



TOLMM WEEKLY NEWSLETTER for 2-8-25 BESHALACH

Ministry News

IF YOU HAVE A PRAYER REQUEST YOU WOULD LIKE PEOPLE ON THE LIST TO PRAY FOR YOU CAN SