetic declaration of John the Baptist. It "is anointed with monumental authority, resulting in the repentance of a nation. A remnant of Israel returns to Yahweh, and a highway of holiness clears between heaven and earth. Soon thereafter, [Yeshua] appears publicly as Messiah (see John 1:31). "[2B] The same call is going forth today for believers to *make teshuva*, that is, *to return to the highway of unadulterated truth and Spirit. "Consecrate yourselves."*

Torah

"The Torah is the foundational revelation about the Holy One and His redemptive dealings with mankind. Therefore we should expect the Torah to address *every essential doctrine* (2 Tim. 3:16). There is not one subject pertaining to the faith that doesn't have its foundation in the

Torah. There is one catch, though. Since the Holy One chose to reveal His plan *progressively*, the Torah does not present each doctrine in clear, concise, and complete detail. The Torah uses types, shadows and pictures to teach many of its important lessons. Furthermore, the details of these doctrines are presented piecemeal, in a seemingly random order--here a little, there a little (Isaiah 28:9-10).

For example, although the account of the fall of mankind into sin (Genesis 3) revealed to us the necessity for substitutionary blood atonement, the Torah did not tell us, in Genesis chapter three, that the fullest manifestation of substitutionary blood atonement would be found four-thousand years later in the sacrifice of Yeshua, the sinless Son of God who was born in Bethlehem to a virgin mother. Various prophets supplied these and many other details at different times over a period of thousands of years (Hebrews 1:1). Progressive revelation involves the Holy One's gradual revelation/discourse of knowledge and understanding over time. We must remember the Torah was a shadow and pattern of good things to come." [3]

1. *"And Jacob dwelt [settled] in the land wherein his father was [sojourned] a stranger, in the land of Canaan. These are the records of the generations of Jacob" (B'resheet 37:1-2).*

Jacob returned to and settled in Hebron with his twelve sons, including Joseph, his favorite. Joseph, being the first son of the beloved Rachel, was blessed by his father's preferential treatment of which his brothers became resentful and jealous, even hateful.

2. *"Joseph was seventeen years of age, was pasturing the flock with his brothers...and brought back a bad report about them to his father. Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of many colors" (B'resheet 37:3).*

Joseph was Rachel's first child, and Jacob's eleventh and favorite son. He worked in the pastures with his brothers. But Joseph was distinguished from his brethren by (a) his father's greater love which he enjoyed, (b) his more pious, moral character which he displayed, and (c) his fellowship and communications which he received from YHWH. Because of this, his brothers were jealous and antagonistic toward Joseph. Their anger and resentment were exacerbated by the lad's open display of his "coat of many colors." **Note:** It is said by some commentators that the royal coat was Jacob's way of not only showing personal preference to Joseph but also of singling out and distinguishing him as the heir of the birthright forfeited by Reuben.

3. *"And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told his brethren..." (read B'resheet 37:5-17).*

It was Joseph's dreams of ascendancy over his brothers, of which he happily boasted, that turned their resentment toward him into hatred. "...my sheaf arose...and your sheaves...made obeisance [bowed themselves down] to my sheaf" (v. 7). The brothers' bitter rage burned, and as everything good or evil strives for completeness, the murderous feelings Joseph's siblings

held for him boiled over into a fratricidal scheme. *"Lust, when it is conceived, bringeth forth sin: sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (James 1:15)*. The brothers were determined that Joseph would *never* rule over, dictate to, or govern them. The spirit that governed their envy and anger also possessed Herod in the time of Messiah's birth, driving him, so that he *"...slew all the children that were in Bethlehem."* Give no place to the enemy, the works of the flesh. Keep up the shield of faith (Eph. 6:16). *"Blessed are the poor in spirit..."*

His brethren went to feed the flocks, and after a while Jacob sent Joseph to check on them; *"Go...see whether it be well..."* Joseph left unexpectedly on his assignment to find his brothers, not knowing he would never return to his home. After spending more time on his journey than he had planned, Joseph finally came across his brethren in Dothan.

4. *"And when they saw him afar off, even before he came near unto them, they conspired to slay him" (B'resheet 37:18).*

Joseph was seventeen when his brothers launched their diabolical scheme to murder him. Simeon and Levi concocted the plot to kill him. The lads [ten against one] threw him into a pit (or cistern). Reuben, who was trying desperately to regain a measure of his father's favor, planned a merciful, but timid and weak last minute rescue effort that failed. He suggested that they throw Joseph into the pit, but later intended to retrieve him once his sufferings had become unbearable. At Judah's insistence, though, Joseph's life was spared. He was lifted from the pit and sold into Egypt—*"Come, let us sell him"*--where he eventually languished in prison. The boys returned home with a fabricated story of Joseph's demise which left Jacob in a state of prolonged mourning and quite possibly cast a lasting, smog-like melancholy--an over-spreading, gloomy disposition, upon the entire household. *"And all his sons and all his daughters [probably daughters in law] rose up to comfort him."* His sons, the criminals and conspirators, became his hypocritical comforters. How typical. One lie always leads to another.

Note: We of faith are no strangers to depressions, valleys, or pits. Yeshua has drawn all His followers from a pit. *"He brought me up also out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings" (Ps. 40:2)*. Whether through carelessness, indifference, neglect, lust, or pride, may we not be drawn back and become stuck again in any altogether unfavorable circumstances, overpowering temptations, or unholy ambitions. Yet, for the repentant there is always deliverance from the most miry of pits, and for this we give praise to the One whose superintendence over Joseph protected him and led him to a secure place.

The strife/contention that existed between Joseph and his brethren and that later marked the relationship of Judah (Southern Kingdom) and Joseph (Northern Kingdom), leavens the history of Israel. The struggle has its origins in the marriages of Jacob to Leah and Rachel. *"Leah was tender eyed; but Rachel was beautiful and well favored. And Jacob loved Rachel..." (Gen.*

29:17-18). He married Leah first, who gave him six sons: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun. But Jacob much preferred Rachel, who gave him two sons, Joseph and Benjamin. Jacob's love for Rachel was transferred to Joseph and was exhibited in open demonstrations of favor and affection, thereby showing Jacob's unabashed preference for his eleventh boy.

Note: Reuben was the firstborn son of Jacob and as such was entitled to/designated for family leadership and the double-portion family inheritance. But his incestuous sin with his father's maid disqualified him (Gen. 35:22), and resulted in his privileges and rights as the first-born being withdrawn from him and transferred to his brothers (B'resheet 48 and 49).

Scripture and history reveal that the priesthood went to Levi (third born of Leah), kingship went to Judah (fourth of Leah), and the first-born birthright of the "double-blessing" went to Joseph (first of Rachel). It is interesting to note that Joseph had two sons (Ephraim and Manasseh) who became tribes with tribal territories and who were prophesied to become *"a multitude in the midst of the earth...a people...be great...and a multitude of nations"* (read B'resheet 48:16-19). Could this prophecy be finding fulfillment in today's militarily powerful and economically rich and influential nations? It would seem. Thus, we take notice in this chapter of "God's distinguishing grace to Joseph, separating him from his brethren in character, in his father's affection, in the method of his life, in the communications of the Spirit. Joseph is a type of the believer [i.e. **disciple of Yeshua** today], faithful to the covenant among both the Canaanitish heathen and the unfaithful children of the covenant, the brothers." [R., Genesis, Eerdmans, p. 449]

5. *"...Judah went down from his brethren...And Judah saw there a daughter of a certain Canaanite whose name was Shuah and he took her, and went in unto her..."* (B'resheet 38:1-2).

Note: This chapter seems to be inserted rather abruptly into the narrative of Joseph and therefore interrupts the continuity of the story. Its purpose has been explained as showing the line of David coming from Judah, and indicating the Levirate law of marriage as originating with Judah also (Deut. 25:5). But the episode of Judah and the Canaanite woman represents an important reason (other than the famine) the royal family had to descend to Egypt. It was to avert the possibility of mixing seed, we believe (Gen. 28:1; De. 22:9-11). Therefore the narrative is placed here, before Jacob removed his family from Canaan.

If the family of Jacob had been left in the land, his descendants would very likely have fallen to the temptation to cavort with, and even marry and procreate with, the daughters of Canaan as the episode of Judah and Tamar would strongly suggest. This would have caused a rapid and serious deterioration of the faith and morality of the covenant people [the line of the holy seed] and provoke them to become blended into the heathen world. Israel's timely removal to Egypt, while the family/nation was still in infancy, and further by its later separation in Goshen, spared Jacob's family from what could have been a *miry pit* of catastrophic marital compromise.

Judah left home for a season and married/cohabited with the daughter [Tamar] of a Canaanite whose name was Shuah. They had three children together. "The eldest, **Er**, dies young and childless, and his wife **Tamar** ["date palm" or "palm tree"] is given in a levirate marriage [the type of marriage where an eligible brother of a deceased man is obligated to marry his widow] to the second son, **Onan**. Onan sins by *spilling his seed* and he too meets an early death. Judah is reluctant to have his third son [**Shelah**] marry her. Determined to have a child from Judah's family, Tamar disguises herself as a prostitute and seduces Judah himself. Judah [then] hears that his daughter-in-law has become pregnant and orders her [to be] executed for harlotry, but when Tamar produces some personal effects he left with her as a pledge for payment due, he publicly admits that he is the father. Tamar gives birth to twin sons, **Peretz** (an ancestor of King David) and **Zerach**." [4]

Again we see both the goodness and mercy of YHVH. Joseph was spoiled, became lost to his house, but remained under the protection and care of Elohim. Judah was a wanderer, self-willed, and sensual, yet out from his line of descendants the Holy Seed would appear. What should we think of this? Perhaps that one should neither despair *or* be self-righteous, but be glad that our Elohim's mercy endures forever and that He has provided the means of salvation for all. We also are reminded by Scripture that Gentiles are included as the mothers, brothers, and sisters of Yeshua.

6. *"...Joseph was brought down to Egypt; and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him...and the Lord was with Joseph..." (B'resheet 39:1-2).*

Joseph went to the auction block once he arrived in Egypt, was sold to Potiphar [meaning, "he whom *Ra* gave"] and put to work as a lowly slave in his house. Joseph recognized that his unhappy circumstance was assigned from above and thus he refrained from murmuring. Therefore, YHVH blessed everything to which Joseph put his hand and he was therefore noticed by his master.

He became the overseer of Potiphar's entire estate. Soon after, Potiphar's wife made advances toward the handsome lad, advances which he rejected. Joseph did not flirt with the temptation, but fled! Feeling scorned and seeking revenge, the woman told her husband that Joseph, the Hebrew slave, tried to assault her, and Potiphar had him thrown into prison. But even there God was with Joseph. He gained the respect and trust of his jail guards and was appointed to the status of trustee, a position of some (albeit limited) authority and privilege in the prison system. Hence we note that shadow *and* sunshine fall upon the same life. [Two *train track rails* of life, remember?]

Joseph was patient, even reasonably content in his circumstances. He was industrious and faithful in his service. He endured and did not grow weary in well-doing because he never gave

up hope for a better day to arrive (Gal. 6:9). Faith in YHVH was the secret to his optimistic attitude, prosperity, favor, and eventual release. *"Without faith it is impossible to please God."* He IS a Rewarder. Faith and diligence are needed on our part.

7. *"And Joseph's master took him, and put him into the prison, a place where the king's prisoners were bound: and he was there in prison" (B'resheet 39:20).*

Joseph was not executed, only imprisoned. He went from Canaan to Potiphar's palace, then from there to the dungeon (where he was actually safer). He lost the confidence of his master Potiphar but gained the favor of the jail keeper. He had not been forsaken, as some might assume, but remained secure under the shadow of the Eternal One. Joseph was: **discreet**--he kept the trust placed in him; **diligent**--he toiled to benefit his master; **devout**--he repelled temptation through his ardent faith. Thus [in this manner; because of this] Joseph remained under the constant attention and care of Elohim while in exile. We must train our souls and cultivate these three virtuous, favorable traits--(a) wisdom, (b) diligence, and (c) reverence. Such character features will produce temporal and eternal dividends for us and our houses.

8. *"The keeper of the prison looked not to anything that was under his [Joseph's] hand; because the Lord was with him, and that which he did, the Lord made him prosper" (B'resheet 39:23).*

Joseph regulated the prison's activity according to the orders of the captain of the roundhouse [jail], the chief officer of the prison, who trusted Joseph's integrity and ability. During this difficult time, Joseph had peace of mind *and* heart produced by his knowledge that he remained under the over-shadowing presence of YHVH. Further, [we assume] he had been personally schooled in the essence of Torah by his father, Jacob. Therefore, Joseph lived habitually asunder the sight of the Almighty (Gal. 4:28). God's will and way were his rules of life. He resisted temptation (James 1:12), was faithful to his responsibilities (1 Cor. 4:2), offered no excuses or blame (Gen. 44:32), and slandered no one, not even his persecutors (Prov. 10:11).

As keeper of the prison, Joseph performed many labors; his toil was not easy, yet he maintained sympathy for the incarcerated men, served with a cheerful spirit [one's gloom and complaining will assuredly put extra burdens on people], and was strong enough to be courteous and genuinely concerned over the welfare and disappointments of the inmates. Joseph's trials constituted YHVH's training program for Jacob's son which prepared him for the role of prime minister of the land. **Lesson:** Our trials and struggles comprise the equipping course which prepares us for the greater things in our future. And those of us who experience the grace of the Most High in our struggles must turn and minister His life and grace to others. *"The liberal soul shall be made fat [prosperous], and he that waters shall be watered himself" (Prov. 11:25).*

What inspiration can we safely draw from the story thus far concerning Joseph's character? We notice his love for YHVH, and his concern and compassion for man. He must have believed confidently that the blessing of the Almighty came upon those who honored Him. He had the strength of self-control, for he was subject to temptations that would have taken him away had he not been a virtuous individual. Hence, *"...the Lord [YHVH] was with him, and that which he did, the Lord made to prosper."*

9. *"And it came to pass after these things, that the butler of the king of Egypt and his baker had offended their master the king of Egypt" (B'resheet 40:1).*

Joseph was the attendant of the prisoners, men of various ranks, offenses, and punishments. The butler and baker were two high ranking officers of Pharaoh who were (possibly) alleged to have been involved in a conspiracy to poison the king. They incurred the wrath of the king and were thrown into the dungeon and placed under Joseph's care, who served them faithfully and with humility and discretion. This is a good life strategy. *"...and he that humbles himself shall be exalted" (Luke 14:11).*

While in the dungeon both prisoners had troubling dreams of differing imagery which they revealed to Joseph. Joseph was humble yet confident, and by faith received their interpretations by revelation from YHVH.

"The chief butler told his dream to Joseph" (v.9).

The dream featured a vine, three branches, and ripe grapes which the butler pressed into Pharaoh's cup.

"And Joseph said unto him, this is the interpretation of it..." (v. 12).

The first interpretation: The three branches represented the time frame. Quickly blossoming grapes indicated days, not weeks or months. Pressed grapes forecasted a renewal to service. Accordingly, in three days the butler's head would be lifted, meaning he would be elevated, counted among Pharaoh's servants again. He would be restored to his old position.

10. *"For indeed I was stolen away [kidnapped] from the land of the Hebrews" (B'resheet 40:15).* Then Joseph, wisely seizing upon the opportune moment, brought his plea. He confessed his plight to the butler, the one to whom he had graciously given a sure word of restoration, a prophecy that he would be returned to his former position in Pharaoh's court. Joseph told him that he was a Hebrew that had been unjustly imprisoned. He held out hope that the butler would remember him, show favor, and bring his case before a magistrate of the royal court, perhaps even to Pharaoh himself.

Note: In Genesis 14:13 Abraham is recognized as a Hebrew, though a sojourner in the land. *"And there came one that had escaped, and told Abram the Hebrew..."* Thus, Joseph correctly called his home country, promised to the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the "Land of the Hebrews".

The word *Hebrew* is derived from the word "ivri", which in turn is based on the root word "arvi", meaning "cross over." The related name, "Eber", referenced in Genesis 10:21, refers to the "one who traverses," or crosses over. Of course, Abram's house qualified for this title when he and his family left Ur and Haran, thereby crossing over (a) from polytheism (idol culture) to monotheism (worship of YHVH, the One True Elohim), and (b) from Mesopotamia into Canaan. Hebrew also refers to the surviving Canaanite/Semitic language spoken in Israel from the 10th century to the Babylonian exile. Today Hebrew has been restored and is the official language once again of Israel. [See Tongue of the Prophets by R. St. John.] In order to rebuild a united nation the early Israelite leaders wisely understood that a primary cultural unifier would be needed. That unifier would prove to be the recognition, instruction, and establishment of Hebrew, the original language of Israel, as the common language of the restored Land.

11. *"When the chief baker saw that the interpretation was good, he said...I also was in my dream, and behold, I had three white baskets on my head..." (v. 16).*

Three white baskets on the baker's head, with the foodstuffs in the top basket being devoured by birds, were featured in the dream. Three baskets were three days. The food being ravaged by the aggressive birds spoke against restoration.

The baker was powerless, entirely unable to resist the bold birds from raiding Pharaoh's goods. It was an ill foreboding. [**Note:** Egyptian men in that day commonly carried baskets on their heads while the women carried them on their shoulders, like Hagar (B'resheit 21:14).] The baker, emboldened by the butler's good fortune that was predicted, stepped forward and described his dream.

12. *"And Joseph answered and said, This is the interpretation thereof: The three baskets are three days..." (Gen. 40:18).*

The exposition [meaning; purpose] was provided by the Most High Elohim. The baker would be executed in three days, decapitated and his body hung from a tree. Whether Joseph may have been reluctant or anxious to deliver the somber and frightening interpretation to his listener, he could not, and did not, change or deviate from it at all. Paul reflects also knew the importance of faithfulness to proclaim accurately **all** YHVH declares and wrote for our admonition: *"For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel [the full and complete, unabridged counsel of God, including the Torah]" (1 Cor. 9:16).* For centuries Christianity has deviated from proclaiming the full

counsel of the Almighty, the spiritual heritage to which He is now returning His people. Yeshua said that man shall live "...by **every** word that proceeds from the mouth of God" (Mt. 4:4). This comment points to the Torah, does it not? "Then God spoke all these words, saying..." Exodus 20:10. And, "Thus YHVH used to speak to Moses face to face, just as a man speaks to a friend" (Exodus 33:11).

Comment: YHVH has many different ways of communicating His mind to people. Humility and faith to hear and wisely act upon His written and spoken word are critical to the well-being of our lives.

"...and His sheep follow Him because they know His voice..." (John 10:4).

Mature "sheep" [disciples] have had their spiritual senses developed. They can be led by the voice /impression of the Spirit and do not need the crook and staff of the shepherd to push and prod them. They hear and know the voice of the Good Shepherd from within; by reason of practice and maturity discern its purpose, and follow it. They do not follow strange voices and are not given over to responding to their own carnal impulses without examining them. Simply, maturing disciples recognize Yeshua's voice in the Spirit and do not resist His word. Accordingly, they are led to and enjoy green pastures, quiet streams, full tables, joy and not fear [unease], goodness and mercy, fresh anointing, and sweet fellowship. **Overcoming** is his will for us.

When the Spirit/Ruach speaks to us it is a supernatural, divine communication. He speaks into our regenerated, born-again, Holy Spirit-indwelt human spirits with (a) a still, small voice (previous two parshas covered this), (b) a spontaneous thought, idea, or inspiration [a want, or surge of faith], (c) an inner witness [knowing, revelation], (d) internal and open visions, (f) and dreams. As we mature in spiritual ministry we will become more sensitive and open to the various forms of the voice of the Holy Spirit, and by them better discern His leading for steering our course. **His voice/word will:**

A. Give peace. *Ps. 29:11; Isa. 26:3; Phil. 4:7.*

B. Empower faith. *Rom. 10:17; 1 Cor. 2:5*

C. Impart inner strength. *Isa. 40:31; Phil. 4:13.*

D. Activate the spiritual gifts; stimulate growth of spiritual fruit. *1 Cor. 12:1-12; John 15:5.*

F. Encourage holiness. *Lev. 11:45; Rom. 1:4; 2 Cor. 7:1.*

G. Exalt and glorify Yeshua ha Mashiach. *John 14:26*

H. Agree with Torah and all Scripture [Yeshua's Words]. *Jn. 15:26; 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:21*

I. Uplift and encourage. 2 Chron. 31:4; Ps. 3:3; Jas. 4:10;

J. Develop boldness. Prov. 28:1; Acts 2; 9:17; Eph. 6:9

Joseph's sensitivity to YHVH's voice was, in large measure, a result of his moral purity. *"How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God" (Gen. 39:9)?* Cleanness of heart and mind allowed him to properly discern the Almighty's word, without the soulish distortion and interference which commonly cause confusion and doubt among so many today. Let us take a lesson from this amazing account of Joseph's spiritual confidence (faith) and perception. In these last days knowing His voice is pre-requisite for the highest success of believers in fulfilling our destinies.

May we each be encouraged to come before Him with *"clean hands, and a pure heart" (Psalm 24:4)*. With this in mind, read the assignment, wait for His voice, and recognize its holy characteristics this week. Start to become accustomed to His closeness. Enter into His glorious, manifest presence through praise and worship, then wait and listen. And remember, *first* examine the character of what you receive, and *then* share it with mature, wise counsel.

12. *"And it came to pass the third day, which was Pharaoh's birthday, that he made a feast unto all his servants...and he restored the chief butler...but he hanged the chief baker: as Joseph had interpreted to them...yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph..." (B'resheet 40:20-23).*

The butler, an advisor and official to the king, appears as a forgetful ingrate. But we must not judge him too quickly. We are sure he did not want to remind his master of the past, perilous period of disfavor he had experienced, and arouse bad memories and renewed suspicions by bringing up the topic of prison. We who trust Yeshua harbor no such trepidations, for there is no cause to fear a divine uprising against us who trust in the Blood of Messiah. *"For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more" (Heb. 8:12).*

The narrative sets forth some interesting ideas. Among them is that "the order of the world, as resting on the divine [YHVH's] foreknowledge and appointment in connection with the elect instrumentalities [chosen and selected persons], bring the things of Egypt under the dominion of the kingdom of God." [R., Genesis, Eerdmans, p. 458]

Yeshua said it this way: *"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I command you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Mt. 28:18-20).* With us, as He was with Joseph.

Haftarah

1. "...because they sold the righteous for silver..." (Amos 2:6).

The first verse in the *haftarah* contains a reference to the sons of Jacob selling Joseph, a type of the Messiah, for twenty pieces of silver to passing Midianite merchantmen who took him to Egypt. While Joseph languished, however, his family was not without their heartache. The brothers' guilt and heavy pangs of conscience consistently robbed the extended household of any glints of true, unburdened family joy. The verse also points to Judas, who sold Yeshua to his enemies for thirty pieces of silver (Mt. 27:3). He could not keep the silver, however, for the coins burned to his touch, reminded him of his sin, and sorely provoked his conscience. In desperation, Judas threw the ill-gotten gain away to the feet of his conspirators, but the unrelenting torment of guilt remained. *"The love of money is the root of all evil."* Let us remember to resist covetousness at the beginning, for it grows stronger and continually lengthens its reach into the soul over the years. Let us keep in mind that unholy gain only brings miseries and trouble. Judas was remorseful, but that was not enough. Instead of running to the cross to find grace and save himself, he fled to a lonely tree and hanged himself. Envy and an inordinate love for money stimulate the fallen nature to produce corruption.

Moral: Forsake greed. Push it away! The apostle wrote of his experience and habitual frame of mind: *"...for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content"* (Phil. 4:11). Contentment frees the heart and opens the hand of liberality.

Contentment is based upon trust in the faithfulness of Elohim to provide and *"...cause all things to work together for good to those who love God..."* (Rom. 8. 28). It is key to the prosperity of one's soul. [3 John 1:2.]

2. "Hear this word that the Lord hath spoken against you, O children of Israel, against the whole family which I brought up from the land of Egypt, saying, You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore, I will punish you for all your iniquities. Can two walk together, except they be in agreement?" (Amos 3:1-3).

The prophet Amos rebuked Israel. The nation had committed three cardinal sins: (a) sexual immorality, (b) idolatry, and (c) murder. The fourth sin, however, crossed the line, so to speak. This was the flagrant, premeditated, and ongoing mistreatment of the poor, innocent, orphans, and widows. The prophet characterizes the severity of punishment due for Israel's rebellion. *"And the stout-hearted shall flee naked on that day."* Yet, he then recalls YHWH's love for His people: *"Only you did I love above all the families of the earth; therefore I will visit upon you all your iniquities..."* YHWH's great love for Israel is the reason He delivers her, cleanses and restores her to the path of righteousness and to prosperity of soul and society. Working toward our welfare is always on foremost the Almighty's mind.

Part 3: Yeshua—*The Eternal High Priest of the Believers Discipleship*

"For it is fitting for us to have such a high priest [Yeshua, making intercession], holy, innocent, undefiled..." (Hebrew 7:26). The glorious priesthood of Yeshua is superior because unlike other priests who sinned, Messiah Yeshua is sinless. While on earth He was tempted, but never, in any way, yielded to sin. He kept His Father's Law perfectly out of immaculate love.

"...the mystery [YHVH's salvation for all men through His Son] that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints. To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Messiah in you, the hope of glory. We proclaim Him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Messiah" (Col. 1:26-28).

Our faith is not about hidden knowledge, or mysteries that are explained to just a few people.

YHVH openly reveals His truth. "Christ [Messiah] living in us by His Holy Spirit is our assurance of future glory and eternal life (see Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30). Only [Messiah's] inner presence and our ongoing intimate companionship and interaction with Him can dismiss any doubt about being with Him in heaven [eternity] (Rom. 8:11).

To have Messiah Yeshua as one's Savior and Adonai is to approach the perfection of earthly life. (Jn. 3; 17; 1 Jn. 5). The word 'perfect' means 'whole, complete, mature.'

" 'Perfect' does not imply moral or ethical perfection or flawless behavior, but rather it points to a mature relationship with God that demonstrates love for Him fully and strives to fulfill His purposes through a lifestyle of complete devotion (i.e. obedience) to Him and love for others.

"Such a lifestyle will fulfill the requirements of Messiah's commands (Mt. 22:39; Mk. 12:30)." [5]

1. *"And the patriarchs moved with envy, sold Joseph into Egypt: but God was with him, and delivered him out of all his afflictions, and gave him favor and wisdom..." (Read Acts 7:9-16).*

Stephen became a servant of the believers in Jerusalem, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit. He was unfairly accused and illegally executed by an angry and jealous mob of Jews. In his testimony before his persecutors, he accused them of having the same spirit of the men who wanted to murder Joseph, but sold him into slavery instead and then conspired in a cover-up of

the heinous crime. Enraged, they stoned him. Both Joseph and Stephen were good and faithful servants.

2. *"...whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto [not to be served], but to minister [serve], and to give His life a ransom for many" (Mt. 20:27-28).*

Humility and service are the prerequisites for leadership in the congregation of Redeemed Israel. Worldly esteem for rank and position simply should not find room to flourish in the Body of Messiah. We are a brotherhood and One is our Master, Messiah Yeshua (Mt. 23:8).

He is supreme and is directly involved with every subject [person] of His kingdom. He takes no account of the titles and offices of men, but takes notice instead of their character and conduct. Greatness in the Kingdom of Messiah is associated with selfless service of the brethren. This is because it is *Messiah-like*.

The believers who will be most honored by the Messiah will be those who are most *like* Him. Kingdom service is essentially selfless in nature, and Yeshua demonstrated the ultimate excellent service for mankind by giving His very life-blood as a *"ransom for many."*

In doing so He liberated us from the power of Satan, sickness, and sin. For this the Father *"...also hath also highly exalted Him" (Phil.2:9).*

Greatness is within the reach of us all if we are willing to toil for the welfare and good of others. *"...and whosoever would become great among you shall be your servant."*

Part 4: The Holy Spirit—*The Power of Discipleship*

"As you live in the Spirit [with a sincere heart living in the light you possess with integrity], when you walk down the steps of your house, the Devil [evil] will have to flee before you [its working loosened]. You will be more than a conqueror over the [enemy] (Romans 8:37)" ...Everything is "a failure except what is done in the Spirit. But as you live in the Spirit, you move, act, eat, drink, and do everything to the glory of God." [4B]

1. *"And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it [to] his brethren [brothers], and they hated him [all] the more." (Gen. 37:5).*

There was no voice in the vivid dream to suggest to the youthful Joseph that it was prophetic, or from a divine origin, and should therefore remain private. Impulsively, and possibly to annoy his older brothers, he tells them of it. Nonetheless, he was guided unconsciously by the hand of divine providence, making the prophetic dreams *telling* the first step in its fulfillment.

Responding wisely to the Holy Spirit is greatly aided by knowing Him well. Learning about His eternal presence, role, and ministry as they are revealed in the Old Testament (where He is very active) will help us in understanding and valuing Him, and will better position us to receive His present ministry as revealed in the New Testament.

Although there is an abundance of material relating to the Holy Spirit in the Tanach to assist us, this commentary section will not present an exhaustive study, but will provide instead general instruction from which the student can continue his/her own search. [See: Acts 17:10-12, Paul and the Bereans.]

As we spend the next five TGDS parsha lessons (1) discussing the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament, please be observant. We will notice the progression of His ministry [general trend] in Israel, from Genesis through Malachi. We will observe the ascending and descending of His manifest presence and prophetic function in direct response to the hearing and obedience of the people. Later, when we go into the New Testament we (2) will see Him return openly and come with great power and authority to waiting Israel. As your own studies progress, monitor the progression/increase of the evidence of the manifest presence, anointing, and/or functioning of the Holy Spirit in your life and ministry. Keep in mind, you are a New Covenant **disciple** returning to your biblical Hebraic identity and heritage, which are *both* the Torah (Word/Truth) *and* Glory of YHVH (Spirit). Believe for His blessing. "...no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly" Psalm 84:11).

The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament: Part 1 of 5

The Holy Spirit was active in the creation of the heavens and earth.

"And the Spirit of God moved [means to brood-meditate, hover, incubate] upon the face of the waters" (Gen. 1:2). The Holy Spirit is active in the creation account. In the Genesis narrative He is observed as the quickening, formative cause of life and order in the earth, be it physical, intellectual, or spiritual. He hovers still, over multitudes of lost, void souls today, waiting for the command, *"Let there be light...order...life!"*

"By the word [Word, Torah, Yeshua] of the Lord [YHVH] were the heavens made, and all their hosts by the breath (Spirit) of His mouth" (Psalm 33:6). The psalmist provides another glimpse of how Elohim the Word worked through/by the Spirit. He is the "Breath" of His mouth, Who waits and then responds instantaneously to the declared Word. [See: Jn. 1:3; Heb. 1:2, 10.]

Holy Spirit and the creation of man:

"Then the Lord God [YHVH Elohim] formed the man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being" (Gen. 2:7). Adam was built from the ground up. His body was made from the dust of the earth, the atoms and molecules of matter, the basic elements presumed to exist throughout the universe. This was designed to be His most noble work, the shrine of the eternal Spirit.

In creating man, the Creator proceeded along the ascending pattern, or scale, already observed in the creation of the plant and animal kingdoms. He created first the material, physical body, then the immaterial soul, and finally breathed into man an immortal spirit by His own breath, the Spirit of life.

Holy Spirit contended with mankind:

"Then the Lord said, My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, because he is also flesh..." (Gen. 6:3). Spirit strives with man. [**strive**: endeavor; contend; struggle in opposition] The Holy Spirit contended with pre-flood man, seeking to lead him toward repentance, righteousness and a clean conscience, the attitude of faith from which would spring deliverance from the era's tormenting oppressors, evil and sin. He was resisted and eventually withdrew His active ministry (Rom. 1:26), leaving the unrepentant antediluvian people to their own nefarious devices and their unenviable destiny.

Holy Spirit came upon/rested upon servants/leaders of Israel:

*"...I have called by name Bezalel...I have filled him with the Spirit of God [not regeneration, but *charismata*—gifts, enhanced enablement, skill, anointing] in wisdom, in knowledge...[divinely implanted/imparted]" (Ex. 31:2-3).* The Spirit of Elohim is the divine medium/means by whom YHVH bestows all gifts, knowledge, and special abilities.

In the case of the workmen of the Tabernacle, He first (probably) enhanced and improved their natural ability, also imparting new degrees of talent and the gift of inspired artistic execution as well. Bezalel and Aholiab (also called and anointed for the work of the Tabernacle) were from different tribes--Judah and Dan respectively. Yet they worked together in fruitful fellowship, without rivalry or strife. Being conscious that they were both embarked for the glory of YHVH on a holy construction project, which was their common sacred cause, kept them in a spirit of cooperation and brotherhood.

Note: These men provide the Hebrew roots movement with an example of the joy and effectiveness that only a unified revelation of YHWH's glory can produce. Returning to our spiritual origins is a means of greater knowledge of and life-style intimacy with Yeshua.

"And I will come down and talk with thee there: and I will take of the Spirit which is upon thee, and I will put it upon them..." (Num. 11:17). The Holy Spirit is omnipresent, yet His focused empowering presence coming upon persons designated for divine purposes did occur throughout the Tanakh [Old Testament]. However, the visitation was exceptional, not the rule, and usually transitory.

The transfer of the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit which animated and empowered Moses for service, that he had heretofore enjoyed by himself, was eventually extended to seventy others. Moses needed help in the wilderness to manage the huge congregation of Israel. The Almighty knew the ever-pressing ministry chores would require supernatural assistance to accomplish. *"Gather seventy men of the elders of Israel...I will take of the Spirit which is upon thee, and will put it on them" (Nu. 11:16-17).* Moses' personal empowerment was not depleted or reduced as a result of the sharing of the Spirit's power. The Spirit came and rested upon and empowered the group--which is reckoned by some to be the earliest Sanhedrin--with energy, wisdom, discernment, and leadership gifting to help Moses bear the burden of the people.

"...the YHVH took some of the Spirit that was upon him, and put it upon the seventy elders, and when the spirit rested upon them they prophesied" (Num. 11:25-26). The ecstatic prophetic utterances were temporary and soon ceased. Two men however, Medad and Eldad, continued to prophesy in the camp. When learning of this, Moses was not envious or threatened. Rather, he expressed a positive view and mused of how wonderful it would be if all the Israelite people received the Spirit and His gifts resting on them. The Spirit's activity includes prophecy, a spiritual gift in which all New Covenant disciples of Yeshua can and should learn to function (Rom. 12:6; Acts 1:8; 2:17, 18; 1 Cor. 14:1,31,39).

"Take thee Joshua, the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit" (Num. 27:18).

Moses is about to retire after forty years of unbroken service to YHVH in leading His people Israel, and implores Elohim for a successor, *"Set a man over the congregation..."* YHVH tells him to lay his hands on Joshua, his long-time faithful and courageous assistant, and commission him. *"And Moses rose up and his minister Joshua."* Joshua's primary qualification for leadership was the presence of the Holy Spirit and His *charismata* in his life. *"...but his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not out of the Tabernacle."* Close union with Elohim through the Spirit was then, and is today, essential for the servant of the Lord.

Because of the presence of the Spirit upon him--imparting divine virtue and grace within him--Joshua possessed (1) an extraordinary conviction of duty, (2) a divine appointment accompanied by holy authority and power, (3) the confidence of the people, and (4) most importantly, unbroken communion with Elohim, to carry him forward.

Peter speaks to us today, who walk with Yeshua and labor for the restoration of the Tabernacle of David, saying, "...you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you [as He did on Moses and Joshua]" (1 Peter 4:14). Through faith in Messiah Yeshua we are born from above, and the Spirit and the glory of YHVH live within us!

Next, in part two of the *Spirit in the Old Covenant* : The Spirit rested upon and empowered the Judges (Judges 3:10; 6:34; 11:29; 15:14), and kings (1 Samuel 11:6; 16:13), and then the prophets (Ezek. 1 and 2) of Israel.

Glory Note: *"Then the Spirit took me up, and I heard behind me a voice of a great rushing [tumult] saying, Blessed be the glory of the YHVH from His place" (Ezek. 3:12).*

Ezekiel ministered to unbelieving and rebellious countrymen. He constantly encountered worldliness and disdain for holy behavior. The great sound of heavenly voices came to strengthen and encourage the servant of YHVH.

Throughout the Book of Ezekiel we read of the Spirit coming upon the prophet, taking possession of him, putting him into new and diverse circumstances, expanding and enlarging his experience with YHVH, and bringing him to higher levels of divine glory and intimacy with His [Adonai's] heart.

Let us not assume such encounters are only for a few selected, special people. Believers today are seated with Messiah Yeshua in heavenly places. Because of the Blood of Yeshua shed for us, this is our legal redemption position.

That which is in heaven is available to us! Let us therefore desire to enter into such visitations as Ezekiel experienced, that our local *experience* on earth may begin to attain to, or grow closer toward, our elevated legal position [experience] in heaven. *"And He hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Messiah Yeshua..." (Eph. 2:6).*

In our pursuit to study the Torah and embrace our Hebraic identity and heritage, we must keep in mind that we are New Covenant believers, people born of the Spirit through faith in Yeshua, who worship Abba from a New Covenant perspective.

Our bodies are on earth but our recreated spirits are positioned with Messiah in His glory, in the heavenly realm (Ezek. 36:26-27; John 3:6; 17:22; Gal. 5:6; Heb. 4:16; Rev. 1:10-20; 21:10). Our spirits have 24/7/365 access to God, to Yehsua. We are positioned for intimacy.

By faith we can increasingly experience His glorious presence. Pray for a revelation of His glory. *"...if any man hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with Me" (Rev. 3:20).*

Part 5: Overcoming—*The Outcome of Discipleship*

*"Let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin that so easily entangles us, and run with endurance the race that is set before us" (Hebrews 12:1). For all **disciples**, the important aspect of overcoming the world and the powers of darkness is to put aside all sinful of behavior of thought and deed. Believers have been delivered from the power of sin and need no longer to be subject to it. Resist the devil and he shall flee. For this YHVH strengthens our souls with His truth. "...give attention to My words."*

1. *"Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but forgot him" (Gen. 40:23).*

Joseph was an attendant to the prisoners while incarcerated in the compound in Egypt. He behaved himself wisely and discreetly, and thereby was raised up by the jailer and elevated to a significant position, a station that would align him to fulfill his destiny. At one point Joseph graciously interpreted the dreams of Pharaoh's baker and butler, who were in prison with him. Just before the king's servants were released, Joseph asked for a good word to be spoken of him, hoping that a commendation would lead to his release from confinement. Joseph's interpretations proved accurate, and confirmed his faith and integrity, but the attention and kindness he showed to Pharaoh's servants were forgotten. After the butler and baker were released, he received no recognition or mention, and remained incarcerated...but YHVH was with him.

"Remember, and forget not..." (Deut. 9:7). Like the Pharaoh's servants, we may not always remember the words of men, but to remember YHVH's words is of the utmost importance, and to this end the Holy One's **disciples** are regularly exhorted. Moses spoke again and again to Israel: *"Remember, do not forget..." (Exodus 11:7).* The people harkened not. In Jeremiah we read: *"Can a maid forget her own ornaments, or a bride her attire? Yet my people have forgotten me days without number" (Jer. 2:32).* YHVH spoke to the prophet who recorded the words for Judah to hear (and thereby remember), asking them a rhetorical question related to remembering and forgetting. The people had become slow of hearing, self-willed, independent, and had deceived themselves into thinking Abraham's righteousness would suffice for them as they went about their rebellious ways, ignoring YHVH's covenant statutes. But they were wrong. Babylon would be next for them. Unfortunately all mankind has a short spiritual memory, not just Israel, and naturally tends towards self-deception, which is followed closely by self-exaltation. *"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked..." (Jer. 17:9).* For this reason, YHVH was/is always reminding His chosen ones to *"...remember the Sabbath...remember the days of old...remember to obey...remember you were bondmen...remember to honor...remember and forget not...remember what Amalek*

did...remember the word...remember His works...remember...remember...remember..." (Torah). On the other hand, the Mighty One of Israel needs no such reminders because He remembers *everything* (except the sins of His repentant and contrite ones, of course/Isaiah 43:25). For this we can rejoice: *He remembers His Word to fulfill it!*

Thus, each generation has a sure roadmap to help people understand, and **(a)** receive the transformative restoration measure of Spirit and Truth poured out for that hour, and **(b)** prepare and equip themselves for the days in which they/we live.

In keeping with the aforementioned, there are seven historical prophecies--signposts on the roadmap-- that we should remember have been fulfilled (and are continuing to unfold).

They:

(1) validate the awakening and return of Christians to their Hebraic heritage as Spirit led, and **(2)** confirm the divine origin/inspiration of the Hebrew roots/two house movement.

Because we recall these prophetic "words", we are: **a.** *enabled* to discern [have confidence in] our time of refreshing, **b.** *encouraged, even required* to go forward with restoring truth, **c.** *obligated* to go ahead and equip/accommodate ourselves with the current, fresh outpouring of the Spirit, and **d.** *exhorted* to receive renewed faith, fresh vision, and restored zeal from which we and others will benefit.

A. The tribes of the northern kingdom--the house of Ephraim/Israel--would be exiled. [Lev. 26:33; Deut. 4:27; 28:64; 1 Kings 14:15; Jer. 9:16; 13:24; Ezek. 4:13; 20:23; 22:15; 36:18-20; Hosea 7:8; 9:17; Amos 5:27]

B. Their descendants would forget their faith and identity. [1 Kings 14:16; Jer. 3:8; Hos. 1:4-9]

C. They would not be forgotten by YHWH Elohim. [Ezekiel 37; Hosea 2:14-15; Amos 9:9; Zechariah 10:9-10]

D. They would be remembered, recalled, forgiven, regenerated, filled with the Spirit, and re-grafted. [Isa.32:15; 44:1-5; 59:20-21; Jer. 31:18-20, 31-40; 33:7-8; 50:20; Ezek. 37:14; Hos. 1:10; 2:23; 3:5; 14:4-7; Joel 2:28-29]

E. The descendants would fill/occupy and dominate wealthy and powerful nations. [Gen. 49:22-26; Deut. 7:6; 28:1-14; 33:13-17]

F. They would support/assist Judah in re-establishing and settling the ancient homeland. [Isa. 11:11-14; 27:13; Jer. 3:18-23; 31:4-21, 27-28; Ezek. 36:24; 39:25-28; Hosea 1:10; 2:17-20; Amos 9:9-11; Obad. 17-21; Zech. 10:3-10]

G. Ephraim (forgiven, regenerated, re-grafted) will be awakened to his spiritual origins/roots and begin his return to YHVH, the Elohim of their fathers, in preparation for the birth-pangs Messiah predicted for the end-times, the wars of Psalm 83, and *Gog and Magag*, the Great Tribulation, and the coming of Messiah (Isa. 54:6-7; Jer. 31:9,20; 33:23-26; 31:21; Amos 9:9; Ezek. 38-39; Mt. 24-25). Prophetically speaking, we believe the saints are in the season of Elul, a time period set aside for repenting and returning, the season before Trumpets and the great forecasted events of Scripture.

With the prospect of the preceding Scriptures soon occurring, disciples can readily connect the fulfillment of the prophetic stage with the importance and necessity of their cooperation (**a**) in returning to their Israelite identity and family, and (**b**) being restored to their Hebraic heritage, without which there would be less mutual ground for unity between the two houses.

H. The houses of Ephraim, Judah, and all their companions will be spiritually purified, enlightened, and reconciled, restoring unity to both houses--all the tribes and sojourners. [*Isa. 11:13; Jer. 3:14-15; Ezek. 36:24-29; 37:16-28; Amos 9:9-11; Zech. 13:1-5*]

I. Then Messiah will reign over Israel, a kingdom of priests who will take His Torah to the nations with the full measure of the Spirit [*Gen. 12:3; 18:18; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14; Ex. 19:6; Lev. 20:26; Deut. 7:6; 26:19; 28:1,9,13; Isa. 49:6; 60:1-3; 61:6; Zech. 8:3*], and (**J**) the Throne of Yeshua will be in the midst of Jerusalem. [*Isa. 9:6-7; 24:23; Jer. 3:17; Ezek. 37:22-28; 40:1-47:12; Hos. 1:11; Joel 3:16-17,21; Zech. 8:3*] In the end, the whole earth returns from polytheism (idols, paganism, anti-Messiah religions, et al) to monotheism, to the knowledge and worship of the One True Elohim, to YHVH, the Mighty One of Israel. At that future time the restoration on earth of all things spoken of by the holy prophets will be completed, and the *age of ages* will begin.

Overcomers discern His Voice

"I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?' Then I said, 'Here am I! Send me' " (Isaiah 6:8).

The prophet was caught up to the throne room of YHVH and heard Him speaking. The call was not spoken directly to Isaiah, but he obviously heard the Almighty and reacted. YHVH's call is for everyone, not just a few privileged souls, and goes forth throughout the earth (Psalms 19:4 and 147:15; Isaiah 55:11). Whether or not we hear His voice and its summons is another matter and basically depends upon our spiritual attitude and the openness of our ears. Most, it seems, hear only themselves. *"Many are called but few are chosen" (Mt. 22:14).*

Those who are chosen have determined to follow Yeshua—disciples! They have been spiritually changed and their ears are opened to the voice of the Spirit. Allow the Spirit of Elohim to bring

you close to Yeshua, to hear His quickened Word as clearly as did Isaiah, **and overcome** the lies of the enemy.

Part 6: Conclusion

Settling and waiting through the seasons of life for answered prayer can be long and difficult sometimes. But He knows, and says: *"Sing O barren, you who have not borne!"* (Isaiah 54:1). YHWH can and does change circumstances. Barren Sarah gave birth to Isaac. Barren Rachel gave birth to Joseph. Jacob found peace in Egypt with his family around him. Manoah's wife gave birth to Samson. Barren Hannah gave birth to Samuel. Barren Elizabeth gave birth to John the Baptist. And though we wait, His Kingdom will come into full manifestation. [6B]

1. *"And the Lord was with Joseph..."* (Gen. 39:2). One of the lessons made apparent in Joseph's early career in Egypt is that a prosperous man is one who has the presence, peace, and power of Elohim upon his life. Such a person, we can predict, will have an elevated character evidenced always by (a) self-control, (b) a love for Elohim, and man, and (c) confidence that the Almighty will bless an upright life. We can learn from Jacob's eleventh son who, because of his faith, consistently demonstrated these godly qualities even under prolonged stress and deprivation. Let us be sure, the need/requirement for the presence and ministry of the Holy Spirit in our individual lives is indisputable. All Messianic believers--not just Pentecostals, Charismatics, Revivalists, and so forth--have a vital interest in having the Holy Spirit not only abiding within us but in allowing Him to actively empower us. He desires to teach, anoint for service, and equip for reigning in life, each saint. The Holy One stands ready to shield and protect, deliver, impart truth, and bring peace--to each and every person who trusts Him.

"Those who are Messiah's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires" (Gal. 5:24).

Disciples must decide to abandon sin and have no fellowship with it whatsoever. Oswald Chambers said, "Sin belongs to hell and to the devil. I, as a child of God, belong to heaven and to God. It is not a question of giving up sin, but of giving up my right to myself, my natural independence, and my self-will. This is where the battle has to be fought...the natural life is not spiritual, and it can be made spiritual only through sacrifice. If we do not purposely sacrifice the natural [it is the *good* that usually opposes the *best*], the supernatural can never become natural to us. There is no high or easy road. Each of us has the means to accomplish it [sanctification, becoming our best for Yeshua] entirely in his own hands. It is not a question of praying, but of sacrificing, and thereby performing His will." [6] Yeshua said it this way: *"If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself..."* (Mt. 16:24).

2. *"Therefore, I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:1-3).* Remembering always that we are members of New Covenant Israel provides a strong incentive for holiness, and guards against backsliding into a corrupt and carnal lifestyle.

As Redeemed Israel, we are called and empowered to live in unity **(a)** in YHWH's marvelous light (1 Pet. 2:9), **(b)** in the grace of Messiah (Gal. 1:6), **(c)** in the fellowship of Messiah (1 Cor. 1:9), **(d)** in holiness (1 Thess. 2:7), **(e)** in His glory and virtue (2 Pet. 1:3), **(f)** in His kingdom (1 Thess. 2:12), and **(g)** in peace with Elohim, our consciences, and one another (1 Cor. 7:15; Acts 24:16). This manner of walk [*halacha*] is the call, the obligation of redeemed Israel, and the means whereby disciples of Yeshua can honor the Savior with whom we are joint-heirs of the kingdom. A "worthy walk" is powerful, will break down ancient strongholds between Judah and Ephraim, and "*preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*" between the two houses. A yielded, "worthy walk" will make room in our gatherings for the work of the Spirit to progress. He will enlighten our minds, transform your souls, break personal yokes, augment faith and love, and enhance conscious intimacy with Yeshua. Here is our joy and satisfaction. Therefore, as His disciples, this week may we corporately turn to the Spirit and give Him room and freedom to work in our meetings. We want Him to be with us not only individually, but corporately, in a very dynamic way.

Thus, let us "settle" [*VaYeshev*] in YHWH's kingdom with the Holy Spirit, even as Jacob re-settled in Canaan [Promised Land] with his family, flocks, and herds.

Tamid Kadima—Always Forward. Shalom.

The Seven Study Questions

These will appear at the conclusion of every lesson.

The *lesson questions* are **a very important** aspect of the student's learning. All readers are strongly encouraged to take the time and include them in their study discipline. Prayerfully answer each one! They are intended to coax the student to rely upon interaction with the Holy Spirit, discern His voice, receive insight, and obtain prophetic enlightenment.

This process will assist each learner to **(1)** develop a vision for the restoration and reconciliation of the whole house of Israel, **(2)** grow in foundational knowledge of the Torah, **(3)** recover the

principles, practice, and Holy Spirit power of the early, first-century Nazarene believers, and (4) experience and enjoy greater dimensions of the kingdom, power, and glory of Yeshua.

Note: The questions presented here are listed again at the conclusion of each lesson in both the *Torah Commentary Manuals* and the *Torah Discipleship Manuals*. **To repeat—be sure to follow through with them.**

1a. In your opinion, what is the main theme or teaching of each of the listed readings individually? Starting with the Torah: What is its title? What is the interpretation? What truth/idea does the interpretation of the title suggest? What is the Torah section's main truth, as you see it?

1b. What is the corresponding idea in the Haftarah? In the Brit Chadashah?

2. What is the outstanding, central idea or subject that runs through and unites all the individual readings, as you see it? What does it say about discipleship?

3. Find in the Gospels where and how Yeshua declares, demonstrates, exemplifies, or exhibits the parsha's central truth, and explain. Give chapter and verse. Will you follow Him in living the lesson's truths?

4. In what way was the glory of YHVH [manifestations of His goodness] revealed in the parsha lesson?

5. What does the parsha teach you about your Hebrew roots, your identity, your destiny, your duty?

6. In what way did the Holy Spirit/Ruach HaKodesh personally speak to you during prayer and study this week? Did He impress you about how to apply the parsha lesson directly to your life? Explain.

7. *"...because of practice [by reason of use] have their senses trained [exercised] to discern..."* You and I are called to return to hearing the voice of Elohim and to functioning in the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Progressing in these vital areas will require spiritual hunger, faith, and practice. He is waiting for us to approach Him.

Ask the Holy Spirit to speak into your spirit/heart as you pray each day. Look for opportunities to lay hands on the sick, or to be used in prophecy. Faithfully record the prophetic words and experiences you receive, and be sure to share them with your brethren.

It is helpful to **share** your answers, insights, and revelations with your study group (table class). We recommend meeting regularly in a small group. This allows for healthy interaction and

exchange, and militates against stagnation. Practice operating with your spiritual gifts under the anointing of the Holy Spirit while among your friendly, supportive peers. Allow for open participation in leading praise and worship. Give altar calls at your table for healing, refreshing, and prophetic words. These are effective ways for all present to mature in their calling and gifting. The non-threatening small group provides a favorable and encouraging environment in which to learn the ministry of the Spirit. You will do well.

Next-for the upcoming generation.

The parsha lessons are being crafted and shortened for younger readers. Be sure to use them. Deuteronomy 6: 6-7.

1. Youths' Version - Under construction.

2. Childrens' Version - Under construction.

Footnotes: 1. J. I. Packer, *Forgotten God*, Ch. 4. 2. *Pulpit Commentary*, Eerdmans, Matthew, p. 175. 3. *Restoration of Torah Ministries*, Introduction to the Two Houses, P.1. 4. Chabad.org/parshah/article. 5. *FireBible*, Student Edition, Life Publishers International, p. 1764. 6. *My Utmost for His Highest*, O Chambers, Discovery House, p.343.1A. End-times-prophecy.org/end-time-news. 1B none. 2B. *Israel's Anointing*, S. Teplinsky, p. 92. 3B. None. 4B. *Greater Works*, S. W., p. 64. 5B. None. 6B. *The Spiritual Seasons of Life*. D. Swan, p. 12.

Mikeitz (*"At the end"*)

Next

Contender's Voice

Discipleship Series

Book of Genesis/B'resheit

Lesson Ten

Miketz (*"At the end of"*)

Torah: Genesis/B'resheit 41:1-44:17

Haftorah: 1 Kings/Melechim Alef 3:15-4:1

Brit Chadashah: Acts/Maaseh 7:9-16; 1 Corinthians/Qorintyah Alef 2:1-5

Lesson Sequence

1. Introduction: *The Call to Discipleship* **2.** Weekly Parsha: *The Torah—the Standard of Discipleship* **3.** Yeshua: *The High Priest of our Discipleship* **4.** The Holy Spirit/Ruach ha Kodesh: *The Power of Discipleship* **5.** Overcoming: *The Outcome of Discipleship* **6.** Conclusion

Selah

"... there are many Christians in the world *today* who are experiencing fiery persecution. Throughout the history of the church, there have been many believers who have been tortured and martyred for their faith in Jesus Christ. So even if a Christian believes in the imminent return of Christ, he or she would do well to realize that before Jesus comes, there *could* be a time of persecution of the church in *his or her* part of the world as well. During times of relative peace and security for the church, it is possible for Christians to become so unaccustomed to persecution that they may become useless to the Lord during the time of fiery trial. Christians can even adopt a "head-in-the-sand" mentality of denying the possibility of any tough times for

themselves personally. If times of persecution come our way, we should be so mentally, emotionally, spiritually, and physically prepared that we can be used by the Lord to be a strong witness for Him until He calls us home. ” [1A] **“Prove to be My disciples” (John 15:8).**

Part 1: Introduction—*The Call to Discipleship*

*“Have nothing to do with irreverent...myths. Rather, train yourself in godliness...” (1 Tim. 4:7). “The one who looks intently into the law of freedom and perseveres in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer who acts—this person will be blessed in what he does” (James 1:25). **Perceive:** Do, train, looks, perseveres, doer, acts, does—these are words that “describe a disciple’s responsibility in this transformation process [growing in Yeshua’s likeness]. Without question God does the renewing, the empowering, and the re-creating, but disciples must do the yielding, the submitting, and the obeying. Such is the nature of the human-God relationship.” [1B]*

Last week’s discipleship review: *“And the keeper of the prison [the captain of the round house, the chief officer of the tower] committed to Joseph’s hand all the prisoners that were in the prison...YHVH was with him, and that which he did, YHVH made it to prosper” (Gen. 39:22-23).*

In the previous parsha’s Torah narrative, *VaYeshev*, Joseph was sold into Potiphar’s house and became his chief servant. While in the Egyptian’s employ, *out of the blue* a strong, potentially catastrophic temptation came upon him in the form of Potiphar’s impudent, lustful wife. Joseph *“fled, and got him out.”* From this episode we glean certain admirable character qualities of Joseph that are worthy to be emulated. **He was alert!** When temptation comes--and it can at any time and from any direction--we are to *flee* from it, *not flirt* with it and thus fall.

Joseph rejected the promiscuous advance: (1) *without hesitation* (any lingering would have augmented/increased the strength of the temptation); (2) *without indecision* (double-mindedness/second thoughts cause one to lose resolve, wobble and fall); (3) *without rudeness or self-righteousness* (his words revealed his moral indignation, but were without fault); (4) *without fear* (he prepared to face the risk and all possible consequence).

Joseph’s temporary *reward*: The wife’s slander, the master’s wrath, and a dank, dark prison cell which became his assigned portion. However, *“...the Lord was with him...”* **Note:** Joseph’s *lasting reward* is given below, in the Torah section.

This week's discipleship preview: *"And it came to pass at the end of two full years [probably 2 years after the butler's release and restoration to his old position], that Pharaoh dreamed..." (Genesis 41:1).*

In parsha *Miketz* we read about Joseph's miraculous ascension from the prison to the palace, and to the position of ruler over Egypt, under Pharaoh. *Miketz* means "at the end". The word "end" can also be interpreted to mean "extreme", which implies the existence of another, polar "extreme" at the other end of a spectrum. Joseph had been thrown to the extreme bottom of Egyptian society, an ancient foul fortress, for resisting an extreme in moral depravity, *adultery*. He later rises to another extreme, the top of Egyptian society, by honoring the extreme of moral behavior, *Torah integrity*. Remember, YHWH's Torah, even the entire Word of Elohim, is comprised of divine instructions and principles [extremes to some] that if honored will produce prosperity of soul and life. Having stated that, it follows that every struggle, every enemy, every trial is a possible passageway to victory and increase for those who walk uprightly. *"For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome. For whatever is born [begotten] of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world [the sphere of demonic dominance, disturbance, and tribulation]--even our faith" (1 John 5:3-4)*. These are the words of the aged Apostle John, a man of many experiences and trials [extremes]. He writes that the person who is already committed to the will and purpose of Elohim will not find His ways or statutes difficult at all. Why? Because, the opposition to obedience--Spiritual darkness and the world's resistance to the restoration of the Kingdom of God--has already been defeated and overcome by Yeshua. Therefore, how can one who truly believes in and follows Yeshua fail? He or she cannot!

Note: The power which gives the victory is the Spirit, the Guide of Zion's travelers, the One Who gives expression to divine truth. He Himself is divine, and personal, not merely an energy or influence. *"And when He is come, He will convict the world of sin [unbelief; refute error], of righteousness [wrought in the atoning work of Messiah; brought forth from His death and resurrection for His people], and of judgment."* These are the three categories or themes where the world, which lies under the distressing weight of its own faulty values and principles, has exercised great error and needs enlightenment.

Take heed! The evil prince of this world is judged. **"(1)** He [writer] does not refer to any judgment on Satan for his primordial fall, nor for his deceptive temptations so fatally exercised against man. **(2)** He refers to the subversion [overthrow] of Satan's empire, to the abrogation [abolishment] of his usurped [seized wrongfully, by lies and deception] rights [power] over man. The [atoning] death of Messiah effected this result in the following way: **(a)** Sin [power and penalty] was put away by the sacrifice of Himself (Heb. 9:26), the supreme Judge discharged the guilty. **(b)** The accuser of the brethren [devil] could not demand their condemnation (Rom. 8:1).

(c) Messiah broke the power of death *'by destroying him that had the power of death'* (Heb. 2:14)." [3] Through faith in Yeshua's shed Blood, we become overcomers of the world also (Rev. 12:11), and agents of conviction.

Therefore, disciples, keep in mind, **Messiah has overcome** the world and has put to shame its evil elements by: (1) His obedience to death, (2) His conquest of the evil one, (3) His atoning death by which the evil one has been cast out [he is no longer the legal landlord of the planet], and (4) His intercession that secures victory in the lives of them who trust Him. See Hebrews 7:23-28. Our faith unites us to Him, and gives us each an abundant share in His victories. By trusting in His shed Blood, declaring His Name, and confessing His holy Word, the powers of darkness are joined and defeated in our battles.

And the glorious testimony that comes forth, again and again, is that Yeshua, *for a fact*, is the Son of Elohim! This is the witness: the fruit of the Spirit over-coming the works of the flesh. *Overcoming* is the disciple's (your) destiny!

Part 2: Torah—*The Standard of Discipleship*

Parsha Lesson Ten: Miketz (*"At the end of"*)

"Keep His statutes and His commandments...that it may go well with you and with your children after you..." (Deut. 4:40). "The principles of Torah are what we call the 'spirit' of Torah. To keep only the 'letter' of the Torah is to practice legalism. Society might not observe the Torah now, but everyone will in His Kingdom. Many of the commandments come with additional wording, such as 'so that your days may be lengthened' or prolonged. This teaches us that grace is actually located within and associated with the commandments [YHVH's divine instructions for life]" [2B]

Torah. Starting with B'resheet [Genesis] 1:28, *"Be fruitful and multiply,"* and reading through to the last commandment in Deuteronomy 31:19, *"write ye this song for you, and teach it [to] the children of Israel,"* we find that a Torah scroll contains 613 commandments. Some laws pertain only to the priests, and some to rulers, such as kings; some apply to men, and others to women. Some statutes, such as the Ten Commandments, apply to everyone. But no one can keep *all* the commandments.

While the Torah has been published in book/scroll form, it was originally written with black ink on sheets of parchment made from the skin of a clean, or kosher, animal, like a sheep or cow. This standard remains common for Torah scrolls today, each of which may contain 62 to 84 cured, tanned, and scraped sheets. The Torah scroll has been the focus of very detailed study from its beginning. Every scroll contains 187 chapters which contain 5,845 verses and 304,805 letters. The most common letter is the "yod" (י) which appears 31,530 times in a scroll. The least common is the letter "tet" (ט), which appears 1,802 times. Each scroll is handwritten by a trained scribe who uses a quill from a goose or turkey, and has 248 columns, each of which contains 42 lines. Every word must be carefully handwritten in Hebrew. The scroll must be absolutely perfect to be accepted and used in the synagogue, not having an error of any kind. The handwritten scroll is called the Sefer Torah (*Sifrei Torah*).

1. *"And it came to pass at the end of two full years, that Pharaoh dreamed: and behold, he stood by the river" (B'resheet 41:1).*

The parsha's Scriptures open with the monarch of Egypt having had dreams at night, midnight visions that bewildered him and left him highly agitated. The wise men, astrologers, and magicians, when summoned, were unable to decipher the dreams, leaving Pharaoh frustrated and even more troubled. The king's butler then remembered his cell mate, Joseph, and explained to his master that the Hebrew had accurately interpreted the butler's and baker's dreams. Joseph was summoned to the royal chamber and interviewed. Pharaoh told him about his own two dreams and asked if he could provide an interpretation.

Of course, Joseph washed, shaved, and changed clothes before he was brought before Pharaoh. After regarding him with interest, the king declared his dreams that had baffled his wise men.

2. *"Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I have had a dream, but no one can interpret it...And Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, It is not me; God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace" (B'resheet 41:15-16).*

Joseph pointed Pharaoh to YHVH, declaring that interpretations can come only from Him, the divine Interpreter, but by the exercise of prophetic faith he assured Pharaoh that Elohim would give him an answer that would lead to his own happiness and his country's welfare. Joseph then listened to the rehearsal of the night-time visions. Then he declared the interpretation, that seven years of plenty would be followed by seven of famine, and that the dream revealed the certainty of the interpretation because of its repetition. Joseph recommended the implementation of a national strategy, one that would need an able and wise administrator, i.e., himself.

"Can we find such a man like this, in whom is a divine spirit?" (v. 38).

Joseph was thirty when he embarked upon his public ministry for Egypt and for YHVH. He was appointed by Pharaoh's edict to be the prime minister of the kingdom. Pharaoh had himself admitted that the "divine spirit" was upon the young man, which he perceived through the demonstration of divine revelation and authority that were in Joseph's words. [The *Ruach Elohim* was understood by the king of Egypt to be the wisdom and revelation of deity.] Joseph is

a type of Messiah Yeshua, the Hebrew who has been exalted to rule the earth. There are many analogies. "He that distributes the bread of life to a perishing race was himself taken from prison, was treated as a malefactor, was declared the Ruler and Savior because the Spirit of God was upon him, was King of kings and Lord of lords. His benefits and blessings distributed to the world are immediately identified with his kingdom. He gathers in that He may give out. He is first the all-wise and all-powerful ruler of seven years of plenty, and then the merciful helper and redeemer in the seven years of famine." [4]

3. *"And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt...and gave him to wife Aseneah..and Joseph was thirty years old..." (read B'resheet 41:41-46).*

As befitting one who had already proven himself valuable in service to Pharaoh and Egypt, Joseph was immediately and lavishly recompensed. Joseph's permanent reward: (a) Joseph's recommendations were recognized and accepted; (b) he was promoted as the grand administrator over the entire land (second only to Pharaoh; (c) he received Pharaoh's own ring-signet of authority; (d) he was given a new name-*Zaphnath-paaneah*, ["the man to whom mysteries are revealed," Targum Onkelos]; (e) he was naturalized as an Egyptian prince by virtue of the new name, and (f) he was married to the daughter of the court's high priest, who represented the highest caste of dignitaries in the State; (g) he became wealthy, going from rags to riches in one day; (h) he was divinely placed (and thereby distinguished) by the overruling providence [the divine power caring for, sustaining and guiding human destiny] of the Almighty, for the next phase in the fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant; (i) he was validated before his accusers and totally vindicated; (j) he was increased in the knowledge and fidelity of YHVH Himself, and (k) he was given children who were prophesied over by Jacob and received the first-born blessing. In the course of time, as we will read in the last two parshas of Br'esheit, (l) Joseph was eventually respected and honored by his father and brothers, (m) had a descendant lead Israel in conquering Canaan, and (n) was, in the end, laid to rest in Shechem in the Promised Land, the area allocated by Joshua to be of the tribe of Ephraim.

4. *"And unto Joseph were born two sons...the firstborn Manasseh ["making forgetful"]...the second he called Ephraim ["fruitfulness"]..." (B'resheet 41:50-52).*

As we have already noted, Joseph was thirty years old when elevated to second in command in the land of Egypt. He had been seventeen when he was sold by his kin to a spice caravan of

Midianite traders. He was sold again in Egypt as a slave and served ten years as a bondsman in the house of Potiphar, the provost marshal of the slaughterers [in charge of their execution], and soon became the overseer of the powerful man's estate. He went forth to prison for three years on a charge of which he was entirely innocent. Then, overnight, he was recognized as a wise and able man, and appointed to become the most powerful administrator in the land. He was married to an affectionate wife, Asenath, daughter of Poti-pherah, a priest or prince of notable position in the government. He had two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, who would become tribes in Israel. The names can be considered a testimony to his faith—"God has made me forget my toils and father's house," *Manasseh*; and "God has caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction," *Ephraim*. Children who would become joined to Israel were further indications of divine favor. **Learn: A.** YHWH's school of faith has unusual but effective ways and means of developing ability and character, and effectively advancing the student toward his/her destiny. **B.** The case of Joseph's bondages "is a signal illustration [beacon, sign, vivid lesson] of the beneficial uses of adversity, and shows that the true road to success in life, to the acquisition of wisdom, power, wealth, or fame, or of all combined, often lies through early hardships, and trials, disasters, and defeats." [5] This helps us better appreciate why Paul's words apply in all circumstances: *"In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Messiah Yeshua concerning you" (1 Th. 5:18).*

5. *"And the seven years of dearth began...all the land of Egypt was famished...and Joseph opened all the storehouses..." (B'resheet 41:53-56).*

When the seven years of famine came, Joseph's reputation as a prophet was confirmed. He was also seen as a wise administrator in the policy of grain distribution.

Some thoughts: **A.** It is possible that the grain was purchased from the people during the seven prosperous years. **B.** The people had been warned of the coming draught and given ample opportunity to use forethought and steward their resources for the day of lack. [Evidently, very few demonstrated conservation or sound stewardship policy.] **C.** To have gratuitously given the grain, and not to have sold it, would have caused excessive and unequal distribution with much of the corn ending up in the barns of the clever and greedy of the population for resale and black-marketeering. **D.** By charging a price, the population was forced to practice frugality and not become patrons entirely dependent upon a welfare state. **E.** Joseph's wise husbanding policy [judicious use of resources] militated against hoarding and thus allowed for the sphere of relief to be extended beyond Egypt to the starving countries whose people came to purchase corn. **F.** Jacob would not have sent his sons if grain had not been for sale.

6. *"And Jacob's ten brethren went down to buy corn in Egypt" (B'resheet 42:3).*

Joseph's brothers came to buy food. They journeyed together in a large number for safety, and because the grain was being sold and proportioned individually. Hence, more individuals, more corn.

7. *"And Joseph saw his brethren, and he knew them, but made himself strange unto them...and Joseph remembered his dreams...and said unto them, Ye are spies..." (B'resheit 42:7-9).*

Joseph spoke roughly to them at first. He did not speak from revengeful sentiments or duplicity, but to discern the brothers' hearts and discover their frame of mind toward him. He also wanted to learn of Benjamin, whose absence was apparent and caused concern to the regent of Egypt. Twenty years had passed since the tragic episode at Dothan. The high position of Joseph, his adopted foreign language and customs, and also the change of his appearance from boyish to mature masculinity, combined to mask his true identity from his siblings. He remembered his dream and challenged them: *"You are spying!"*

"...nay, my lord..." The lads protested and explained who they were and from where they came.

8. *"Hereby shall you be proved...carry corn for the famine...but bring your youngest brother unto me" (B'resheit 42:19-20).*

The brothers showed no pride and took no umbrage at the charge, but were genuinely fearful, and humbled. *"We are all one man's sons!"* The implication of the response: Why would one man send his ten sons on the same trip, at the same time, to the same place on a perilous mission of espionage? Their reply was sufficient to establish their sincerity, but Joseph pressed them further. *"Nay, but to see...ye are come."* The brothers responded, *"Thy servants are twelve brethren...the youngest is this day with his father, and one is not."* The assertion was only partially correct. They wished that it would be accepted that the *"one [who] is not"* was dead, which was not an entirely unreasonable assumption, but it aroused concern in Joseph's bosom for Benjamin. He sent them home on the condition they would return with his younger brother. Simeon was held as the hostage. The boys returned home with grain, and their purchase money in their sacks, and gave Jacob the unsettling report.

"...go again and buy us a little food."

Jacob directed his sons to make a return trip. Reuben's offer to be responsible for Benjamin was rejected and Judah became the spokesman for the group.

9. *"And Judah said unto Israel his father, Send the lad with me..." (B'ersheit 43:8).*

Jacob received the ultimatum, *"...bring your youngest brother..."* and was greatly distraught. Reuben rashly offered to recover Simeon, whom he had just *left* in jail in Egypt! Jacob could not

agree. But the drought persisted and his circumstances continued to deteriorate. *"...the famine waxed worse...and Judah spoke unto him [Jacob]...the man solemnly warned us..."* The family would have to go again for grain but this time Benjamin would also go. Judah took responsibility for Benjamin, and Jacob agreed to send his youngest son, the last of Rachel, with the brothers.

Note: We see in the narrative again the overruling providence of the Almighty guiding and shaping the affairs of His people. Jacob had said, *"...all these things are against me."* Not really. All *"these things"* were actually working together for his restoration and the welfare of his seed. So it is with us today. Again: *"For we know all things work together for good to them that love God..."* (Romans 8:28).

Preparations were made. Gifts and double the money were stowed. Jacob's prayer preceded the brothers to Egypt: *"May God Almighty give you mercy before the man."*

10. *"...and they took double money in their hand, and Benjamin; and rose up, and went down to Egypt, and stood before Joseph...And he took and set servings unto them..."* (read B'resheet 43:15-34)

Joseph received the men kindly and provided dinner. *"And he lifted up his eyes, and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and said, is this your younger brother, of whom ye spoke unto me? And he said, God be gracious unto thee, my son"* (Gen. 43:29). He entertained his self-conscious, ill-at-ease brothers, and had them sit according to their birth order as he provided generously for them. As they ate, conversing became more relaxed, and the brethren began to actually enjoy themselves, for *"the men marveled [became astonished, filled with surprise] at one another"* as there became apparent among them rising sentiments of cheer and happy fellowship. It would seem that such congenial merry-making heretofore had been an unfamiliar experience to Jacob's family fold. The process of restoration of the house of Jacob had begun. It is a picture of the Millennium when both houses of Israel, all twelve tribes, will finally be recognized, reconciled, reunited and rejoicing in harmony and with unsullied gladness as they gaze together upon Yeshua in the Messianic kingdom.

"And I will strengthen the house of Judah, and I will save the house of Joseph...and they of Ephraim shall be like a mighty man, and their heart shall rejoice as through wine; yea their children shall see it, and be glad, and their heart shall rejoice in the Lord" (Zech. 10:6-7).

The Holy One of Israel is, by way of these verses, proclaiming wonderful news for all of us, Judah and Ephraim, and all Israel. It is that the prophesied strengthening and uplifting of Judah and Ephraim will be:

(a) Real. "I will strengthen." **(b) Universal.** The promise embraces **both** Judah and Joseph, the long-divided and rival leading families of Jacob. **(c) Complete.** The dual action, *"strengthen"* and

"save", indicates an up-building and renewal so powerful and effectual that the debilitating memories and influences of both their pasts will be completely obliterated and forgotten. *"They shall be as I had not cast them off."* (d) *Blessed*. "Wine" speaks clearly of causing rejoicing and uninhibited exhilaration, assurance and joy. (e) *Permanent*. Their *"children shall see it"* reveals the restoration of YHVH flows down generational lines. Expect challenges as you walk in renewal. Nevertheless, good things will continually transpire for you.

11. *"Fill the men's sacks with food...put every man's money in his sack's mouth. And put my cup...in the sack's mouth of the youngest..." (B'esheit 44:1-2).*

Joseph, not quite finished with testing his brothers, moved with purpose and cunning. He had his butler plant/stash the silver divining cup in the grain sack of Benjamin. The plot was designed for at least two purposes. **First**, that Benjamin would be arrested as a criminal and detained in Joseph's house. **Secondly**, and primarily, the ploy was designed to place added stress upon the men, and return them to be challenged before Joseph. He wanted to discern if they could suffer Benjamin's punishment unmoved, without sympathy, as they had before when they had watched with calloused hearts as Joseph—young, hot, dirty, hungry, and thirsty—was hauled by slave-traders down to Egypt. The plot succeeded and revealed the hearts of the men.

The souls of the brothers were tried by the unfolding events. We learn from this that no part of our lives is unimportant from a spiritual perspective. Some circumstances are ordered to try us, challenge us (Deut. 8:2). Trials, confrontations, and contests mature us and reveal motives and character. (Rom. 5:3-5). How are we to stand in the days of trial? By faith in the Blood of the Lamb (Rev. 12:11).

12. *"And Judah and his brethren came to Joseph's house" (B'eresheet 44:14).*

Joseph sent his guard after the brothers once they had departed the city. The soldiers discovered the silver chalice in Benjamin's sack and made the men return to Joseph. He confronted the brothers again, then agreed to free them but threatened to hold Benjamin. This appeared as a severe and undeserved sentence, and Judah (not Reuben) pleaded with great humility, simplicity of speech, and sincere emotion, and offered himself as a hostage in Benjamin's place: *"Let thy servant abide instead..."* We take note of Judah's perception and change of heart by his unexpected confession: *"God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants."* The old, unconfessed sin had haunted him for years, yet the grace of YHVH had been at work upon the heart of the fourth brother, convicting and converting him. Benjamin was innocent, but not the rest of the brothers, and Judah knew it. He thus bravely committed himself to the compassion and righteousness of Joseph.

We are hereby encouraged to remember God's Word, not for ourselves only, but especially for our families and nation: *"But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound" (Rom. 5:20).*

This is the reason we must maintain faith and continue to pray for the harvest and spiritual renewal in our land, and not give up. A momentous, unprecedented outpouring of the Spirit, which would produce a third great spiritual awakening in America, would also bring a great harvest of souls into the Kingdom of God, and awaken and return multitudes of descendants from the House of Israel to their Hebraic heritage faster and with greater power and effectiveness than anything our current restoration ministries could possibly accomplish *without* such a visitation! Therefore, it makes sense that our teachings should be fashioned to encourage and conduct believers toward such a needed third-millennial glory encounter. Where sin abounds, grace much more abounds.

Haftorah

1. *"And Solomon awoke and behold it was a dream" (1 Kings 3:15).* This verse is a reflection of Pharaoh's experience and an emphasis on the fact that the Almighty did, does, and will continue to direct people by divinely sent dreams. *"I will pour out My Spirit...your sons and daughters will prophesy...old men will dream dreams...young men shall see visions" (Joel 2:28).* The *haftorah* presents the famous story of Solomon's wisdom for which he had prayed in his dream. That his request was granted is evidenced in his dealing with the two harlots who disputed over a surviving infant. Read the account.

Part 3: Yeshua—*The Eternal High Priest of the Believers Discipleship*

"...He did once for all when He offered up Himself" (Heb. 7:27). The Priesthood of Yeshua is superior. He offered up Himself on the cross and in effect made Himself the center of history. "Every work of God's grace in history before the sacrifice of Christ looked forward to the death of Christ for its foundation. And every work of God's grace since the sacrifice of Christ looks back to the death of Christ for its foundation. Christ is the center of the history of grace. There is no grace without Him. Grace was planned before all eternity, but not without Jesus at the center and His death as the foundation." [3B] He did not require a sacrifice for Himself, and is superior over all other priests.

"I did not come to abolish but fulfill" (Mt. 5:17).

Yeshua asked Peter a question when He appeared at Galilee where he and other disciples were fishing. *"...Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?" (see John 21:15-19).* This may have been the most personal *and* important question Peter had ever been asked. After his denial of Messiah (John: 18:17, 25-27) he was put in a position where he had to decide, out loud and openly, whether or not he indeed possessed a true, deep devotion for his Master. The repeated questions puzzled and hurt Peter, but Messiah Yeshua was actually showing compassion for His disciple by making a way for his restoration and reinstatement as a leader. Yeshua knew that

Peter's typical enthusiasm would not be enough for him to endure in faithful service. His commitment to follow the Master would not last unless he (Peter) was sure of his love for Him. "Two Greek words are used...The first (used in Yeshua's first two questions) is *agapao*, which implies an intelligent, thoughtful and purposeful love involving the entire personality, but primarily a decision of the mind and will. The other word is *phileo*, which implies a warm, natural and more spontaneous sense of feeling and affection—a more emotional love. Through these two words [Hebrew equivalent] Yeshua indicates that Peter's love must be not only a matter of the mind, but also of the heart. It must be a love motivated by both purpose and [deep] personal attachment." [6] All of us who are returning to our Hebraic heritage must ask ourselves the same question. The issue is not whether we are willing to love others, study and serve. It is whether we have a true and deeply seated love for the Master. A sincere, heartfelt devotion for Messiah is the only motivation that will enable us to endure in following Him and serving Him with power (John 14:15; 16:27; Lk. 7:47; 1 Cor. 16:22; 2 Cor. 5:14; 1 Pet. 1:8; Rev. 2:4, etc.). Let us determine afresh to spend time with Him, know Him more intimately, build our love relationship day by day. May we be ready to answer "yes!" to all three questions of the cited passage in John.

1. *"Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Yeshua Messiah [a reference to the second coming of Yeshua in glory, which is the joy and comfort of all true believers]; Who gave Himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar [special] people, zealous of good works" (Titus 2:13-14).*

Judah offered himself as a substitute, to be held hostage in the place of Benjamin. *"Now, therefore, I pray thee, let thy servant [Judah] abide instead of the lad [Benjamin]" (B'resheet 44:33).* In this he can be seen as a type of Yeshua, the One *"Who gave himself for us."* Messiah's sacrifice was (a) a priestly deed. The Father gave the Son (John 3:16), and the Son voluntarily *"gave Himself,"* an act that exhibited a depth of divine love and obedience that is unfathomable to man. Further, that Yeshua *"gave Himself for us"* makes His action (b) vicarious. His sacrifice was substitutionary. He died in our stead and for our benefit. While we were *"yet in our sins,"* and subject to divine judgment, condemnation, and wrath, He had our iniquity charged to Himself. How great is His compassion!

Yeshua's atoning work is here stated as *two-fold* in effect. **First**, it provides redemption from iniquity. We are delivered because He purchased us/redeemed us by His shed Blood (2 Sa. 7:23; 1 Pet. 1:18; Rev. 5:9; Gal. 3:13). The range, or extent, of our redemption is encompassing; it is *"from all iniquity"* (Eph. 1:4-14). Paul wrote concerning Him: *"Who has delivered us from the power of darkness, and has translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son, in whom we have redemption through His shed Blood, even the forgiveness of sins"* (Col. 1:13-14). Yeshua's

sacrifice delivered us from the power, impurity, and penalty [the liability to punishment because] of our sins. **Secondly**, Messiah's atoning work provides for the purification of the redeemed people for Himself, sanctified and ardent for good works. This is a work of the Holy Spirit within the hearts of those brought into covenant and fellowship with the Almighty through faith in the Blood of the Lamb. Thus believers have a new standing and peace with God through Yeshua. His intent is to have consecrated **disciples** for set-apart service and priestly worship, a peculiar people separated from the world.

These are those who, by redemption, are spiritually united to the Messiah and whose souls have been divinely enlightened and elevated from secularism to kingdom orientation, who have been given mastery over the devil, and want to reign with the Groom. They will be *"zealous of good works"* because they have become partakers of the Spirit of holiness (Rom. 1:4) and sanctification (1 Peter 1:2). Yeshua not only took us out of the prison of sin and bondage to corruption, but as was Joseph in Egypt, He lifted us up to the Throne Room, *His Throne Room*.

A. He made a new and living way for believers into the presence of Elohim—when, at the point of His substitutionary death, the veil in the Temple was rent and the Holy of Holies was opened. *"By a new and living way, which He has consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh; and since we have a great high priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith..." (Heb. 10:20).*

B. He had raised us up with Him, and has given us a legal position with Him in heavenly places. *"And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Messiah Yeshua..." (Eph. 2:6).*

Our physical bodies are earthbound, but our recreated, born-again *spirit man* has access to the realm of heaven and glory, and in fact abides in that glory (Ro. 8:11; 1 Cor. 3:16; 2 Tim. 1:14; 1 Jn. 4:12-15). We have intimacy with Messiah because it is for this that He has positioned us. It is safe to assume that His will for us is to encounter and experience His manifest glory in the earth, in this life.

Part 4: The Holy Spirit—*The Power of Discipleship*

"But you will receive power" (Acts 1:8). "Jesus [Yeshua] promised that when the Holy Spirit came we would receive power. It is very important for us to connect in our hearts and minds the endtimes Church with the power of God, because the battle of the last days will be between the power of the Holy Spirit and the power of the spirit of the antichrist" [4B] Are you filled with the Holy Spirit?

1. *"And there was with us a young man, a Hebrew, servant to the captain of the guard; and we told him, and he interpreted to us our dreams; to each man according to his dream he did interpret" (Gen. 41:12).*

The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament: Part 2 of 5

Joseph had been refined/prepared for his future by a long experience in the furnace of abuse and imprisonment. He was ready to stand before Pharaoh where the butler's testimony would place him, and from there to step into a role of authority and honor. Without the direct involvement of the Holy Spirit assisting him, Joseph would have had no more success in effectively answering the monarch than did the court magicians and astrologers before him. In the Old Testament we have abundant evidence of the Spirit coming upon and empowering certain people for specific tasks and ministries. In the time of the judges, the backsliding, morally weak Israelite people were often in danger of being overrun and destroyed by surrounding nations.

At such times, once the people had repented and returned to YHVH with prayers and supplications, the Holy Spirit would come upon certain individuals (judges, kings, prophets) and specially anoint them, quickening and enabling them to lead their particular tribes/people, deliver them from their oppressors, and oversee their subsequent restoration. In the following examples we will see again that it was always the Holy Spirit's presence and activity that brought forth successful outcomes for the Israelites.

"And when the children of Israel cried unto the Lord, the Lord raised up a deliverer...even, Othniel...and the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, and he judged Israel..." (Judges 3:9-10). The same pattern is seen throughout Judges: Israel would fall into apostasy, then servitude, distress, and finally come to repentance. Then, at that point, the Holy Spirit would come upon and empower the selected judges to rally the people and deliver them from their oppressors. Afterwards, there was always a rest period with the renewal of religion and morality. Such was Israel in the days of Othneil.

Early in the referenced episode, when unfaithful Israel had become joined to Baal worship and was sorely oppressed by "Chushan the Wicked", Elohim raised up Othneil, a chieftain and a kinsman of Caleb, as the deliverer. He went to war and the Lord, who inspired Othneil's courage, delivered the king of Mesopotamia into his hand. The anointed, victorious warrior ascended to judgeship, went on to rule faithfully, and Israel gravitated to his moral authority. The deliverance and re-establishment of the people of Israel as a Torah society, time and again, was completely subject to the orchestration and empowering of the Spirit of YHVH--the Holy Spirit, and not man. True deliverance must always come forth from the presence and empowerment of the Holy One, by His Spirit. Other examples of Spirit-anointed and inspired judges include Deborah

(Judges 4), Gideon (Judges 6:34), Jephthah (Judges 11:29), Samson (Judges 14 and 15), and others. With all these individuals the pattern was the same. Hence, the success of the Judges in both war and social administration must be attributed to the Holy Spirit's personal and direct involvement with them, and their yieldedness to Him.

The Spirit came upon kings of Israel as well as the judges. *"Then Samuel took a vial of oil and poured it upon his head...and said...the Spirit of the Lord will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy...and the Spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied among them"* (1 Samuel 10:1-10). Saul was anointed to be the first King of Israel [the title/term here also means "war leader"] and he was prophesied over by the prophet-judge, Samuel. Saul was told *"the Spirit of YHVH will come upon you"*. The Hebrew meaning of the phrase could be written, "the Spirit will come mightily, in an overpowering fashion, upon you, and though untrained, you will prophesy exuberantly under His heavy unction, and from the experience be inwardly transformed into a different man."

This Spirit-inspired prophecy meant that Saul, by the Spirit coming upon him, would be renewed and invigorated in his soul, given new thoughts and emotions, new physical stamina, and mental prowess which would enable him to know YHWH more personally, take wise action, lead Israel, and subdue enemies in any event or situation that arose during his reign. Samuel's word was good, and came to pass. The Spirit descended on Saul as prophesied, imparted and sustained new endowments [charismata] with which Saul was wonderfully enriched, and that were demonstrated when the new king later defeated the Ammonites. *For a short season*, while he exercised holy faith and honorably discharged his sacred duties, Saul lived victoriously and *"...tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come"* (Heb. 6:5)

Saul did not maintain obedience to the Torah and the Spirit of Elohim left him. *"But the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul..."* (1 Sam 16:14). The Spirit leaving him refers to the special, divine empowerment, presence, and peace once divinely given, being lifted and withdrawn. As a result he became powerless and exposed, open to inner and outer enemies, paranoid, frail (and knowing it), and susceptible to failure. Thus, King Saul was left in a greatly weakened spiritual condition and much, much worse off than before the Spirit's visitation/coming to rest on him. [Read: Hebrews 6.]

Let us go further, and briefly recall David. *"Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him...and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward..."* (1 Sam 16:13). The Spirit came upon David and remained with him [not in the New Covenant sense of regeneration and indwelling, but empowering] even through David's three backsliding episodes. This is because, unlike Saul, he always genuinely repented of his transgressions. As a result, David was basically very successful as a leader, warrior, king, prophet, and psalmist. His success is

attributable to the presence and prowess of the Spirit of YHVH active on his behalf during his entire life.

"You shall receive power..." (Acts 1:8). Old Covenant Israel experienced the Spirit coming upon servants, judges, and kings for a greater or lesser period of time according to the servant's faithfulness and YHVH's purposes. However, New Covenant Israel--the houses of Judah and Ephraim/Israel, and all their companions in faith all over the world--have the Spirit and His power **not only on us** (see: 1 Peter 4:14), **but in us** (see: John 14:16-18; 1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19). The New Covenant is distinguished by and blessed with the promise of the Spirit permanently (a) upon, (b) within, and (c) remaining with believers through the *new birth* spoken of by Messiah in John 3:1-16.

Take notice: *"...having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, Who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory" (Eph. 1:13-14).* The indwelling Spirit is represented as the pledge, an earnest, a down payment (so to speak) of our future life. He is the Promise of our inheritance of a new, immortal body that will be divinely fashioned for abiding in His unmitigated [not lessened or decreased; full] glory. *"But if the Spirit of Him who raised Yeshua from the dead dwells in you, He who raised up Messiah Yeshua from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you" (Roman 8:11).* The Spirit is a blessing and a security Who now makes us His home, His holy temple. How wonderful He is!

A significant, but sometimes overlooked purpose of the Hebrew roots movement that is now becoming increasingly obvious, is the call for a more complete return of the Ecclesia to the **fullness** of the power and presence of the Spirit, which were distinguishing characteristics of the early Apostolic-era disciples. Why press this issue, one might ask? We do so because the Ecclesia must not be unlearned or inhibited and reluctant with her display of trust and affection for the Holy Spirit. The saints must become openly yielded/surrendered to Him if Yeshua is to be Master and Husband of His fold. The function of the early Apostles and disciples, which is insisted upon in Scripture, was to be witnesses...effectual, Spirit-empowered witnesses.

This is the calling for today's believers also. The Holy Spirit is the precious gift of the Father sent by Yeshua to regenerate and permanently indwell and empower believers, making them new creations and anointed ambassadors of His kingdom! He makes this possible! [See: 2 Cor. 5:17.]

Throughout the Word, the Spirit is associated with supernatural, divine power...power [including fruit, gifts, signs, and wonders] with which the saints are to live and function in their Messianic calling while under the scrutiny of the whole earth. [See: Luke 4:14; 10:38; 24:49; Rom. 15:13; 1 Cor. 2:4; Eph. 3:16; Heb. 4:6.]

It would profit withal if every Messianic Believer would examine his/her faith and discover to what extent their religion (a) is based upon Holy Spirit visitation/activity and (b) imbibes of or remains under His revolutionary, radical renewal power.

Next TGDS lesson will discuss the Holy Spirit and the Old Testament prophets.

Knowing His Voice through the Communion of the Spirit

"Pharaoh said to Joseph, I have had a dream, but no one can interpret it...Joseph then answered Pharaoh saying, it is not me; God will give Pharaoh a favorable answer...God hath told Pharaoh what He is about to do" (Gen. 41:15-16,25).

Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh and commenced his public ministry. It was the Spirit of Elohim Who gave him the faith and inspiration to declare the interpretation for the dreams, and the courage and presence of mind to make appropriate recommendations before Pharaoh. He would not have ventured (with any hope) into the palace on such a mission if YHVH had not been with him. He stood before the court, responded promptly to the request of the monarch, trusted His Elohim, and perceived the meaning of the dreams as it was imparted into his mind by the Spirit. **Lesson:** He then remained in faith (for years), nothing wavering, and guarded his mouth! Hearing, and accurately perceiving and reacting to the word/the voice of YHVH by faith and unclouded soul, made the difference between victory and failure.

YHVH breathed into Adam the Spirit of life and he became a living soul, an Elohim-conscious, a self-aware human being, a soul with divine consciousness. His spirit was that part of him that was united with, and one with, YHVH his Creator. It was eternal, like YHVH Himself. Today, the Holy Spirit leads regenerated, Spirit-indwelt believers through their recreated, divinely anointed spirits. This is where He bears witness with us [some consider this as Spirit enhanced *intuition*], and speaks to us with His still small voice. Our souls receive and hear the Spirit's voice, His word, and we discern the nature and meaning of the sanctified impression. We believe the soul is the seat of the human intellect, emotions, and will (the "wanter"), and as such is spiritually unreliable in correctly discerning and processing divine input.

It needs sanctification and training to consistently recognize and comply correctly with YHVH's voice coming through the sanctified inner man. The soul is easily manipulated by the sinful nature, and also by various other inner and outer stimuli such as lust, worldliness and demonic interference. It therefore must be regularly exercised and renewed by the Word and ministry of the Spirit to effectively perceive, discern and obey divine leading. Good hearing, understanding, and response to His voice/word are the sweet fruit of *the communion with the Spirit* of Elohim.

*"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ , and the love of God [the Father, Abba], and the **communion of the Holy Spirit**, be with you all. Amen" (2 Cor. 13:14).*

Elohim in His fullness is represented in this full, apostolic benediction which Paul bestowed upon the Corinthian Ecclesia after correcting them in the first, more stern letter. The troubled congregation seemed to have improved its spiritual condition, benefiting especially from its

renewed obedience to authority and liberality in giving, and settled down after profiting from the Apostle's letter and visit. Let us examine the rich blessings which Paul commended upon the Corinthians and set our hearts upon them.

First, a true blessing does not consist of (does not invoke) earthly pleasures, carnal enjoyment or even human friendship, as pleasant as these can be for us. Rather, it **(a)** promotes the higher, more noble and sublime benefits of the soul [spiritual restoration or refreshing, revelation, love, joy, holy peace, and much more] and **(b)** invokes (extols and petitions, appeals, solicits) life-enriching, spiritual blessings that only YHVH (not the world) can directly provide. **Secondly**, a true blessing will **(a)** embody a consciousness (an appreciation, an awareness) of the value/significance of divine fellowship and **(b)** commend heavenly revelation and blessed visitation upon the recipient. This Paul did. The "*grace of our Lord Jesus Christ* " refers to Yeshua's favor and goodness, and everything that His grace could possibly involve, embrace, and bestow. "*The love of God* " would be the riches of YHWH's divine love (the Father's love) and all the revelation that divine love brings forth in one's life.

And, "*...the communion of the Holy Spirit*" which refers to intimate fellowship, rapport, mutual participation and cooperation with the Spirit, and the experience of His reality and life in sweet fellowship. Further, union of the Believer and the Holy Spirit imparts an enlightening revelation and growing awareness of **(1)** the living reality of Yeshua *and* **(2)** the Father's love. This is life-changing! The flow of such blessings, along with sanctification, understanding of truth, preservation in time of peril, comfort, victory, empowerment to witness, and more, are largely dependent upon our participation in the *communion of the Holy Spirit* and submission to His voice.

Paul prayed for the Corinthians, that they would experience that the fullest measure of the blessing of Elohim's weighty presence would– "*be with you all.*" It is a benediction for *all* believers. Therefore, have faith, pray, and partake of the available (a) communion with and (b) communication of the eternal Spirit. Obey Him and do not minimize, quench, grieve, or ignore Him. Here is the point: In this life here on earth, the Holy Spirit is the only divine One with Whom you can have regular, daily, conscious communion and fellowship.

All we receive from heaven in this life is from, by, and of the Spirit of Elohim. Abba is on the Throne of Grace and Yeshua has completed His work and is at the Right Hand of Glory. Apart

from unusual visitations, we have our regular fellowship with the Spirit. What a profound benefit! He is a Gift sent to magnify the Son and empower and

bring the Bride [His followers, those who emulate His words] to a state of readiness, in Word and in Spirit, for Her coming Bridegroom. The Hebrew roots movement is an important, current end-times aspect of that preparation. Pre-requisite in welcoming the Spirit's leadership is to remember and adhere to Yeshua's teaching. *"...the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" (John 6:63).*

The first benefit we want to discuss (others will follow next week) resulting from the "communion of the Spirit" is hearing Him bring the precious, faith-inducing words of Messiah to our minds and hearts again. *"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things and bring to your remembrance [re-communicate directly, or by renewal/enlargement of memory], whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14:26).* Listen to the Spirit. As the Son revealed the Father, likewise the mission of the Holy Spirit is to reveal and magnify the Son, Yeshua, and renew to us His words of Spirit and life.

The Spirit's education ministry is two-fold, therefore. **First**, He teaches biblical truth and brings revelation. **Secondly**, He brings all truth, from the Torah right through to the Apostolic Scriptures, to remembrance and illumination. In this way He renews faith, convicts and corrects, provides guidance, and prepares us as disciples of the Messiah. The words of Yeshua (Who is the living Torah) provide the foundation for His operation with the New Covenant Ecclesia. In the next few TGDS discipleship lessons we will discuss further: (1) what the "communion of the Spirit" is, (2) how to enter into and remain in that communion, and (3) what His voice/word speaks into us via the communion of the Spirit; that is, how we benefit.

Part 5: Overcoming—*The Outcome of Discipleship*

"Adversity is an unavoidable part of life. Death of a loved one, breakup of a relationship, malicious action by another, job loss, natural disaster, or any other undesirable event are all circumstances people encounter. Events happen that are beyond our control. Successfully overcoming adversity is essential for a healthy life. Overcoming adversity builds mental strength, character and endurance. You develop in ways that would not otherwise be possible." **His Word:** *"He gives strength to the weary, and to him who lacks might He increases power" (Isaiah 40:29).* Rejoice! You are equipped to be an overcomer!

1. *"That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God" (1 Cor. 2:5).* Here is Paul's exhortation to rely upon the wisdom, word, and power of the Almighty in all circumstances. *"As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Rom. 8:14).*

The Pharaoh dreamed, the butler remembered, Joseph came out of prison and was made viceroy by Pharaoh, and his brothers came to him in Egypt. In the events we discover YHVH working behind the scenes, imparting wisdom, moving with power, and despite the frailty of man, accomplishing His intentions for Jacob's house. So, *"at the end"* of two more years in prison, things turned out well for Joseph after all, and his family was brought forward and positioned for reconciliation and a new beginning. What can we surmise from the reading? The world by its own wisdom cannot know YHVH or His kingdom, power, or glory any more than the magicians of Pharaoh's court could interpret his dreams. But you know Him because He is with you, and is in you. See: *John 14:16-18 and Acts 1 and 2*. Therefore, O Israel, rejoice! Do not allow your struggles (they are part and parcel of life) overcome you. But fear the Lord, walk in His integrity, by faith imbibe the wisdom of His Word and His power, and He will lift you (as He did Joseph) as high and take you as far as you need to go.

"He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dung hill; that He may set him with princes, even the princes of His people" (Psalm. 113:7-8).

Note: Though there are many things to admire about Joseph, we know he was not perfect. Some thoughts: It should be recognized that, as viceroy over Egypt, he seemed more interested in bringing the people under greater control of Pharaoh than in advancing their own conditions, and benefiting them. What is more, concerning the private life of the appointed prime minister, Joseph, we observe in the entire story that "...he was soon led to conform to the spirit and practice of the ungodly nation. He used a divining cup (44:15-16) and took his meals apart (43:32), recognizing and sustaining class distinctions. He learned the mode of speech common among the Egyptians, swore by the life of Pharaoh (42:15), and was affiliated [engaged and married] to an idolatress, probably a priestess (41:45). He made no effort to return to his own land, or to the pastoral life of his fathers. It was in his power also for nine years to have sent to make search for his father, who was sorrowing for him as dead, but he sent not [for him]...not until trouble, and by apparent chance, drove his brethren to him did he appear to think of them, or of home or Jacob. When they came he was very slow to make himself known, as though he feared it might compromise him in the eyes of the Egyptians to be known to have relatives who were shepherds, an occupation which was abominable to the Egyptians (44:34).

When he revealed himself to them, it was without the knowledge or presence of the Egyptians. He *removed* his brethren also to a distinct part of Egypt, that they might not constantly, by their presence, remind him and others of their origin. [Thus] we fancy that Joseph had weaknesses and imperfections such as other men had. He dwelt in Egypt and caught its spirit [at least to a degree]. In the names that he gave to his children there seems some indication of regret at his forgetfulness and wonder at his fruitfulness.

Amid views that might depress there is some brightness. His forgiveness of his brethren was noble. His affection for his father returned [resurfaced]. His faith in God was pure at last. Dying, he 'gave commandment concerning his bones.' He showed [in the end] that though outwardly an Egyptian, he was inwardly an Israelite." [7]

"For the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart" (1 Sam. 16:7).

Hear His Voice

"Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:16). Yeshua said to His disciples, *"I have called you friends"* (see John 15:13-15). When obedient believers begin to see themselves as **disciples and friends** of Messiah, our prayers will become stronger, more faith-filled and Spirit-led. The story Yeshua told in Luke chapter eleven, which followed His comments on the Lord's Prayer, may help us understand the vitality of friendship.

A man with a need went to a friend and said, *"...lend me three loaves...trouble me not [was the reply]...I cannot rise and give thee...I [Yeshua] say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity [persistent prayer] he will rise and give him as many as he needeth"* (Luke 11:5-8).

The person asking for bread received it because of his persistence, which is described as "shameless" [bold, confident, forward]. Generally, people shamelessly or by persistent boldness that is void of fear, persist only with their friends. Friendship and trust make this possible. Usually we have nothing to hide from our friends, have a level of intimacy with them, are unafraid to show passion and need, and are therefore more inclined to persist with them than with a stranger. The more we grow in our friendship with YHVH, and the more we become accustomed to His voice, the more bold and confident we will be to come and remain before Him.

"You will seek Me, inquire for, and require Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart" (Jeremiah 29:13).

Be careful! Lukewarmness creeps slowly among the brethren and is always a subtle, present threat. Spiritual passivity must be resisted. It keeps us from growing in the knowledge of Yeshua. A commitment to spend time with Him is absolutely necessary for spiritual progress. Making appointments with him and keeping them is profitable. Persistence is required to reach the place where we are receiving deeper understanding of His word, enjoying intimate communion with Him, sharing the matter of the heart, and hearing his voice.

Part 6: Conclusion

"Now unto Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us" (Ephesians 3:20). "God puts dreams in our hearts and writes a destiny over our lives. And if we trust Him enough to take Him at His word, we will find ourselves on a journey toward the fulfillment of that dream." [68]

1. *"And they sat before him, the firstborn according to his birthright, and the youngest according to his youth: and the men marveled at one another" (Gen. 43:33).*

The last time the brothers had looked upon Joseph was when he was bound by ropes, and being pulled along by a Midianite camel toward Egypt. But years later in an Egyptian palace, when looking upon him, the same brothers did not recognize him at all. Joseph, by *faithfully acknowledging* YHVH's presence and authority in his life, was able to go from one extreme to the other and be transformed in the journey, as YHVH had (also) *faithfully worked* all events and conditions together to establish His purposes and provide for Joseph's (and ultimately Israel's) good.

2. *"Order my steps in thy word: and let not any iniquity have dominion over me" (Ps. 119:133).* Joseph was able to overcome adversity and survived his exile by his adherence to the limited Torah instruction that we believe he had received from Jacob, his father. Joseph was home-schooled, and was also the "pet" pupil in Jacob's *Yeshiva*. This schooling imparted to him spiritual truth, inspiration, and faith. Thus, *"the Lord was with him"* always because Joseph, having been taught carefully by his father, had been shaped for and remained on the Almighty's pathways.

3. *"And the Lord said unto Cain, where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I don't know: Am I my brother's keeper?" (B'resheet 4:9).* A lesson that we, grafted-in, returning Israelites, can glean from the week's reading is understanding the importance of uniting our personal interests with the greater, more expansive, eternal interests and purposes of YHVH. Foremost among His purposes are (a) serving people while (b) working for the restoration of Israel. Our individual salvation provides each of us with the grace and love whereby we can dedicate ourselves to the restoration of the kingdom, power, and glory of God to all Israel. Personal and family life that is founded squarely upon prophecies of Scripture which (for instance) forecast the restoration of Israel—an issue foremost in the heart of the Almighty—will sustain holy faith, and assure His favor and blessing upon such focused, faithful lives and industries. Israel's restoration and the

reconciliation of the Body of Messiah will bring YHVH great glory and ultimately produce a glorious welfare for mankind. Uniting with others of the same heart is an expression of attempting to be our "*brother's keeper*."

"*At the end of*" (*Miketz*) every extreme, every trial, behind every enemy, at the conclusion of each battle, is the reward and uplifting of the Almighty. Obstacles are in place for us to overcome. "*But the Lord is faithful, who will establish you, and keep you from evil*" (2 Thess. 3:3). ***Tamid Kadima—Always Forward***. Shalom.

The Seven Study Questions

These will appear at the conclusion of every lesson.

The *lesson questions* are **a very important** aspect of the student's learning. All readers are strongly encouraged to take the time and include them in their study discipline. Prayerfully answer each one! They are intended to coax the student to rely upon interaction with the Holy Spirit, discern His voice, receive insight, and obtain prophetic enlightenment.

This process will assist each learner to (1) develop a vision for the restoration and reconciliation of the whole house of Israel, (2) grow in foundational knowledge of the Torah, (3) recover the principles, practice, and Holy Spirit power of the early, first-century Nazarene believers, and (4) experience and enjoy greater dimensions of the kingdom, power, and glory of Yeshua.

Note: The questions presented here are listed again at the conclusion of each lesson in both the *Torah Commentary Manuals* and the *Torah Discipleship Manuals*. **To repeat—be sure to follow through with them.**

1a. In your opinion, what is the main theme or teaching of each of the listed readings individually? Starting with the Torah: What is its title? What is the interpretation? What truth/idea does the interpretation of the title suggest? What is the Torah section's main truth, as you see it?

1b. What is the corresponding idea in the Haftarah? In the Brit Chadashah?

2. What is the outstanding, central idea or subject that runs through and unites all the individual readings, as you see it? What does it say about discipleship?

3. Find in the Gospels where and how Yeshua declares, demonstrates, exemplifies, or exhibits the parsha's central truth, and explain. Give chapter and verse. Will you follow Him in living the lesson's truths?

4. In what way was the glory of YHVH [manifestations of His goodness] revealed in the parsha lesson?

5. What does the parsha teach you about your Hebrew roots, your identity, your destiny, your duty?

6. In what way did the Holy Spirit/Ruach HaKodesh personally speak to you during prayer and study this week? Did He impress you about how to apply the parsha lesson directly to your life? Explain.

7. *"...because of practice [by reason of use] have their senses trained [exercised] to discern..."*
You and I are called to return to hearing the voice of Elohim and to functioning in the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Progressing in these vital areas will require spiritual hunger, faith, and practice. He is waiting for us to approach Him.

Ask the Holy Spirit to speak into your spirit/heart as you pray each day. Look for opportunities to lay hands on the sick, or to be used in prophecy. Faithfully record the prophetic words and experiences you receive, and be sure to share them with your brethren.

It is helpful to **share** your answers, insights, and revelations with your study group (table class). We recommend meeting regularly in a small group. This allows for healthy interaction and exchange, and militates against stagnation. Practice operating with your spiritual gifts under the anointing of the Holy Spirit while among your friendly, supportive peers. Allow for open participation in leading praise and worship. Give altar calls at your table for healing, refreshing, and prophetic words. These are effective ways for all present to mature in their calling and gifting. The non-threatening small group provides a favorable and encouraging environment in which to learn the ministry of the Spirit. You will do well.

Next. The parsha lessons are being crafted and shortened for younger readers. Be sure to use them. Remember Deuteronomy 6: 6-7?

!. Youth Version - Under construction.

2. Children's Version - Under construction.

Footnotes: To examine the group questions, return to the Introduction. And, be sure to share the Gospel this week, to the Jew first and also with the Greek (Romans 1:9; Acts 9:20-22)**Footnotes:** 1. F. C., Erasing Hell; 2. Ibid; 3. Gospel of John, Pulpit Commentary, Eerdmans, p.312. 4. Genesis, Pulpit Comm., Eerdmans, p.467. 5. Ibid, p. 41. 6. FireBible, Student Edition, Life Publishers, p. 1492. 7. Genesis, Pulpit Comm., Eerdmans, p. 469. 1A. www.aboundingjoy.com/Endtimes. 1B. Discipleship: God's Life-Changing Work, p. 3. 2B. A Tale of Two Covenants, K. Rogers, p. 7. 3B. www.desiringgod.org/messages/our-high-priest. 4B. The Hidden Power of Speaking in Tongues, M. Chavda, p. 174. 5B. www.daretolivewithoutlimits.com. p. 1. 6B. www.myfaithradio.com/2015/god-is-preparing-you.

VaYigash (“And he drew near”)

Next

Contender's Voice

Discipleship Series

Book of Genesis/B'resheit

Lesson Eleven

VaYigash (*"And he drew near"*)

Torah: Genesis/B'resheit 44:18-47:27

Haftorah: Ezekiel/Yechezkel 37:15-28

Brit Chadashah: Luke/ Luka 6:9-16

Lesson Sequence

1. Introduction: *The Call to Discipleship* **2.** Weekly Parsha: *The Torah—the Standard of Discipleship* **3.** Yeshua: *The High Priest of our Discipleship* **4.** The Holy Spirit/Ruach ha Kodesh: *The Power of Discipleship* **5.** Overcoming: *The Outcome of Discipleship* **6.** Conclusion

Changes are drawing near. Think about it.

"The truth About CERN is finally being revealed. Okay, maybe the alternative media already knew what was happening, but there are a few people who do not understand what is taking place in Switzerland with the Large Hadron Collider. What is the purpose of CERN trying to open a gateway? Why are they seeking to open Pandora's Box? We won't get into details about the conspiracy theories, but let's look at what's happening with the Large Hadron Collider from the mouth of their own scientists. What is even more frightening is that they may have opened a portal to another dimension. What does it mean prophetically? Is CERN opening a portal to an

ABYSS?" [1A] Today, scientists and researchers believe that the known universe, which they also called a multiverse, consists of a multiplicity of dimensions in which live other-dimensional entities. Further, many of these scientists are committed to pagan and occult forces that exist in the invisible planes of reality, and CERN is their modern Tower of Babel—another attempt by man to open forbidden passages to access alien beings and their technology, and thereby enter into a post-human era and attain cosmic consciousness--godhood. The world, and our nation as part of it, are on the cusp of startling changes. *"Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass"* (Luke 21:36).

Part 1: Introduction—*The Call to Discipleship*

"Discipleship is more than a call; it is a lifestyle that is never to stop, that must never stop until we are called home to eternity with our Lord. It is the instigation and flow for the Christian life; it is our continual devotion, worship, learning, growth, and practice in Christ as LORD over all." [1B] Follow Him into a great spiritual awakening in the land.

Last week's lesson: *"And Judah and his brethren came to Joseph's house; for he was yet there: and they fell before him on the ground"* (Gen. 44:14).

In Parsha Miketz (*"At the end of"*), Joseph was elevated from the prison and promoted to the position of viceroy of Egypt. His life began to reflect that of his father Jacob, who had also been thrust into very difficult situations and circumstances and learned to prosper in spite of them.

By flourishing in difficult and hostile environments, Joseph manifested the qualities his father had discerned and admired in him as a child, qualities that would enable him to endure and overcome the great challenge of exile.

In the Miketz reading we observe that Joseph was made ruler over the land and that his brothers eventually came to Egypt to purchase grain from him. Joseph recognized them and sent them back to Canaan to fetch Benjamin. When they returned with him, Joseph contrived a clever and effectual plot. He planted his silver cup with Benjamin's gear as the family departed with grain for Canaan. The cup of Joseph was later found in Benjamin's sack by soldiers, so the unhappy caravan of brothers was turned back to Egypt where Judah would arise as the interceding leader. They *"rent their clothes"* [an expression of the anguish of one's soul], retraced their steps, and came humbly before Joseph. There they prostrated themselves on the ground before him, which was a demonstration of repentance and submission. They were

totally subject to any whim or whimsy of Joseph and knew it, and with humility they sought his forgiveness and mercy.

Joseph had planned to detain his beloved younger brother, Benjamin, but not just to keep his sibling near. He intended to test the brothers, to see if they could remain unaffected, unmoved by the prospect of Benjamin's undeserved, harsh imprisonment as they had been years earlier with Joseph's sale and descent into Egypt.

The plan was cleverly designed to unmask and discern the true characters of Benjamin's brethren, to determine if they were still hard-hearted and calloused, or genuinely repentant.

"For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death" (2 Cor. 7:10). This instructive verse, written by Paul to the troubled Corinthian ecclesia, contrasts true repentance, which is godly sorrow and rejection of sin, with the sorrow of the world. The sorrow of the world is not grief/remorse over sin or offenses toward YHWH, rather it is only regret over sin's consequences. Such an attitude results in sin's continuance and eventually in death. Simply, worldly sorrow holds on to sin. True repentance involves: (1) a sincere renunciation and detestation of evil, (2) a desire for restoration, and (3) a deepness of humility, which makes the heart teachable. Repentance constitutes a return to Yeshua and it brings renewed life. In the Hebrew context, repentance (*teshuvah*) means "return"; or to *turn around and go all the way back to the beginning*, to that place of consecration and sanctification where one was before any compromise, mixture, error, or sin began.

This week's discipleship lesson: We read about the reconciliation between Joseph and his brothers in Parsha *VaYigash* ("And he drew near"), and also of the reunion he enjoyed with his father, Jacob. The stress and tension we witnessed in parshas *VaYeshev* ("And he settled") and *Miketz* ("At the end of") is lifted in *VaYigash* as the family is finally united and Jacob resides in peace, looking forward to raising great-grandchildren under his spiritual instruction.

Learn: The disciple called to follow Messiah and learn of Him is also called to be a *peacemaker*, as was Joseph. What is a peacemaker? The quote we provide speaks of the characteristics of a true disciple.

"A peacemaker [disciple] is someone who experiences the peace of God (Philippians 4:7) because he is at peace (Romans 5:1) with the God of peace (Philippians 4:9) through the Prince of peace (Isaiah 9:6), who, indeed, is our peace (Ephesians 2:14), and who therefore seeks to live at peace with all others (Romans 12:18) and proclaims the gospel of peace (Ephesians 6:15) so that others might have joy and peace in believing (Rom. 15:13)." [1B1]

Part 2: Torah—The Standard of Discipleship

Parsha Lesson Eleven: VaYigash (*"And he drew near"*)

As the psalmist turns to the temple to worship he writes in Psalm 138:2: *"For You have magnified Your word above all Your name."* God's Word is His communication, His promise, the revelation of Himself to His people. It is to be a lamp to our feet in a dark and fallen world, without it we would have no way to know God or how to do God's will."^[28] *"To obey is better than sacrifice"* (1 Samuel 15:22). His word sets the unchanging standard for His disciples.

Torah

The Jewish scribe, we have read, must follow stringent rules and guidelines when writing a new Torah. First, he must bathe in a *mikvah*, a pool of specified dimensions used for ritual purposes. The writer's immersion into the waters of a *mikvah* is symbolic of spiritual cleansing. Further, in the writing only the quill of a goose or turkey (or other kosher bird) may be used. The pen is tested by the scribe for its ink *capacity* and *distribution qualities* by writing and then scratching out the name of Amalek, Israel's ancient enemy. *"Remember what Amalek did to you along the way when you came out from Egypt, how he...attacked among you all the stragglers at your rear when you were faint and weary; and he did not fear God...you shall blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven; you must not forget"* (Deut. 25:17-19). Every letter of every word of the Torah text must be hand-written in permanent black ink on sheets of *klaf*, which is the parchment of a kosher animal. The scroll is regarded as *pasul*, or not kosher, if just one letter is missing, incorrectly written or mistakenly included. Only one letter out of the 304,805 in a scroll, if found to be incorrect, will render the entire scroll--with its 187 chapters, 5,845 verses, and 79,976 words--unacceptable and thus unusable. Every proper stroke of the pen has its necessary place in the Torah, just as do you and I in the Body of Messiah. *"But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one stroke [a small projection] of a letter of the Law to fail"* (Luke 16:17).

1. *"Then Judah came near unto him, and said, Oh my lord, let thy servant, I pray thee, speak a word in my lord's ear, and let not thine anger burn against thy servant: for thou art even as Pharaoh [with power and authority to pardon or condemn]"* (Gen 44:18). VaYigash shows us of the reconciliation between Joseph and his brothers, and his reunion with Jacob.

The Torah portion starts out with Judah's supplication before Joseph. Commentators regard his speech as, *"one of the masterpieces of Hebrew composition"* (Kalisch), and, *"one of the grandest and fairest to be found in the Old Testament"* (Lange). Perhaps our communication effectiveness could profit from employing these four characteristics found in Judah's comment's: **(A)** His language was respectful, and humble. **(B)** His rhetoric was simple, without lofty oration or

unnecessary length, but plain, logical. (C) His pathos [the quality of expression that evokes sympathy and emotion] was effective in describing/picturing Jacob's love for Benjamin, *and* depicting how devastating it would be for Jacob if Benjamin did not return home. (D) His plea that he take Benjamin's place in chains rather than have his father Jacob die in sorrow reveals Judah's love and willingness for self-sacrifice.

"Counsel in the heart of man is like deep water; but a man of understanding will draw it out" (Prov. 20:5). Judah had been convicted of his participation in the treatment of Joseph, and became repentant, turned and came forth as one who could be trusted. He answered Joseph honestly, humbly, and wisely. In so doing he drew forth, from deep within Joseph's soul, stored (hidden) sentiments and words of grace that--just as pure cool waters are drawn by reaching deeply into a well--only Judah's blessed and understanding words could reach and bring forth from his brother. Interestingly, Judah, who had participated in the sale of Joseph into slavery in Egypt, ends up offering himself to Joseph as a slave. What goes around, comes around, we are told. *"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Gal.6:7).* Having spent years wrestling with a troubled conscience over the past, coming to repentance, and then offering to substitute himself in his brother's place, Judah received much grace. His sentence was commuted, accounted as "time served", and the matter was adjourned. Judah was advanced to further service.

2. *"Then Joseph could not control himself...he wept...then Joseph said to his brothers, 'I am Joseph!' But his brothers could not answer him for they were dismayed..." (B'resheet 45:1-3).*

Joseph identified himself and consoled his brothers. Judah had offered himself as Benjamin's substitute and Joseph had become convinced in his heart of his brothers' (a) devotion to their father, Jacob, (b) love for Benjamin, and (c) sorrow and contrition for their crimes against Joseph. The men had been humbled and thus the breakthrough for their reconciliation was achieved. *"So then, it was not you who sent me here, but God. He made me father to Pharaoh, lord over his entire household and ruler over all Egypt. Now hurry back to my father..." (vs. 8-9).*

"Only small natures are ashamed of tears. At first the men who had great sin upon their consciences were only troubled at the presence of their injured [mistreated] brother [Joseph], but soon the full manifestation of his loves turns all their fears into rejoicing. Joseph wept for joy at their return to him, and they were henceforth his brethren indeed.

Although for a time we carry the burden of our sins and feel their weight, even though we believe they are forgiven, still as God reveals Himself to us and surrounds us more and more with the embrace of His love we lose the constraint [limitation; hindrance; inhibition in relations with Him] of our painful remembrance and rejoice with all our hearts in present peace and future glory." [2]

The men were slow to believe. Likewise, many today are slow to believe the Gospel and enter into sonship and the brotherhood of Messiah Yeshua. He must be perceived by faith, recognized, and received as a personal Savior. The Divine offer of salvation comes before faith. Messiah was crucified for us (Isa. 53:5; 1 Cor. 3:11). YHVH's redemptive work must be believed and embraced by faith.

When we trust Him, He becomes our companion and the Word is transformed from a dead letter into a living letter, the voice of the Spirit. His power flows. Knowledge of Yeshua grows. There is peace. We are grafted into His family and enter into His kingdom.

3. *"So he sent his brothers away...they went up from Egypt, and came to the land of Canaan to their father Jacob" (B'resheet 45:24-27).*

Jacob must have been overwhelmed by the news his sons brought back from Egypt. Joseph was alive and well after-all! He could not believe them at first, for the sons had proven themselves untrustworthy. Thus is the fate of the liar! Even when he speaks the truth he is not believed. Foreseeing this possibility, Joseph had provided, with the supply wagons, proof of the brothers' claim to present to the patriarch. It took the form of calves which accompanied the group to Canaan, which symbolized the last Torah lesson Jacob had shared with Joseph. [read Deut. 21:1-9.] Jacob rejoiced even more in the realization that his son was not only alive, but had stored in his heart and still remembered his father's teachings. [3] Our lesson: "...remember the words of the Master Yeshua..." (Acts 20:35). Store His lessons in your heart.

The parsha has now brought us to a place where it is no longer dealing primarily with Joseph's family. It begins to speak of the greater sphere of *"the children of Israel"* (verse 21). The historic period of Israel's Egyptian experience has begun. Pharaoh and his servants emerge. Israel is positioned in the best of the land, Goshen. The brethren of Joseph, once transgressors and culprits, become the family leaders in the change of conditions and prospects that attend their adoption and settling of the new land.

4. *"And Israel took his journey with all that he had, and came to Beersheba, and offered sacrifices unto the God of his father Isaac. God spoke unto Israel [Jacob] in the visions of the night, and said Jacob, Jacob...fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation" (B'resheet 46:1-3).*

A long night of exile was soon to come upon the house of Jacob, and he wanted a confirming word before leaving Eretz Israel for Egypt. Therefore, Elohim visited him to assuage/comfort/assure him that, while he was away from Canaan, YHVH's presence and Shechinah glory would always be over-shadowing him and his house. Jacob had reason to be concerned about moving to Egypt. His grandfather Abraham had run into peril and difficulty there. His father Isaac had actually been forbidden to descend to Egypt. [*"The Lord appeared*

unto him, and said, Go not down into Egypt..." (Gen. 26:2).] Indeed, Egypt had been prophesied as the land of bondage where Jacob's family would remain and grow for four-hundred years. [See Gen. 15:13.] It's understandable that Jacob would be apprehensive about "signing *that* lease" before receiving confirmation. Before this particular visitation, he had received the command to be fruitful and multiply. [See: Gen. 28:3.] Jacob had also been informed two other times that he would become a multitude of peoples. [See: Gen. 28:14; 35:11.] But this fresh injunction (command) stirred up foreboding images in his mind. Nevertheless, the Almighty's encouragement renewed his faith, and he went forth, perceiving that the fulfillment of the prophetic promise given to his fathers and him was unfolding. "...and lo, I am with you always."

"I will go down with you to Egypt and I will surely bring you up again" (Gen. 46:4). Everywhere Israel went Elohim's divine presence went with the people, to preserve them. He was with Judah in Babylon, and brought them back to their homeland. He has also been with the scattered Ten Tribes in their exile, and is bringing them back into His fold, and revealing to them their lost identity and heritage. *"I will sift the House of Israel among all the nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth [be forgotten]"* (Amos 9:9). Yeshua will accomplish this great work. *"And He shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah..."* (Isa. 11:12). Messiah will gather His people and bring the two houses, Judah and Ephraim, back into their ancient homeland and settle them in their tribal regions again. We believe the re-gathering and reconciliation will culminate at His second coming.

Where are the missing tribes today? *"Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over a wall: the archers ...shot at him, and hated him, but his bow abode in strength...by the Almighty who shall bless thee with blessings..."* (Gen. 49:22-25). The tribe of Joseph--composed of the tribes of Manasseh and Ephraim--has been traced to the stronger and more wealthy western nations. The prophecy likens Joseph [tribes, descendants] to a vine, not a situated tree, that [runs] spreads out by sending branches and vines elsewhere (B'resheet 49:22). The descendants of Joseph as well as the other nine tribes (House of Israel/Ephraim) would be scattered and become present in every nation. However, they would be predominant as colonizing countries, having a religious mixture, both envied and hated by other nations, powerful, and blessed by the Almighty to the extent they walked in their divinely given light (Gen. 48:15-22; 49:22-26; Deut. 28:1-14; 33:13-17).

5. Now these are the names of the sons of Israel, Jacob and his sons, who went to Egypt" (B'resheet 46:8).

The family departed from Canaan, three-score and ten descendants of Jacob (v. 27). "The number seventy became afterwards a symbolic number among the Israelites—as in the seventy elders of Moses, the seventy of the Sanhedrin, the seventy of the Alexandrian version of the

Scriptures, the seventy disciples of Messiah, the seventy heathen nations of the world, according to the Jews. There may be something in the combination of numbers. Seventy is 7 X 10. Ten is the symbol of the complete development of humanity. Seven symbolizes perfection. Therefore the seventy may symbolize the elect people of Elohim as the hope of humanity—Israel in Egypt...the small number of Israel in the midst of the great multitude of Egypt is a great encouragement to faith." [4] The small group would grow greatly. *"Who hath despised the day of small things."*

6. *"And he sent Judah before him unto Joseph, to direct his face [to prepare ahead of him, or teach] unto Goshen..." (Gen. 46:28).*

Judah's noble qualities, which had become increasingly evident as time passed, did not escape the attention of Jacob who was learning to admire and trust them. The aged patriarch's confidence and affection for Judah had soared since his handling of the crisis with Benjamin, and he decided to send Judah ahead to Goshen so Joseph could instruct and supply him in assisting the entire family when they emigrated south. The Midrashic interpretation [Rashi] of Judah's purpose in returning early to Egypt adds a second reason for the mission. The word "prepare" is there interpreted as "teach". It implies that Jacob sent Judah down *also* to make ready a Yeshiva of some sort, a Torah school, in Goshen where the family and its descendants could have consistent, YHWH-centered education that would give them a strong identity in a foreign land. Godly instruction would help prevent Israel's assimilation into the heathen culture. This is said to have established a precedent [the authorization or justification for a subsequent act], which is the priority of a Torah education as the soul of the Jewish/Israelite nation. **Note:** Your (regular) private or group study time is the equivalent of your own *Yeshiva*, from which you derive life-enriching instruction and exhortation that resists the subtle knitting of your soul to the moral fabric of the ever-encroaching value system of this world. Esteem your "yeshiva" time, be filled with the Spirit, and stay engaged!

7. *"...I will go up and tell Pharaoh...the men are shepherds, for they have been cattlemen; their flocks and cattle..." (B'resheit 46:28-32).*

Joseph had demonstrated wisdom and love for his brethren in his words to Pharaoh. He wanted to be sure his family would be secure in Goshen, away from the corruptive influence of Egypt's heathen society. He therefore established a pattern for the following Israelite generations that would repress/prevent any attempt on their part to curry favor or grace from ungodly, heathen rulers, or mingling and blending in with them socially. To discourage the monarch from recruiting court officials and dignitaries from the intelligent and gifted family that produced Joseph, he instructed his family ahead of time to inform Pharaoh that they were simply shepherds and herdsmen, occupations the animal-worshiping Egyptians despised. Then, when the interview with Pharaoh came, Joseph—it would seem, selected the least impressive, less

robust individuals to speak before the Egyptian leader. Apparently, after listening to the (probably rehearsed and staged) presentation, Pharaoh (**a**) underestimated (as had been hoped) the brethren, (**b**) perhaps concluded that Joseph was an anomaly [a deviation from the normal order], and (**c**) judged that his family was suited only for shepherding. So, Pharaoh left them alone in Goshen.

Note: If the most impressive sons had been brought before Pharaoh—it certainly could have been possible, as some commentators interpret the passage--that the Monarch would conscript them for palace service, something which would have presented a serious threat to the cohesion of Jacob's house.

8. *"Then Joseph came and told Pharaoh...and he took some of his brethren" (47:1-6).*

Five brothers were presented. In a straight-forward and honest manner they stated their occupations and explained their need for shelter and provision during the famine. Their humble request was granted, and even extra work was provided for them. The men's simplicity, honesty, demeanor, and good conduct secured their position.

"Then Joseph brought his father Jacob and presented him to Pharaoh...And Jacob blessed

Pharaoh, and went out from before Pharaoh. Joseph placed his father and his brethren and gave them a possession...and Joseph nourished his father and his brethren, and all his father's household, with bread, according to their families" (see Gen 47:7-12).

Jacob had been introduced to Pharaoh, who was impressed with the patriarch's age and stature. The ruler asked the Patriarch how meaningful had been the days of his years. Jacob humbly assessed the quality of his life and answered, "My life is not comparable to the lives of my fathers. They lived *more*, in the sense that every day of their existence was *living* [toward fulfilling a divine destiny], and they were able to carry out their missions under cheerful conditions." [5] Jacob gave a modest and brief evaluation of his life before the king. His response reminds us: *"Let your words be yay or nay..."*

Before he departed from the palace, Jacob blessed Pharaoh. The result [we have read in commentary] of the anointed patriarch's benediction and the kindness shown him by the monarch was Egypt's famine ending [or abating] after only two years, instead of the seven forecasted by Joseph. [6] YHVH's mercy in curtailing judgment is seen in the narrative of Jonah: *"And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them unto them; and he did it not" (Jonah 3:10).* Famine and drought are historically regarded as judgments, but the Holy One can always forestall or postpone them. Verse 13, and the remainder of the passage, reverts back to the beginning of the famine and Joseph's grain collection and distribution policies. *"And Joseph gathered up all*

the money...and Joseph bought the money [every penny] into Pharaoh's house" (verse 14). Even as the powerful, unchallenged viceroy of the land, Joseph's loyalty to his Torah [spiritual] training, which accounts for his integrity and honesty, motivated him to glorify Elohim. His unfaltering prioritizing of YHVH distinguished Joseph's life and service.

9. *"And there was no bread in all the land; for the famine was very sore, so that the land of Egypt and all the land of Canaan fainted by reason of the famine" (Genesis 47:13).* Money, as a primary means of exchange, was of little use in Canaan. The famine had become unbearable. There was little to purchase and nowhere for the Canaanites to escape the dire, arid conditions. But Joseph's family (shepherds, herdsmen) was settled in Goshen, the best pasture land of Egypt. Goshen is a type of the Kingdom of God. Although shepherds were looked down upon, even despised by the Egyptians, Israel nevertheless received the best of what Egypt had to offer. *"Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth" (Mt. 5:5).* Simply, the Holy One of Israel gave His people the *firstfruits* of Egypt, the most fertile of the nation's land on which to multiply and prosper. *"For the Lord will comfort Zion: He will comfort her waste places; and He will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody" (Isa. 51:3)*

In verses 14-19 Joseph gathers up the money and livestock of the people in exchange for grain.

10. *"So Joseph bought all the land for Pharaoh, for every Egyptian sold his field because the famine was severe upon them" (B'resheit 47:20).*

"The Egyptians spoke of the death of the land because...when the land is allowed to lay waste, without being plowed and planted, it is tantamount to its death. *'Wherefore shall we die...and our land' (verse 19).*" [7] The same is true for people who squander their potential...the wicked are called dead even in their own lifetimes (Mt.8:22). Life is synonymous with productivity, fruitfulness (Mt. 13:8). We notice that the patriarch became fruitful. *"A nation and a company of nations shall come from you" (B'resheit 35:11).*

"In practice, Joseph took possession of the land, but not the people...he wanted them to be self-supporting and not become wards of the government...Joseph transferred the population from one city to the other to establish the monarchy's undisputed ownership of the land..." [8] By this arrangement, the people became sharecroppers and serfs of Pharaoh and were given the opportunity to farm for a percentage of their produce.

11. *"And Israel [the people] dwelt in the land of Egypt, in the country of Goshen; and they had possessions therein [acquired holdings] and grew [fruitful] and multiplied exceedingly" (Gen. 47:27).* Joseph's policy of storing and then *selling* grain to the Egyptians during the famine cycle, which became more severe, gradually impoverished the land's population, but greatly enriched

Pharaoh. The resultant poor people, who had gone in seven years from being *land-owners* to becoming *land-leasers*, lacked leisure time and disposable income.

Therefore they did not have the opportunity to become a threat that they would have been otherwise to the prospering Israelites next door in Goshen. This arrangement, whether divinely orchestrated or humanly arranged, contributed to Israel's entrenchment and the fulfillment of the Word of YHVH to Jacob. *"For I will there make of thee a great nation" (Gen. 46:3)*. Jacob, at last, reposed contentedly in the land with all his twelve sons around him, and living in peace.

It must be remembered that Joseph, who was once despised and rejected, was chosen and used mightily by the Almighty to save Egypt *and* Israel.

The choice was typical of the Almighty's working. Paul confirms YHVH's intention to often use common, unrecognized, even despised people for His purposes and glory: *"But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty; and base things of the world, and things that are despised, hath God chosen, yea, the things which are not, to bring to nought [no effect] the things that are; that no flesh shall glory in his presence" (1 Cor. 1:27-29)*. This verse, you could say, describes YHWH's tool box.

Haftarah

1. *"Judah and for the children of Israel his companions...for Joseph, the stick of Ephraim and all the house of Israel, his companions: And join them one to another into one stick" (Ez. 37:16-17)*.

Ezekiel here prophesies concerning the fusion, or joining together, of the House of Judah and the House of Israel (Ephraim) in the latter days. The two sticks represent the divided, often-warring kingdoms which developed after the death of Solomon:

(a) The Northern Kingdom (Ephraim) of ten tribes was ruled by Jeroboam.

(b) The Southern Kingdom remained under the Davidic (Judean) Dynasty. Both eventually became dispersed in the nations, though many from the House of Judah have returned to settle and dwell in Eretz Yisrael.

The reconciliation observed between Judah and his brothers and Joseph in Egypt is a picture of the restoration and merging of the tribes of Israel, the two kingdoms or houses that will be completed in the Messianic era, at the coming of Messiah. *"Come, and let us return unto the Lord; for He hath torn, and He will heal us; He hath smitten, and He will bind us up. After two*

days will He revive us: on the third day he will raise us up, and we will live in His sight" (Hosea 6:1-2).

Descendants from all the tribes of Israel are scattered throughout the nations of the earth, not in just a few small enclaves and obscure communities in the middle and far east (Jer. 3:8; 9:16; Ezek. 4:13; 20:23; Hos.7:8; 9:17; Amos 5:1-27).

"I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Mt. 15:24). YHVH has shown the House of Israel unmerited favor at the end of its exile and at the threshold of the Messianic Age, through repentance, faith in Messiah, and the new birth by the Spirit. Conversion to Messiah provides the way of return into covenant with the Almighty (Isa. 32:15; 44:1-5; 59:20-21; Jer. 31:18-20; 31:40; 33:7-8; Hos. 1:10; 2:23; 3:5; 14:4-7; Joel 2:28-29; Acts 2:1-4).

Part 3: Yeshua—*The Eternal High Priest of the Believers Discipleship*

"Jesus is not only our High Priest, but also a "priest forever after the order of Melchizedek" (Hebrews 7:11-22). The writer of Hebrews explains that Jesus is of this order of priests – His priesthood is based on authority rather than on lineage (Hebrews 7:11-17), and it is also kingly. Therefore, Jesus' priesthood institutes a new way of being: Melchizedek is introduced in Genesis 14. Perhaps the most crucial thing for believers to understand today is that it is because Jesus is our High Priest that we can approach God with confidence (Hebrews 4:16). We no longer need to go through earthly mediators. Jesus has broken the barrier, made the sacrifice, established a new covenant, and reinstituted our relationship with God. Because of our High Priest, we are free to come to God." [6B]

*"He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become the children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God"*As did Jacob when he came to his sons in Egypt, Yeshua also came to His own (John 1:11-13). He was in the world before the incarnation, but John gives a special account of Messiah's manifestation. He writes, *"He came."* The Son came by incarnation into the world through a particular and unique locality. He came physically, personally, and visibly to His own land, to Israel, and to His own people, all classes of the Jewish nation. He offered His teaching and blessing to all without partiality, and during His earthly ministry summoned everyone to enter His kingdom by the same road—the narrow way of repentance and faith. *"And His own received Him not."* Though He came to them—their Messiah, rightful King, Prince of Peace, Healer, Source of Life, divine Son of God, fulfilling Scripture and performing supernatural

works--most of His nation rejected Him. *"But as many as received Him..."* Some however, an independent and courageous minority, *did* receive Him. Their reward? *"To them He gave the power [the right] to become children of God."* Being a child of the true Elohim describes the closest, most personal relationship with YHVH that is possible, which is the highest joy and privilege man can enjoy, the priceless gift of Messiah. How did a few, regardless of character, social position, or office, come to possess such a high honor? They believed upon His name. It was by the regenerative and transformative power of faith. Faith has discerning power and can see past the present and visible to the future and invisible. Those who received Messiah saw past the physical and discerned Divinity. This is the gift of YHVH. **1.** *"And these are the names of the children of Israel, which came into Egypt, Jacob and his sons..."* (B'resheit 46:8) Jacob came to Egypt and there he securely abode with his twelve sons around him, from whom would come the nation of Israel.

2. *"And when day came, He called his disciples to Him and chose twelve of them, whom He also named as apostles"* (Luke 6:13).

The selection of the twelve disciples was of utmost importance to the Messiah and He spent an entire night before the Father in prayer with the matter foremost in His heart. He selected them in the morning after the prayerful period. These twelve people would remain with Him during His ministry and in time become the first living stones of His New Covenant spiritual house ((1 Peter 2:5). *"And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Yeshua Messiah Himself being the chief cornerstone; in whom all the building fitly framed together grows unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are built together for an habitation of God through the Spirit"* (Eph. 2:20-22). **[Note:** If the Master recognized the necessity for continuous prayer before choosing the twelve, how much more should we today engage in prayer before we go about His business. Divine discernment, wisdom, and insight are indispensable assets which enable believers to effectively and persuasively carry out the commission of Yeshua. Heavenly guidance is requisite for kingdom service and it can be counted on to come forth through earnest prayer. Keep in mind that it is not always a simple or easy matter to act judiciously and fairly when dealing with His people.]

The persons Yeshua prayerfully selected from among His followers were the choices of divine wisdom, not of worldly judgment which would *not* have discerned or esteemed the best candidates. They were not publicly admired men of broad influence, high social stature, or respected positions. As a matter of fact, they would only become reliable, effective, and endowed with power when the Spirit descended upon them at Pentecost. But this was the wisdom of God. It is profitable to read Paul's word to the Corinthians again: *"But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise...the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty"* (1 Cor. 1:27).

We will not discuss each apostle selected, but the twelve can be divided into three groups. The first group includes Peter, Andrew, James, and John. These men were chief among the twelve, the leaders. They were *men of spiritual insight*. Next were Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, and Matthew. These were the *men of reflection*, skeptical at times. Finally, we have *the practical men*. These were Alphaeus, Jude, Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot. This teaches us that our Master Yeshua uses all grades and types of people in His Congregation to serve His purposes. Paul affirms this truth also. *"Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit...for the body [of Messiah] is not one member, but many"* (1 Cor. 12: 4, 14). We are each different in our makeup, but equal in our value to Him, and alike in our need of Him.

As Yeshua chose the original twelve apostles, He has chosen us as well. Peter wrote to the believers who were scattered in Asia minor and said: *"But you are a chosen generation...a holy nation...which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy"* (1 Peter 2:9-10). He referenced Hosea 1:9-10 and 2:23, and addressed the people of the Northern Kingdom that had been exiled and scattered among the nations. Hosea prophesied their return to YHWH and Israel, which we have said has been occurring through faith in Messiah and the *new birth* by the Spirit (John 3). We, who are the *"chosen generation"* have our own choice to make. It is the same one every generation of Israelites must make, and each believer must make every morning, often on a moment-by-moment basis. *"...choose you this day whom you will serve..."* (Joshua 24:15).

Our choice is determined by who we listen to and whose word we obey. Hence, when the Living Torah, Yeshua Himself, speaks, we should give His words the most earnest heed. *"Therefore, whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not, for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it"* (Mt. 7:24-27).

Yeshua chose His twelve to be with Him, to "draw near". He has also chosen us. We, in turn, choose His words and ways. As did Judah when he approached Joseph, may we "draw near" [VaYigash] to Yeshua at a personal and utterly honest level. When we choose intimacy with Yeshua and honor His words, we enjoy uninterrupted fellowship with Him...and abundant life.

Part 4: The Holy Spirit—The Power of Discipleship

"Christ made it clear that the Holy Spirit is connected with power. The Greek word translated "power" is *dunamis*. It is translated "power," "mighty work," "strength," "miracle," "might," "virtue" and "mighty." It is the same Greek root from which we get [our] modern English words like *dynamic*, which means active, forceful and energetic; *dynamo*, which is a device for generating electric power; and *dynamite*..." [4B]

1. "So it was not you that sent me hither, but God [literally, for the Elohim (sent me)] and He hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt" (Gen. 45:8).

The Holy Spirit in the Old Testament: Part 3 of 5

Joseph's brothers conspired and sold him into slavery. But the unseen, powerful hand of

Providence had over-ruled circumstances and shaped conditions in order to send the lad into Egypt, there to become a savior/deliverer for his family. [Joseph, we know, is a type of Yeshua.] Joseph reveals his devotion for Elohim by recognizing, in the referenced verse, that it was His divine wisdom and guiding presence that controlled and conducted the events for the fulfillment of His purpose.

Like Jacob's family, many of YHVH's servants in the Old Testament were at times unknowingly directed by the Spirit. Samson, Saul, David, and even Rehoboam and Jeroboam are examples. The success or failure of their services and lives was, in the end, always determined by their obedience/submission to the Spirit. In the Old Covenant His guidance for people was usually quiet, persistent, and effectual as they were obedient to the Torah/Word of Elohim. The Spirit's guidance was more direct, discernible, and stronger when He would come unannounced (albeit uncommonly) upon individuals. Joseph, a person fore-ordained for God's purposes, was an example of both the Spirit's unnoticed leading *and* conspicuous activity in one's life. The *proof* of His empowering presence and directive guidance was the ultimate material success and spiritual prosperity of Joseph and his family. **Pause:** What is your purpose, dear reader? Are you under the leadership of the Spirit?

Once Israel left Egypt and settled in Canaan, judges ruled among the tribes. After some time kings replaced judges as Israel moved from being a *theocracy* [a government by direct divine guidance, or by people believed to be divinely led/guided] to a *monarchy* [the undivided, absolute rule by one person, i.e. a king, over a united nation]. The ministry of the kings of Israel, both of Judah and of Israel/Ephraim, ultimately failed (with several exceptions in Judah) to follow Elohim's kingdom principles and social standards. They did not walk or rule, for the most part, in His statutes. YHVH then raised up anointed prophets and placed His Spirit upon them to declare His word in Israel and proclaim His works in the earth. There were many prophets in Israel upon whom the Holy Spirit *fell*, but we will look briefly at only a few.

"...and Elisha said [in response to Elijah, the mentoring prophet's question, "What shall I do for thee?"] I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me. And he said, thou hast asked a hard thing: nevertheless, if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee...(2 Kings 2:9-10). Elijah and Elisha were prophets sent primarily to the House of Israel/Ephraim, the northern kingdom of the divided nation. At the time of their service, neither the House of Ephraim or the House of Judah had gone into exile. They ministered during the reigns of Ahab , Ahaziah, and Jehu. Both prophets were raised up to call the rulers and people to repent of idolatry and return to YHWH. Elijah and Elisha revered Elohim's laws and understood the need for the assistance/empowerment of the Spirit for godly living *and* for validated, effectual ministry.

Elisha had asked for something—he wanted **a double portion** of the Ruach's anointing upon him—something that Elijah, on his own, could neither grant nor officially refuse. It was *"a hard thing."* But he was divinely inspired to give Elisha a sign which would indicate whether or not Elohim would answer his prayer. He would have to actually see the scene of the translation of his master and teacher, Elijah.

When the moment came for the prophet to be taken alive to heaven, Elisha's eyes were divinely opened to the unseen world and he witnessed the translation take place. The spirit of Elijah--the mantle, charismata, anointing, abiding presence, and power of the Holy Spirit bestowed on, directing and animating Elijah--fell upon (came on) his servant Elisha the moment he saw his mentor taken into heaven.

The presence and work of the Spirit is evidenced by the fact that Elisha was given spiritual sight, a divinely imparted ability to see into the realm of the spirit what others cannot see. [The spiritual gift of *the discerning of Spirits* is the New Testament counterpart of this phenomenon.] The mighty works performed through Elisha later, which included a reappearance of "spiritual" sight, are further confirmation of the Spirit being with him, guiding and empowering him. **Note:** When the Spirit comes upon a person, the first gift (divine enablement) they manifest or exhibit often remains as their signature gifting.

The Spirit came upon prophets to enable them to declare Elohim's will and word to the people. The House of Israel had rejected their prophets and were taken into exile before Judah. However, Isaiah warned rebellious Judah that they *"were not of [not in accordance with] My Spirit, that they should add sin to sin" (Isa. 30:1).* The people refused to listen to the Spirit as He persistently spoke through the prophets. He was ignored. It became clear that the Spirit coming upon selected people would not be enough and therefore the prophet spoke of the re-occurrence of rebellion until the *"...Spirit be poured upon us from on high..." (Isa 32:15).* Micah prophesied during the reign of Hoshea in the northern kingdom just before the people were conquered and carried away by Assyria. *"But truly I am full of the Spirit of the Lord,*

and of judgment, and of might, to declare unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin" (Micah 3:8). In the verse, the prophet affirms he is anointed to act and speak by the direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

In his case, the Spirit visited upon him three gifts, or charismata. They were: **(a)** power, force of speech, **(b)** righteous judgment, placement of a righteous message, and **(c)** might, which was courage.

He is a stark contrast to the false prophets who were not visited or animated by the Holy Spirit upon them, and as a result were **(1)** weak, without omnipotent backup, **(2)** beguiled, calling good evil, and **(3)** timid, lacking in confidence. **And the false prophets failed miserably.**

The history of Israel is a story of, among other things, the rise and decline of the active ministry/influence of the Spirit, and concurrent, increasing rule of man in the affairs of the nation.

The fall of the Ecclesia from Light into the dark ages can be traced to a similar decline of the rule/governance and illumination of the Spirit because of the carnality and idolatry of men. It is clear that all the work of redemption through YHWH's servants (as seen in Torah), judges, kings, and prophets before, during, and after the Exile (as seen in the Tanach), is carried forward and completed by the activity of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit must be encouraged to rise only, and not withdraw for any reason.

He alone is the source of our power, judgment, and might. He alone can anoint us to stand and declare to the Ecclesia its transgression and call His people to return to the faith and standard of the Nazarene Apostles.

Learn: The Holy Spirit is crucial to our fellowship with Yeshua, for validating ministry with confirming signs and wonders, and in living an overcoming life. Because He alone regenerates and indwells converts, Messianic believers can come to know the Spirit intimately, even *more* than did the prophets of old, *if* we so choose. Yeshua thought it important. *"And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Counselor to be with you forever" (John 14:16).*

In the next TGDS lesson we will discuss the Spirit's involvement in the exile of Israel and Judah, and with Judah's return to rebuild the wall and the Temple at Jerusalem.

2. *"And they told him [Jacob] all the words of Joseph, which he said unto them..." (B'resheit 45:27).*

As we have already commented, Jacob balked at believing the report of the brothers who had in earlier years lied to him. As a matter of interest, one Rabbinic commentary states that Joseph, in

anticipation of this uncertainty, had directed them to relate to Jacob the last Torah topic [instruction] he and his father had discussed together. When they did, he was convinced Joseph was alive, and then "*Jacob was revived.*" He believed their testimony, was spiritually renewed, and made happy again. Thus, in the next verse (v.28) he is called Israel, the name that stands for spiritual nobility.

The other reason (we have observed) for Jacob's joy was that his son, his prize pupil, had remembered his spiritual lessons, the Torah instructions shared by his father. His son's remarkable recovery and ascension indicated to Jacob the probability that Joseph was still honoring YHVH. Hence, Jacob received a double portion of the joy of YHVH. "*A wise son maketh a glad father...*" (Pr. 10:1).

The words the siblings brought to Jacob revived his soul by imparting knowledge and hope for the future. In a similar way, an important ministry of the Holy Spirit is to bring the Words of Yeshua to our memory in our daily walk. He helps us to remember what we read, and in so doing renews hope, purpose, and faith in disciples on a daily basis. Just as Joseph remembered the Torah lessons he received from Jacob and kept them in his heart, so the Spirit reminds us and keeps the word of YHVH, the Torah, in our hearts to sustain hope and inspire fresh faith in our daily walk.

The Spirit also distributes to believers spiritual gifts [See; 1 Cor. 12 and Rom. 12] with which to bless, encourage, comfort, restore, and inspire others. For instance, the gift of prophecy is a great edifier of the people of Elohim, and should be in widespread operation within the Ecclesia. As the words of the returning brothers transformed Jacob's demeanor and life, the right word (rhema) given personally from the Spirit to an individual, or spoken by one anointed, inspired disciple to another can change (for the better) a life forever, in a moment of time. "*A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver*" (Prov. 25:11).

Hearing His Voice by the *Communion of the Spirit.*

"*The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God [Abba, Father], and the **communion of the Spirit**, be with you all. Amen*" (2 Cor. 13:14). Paul's apostolic blessing invokes the blessing of the *communion of the Holy Spirit* (an intimate spiritual fellowship) to become a reality in the Corinthian life experience. As we stated last week, "the communion of the Spirit" is intimate fellowship, rapport, cooperation, and mutual participation between the believer and the Spirit Himself in the fulfillment of prophetic, restoration Scriptures. Below is a list of suggested disciplines/ways by which to develop a holy, reverent familiarity with the Spirit of Elohim that will sensitize and improve one's ability to hear/discern His word/voice.

We know, of course, that the sacred communion between believer and the Spirit is inaugurated by the new birth [John 3:1-18; 4:29; 2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15; 1 John 3, 4, and 5]. The relationship is

then sustained and progressively developed by: (1) a commitment to prayer, (2) reading and study of the Torah, and all Scripture, "...the renewing of your mind" (Rom. 12:2), (3) praise and worship, (4) timely repentance, (5) obedience in our daily walk, (6) the baptism in the Spirit, (7) praying and singing in the Spirit (tongues), (8) operating/functioning at some level, by inspiration *and* faith, in the gifts of the Spirit, (9) service to the brethren, (10) intercession, (11) receiving fresh outpourings, (12) bearing fruit, and (13) singing the Song of the Lord, (14) waiting/abiding in His manifest, tangible presence, and (15) by the corporate anointing present among sanctified Spirit-oriented, Spirit-enthusiastic companions.

Strengthening our *communion with the Spirit*, the blessing Paul invoked for his flock, must become a priority for Messianic believers. Our need in this hour is not to be passively, unconsciously led only [again, this is a stage of our spiritual growth], but to become increasingly aware of the reality and presence of the Spirit, remain in a consciously close union with Him, and come to a spiritual level (enlarged capacity) where we actually recognize and cooperate with His leading. We are called to the joy of participating with Him, not blindly, but with full spiritual vision and hearing.

Last week the benefit of the *communion of the Spirit* (voice) mentioned first was revealed in John 14:26; "...the Holy Spirit...shall teach you all things and bring to your remembrance..." The communion/fellowship of the Spirit brings the words of YHVH to the remembrance of the Saints, and illuminates their meaning to their hearts and minds. **The next blessing** [that which is communicated into the believer's spirit, and soul] of the communion of the Spirit is found in John 16:14. "He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you." Believers cannot, in and of themselves, even begin to perceive or comprehend what goodness, virtue, majesty, and advantage there is in Yeshua without the supernatural assistance (enlightening, illuminating work) of the Holy Spirit. Thus, the second holy blessing coming from the "communion of the Spirit" is the revelation (infusion, continuous introduction) to the believer's consciousness of the glory of the Son, the splendor of His Name, the purity of His holiness, the awe of His majesty, the immensity of His power. "*The Spirit Himself bears witness [testifies] with our spirit...*" (Rom. 8:16). Because of this, we can begin to know and understand (comprehend) His uniqueness, greatness, and the unspeakable riches contained in Him. To this end, Paul prayed for the Ephesians, that Elohim, "...may give unto you [impart/quicken/infuse/produce by the Holy Spirit through illuminating the Word and/or giving direct revelation] *the spirit of wisdom, and revelation in the knowledge of Him: the eyes of your understanding being [divinely] enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, and what [is/are] the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints...the exceeding greatness of His power...*" (Eph. 1:17-19).

The Holy Spirit parts the curtains of the soul and begins to bring forth to it the glorious truths about the eternal, wonderful Person, Yeshua.

And here is good news: *"But we are all, with an open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Cor. 3:18).*

The glories and treasures hidden in Messiah, and waiting to be revealed, can never be fully fathomed. Therefore, the revelatory work of the Spirit will be from glory to glory, from age to age. Perhaps, with this in mind, we can understand Paul's foremost ambition, who, at the end of his ministry, was still discovering the riches and treasures hidden in Messiah, and wrote, *"That I may [continually] know Him [more and more, from one level of glory to another]..." (Phil. 3:10).*

The glorification of the Person of Yeshua to the consciousness of the Church/Ecclesia by the communication of divinely illuminated truth is an ongoing, progressive process that draws its life from the *communion [voice] of the Spirit*.

The resulting benefit is the (usually) gradual spiritual transformation of the believer. Again, the inner work progresses from season to season, from change to change, more completely developing the image of Yeshua in the believer over time. Mysticism, logic, or New Age practices can never accomplish this dynamic, divine, supernatural, spiritual metamorphosis.

There is no personal relationship or fellowship with YHVH for anyone apart from the Holy Spirit through faith in Yeshua.

Trying to access the Almighty--His kingdom, power, peace, and, glory, by circumventing or diminishing the Son is an empty, futile exercise.

Only the Spirit of Elohim exalting the Eternal One to the Believer through saving faith in Yeshua can awaken the soul to the reality and riches of YHVH. Thus, man's efforts to do so based upon Kabbalah and other occult sciences will always fall short and fail.

Further, there are instances when the communion of the Spirit is magnified greatly within and upon someone, and the resulting spiritual transformation is instant, powerful, and enduring.

Glory Note: *And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, Holy, Holy, is he Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory" (Isa. 6:3).* YHVH's wonderful attributes, character, power, and perfections, and displays of His radiant presence, are displayed in the earth. His matchless qualities, wisdom, love, and grace, are evident in our lives.

His glory is in us by the Spirit

Part 5: Overcoming—*The Outcome of Discipleship*

"There is a fine balance that must be observed in Scripture. Salvation and victory is completely of the Lord. We are to put no confidence in the flesh (Phil. 3:3). We do not overcome by our works, by the energy of the flesh, or by our sincerity, or by our effort, or by our will power because we are powerless. Nevertheless, victory requires our cooperation with God's operation. It means discipline, diligence, commitment to draw near to God and to act on His promises and provision by faith." [58]

1. *"They took their livestock and their wealth which they had amassed in the land of Canaan and they came to Egypt--Jacob and all his offspring with him" (B'resheet 46:6).* Having read the marvelous account of Joseph's reunion with his family, their rescue from famine, and subsequent positioning and increase in Egypt, we arrive at the confidence that He can use all believers in a similar way, even if we happen to be of little reputation.

As returning Israelites, whose call and desire is to be involved in the restoration of the Tabernacle of David, our confidence is in Him: *"...My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Cor. 12:9-10).*

Accordingly, just as Judah "drew near" to Joseph, with confidence his words would be heard and his mission would succeed, *"Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let*

us hold fast to the profession of our faith without wavering; for He is faithful who promised" (Hebrews 10:22-23).

Joseph and Judah were reconciled and cooperative in getting their entire family settled in the land. This is a picture of the reconciliation of Judah and Ephraim and the restoration of Israel at the advent of the Messianic Age.

Hear His Voice

"And I will give them one heart, and put a new spirit within them. And I will take the heart of stone out of their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, that they may walk in My statutes and keep my ordinances and keep them" (Ezekiel 11:19-20 NAS). In the new birth (John 3:3-8) the convert of Yeshua is given a "new heart," which actually is a regenerated, re-born human spirit.

The *new heart* is a divine and supernatural work wrought by the Holy Spirit Who comes to indwell the new believer's inner man.

The *new heart* is soft and sensitive to the leadership, voice and touch of the Spirit, unlike the old, hard heart of the flesh. The hard-hearted person quenches the Ruach Elohim, offends people, and does his own thing. Yeshua wants our hearts to be sensitive, soft, and responsive, and thus has provided for the believer a new one. Fellowshiping with Yeshua in study, worship, and prayer keeps our new hearts open and pliable to the voice and other influences of His Spirit.

Abide for periods in His presence. Your old stony heart has been replaced with a new, sensitive heart. You were born (again) to hear and follow His voice. "...and the sheep follow Him: for they know His voice" (John 10:4).

Part 6: Conclusion

"God does not require us to be famous, rich, successful (in man's estimation of success), smart, talented, or handsome. God does require that we be **faithful**. The requirement is that we are faithful with what He has entrusted to us." [6B]

1. "...but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things that are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus [the prizes of the upward call: higher degree of spiritual life, new encounters of the Spirit, greater illumination in the Torah/Word, deeper revelations of the Father's love, intimate fellowship with Yeshua, and ultimately--a crown of righteousness!]" (Phil 3:13-14).

The apostle Paul was an amazing individual, but he was still human. He wrote confessing he had not attained to Yeshua's full rest, but went on to affirm his determination to apprehend (faithfully and eagerly partake of) all that YHWH's gift of salvation has for him in this life. The language in the passage points to his experience on the road to Damascus where he was going to persecute more believers adhering to *the Way*. Paul wrote that Yeshua had "*apprehended*" him, stopped his downward course, brought his heart under His glorious grace, and transformed his life. He was thus determined that, having been forgiven, and forgetting the things that were past, to do "*this one thing...*" He would press forward [aim] to the mark of holiness, the prize of blessedness, and the fulfillment of his high, upward calling of Elohim in the knowledge of Yeshua. To "**press**" means: (a) to forget the past, and **not** allow regrets and failures to depress the heart, smother faith, and ruin hope, (b) to concentrate all energies and resources, making all things contribute to the work of his sanctification, and (c) to remain resolved, and not become lukewarm, or weary in well-doing.

Can we follow Paul's example? He was highly educated, had a choleric temperament, was disciplined, passionate, and persistent. He is therefore a hard, but not impossible, act to follow. Not many individual saints are like him. Believers have different personalities, constitutions, and experiences which influence their rate and degree of growth in grace. Nevertheless, if *any one of us* seeks His guidance with a single heart and humility, our Father will customize His ministry to suit that person's needs and abilities, lead him/her forward in sanctification, and take him upward into new levels of Spirit experience and revelation also. It is written: "...but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembles at my word" (Isa. 66:2). **He's calling you to return all the way to Him.** Press onward.

"Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return..."

2. *"But the Lord is faithful, who shall establish you, and keep you from evil" (2 Thess. 3:3).*

Jacob, Joseph, and the brethren were established by the faithfulness of YHVH. As we persevere in abiding in His grace and unity with one another, we will be established and our individual and corporate destinies fulfilled also. Our confidence is in His faithfulness to Israel, the nation to which we belong, and over whom He is always brooding and moving.

He **(a)** has begun a good work in us that He will carry on. He, Yeshua, **(b)** intercedes for us in heaven and obtains all He requests for us. He **(c)** has bestowed upon us, and placed within us, His Spirit and will not withdraw His presence or power from His sanctified ones. His faithfulness to all Israel establishes our security, inspires our boldness and faith, and completes our joy. *"...no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly" (Psalm 84:11).* He is busy establishing you right now, even as you read!

Let us take a lesson from Judah who "drew near" [*VaYigash*] to Joseph with a humble, open, self-sacrificing and compassionate intercession for his father Jacob and brothers. His heartfelt request stirred the heart of the unrecognized brother and precipitated reconciliation. He is an example on how we can approach the Throne of Grace [draw near to the Almighty] for our own grace in time of need and the restoration of the whole House of Israel.

He calls us to come forward.

Believers have much encouragement to approach the Throne of Grace. It is written, *"Let us therefore draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace."* We have freedom of access to the throne, and we may have freedom of speech with him who sits thereon. We may draw near to God with confidence. This we have, or may have, through our great High Priest. He has revealed the infinite love of the Father toward us, and his delight in blessing us; he is the perfect "Mediator between God and man;" he was "in all points tempted like as we are, yet without

sin," and he is able "to sympathize with our infirmities;" and he now wears our nature in heaven by his Father's throne. "Let us therefore draw near with boldness"—confidence and faith. [7]

The Seven Study Questions

These will appear at the conclusion of every lesson.

The *lesson questions* are a **very important** aspect of the student's learning. All readers are strongly encouraged to take the time and include them in their study discipline. Prayerfully answer each one! They are intended to coax the student to rely upon interaction with the Holy Spirit, discern His voice, receive insight, and obtain prophetic enlightenment.

This process will assist each learner to (1) develop a vision for the restoration and reconciliation of the whole house of Israel, (2) grow in foundational knowledge of the Torah, (3) recover the principles, practice, and Holy Spirit power of the early, first-century Nazarene believers, and (4) experience and enjoy greater dimensions of the kingdom, power, and glory of Yeshua.

Note: The questions presented here are listed again at the conclusion of each lesson in both the *Torah Commentary Manuals* and the *Torah Discipleship Manuals*. **To repeat—be sure to follow through with them.**

1a. In your opinion, what is the main theme or teaching of each of the listed readings individually? Starting with the Torah: What is its title? What is the interpretation? What truth/idea does the interpretation of the title suggest? What is the Torah section's main truth, as you see it?

1b. What is the corresponding idea in the Haftarah? In the Brit Chadashah?

2. What is the outstanding, central idea or subject that runs through and unites all the individual readings, as you see it? What does it say about discipleship?

3. Find in the Gospels where and how Yeshua declares, demonstrates, exemplifies, or exhibits the parsha's central truth, and explain. Give chapter and verse. Will you follow Him in living the lesson's truths?

4. In what way was the glory of YHVH [manifestations of His goodness] revealed in the parsha lesson?

5. What does the parsha teach you about your Hebrew roots, your identity, your destiny, your duty?

6. In what way did the Holy Spirit/Ruach HaKodesh personally speak to you during prayer and study this week? Did He impress you about how to apply the parsha lesson directly to your life? Explain.

7. *"...because of practice [by reason of use] have their senses trained [exercised] to discern..."*
You and I are called to return to hearing the voice of Elohim and to functioning in the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Progressing in these vital areas will require spiritual hunger, faith, and practice. He is waiting for us to approach Him.

Ask the Holy Spirit to speak into your spirit/heart as you pray each day. Look for opportunities to lay hands on the sick, or to be used in prophecy. Faithfully record the prophetic words and experiences you receive, and be sure to share them with your brethren.

Next - equipping the generations.

The parsha lessons have been crafted and shortened for younger readers. Be sure to use them. Do you remember what is written in Deuteronomy 6: 6-7?

1. Youth Version - Under construction.

2. Childrens' Version - Under construction.

Footnotes: 1. F.C., Forgotten God: Our Tragic Neglect of the Holy Spirit. 2. Genesis, Eerdmans, p. 497. 3. Chumash, Stone Edition, B'resheet, Pg. 256-257. 4. Genesis, Pulpit Commentary, Eerdmans, p.507. 5. Chumash, Stone Edition, P. 265. 6. Ibid. pg. 265. 7. Ibid. pg. 266. 8. Ibid. pg. 266. 1A. These Christian Times/The Truth About CERN. P. 1. 1B. The Call to Discipleship, R.J.Keijcir, page 1. 1B1. www.desiringgod.org/articlal/what-is-a-peacemaker. 2B. Let us Reason Ministries, p. 1. 3B. www.compellingtruth.org/Jesus-high-priest. 4B. www.ucg.org. The Holy Spirit, p. 3. 5B. Bible.org/revelation-appendix-who-are-overcomers. 6B. Go to the Bible.com, Faithfulness, G. Alquist, Jr. [7B] www.biblehub.com/etc.-W.J.

Va Yechi ("And he lived")

Next

Contender's Voice

Discipleship Series

Book of Genesis/B'resheit

Lesson Twelve

Va Yechi (“And he lived”)

Torah: Genesis/B'resheit 47:28-50:26

Haftorah: 1 Kings/Melechim Alef 2:1-12

Brit Chadashah: 1 Peter/Kepha Alef 1:3-9

Lesson Sequence

1. Introduction: *The Call to Discipleship* **2.** Weekly Parsha: *The Torah—the Standard of Discipleship* **3.** Yeshua: *The High Priest of our Discipleship* **4.** The Holy Spirit/Ruach ha Kodesh: *The Power of Discipleship* **5.** Overcoming: *The Outcome of Discipleship* **6.** Conclusion

Consider

You are blessed. Therefore “draw near” and let Abba hear your voice, and listen for His.

“The UN is not asking permission, but issuing a command that the entire planet will commit to 17 sustainable development goals and 169 sustainable development targets designed to radically transform our world by 2030. The UN 2030 plan promoted by the Pope will advance Agenda 21 on steroids. Through a controlled media the mass populations will be told that this is all about saving the environment and “ending poverty.” But that is not the true purpose of Agenda 21. The true agenda of Agenda 21 is to establish a global government, global economic system, and global religion. When UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon spoke of “a dream of a

world of peace and dignity for all” this is no different than when the Communists promised the people a ‘workers paradise.’ Very powerful secret societies and international organizations have been moving us in this direction for a very long time, and most Americans simply have no idea [discerning perception] what is [really] happening.” [1A] *“He who has ears to hear...”* **Study the Word. All power belongs to YHVH. The stage is set for revival and a great harvest! Believe.**

Part 1: Introduction—*The Call to Discipleship*

“It isn't that the Lord will divest you of all of those things necessarily, it is that you show the cry of your heart at its deepest point in the fact that salvation is so precious to you and a place in the eternal kingdom of God, and the forgiveness of sin is so valuable to you that you would hold nothing back were He to ask for it.” [1B]

Last week review: *"And Joseph placed his father and his brethren in the land, and gave them a possession in the land of Egypt, in the best land..." (B'resheet 47:11).* In the previous pasha, *VaYigash ("And he drew near ")*, Joseph brought his family to Egypt and gave them a settlement, that is, he arranged for them to acquire and use property. Though Jacob and his house may have been given a district in Goshen, it is possible that they received Goshen itself. Thus we observe the hand of YHVH preparing the weak to become strong as the seed of Abraham is given, by lease, the "best of the land."

This week's discipleship preview: *Vayechi* is the name of this parashat. It means *"And he lived"*, and refers to how Jacob lived the last years of his life in Egypt. The narrative of "he lived" is devoted to the events leading up to and following Jacob's death.

The lesson we disciples learn from *Va Yechi* is this: A truly noble life is produced by godly, Torah-centered ideals/principles that are lived out before others, and sent forth from one person to be reproduced in the lives of others, bringing forth trans-generational fruit that remains. If our descendants remain loyal to the ideals and truth that we have demonstrated and passed unto them, we have prevailed, and truly "lived".

Jacob "lived" 17 years in Egypt observing his children and grandchildren trained and brought up on the Torah ideals and principles he had taught Joseph, to which the eleventh son had been faithful, even in exile. Jacob "lived" [prevailed] by remaining loyal to and exemplifying Torah truth. In doing so, he lived uncontaminated by the ever-present heathen values of the culture, an inspirational example for his family. Because "he lived" for El Shaddai (Ex. 6:2-3), Jacob lives on. *"...though he was dead, yet shall he live."* Jacob had lived seventy-five years in Canaan,

twenty years in Padan-aram, thirty-three years in Canaan again, and seventeen in Egypt. This tallies to one hundred forty-seven years. He had spent his first 130 years on a rocky pilgrimage, encountering the ups and downs of life, facing adversities and numerous struggles.

But in the end Jacob reached a place of rest and peace for the *evening* of his life, and enjoyed for seventeen years (the same length of time Joseph had originally lived with him) the care and love of his beloved Rachel's first-born son. **Disciple, fulfill your call!** Bear fruit! And live well!

Part 2: Torah—*The Standard of Discipleship*

Parsha Lesson Twelve: **Va Yechi** (“And he lived”)

"Men in responsible positions will not only ignore and despise the Sabbath themselves, but from the sacred desk [pulpit], will urge upon the people [congregations/Christians] the observance of the first day of the week, pleading tradition and custom in behalf of this man-made institution. They will point to calamities on land and sea-to the storms of wind, the floods, the earthquakes, the destruction by fire-as judgments indicating [trying to convince listeners] God's displeasure because Sunday is not sacredly observed." -*Signs of the Times*, January 17, 1884. [2B] There is no law in Scripture changing the seventh day Sabbath to the first day of the week.

Torah

The *Sefer Torah*, as we have learned, is a handwritten copy of the Pentateuch, or Torah, rolled up around two attractive, wooden shafts. It is produced by following very strict standards. The Torah Scroll is used primarily for the ritual readings during Jewish religious services. When not in use, the scroll is kept behind a curtain in an ornate cabinet called the *Aron Kodesh*, or "Holy Ark," which is often located in the section of the synagogue that most closely faces Jerusalem.

The Torah is also printed and bound in book form for common reading and study. Then it is called the *Chumash*, or "five part," referencing the five books of Moses. A *Chumash* may also include Hebrew text, commentary, or various translations.

"Thus all Israel brought up the ark of the covenant of the Lord with shouting, and with...cornet, and with trumpets...cymbals, making a noise with psalteries and harps" (1 Chron. 15:28). The introduction of a new *Sefer Torah* into a congregation is a significant event which calls for a celebration, including singing, dancing, prayer, and praise to Elohim.

Keep in mind: "The Bible [biblical teaching, instructions in Hebrew roots, etc.] is not an end in itself, but a means to bring men to an intimate and satisfying knowledge of God, that they may

enter into Him, that they may delight in His [manifest, tangible] Presence, may taste and know the inner sweetness of the very God Himself in the core and center of their hearts." [2]

It is the desire of TGDS course to assist the reader encounter Yeshua intimately.

1. *"And Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt...and multiplied exceedingly. And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years; so the length of Jacob's life was one hundred and forty seven years. And the time drew near that Israel [Jacob] must die: and he called his son Joseph..." (B'resheet 47:27-29).*

When Jacob had stood in the court before Pharaoh, his words suggested that he did not expect to attain the ages of his revered ancestors, Abraham and Isaac. Thus he was not surprised when he sensed the allotted span of his days was drawing to an end, nor was he melancholy or alarmed at the prospect of impending death. For many years Jacob had been blessed with the enjoyment of the Almighty's friendship, visitations, provision, protection and salvation so that he would certainly not regard translation into His glorious company, and reunion with his family, as a hardship. "And he lived" *well* because he lived in a relationship with the Most High.

May we all learn to count the measure of our days and apply our hearts to wisdom, which is **(a)** to live with a continual awareness of our mortality, and **(b)** to continually cultivate our relationship with Yeshua.

2. *"When the time for Israel to die drew near, he called his son Joseph...Bury me not in Egypt; but I will lie with my fathers, and thou shalt carry me out of Egypt and bury me in their burying place" (B'resheet 47:29-30).*

As Jacob foresaw his end approaching he wanted to leave final instructions with Joseph and thus summoned him to his bed. Among his last duties, Jacob ordered Joseph to carry his physical remains to the family grave-vault in Hebron, which is in Canaan, his family's God-given inheritance. In so doing, he demonstrated his true belief that Canaan was the inheritance of Israel and that eventually his descendants would return. Joseph affirmed his father's deepest desire with his sincere response. *"I will do as thou hast said. And he said, Swear unto me. And he swore unto him" (V. 30-31).* The patriarch's last anxiety was thus removed; his apprehensions were allayed by Joseph's promise and oath.

3. *"Now it came about after these things that Joseph was told, Behold, your father is sick: and he took with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim...And Jacob said unto Joseph...Ephraim and Manasseh shall be mine, as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine" (see B'resheet 48:1-22).* Immediately, when Jacob fell sick, a messenger was dispatched from Goshen to the royal palace to inform Joseph. Upon hearing the news, Joseph came with his two sons in tow to his father's bedside. Jacob related to his son how El Shaddai had appeared to him at Bethel,

what YHVH had promised him, and the great afflictions he had endured. Then he bestowed upon Manasseh and Ephraim his patriarchal benedictions.

A. The blessing upon Ephraim was the *heirship*, the possession of the place and privilege of the firstborn: He *"shall be greater."* **B.** The blessing upon Manasseh was that he would become a people and be great also. **C.** The blessing upon them together: *"...the Angel who redeemed me from all evil bless these lads"*--a promise of spiritual blessing for themselves. And, *"In thee shall all Israel bless, saying..."*--a promise of spiritual influence upon others. **D.** The blessing upon Joseph was in the blessing of his sons and Jacob's adoption of them as his own children--*"My name shall be named upon them, and the name of my fathers, Abraham and Isaac."* Also, Jacob's blessing was in the reception by his two sons of a double portion of the inheritance--*"Moreover, I have given unto thee one portion above thy brethren..."* [3]

"Behold, I die; but God shall be with you, and bring you again into the land of your fathers."

Jacob was on the brink of death when he uttered these words. His spiritual vision of the sure promise of YHVH was probably more keen as the obscuring veil of mortal life faded. He affirmed what the Almighty had already proclaimed—that He would be with Jacob's descendants as they sojourned in Egypt and would eventually bring them back to the covenant land of their fathers.

4. *"Then Jacob summoned his sons and said, Assemble yourselves so that I may tell you what will befall you in the days to come" (B'resheet 49:1).*

The patriarchal blessings are the last recorded words of Jacob. He spoke prophetically over the sons of Leah, then the sons of the concubines, Bilhah and Zilpah, and finally over the sons of Rachel. We can deduce from the benedictions that a person's sphere and influence in life are in accordance to his peculiar character. For instance, Reuben was likened to unstable water, and the birthright was taken from him. Simeon's and Levi's reckless, angry temperaments garnered their father's rebuke and they would be scattered in Israel. Issachar was powerful and wise, but fond of luxury and comfort, and would thus render honor and tribute to his more adventurous brothers. Judah was honorable, would be admired, become the tribe of leadership, and hold a prosperous domain. Asher, the happy one, would be content occupying fertile lands and supplying rich foods for Israel. Joseph would prosper, grow in numbers and spread out, overcome trials, and receive surpassing blessings.

5. *"And Jacob called [by means of messengers] unto his sons [those not already present in his chamber] and said, gather yourselves together [the patriarch-prophet's last utterances were public, not private] and I will tell you that which shall befall you" (B'resheet 49:1).* Jacob called his family together to tell them what would befall them at the end of days, in the time between his utterances and the close of the era.

"When Jacob finished charging his sons, he drew his feet into the bed and breathed his last, and was gathered to his people" (B'resheet 49:33).

"Jacob's benediction [over his twelve sons] was a prophetic treasure to be kept in store by future generations, and a foundation on which much faith could afterwards be built. It has been called 'the last full bloom of patriarchal prophecy and theocratic promise.' The central point [is], the blessing on the royal tribe of Judah.

The corresponding eminence was given to Joseph. The *Israel blessing* to the one, the *Jacob blessing* to the other...It seems possible that the beautiful proclamation, verse 18, *"I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord,"* was intended to form a kind of middle point, separating the groups of blessings into *one of seven*, and *another of five*.

The first group has a *Messianic* character, the second, a *wider, cosmopolitan*. In the first, Judah, the royal tribe, represents the theocracy. In the second, Joseph, the link of connection between Israel and Egypt, represents the kingdom of Messiah becoming the universal kingdom...The **whole** is a typical representation of Israel in the higher sense.

A. It comes out of sinful nature. **B.** It is developed by the grace of God in human history. **C.** It stands upon the divine order of the twelve tribes, the revealed truth, and the divinely sanctioned religious life and institutions. **D.** The essential element in the history is the Messiah coming out of Judah...the Nazarite, the tried man, the blessed one. **E.** The kingdom of Messiah is the universal blessedness of the world.

When Jacob handed his blessing to his heirs, he [gathered] up his feet into the bed, [yielded] up the ghost, and [was gathered] to his people." [4]

6. *"And Joseph fell upon his father's face, and wept upon him, and kissed him. And Joseph commanded his servants the physicians to embalm his father..." (B'resheet 50:1-2).*

Joseph closed his father's eyes and mourned along with the whole family for forty days. He commanded the medical men of the land to care for his father's body, to embalm, wash, and wrap him, and to prepare him for burial by means of fragrant spices and aromas. The public mourning lasted seventy days.

"So Joseph went to bury his father, and with him went up all the servants of Pharaoh...all the household of Joseph and his brothers..." (B'resheet 50:7-8).

A long train of many mourners--family members and officials of every level, with troops and chariots--wound their way from Egypt to Canaan. It is likely that the Egyptians, who had come all the way from Goshen to Goren Atad, remained behind as Joseph advanced through Philistine territory and on to Hebron with Jacob's body.

7. *"...his sons carried him to the land of Canaan and buried him in the cave of the field of Machpelah before Mamre, which Abraham had bought..." (B'resheet 50:13).*

Jacob's sons laid him to rest in the ancestral vault in the cave of Machpelah. With the burial of Jacob in Machpelah, the patriarchal family was at rest together and the tomb was closed. Thereafter, members of the second generation were laid to rest in Shechem. "Jacob had assigned his sons to their respective positions around his bier [casket], exactly as they would later encamp in the Wilderness around the Tabernacle (see *Numbers* ch. 2). As in that instance, Levi did not participate. Nor did Joseph, for Ephraim and Manasseh took his place at the bier. Jacob said that Levi should not be a bearer because his offspring were destined to carry the ark, and it was not proper for him to carry human remains. Nor should Joseph carry the bier, for it would be disrespectful for a leader to do so (*Rashi*)."

8. *"When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, What if Joseph bears a grudge against us and pays us back for all the wrongs which we did to him! So they sent a message...his brothers also came and fell down before him..." (B'resheet 50:15-18).*

The suspicions of the men were unfounded. The enormity of their sin was great but the display of Joseph's love had been greater. *"But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound"* (*Rom. 5:20*). Though hurt by their fear and distrust, Joseph assured the brothers that they had no reason to fear any retaliation. May we **learn from Joseph**, who is a *type* of Messiah Yeshua, and cultivate the things of eternal value.

Joseph was by no means a perfect man yet he possessed the true treasures of life: **(a)** a forgiving spirit (*Mt. 6:14-15*), **(b)** singleness of heart, **(c)** kindness, **(d)** wisdom, **(e)** unwavering, overcoming faith, **(g)** and a watchfulness/attentiveness to the presence and will of YHVH.

9. *"But Joseph said, Do not be afraid...you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good..." (B'resheet 50:19-20).*

Joseph had come to understand YHVH's plan in his exile in Egypt. He reassured his brethren that whatever their original motive was, Elohim had been, from the beginning, processing and evolving the events and circumstances for the family's preservation, multiplication, and eventual deliverance back to Canaan. By divine providence, everything had turned out well for fledgling Israel's benefit and welfare.

After Joseph's death, Jacob's (Israel's) family grew remarkably during their exile [*galut*] in Egypt. Following their deliverance from bondage, and then coming into covenant with YHVH while camped at Sinai, the tribes united around their Torah constitution and became the nation of Israel, married by covenant to the Almighty. The twelve tribes remained a theocratic nation

throughout their wandering forty years in the wilderness, while conquering and settling in Canaan, and continued as such through the period of the Judges. Later, the Nation of Israel became a united kingdom ruled by monarchs, divinely selected kings. The United Kingdom lasted about 120 years and was ruled by Saul, David, and Solomon.

During the reign of Rehoboam (Solomon's son) the United Kingdom became conflicted, and in 931 B.C. was divided into two kingdoms. The Kingdom of Israel, with its ten tribes and dominated by the tribe of Ephraim, was in the north. It was ruled by Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, an Ephraimite of Zeredah. Jeroboam set up idol altars in Bethel and Dan, and caused Israel to sin and fail.

The Kingdom of Judah, officially consisting of two tribes, Judah and Benjamin, occupied the south. Levi remained with Judah. The Southern Kingdom was ruled by Rehoboam. The Kingdom of Israel [ten tribes] has never been reunited. However, the process of restoring the fallen Tabernacle of David (entire Kingdom of Israel) is underway.

Jeroboam turned the Northern Kingdom, or House of Ephraim/Israel, into a thoroughly idolatrous culture, and as a result it was weakened, exposed to enemies, conquered by Assyria, and taken into captivity in 722 B.C. Eventually, the "lost ten tribes" were scattered into the surrounding regions, and later emigrated to the nations/foreign lands. The Northern Kingdom/House lasted 209 years. The Southern Kingdom, Judah, was also conquered and taken into captivity in Babylon in 586 B.C. It lasted 345 years, 136 years longer than did the House of Ephraim/Israel.

The Northern Kingdom, Israel, never returned en masse to the land of Canaan/Israel from its Assyrian captivity, or from its migrations. However, after seventy years in captivity, many Jews from the Southern Kingdom did return to Eretz Israel. Under the supervision and encouragement of anointed leaders and prophets, they built the Second Temple, resettled Jerusalem, and returned to Torah-based worship. The Southern Kingdom, the House of Judah (Jewish people), has remained the only recognizable people of greater Israel, standing out like the tip of an iceberg, so to speak. But today many believers who are not from Judah (not Jewish) are claiming Israelite heritage also. They claim to be the unrecognized and dismissed descendants of the house of Ephraim, the forgotten ten tribes. When the house of Ephraim is recognized, the underwater, unnoticed part of the *Israelite iceberg* (so to speak) will start coming into view. Then Israel will be seen as much larger than had been originally thought.

For years the lost sheep of the House of Israel were considered to be hopelessly assimilated, irretrievable, and possibly existing only among the small, remote enclaves of people discovered from time to time who have retained vestiges of Hebrew/Jewish culture. But in these latter days the Holy Spirit is awakening many believers around the world to their Hebraic heritage and

calling them back to reentry into the Torah and glory of YHVH. Scripture [Jacob's prophetic words included] informs us that these [at least many of them] are probably descendants of the "lost tribes." It is true that some numbers are being found in outlying areas of various Middle Eastern, Asian, and African countries. Yet, we have read that the descendants would be numerous and found in populated, prosperous, powerful nations, and figure prominently among Spirit-born believers, i.e. the Church/Christianity.

"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God" (Rom.8: 14-16). The Holy Spirit is the gift of Elohim to believers. He is the Spirit of new birth and liberty. He is also the Spirit of adoption, whereby every born-again believer is brought into sonship with Elohim, and the quickening by the Holy Spirit that informs a believer that he belongs to YHVH. Through faith in Yeshua and the regeneration of the Spirit, those who were *Lo Ammi* [not My people] are brought back into covenant and become *Ammi* [My people]. This does not suggest merely an external relationship. It clearly implies a transformation of heart and mind, of character, of life, and of spirit that, when realized, results in the cry of Abba (my personal Father) rising from the affectionate, grateful, joyous hearts of those who were once called *not His people*, but who now *are His people*. The Spirit of adoption is the One who awakens a spiritual instinct [intuitive sense, inner knowing] within the regenerated believer that he or she is an Israelite.

The Northern Kingdom was captured, dispersed, and became considered as forever disbanded and forgotten. But the Prophet Hosea, who saw our day and a great re-gathering, said of the dispersed, *"Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured or numbered; and it shall come to pass that in the place where it was said unto them, ye are not my people [Lo Ammi], there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God [Ammi]" (Hosea 1:10).* Paul refers to them, the *Lo Ammi* who became *Ammi*, in his Epistle to the Romans. The Spirit, as prophesied in Joel 2:28-29, had been poured out on them and they had been brought back into covenant [Jer. 31:31-33] with their Elohim. As a "Spirit" people, Paul exhorts them to remain faithful and pliable in the hand of God. He wrote, *"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons [people, "ammi"] of God" (Rom. 8:14).* Therefore, may we remain under the influences of the Holy Spirit.

See: Genesis/B'resheet 12:1-2; 15:1-6; 17:1-3, 15-16; 26:4-5; 28:14; 46:3; 48:3, 15-22; 49:22-26; Deut. 7:6; 28:1-14; 33:13-17; Jer. 31:31-40; Hosea 2:23; 3:5; 14:4-7; Joel 2:28; John 3,14,16; Acts 1 and 2; Rom. 8:14; 11:19-26; Gal. 3:2, 33-15, 28-29; James 1:1; 1 Peter 1.

10. *"Now Joseph stayed in Egypt, he and his father's household, and Joseph lived one hundred and ten years...Joseph said...God shall surely visit [remember] you, and bring you [the new*

generations and the remains of the brothers] *out of this land unto the land which He swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. And Joseph died...they embalmed him and put him in a coffin in Egypt"* (B'resheit 50:22-26).

Joseph had learned from Jacob during his father's last moments of life that a redeemer would come to the enslaved Israelites in Egypt. He [the chosen leader] would inform them that YHWH had said, "*I [Elohim's Name] have indeed remembered you"* (Ex. 3:16).

The idea conveyed is that after a long period--when it seemed that the Elohim of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had forgotten the people--He would manifest His presence and power as if He was remembering them again. The "password" (the sign of impending deliverance/redemption) was given to the leaders to be handed down to future generations. The chosen, sent redeemer/deliverer would speak these words and the leaders of that generation would know him. Evidently, no one but

Moses himself ever spoke the term/phrase before the time for Israel's deliverance from Egypt arrived. [6]Joseph died at one hundred and ten years old. He was embalmed and put in a coffin, *i.e.*, a mummy case made of sycamore wood.

After 360 years, at the time of the Exodus, his remains were removed and carried into Canaan where he was entombed in a sepulcher in Shechem. Today Shechem is called Nablus, a commercial and industrial town of 75,000 residents. It is the largest town on the West Bank, and a center for Palestinian nationalism. Nearby Hebron was the burial place of Joseph's ancestors, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Leah.

Hebron is among the world's oldest cities. It is a town of 70,000 people and is considered one of the four Jewish holy cities [Jerusalem is foremost]. It has a large Islamic center. It also has a reputation for violence. It was here that Abraham entered into his covenant with Elohim. It is in Hebron that Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebecca, Jacob, Leah, the patriarchs and matriarchs--founders of the Israelite Nation--were buried. David, King Saul's successor, made Hebron his first capital before moving to Jerusalem seven years later.

Hebron was populated by an unbroken Jewish presence for many centuries, up until 1929. At that time Arabs besieged the Jewish quarter and killed 67 people and forced the remaining residents to flee their homes. In 1967, following the Six-Day War, Jews returned and created the Kiryat Arba district. In 1980, Jewish students coming out from the Cave of Machpelah were ambushed by Arab gunmen, who killed six and wounded seventeen.

In 1993 and 1994, following the Israel-PLO Accord, there were more attacks on Jews, who at times responded in kind against Arabs in the Hebron area. Notwithstanding, the Cave of Machpelah is considered a place of prayer for both Jews and Muslims.

Haftorah

1. *"Now the days of David drew nigh that he should die; and he charged [commanded] Solomon his son, saying, I go the way of all the earth: be thou strong therefore, and show thyself a man; and keep the charge of the YHVH thy Elohim..." (1 Kings 2:1-3).*

At the time of his death, David delivered his final instructions to his son Solomon who was destined to be the king's successor. It is an episode similar to that of Jacob and Joseph. David encouraged Solomon to be steadfast in his faith in YHVH, for his loyalty to the Covenant would ensure success and prosperity for the kingdom. David died soon thereafter and was buried in the City of David, and Solomon was established as Israel's new sovereign. Joseph remained loyal to his father's teaching, and family reconciliation and unity resulted. Solomon failed to heed his father, and fell into debauchery, idolatry, and pride. The division of the kingdom of Israel resulted. *"Honor thy father and thy mother that your days [of goodness and happiness] may be prolonged..."*

Part 3: Yeshua—*The Eternal High Priest of the Believers Discipleship*

"...the present location of Jesus is in heaven. One of the purposes of Jesus being there is to stand on our behalf before God the Father and make a way for believers to have access to God...unlike a human priest who can only intercede for a limited time, Jesus can intercede before the Father "to the uttermost," a phrase also translated "at all times." The contrast is between a human priest who can intercede temporarily and the role of Jesus as priest who interceded forever on behalf of His people." [3B]

"I did not come to abolish but fulfill" (Mt. 5:17).

"And having disarmed the powers and authorities, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross" (Col. 2:15).

Yeshua, by His crucifixion and resurrection, triumphed over rulers, authorities, powers of darkness and the spiritual forces of evil [satanic and demonic powers] of the world. He stripped all of them of their power to oppress men and women and hold them captive to the power of sin against their will, and demonstrated the rule of the Kingdom of God. Messiah triumphed over them, which means He triumphantly led them in a procession of defeated enemies, much as a conquering general would lead captives through the conquered city so all could see the evidence of their defeat. We share in the victory of Yeshua over temptation and the world. *"You dear children, are from God and have overcome them [that which is of the spirit of*

anti-Messiah], *because the One who is in you [Yeshua by the Spirit] is greater than the one who is in the world*" (1 John 4:4). We have been given the authority and power to resist and defeat the stratagem of the forces of evil today. Exercise faith, and use praise, prayer, and His Word daily to weaken, defeat and bring down the strongholds of evil formed against you.¹ *"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God"* (Mt. 4:4)

At His baptism, Yeshua was declared to be the Messiah. From the Jordan He was led by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness (the theater of the devil's temptations) for forty days. When tempted by Satan to turn stones into bread, the Master replied, *"Man shall not live by bread alone..."* With this comment, we face the fact that YHVH can sustain life apart from the means of ordinary food. Moses is our precedent. He went forty days and nights, and *"...neither did he eat bread, nor drink water..."* (Ex. 34:28). Yeshua told the devil that obedience to the Word of God is better than physical food, i.e., bread, and that if one had to be given up there was no doubt as to which one. In the Word He makes a distinction between the physical food that satisfies the body's hunger--that indulges the appetite and carnal cravings, and the spiritual food that nourishes the spirit, the heart, mind, conscience, affections, and will.

Yeshua shows the reader that the food of a spiritual man is *spiritual*. Such *food* encompasses truth, obedience, submission of will, spiritual intimacy, service, praise, worship, prayer, and such communing that develop sweet fellowship with the Most High. He retained within His Person the divine power to change the stones to loaves but chose to live a human life, remain subject to everyday conditions, and depend totally upon His Father and the work of His Spirit. If Yeshua would have relieved Himself of every danger and evaded difficulties by intervening with His divine supernatural power, His *being-an-example* for us who are ordinary human beings would have been invalid. But He consistently placed Himself on the level of the weakest and most needy, and dedicated the use of His extraordinary divine power for their/our benefit, never His.

Let us learn from the Living Torah: Man is *not* a simply physical body; he is a spirit-being who simply *has* a body. The Master teaches that man is more than a material being, fit only for eating, drinking and procreating. We see in His words that man's true life is in learning and obeying the will of YHVH. Thus we confirm our priorities. Feed first the spirit and soul [the inner man] with hearty portions of the Word of God and with much imbibing of Living Water, for such a well fed and divinely watered soul will happily and wisely enforce godly guidelines for feeding the body and managing its incessant demands. *"Beloved, I pray that in all respects you may prosper and be in good health, just as your soul prospers"* (3 John 1:1).

The final words of people are usually the most heartfelt and significant. For instance, the patriarch Jacob gathered his twelve sons around his bed when he was about to depart from earthly life and join his fathers in the heavenly glory, and delivered to his sons their prophetic destiny. In a similar fashion, Yeshua likewise gathered His twelve apostles around Himself before

He ascended, and instructed them that the re-gathering and restoration of all Israel would take place through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and gave them their final instructions: *"...wait for the promise of the Father, which...ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days hence...It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:4-8).*

Jacob's prophetic words (B'resheet 49:1-33) have provided illumination to future generations and help us anticipate end-time events.

Messiah's words establish our values, impart life, and also help us prepare for the last days. It is interesting to note that His last recorded words were about the blessing of the Holy Spirit! May we remember the words of the *Living Torah*, the greatest words ever spoken on earth, are especially important for *"...they are spirit, and they are life" (John 6:63).*

Part 4: The Holy Spirit—*The Power of Discipleship*

"The Holy Spirit is not only important but essential to life. In fact the coming of the Holy Spirit was equally important as the coming of Jesus Christ! Jesus Christ saves us from our past life but the Holy Spirit empowers us to live the life God has created us for. Without the Holy Spirit our lives are stuck in neutral and going nowhere." [4B] "...you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 1:5).

"The Flame of the Presence was the beating heart of the Levitical order. Without it all the appointments of the tabernacle were characters of some unknown language; they had no meaning for Israel or for us. The greatest fact of the tabernacle was that YHVH was there; a Presence was waiting within the veil. Similarly the Presence of God [through the Spirit] is the central fact of [New Testament faith]. At the heart of the [New Testament] message is God Himself waiting for His redeemed children to push in to conscious awareness of His Presence (Acts 2:1-4)...We are satisfied to rest in our *judicial* possessions [being seated in heavenly places, for instance; see Ephesians 1:15-2:10] and for the most part we bother ourselves very little about the absence of personal experience."^[7] This restricting attitude must be changed!

"...and we saw His glory" (John 1:14).

1. *"And Jacob said unto Joseph, God Almighty appeared unto me at Luz, in the land of Canaan, and blessed me, and said to me, Behold, I will make thee fruitful and multiply thee, and I will*

make of thee a multitude of people; and will give this land unto thy seed...And now thy two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh...they shall be mine..." (Gen. 48:3-5).

The Holy Spirit in the Old Covenant: Part Jacob had become an old man resting on his sick bed. In the passage we note that he summoned Joseph and reminisces of the early years and the visit of *El Shaddai*, and requests that his grandchildren be brought to him. Joseph may have had more children after Jacob had arrived in Goshen, and if so, his father would have been aware of it, but he asked for and directed his prophetic comments to Ephraim and Manasseh only. *"They shall be mine."* It meant that Jacob considered them as his own sons, and gave them an equal position in his family, commensurate with the original twelve sons. The first-born's double portion birthright, of which Reuben had been denied (1 Chron. 5:1), was given to Joseph in the persons of his sons, Ephraim and Manasseh.

Jacob proceeded to prophetically bless the lads by crossing his arms and placing his right hand on the younger son, Ephraim, and his left hand upon Manasseh. **First**, the blessing upon Ephraim was that he would become the greater, a multitude of nations. **Secondly**, the blessing on Manasseh was that he would become a multitude of people, a nation, and would become great. **Thirdly**, the boys' mutual blessing was that both would have spiritual influence over others. **Fourthly**, the blessing upon Joseph was the prophesied pre-eminence of his sons, the names of the Patriarchs associated with them, and their adoption/inclusion into Jacob's family by divinely inspired fiat [decree, command]. *"My name [Israel] shall be named upon them, and the name of my fathers, Abraham and Isaac"* And the double portion of blessing and increase was also for his descendants. *"Moreover I have given to thee one portion above thy brethren, which I took [spoils taken probably by his armed sons who had taken possession of the town, put it to the sword, and seized control of the district] out of the hand of the Amorite with my sword and with my bow."* Finally Jacob, on the brink of death, directed his faith on the sure word of promise and declared to Joseph that he (and his family) would remain in Egypt under divine care until YHWH brought His people up again to Canaan. *"Behold, I die; but **God shall be with you**, and bring you out again into the land of your fathers."*

Elohim *did* remain with Israel, and eventually settled them in Canaan as He had promised. As we have stated earlier, at first Israel was ruled by a theocracy, but later by a monarchy, by kings. YHWH also sent prophets to exhort, encourage, and warn the nation's leaders and populace. Following the reign of Solomon, Israel was divided into two kingdoms, or houses: Judah and Benjamin in the South, and the remaining ten tribes, led by Ephraim, in the north. Both the northern and southern kingdoms fell to apostasy, refused to listen to the prophets, and were driven from their land. The northern kingdom was overrun and carried away by Assyria, and the southern kingdom was defeated and taken into exile in Babylon. But YHWH was watching over the scattered Israelites, both the northern [Gen. 49:22-26; Deut. 7:6; 28:1-14; 33:13-17; Amos

9:9] and southern kingdoms, throughout their exiles and raised up and anointed/empowered prophets to speak His word to them.

In the time following the scattering of the ten tribes by Assyria, and during Judah's dispersion and exile, **Ezekiel** was an Old Testament prophet whom the Spirit came upon and empowered to prophesy and minister to both the northern and southern kingdoms. He had a unique and varied ministry.

(1) He had visions. *"And I looked, and behold, a whirlwind came out of the north..."* (1:4). (2) He was translated. *"So the Spirit lifted me up, and took me away..."* (3:14). (3) The prophetic Word came to him often. *"And the word of the Lord came unto me, saying..."* (6:1). (4) The power of Elohim fell on him. *"...that the hand of the Lord God (YHVH Elohim) fell there upon me."* (8:1). (5) He spoke prophetically of Messiah also. *"And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them...and I the Lord will be their God...and I will make a covenant of peace with them..."* (34:23-25). Ezekiel envisioned the two houses of Israel eventually returning to the land of Israel and becoming reunited and reconciled, which we believe will take place at the dawn of the Messianic Era. [See also: Isa. 11:11; Jer. 23:1-3; Ezek. 37:15-23.] In the Old Testament we see again and again the Spirit bringing enlightenment, vision, power (miracles), and inspiration (words of correction and encouragement) to his elected servants, kings and prophets. During the exile of Judah the Spirit *and* the Word of Elohim acted together, as seen with Ezekiel, to declare the reason and purpose of their judgment and bring hope for a future to the bewildered Jews. *"And the Spirit of the Lord (YHVH) fell upon me, and said unto me..."* (11:5). The Holy Spirit caused the prophet to speak Elohim's mind, His Word to the House of Israel. The coming of the Spirit upon the prophets and the revelation of the ideas, the heart, the word of YHVH were simultaneous occurrences. What Ezekiel described as *"the word of the Lord came unto me"*, Micah (an earlier prophet from Judah) described as, *"...truly I am full of power by the Spirit of the Lord (YHVH)...to declare..."* (Micah 3:8). Power and inspiration for speech was (and is) a common purpose for the coming of the Spirit upon someone.

The Holy Spirit was active in the return of Judah to Israel and in the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the Second Temple. Yet, at the same time, the Holy Spirit/Ruach HaKodesh remained engaged with the scattered northern kingdom in their multiplication and migrations. [Amos 9:9; Hos. 1:10; 2:23; 3:5; 14:1-7.] He has been active in the past 2000 years, and is today, in awakening, restoring, and re-gathering the dispersed descendants of the ten tribes, the descendants of the House of Ephraim/Israel. These saints are found throughout the Ecclesia/redeemed Israel, having been grafted in through faith in Yeshua and the New Birth in very large numbers. **See:** Isa. 11:11-14; 32:15; 44:1-5; 59:20-21; Jer. 31:18-20, 31-40; 33:7-8; 50:20; Ezek. 36:24; 37:14; 39:25-28; Hos. 1:10; 2:23; 3:5; 14:1-7; Obad. 17-21; Joel 2:28-29; John 3 and 14; Acts 1 and 2. After the remnant of Judah returned from captivity in Babylon to rebuild Jerusalem and the

Temple, YHVH's plan was to restore them to prosperity and security in His Torah culture. For this purpose He sent two prophets into their ranks to encourage them and remind them of their need for the Spirit to assure success. He spoke through His prophet Haggai that His Spirit would *"remain among them"* (Haggai 2:5). Further, Zechariah assured the leaders and the people that they must not fear the opponents of the rebuilding of the Temple, for it was the Spirit Who was working with them.

The prophet declared that every enemy, every mountain of resistance to YHVH's plan, would be removed *"not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit* [the manifold operations of the Holy Spirit] *says the Lord of Hosts"* (Zech. 4:6). What the post-exilic prophet spoke to the builders of the Second Temple, he speaks to us today. Zechariah teaches us how to get *kingdom business* accomplished effectively and thoroughly. It is always by the power of the Holy Spirit. Zechariah 4:6 is our paradigm for success. Our Elohim is raising up messianic believers who are ready to return to the original apostolic Nazarene model of living and service, power and practice.

A. Starting with creation, the Holy Spirit has been active throughout the Old Testament in carrying forward YHWH's plans and purposes in the earth. When the Spirit lifts from a person, or departs a nation, abject failure is the result.

B. The Holy Spirit brings power, enlightenment and prophetic proclamation. His abiding presence is known/observed by His anointed people's (Israel's) effectiveness and success.

Note: Power is indispensable. Crowds, traditions, liturgies, organizations, more learning and programs are good, but are not good enough. Intellectualism, eloquence and talent are not enough. Even the letter of truth is not enough. We need more, and must look higher. Our need is to learn, study, obey and pray so we can more effectively minister and live, *"by My Spirit"*. We (and what we do) must be quickened from heaven, from on high, that our work and worship are consistently robust, sincere, true, profitable, pleasing to Elohim, and bring strength to His people, Israel.

Being Led by the Spirit

"And Jacob called his sons and said, gather yourselves together that I may tell you which shall befall you in the last days" (B'resheit 49:1).

As we have seen, Jacob spoke the Spirit's inspired benedictions (YHVH's Word) over his twelve sons, prophesying the fate of their descendants in the last (or future) days. The phrase he used is translated literally as *"in the end of the days."* His words spoken over the boys were adapted, or customized to each lad's peculiar character and nature, and constitute a prophetic treasure which would be providentially preserved in Scripture. These benedictions (and those given by Moses in Deuteronomy 33) have stirred hope and faith in generations of Israelites which have

followed the Patriarchs, and today they help us identify the cast off and exiled ten tribes of the northern kingdom. Scripture tells us that they would migrate, become a multitude, produce strong nations, be repentant, be forgiven, re-born and baptized in the Spirit, and return to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the latter days.

"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God [Father, Abba], and the communion [intimate fellowship; sharing; rapport; communication; companionship] of the Spirit, be with you all. Amen" (2 Cor. 13:14).

Hearing the Spirit and declaring His words at the right time, to the right people, is an essential spiritual practice and necessary for the functioning of the Ecclesia in restoration ministry. This fact emphasizes the importance of the saints maturing in revelation knowledge (1) of the majesty and holiness of the eternal Son, Yeshua, (2) of the Father's love, and (3) *the communion of the Spirit*, which is the fullness of intimate fellowship, union, sharing, and communications that can exist between the Holy Spirit and earnest disciples of the Messiah.

We have already discussed earlier what the communion of the Spirit is, and how we enter into and sustain that relationship. As you know, this holy fellowship begins with faith in Yeshua, the new birth by the Spirit, and obedience to the Word of God. The spiritual enrichment, the blessings that come forth from fellowship with Him include the communication of Yeshua's words [Mark 13:9-11], revelation of the glory of the Son, and progressive spiritual transformation as His truth/voice is quickened and assimilated into the soul. And there's more.

"And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God [Abba, Father] is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which [Who] is given unto us" (Romans 5:5).

In the passage from Romans Paul refers to the tribulations of life being common to all men. He affirms that there is in them a supernatural *benefit for believers*, a sure profit that works for us **as** we obey the truth, submit to divine guidance, and trust in the Father's wisdom and love. That immeasurable blessing is the **love of the Father** that is placed into our recreated, regenerated spirits (hearts) through faith in Messiah, and enlarged through obedience to Him.

"The love of God" is a gift given by divine grace, and it becomes the possession of the true believer in Yeshua. It is to be appropriated, cherished, discerned, experienced, yielded to, made fully operative, and enjoyed. It is Elohim's intent that we have our hearts filled with the riches of His love. His *agape* love [defined as the self-sacrificing love of God for man] is to become our motivation (spiritual influence) for service and godly activity. The Spirit (1) bestows the glorious love of the Father, revealed in Messiah, into our hearts (spirits), and (2) illuminates (communicates, reveals) to our souls His love's reality and power. *"The Spirit witnesses with our spirits."* Our heavenly Father wants us to sense, experience, and be consciously aware of His love flooding our hearts through the presence of the Spirit. In that way we can rejoice and be

strengthened by the revelation and made secure while living in an unstable world of superficial, unsteady relationships.

The internal legitimate knowledge (consciousness) of the genuineness of His "agape" love for us individually, communicated into us by the Spirit, produces the assurance needed within each believer of his **(a)** *sonship* and **(b)** *importance* to Elohim.

As a result, jealousy, vexation, insecurities, confusion, and the threat of apostasy are largely removed from the true Ecclesia. [Unfortunately, such pricks and briars still trouble believers today.] Thus, each saint's place in Messiah is confirmed, and we endure distresses and trials more hopefully unto transformation and victory.

Listen for the Spirit of Truth

The life-changing, personal revelation of the Father's love is the fourth blessing coming forth from *the communion of the Spirit*. It is a divine revelation that has brought healing and renewal to many, many believers.

Read the Word and, like Jacob, exercise faith. Be attentive to His inspiration rising within you. "...and He will tell you what is yet to come [as He did with the Patriarchs]" (*John 13:13*). The Holy Spirit guides us and shows us things that are to come. [See: 1 Cor. 12:8.]

He will give you words of knowledge and wisdom for yourself and to speak to others. You and I do not need to live in the dark concerning His plans for us. He speaks to us with wisdom and knowledge so we can help ourselves and others prepare for the days ahead.

Begin to pray for a greater revelation of the Father's love.

Glory Note: "*But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of YHVH*" (*Numbers 14:21*). Moses was concerned of what the nations might think of YHVH if He did not complete the work of bringing his people into the Promised Land.

The Most High assured him that all the earth would be filled with the manifest glory of God. Not only are the power and the kingdom YHVH's, but (emphatically) so is the glory.

The day is coming when all the criticisms and heady arguments men hold against Yeshua will wither and waste away under the brilliant blaze of His everlasting glory.

Just as believers are supernaturally transformed by the glory of YHVH through faith in the Messiah, the earth will one day be unrecognizable as His glory becomes fully manifested upon it.

Part 5: Overcoming—*The Outcome of Discipleship*

"We are called Christians. We are also called the children of God (John 1:12), children of light (Eph. 5:8), children of the day (1 Thess. 5:5), and children of obedience (1 Pet. 1:14). But there is another title in the New Testament that may be as exciting as any other, and it is the title overcomers. That is the title John uses in 1 John 5:4: "Whatever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." [5B] His disciples are equipped to conquer, subdue, defeat, overthrow, and surmount evil.

1. *"And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years..." (B'resheit 47:28).*

We can learn from *parasha VaYechi* ("he lived ") important lessons for life. As did the patriarchs, we too can *live*. We can weather storms, endure tribulations, face struggles (as we return to our Hebrew heritage), and still (a) raise up godly generations and (b) enjoy the spiritual and physical blessings of the Messianic Age—even while in exile--by obedience to the Word and the Holy Spirit. Paul wrote, *"I can do all things through the Messiah which strengthens me"* (Phil. 4:13). You could thereby also say of Paul, *"and he lived "*.

Paul could teach us some things about living as well. In the epistle to the Philippians he shows us that our quality of life is: **first**, determined by the caliber (character, essence) of our fellowship with the Almighty; and **secondly**, revealed by our peace and contentment in whatever circumstances we find ourselves. The ability to be content with one's lot is good. However, to be content (self-satisfied) with oneself is **not** good. Why? Because progress is produced from a sense of insufficiency and need, which knowledge signals that there's room for improvement. Paul understood how to live in victory, even while in need *or* when in abundance. He demonstrated that kingdom life could be lived in any circumstance, not by stoicism or force of personality, but by the power and strength given him through his union with Yeshua ha Mashiach. *"It is written, man shall not **live** by bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God"* (Mt. 4:4).

How, then, could we apply *Vayechi* to the entire Book of Genesis? The patriarchs and matriarchs lived and grew in fellowship with YHVH during their lives, trusted his Word, passed the promises on to their seed, and so today they continue to "live"! That is, they *live on*--by their works, fruit, and seed, which have gone forward to bless the earth and bring redemption to mankind. May it be said also of you and me, by them we leave behind, that we *"lived!"*

The Torah reading concludes with the death of Joseph, who was a type of Messiah. As was Yeshua in perfection, Joseph was distinguished by (1) his father's love and praise, (2) his admirable character, (3) his divine communications [Yeshua had the fullness of the Spirit], (4) his

unjust, undeserved abuse and mistreatment, and (5) by his exaltation as viceroy of Egypt and ascendancy in his family.

Disciples should Hear His Voice

"The king's daughter in the inner part [of the palace] is all glorious; her clothing is inwrought with gold" (Psalm 45:13).

The verse suggests the "importance of the inner life [prayer, worship, meditation upon the Word, etc.]. Elohim puts His Holy Spirit inside us to work on our inner lives—our attitudes, our responses, our motivations, our priorities, and other important things. As we submit to Messiah's Lordship in our inmost beings, we will sense when He is speaking to us, and will experience His righteousness, peace, and joy rising from within us to empower us for abundant living. See (Rom. 14:17)." [8] Shalom.

Part 6: Conclusion

Our word is ONWARD! "Forward motion suggests [permits] growth and advancement. As [disciples] we seek to grow so as to become like Christ. Our aim is to emulate him and to learn, act and behave as he did. The value to us as individuals is that we remain no longer at the mercy of [sin, darkness]. We can calmly and rationally make right decisions based on the truth of Christ." [6B] "...in your faith supply [go onward to] moral excellence...knowledge...self-control...perseverance...godliness...brotherly kindness...love" (2 Peter 1:5-7).

1. "So Joseph died, being a hundred and ten years old; and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt" (Gen. 50:26).

Joseph had a remarkable, varied life, and faced many difficult and challenging circumstances, not all of which he deserved. Despite his righteousness, Joseph had his troubles. His bondage in Egypt was primarily the result of his brothers' resentment of Joseph's godly life. His resistance to temptation resulted in his undeserved imprisonment. Yet, by faith in the Almighty One, he remained strong, steadfast in his character and demeanor during all his trials and triumphs. Misfortune--both Scripture (Mt. 6:34; John 16:33) and life teach us--finds everybody at one time or another. Joseph rose to prominence in the end, but when his race was run and he died, all his wealth and royalty were left behind. Others came and took his place, his power, and his privileges. So we ask, after our lives are over, no matter what estates we rose to or descended from, what is left? 1 Corinthians 13:13 gives the answer. "And now abideth [remain] faith, hope,

love, these three [and what they produced in life]..." Hence, should not our goal be to bear fruit that remains—Spirit-filled natural and spiritual descendants? Of course!

2. *"Faith alone, without corresponding actions is dead" (James 2:17). [Or, "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone." King James Version]*

The Patriarchs learned that a relationship with the Almighty was all about faith. Joseph demonstrated his convictions through corresponding actions of faith. We observe in the lives of the heroes of Genesis that it was the virtue of active faith in YHVH that opened for them the doors to His visitation, victory, provision, righteousness, and His blessing in their lives and generations. We can learn from them. By looking into their history we observe times and seasons when:

- A.** They *progressed* in Spirit and Truth --by faith. [Heb. 6:1-3]
- B.** They *prayed*, built altars, and received answers--by faith. [Gen. 12:8]
- C.** They *perceived* His voice and obeyed--by faith. [Gen. 12:1-3]
- D.** They *prophesied* (and interpreted dreams)--by faith. [Rom. 12:6; Heb. 11:20-22]
- E.** They *pleased* Him--by faith. [Heb. 11:6]
- F.** They *persevered* in trials and troubles--by faith [Heb. 6:12]
- G.** They *produced* a nation--by faith [Gen. 46:1-7]
- H.** They were *perfected* in character--by faith. [1 John 4:12]

"Now the just shall live [eternally, and abundantly] by faith [trust and dependence upon Elohim]..." (Heb. 10:38). True disciples of Yeshua do not shrink back, or look over their shoulder.

Va Yechi, *"and he lived"*, is the title of our discipleship lesson. It refers to the dynamic, overcoming quality of Jacob's life. What, then, made his life worthy, in the Spirit's sight, to be described as *"he (really) lived?"* He learned to live by faith and dependence upon Elohim.

We conclude our Genesis Volume of the yearly parsha schedule with this exhortation: *"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Heb. 12:1-2).*

Pray: *"Let me see thy glory."* His glory is in you by the Holy Spirit. Pray and believe for His presence to rise up and envelope your soul with His goodness, and the revelation of His heart. You are a child of the Most High and He desires you to experience intimate spiritual communion with Him. ***Tamid Kadima—Always Forward.*** Shalom.

The Seven Study Questions

The *lesson questions* are **a very important** aspect of the student's learning. All readers are strongly encouraged to take the time and include them in their study discipline. Prayerfully answer each one! They are intended to coax the student to rely upon interaction with the Holy Spirit, discern His voice, receive insight, and obtain prophetic enlightenment.

This process will assist each learner to (1) develop a vision for the restoration and reconciliation of the whole house of Israel, (2) grow in foundational knowledge of the Torah, (3) recover the principles, practice, and Holy Spirit power of the early, first-century Nazarene believers, and (4) experience and enjoy greater dimensions of the kingdom, power, and glory of Yeshua.

Note: The questions presented here are listed again at the conclusion of each lesson in both the *Torah Commentary Manuals* and the *Torah Discipleship Manuals*. **To repeat—be sure to follow through with them.**

1a. In your opinion, what is the main theme or teaching of each of the listed readings individually? Starting with the Torah: What is its title? What is the interpretation? What truth/idea does the interpretation of the title suggest? What is the Torah section's main truth, as you see it?

1b. What is the corresponding idea in the Haftorah? In the Brit Chadashah?

2. What is the outstanding, central idea or subject that runs through and unites all the individual readings, as you see it? What does it say about discipleship?

3. Find in the Gospels where and how Yeshua declares, demonstrates, exemplifies, or exhibits the parsha's central truth, and explain. Give chapter and verse. Will you follow Him in living the lesson's truths?

4. In what way was the glory of YHVH [manifestations of His goodness] revealed in the parsha lesson?

5. What does the parsha teach you about your Hebrew roots, your identity, your destiny, your duty?

6. In what way did the Holy Spirit/Ruach HaKodesh personally speak to you during prayer and study this week? Did He impress you about how to apply the parsha lesson directly to your life? Explain.

7. *"...because of practice [by reason of use] have their senses trained [exercised] to discern..."*
You and I are called to return to hearing the voice of Elohim and to functioning in the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Progressing in these vital areas will require spiritual hunger, faith, and practice. He is waiting for us to approach Him.

Ask the Holy Spirit to speak into your spirit/heart as you pray each day. Look for opportunities to lay hands on the sick, or to be used in prophecy. Faithfully record the prophetic words and experiences you receive, and be sure to share them with your brethren.

It is helpful to **share** your answers, insights, and revelations with your study group (table class). We recommend meeting regularly in a small group. This allows for healthy interaction and exchange, and militates against stagnation. Practice operating with your spiritual gifts under the anointing of the Holy Spirit while among your friendly, supportive peers. Allow for open participation in leading praise and worship. Give altar calls at your table for healing, refreshing, and prophetic words. These are effective ways for all present to mature in their calling and gifting. The non-threatening small group provides a favorable and encouraging environment in which to learn the ministry of the Spirit. You will do well.

Next - Equipping the generations.

The parsha lessons have been crafted and shortened for younger readers, and will be posted. Be sure to use them. Re-read Deuteronomy 6: 6-7?

1. Youths' Version - Under reconstruction.

2. Childrens' Version - Under construction.

To examine the group questions, return to the Introduction. And, be sure to share the Gospel this week, to the Jew first and also with the Greek (Romans 1:9; Acts 9:20-22).

Next: We begin the **Exodus** Volume, the second of five parts of our TGDS parsha course, with Parsha *Sh'mot* ("*Names*").

Footnotes: Footnotes: 1. Pursuit of God, Tozer, preface. 2. Ibid, p. 3. Book of Genesis, Pulpit Commentary, Eerdmans, p. 521-522. 4. Ibid., p. 531-532. 5. Chumash, Stone Edition, Genesis, pg. 287. 6. Ibid, pgs. 288-289. 7. Pursuit of God, Tozer, p. 34. 8. Genesis, Pulpit Comm., Eerdmans. 1A. www.infowars.com/moving-toward-a-new-world-government. 1B. www.gty.org/resources/sermons. 2B. www.remnantofgod.org/sabatak. 3B. www.compellingtruth.org/jesus-high-priest. 4B. Power to change.com/blogposts. Importance of the Holy Spirit. 5B. www.gty.org/resources. Assurance of Victory. 6B. www.freegiftfromgod/articles.

Note: The Chumash references and boxed comments do not necessarily represent doctrine, but are presented only as interesting, engaging commentaries, insights and plausible ideas of Jewish scholars and *midrashim* [*midrash*, plural; "investigate" or "study"] which are added for the readers' attention and evaluation.

Conclusion

Good work, blessed reader. You have finished **Beresheet**. Exodus is next.

Tamid kdimā—Always forward.

See you there. Shalom.

Hutch Church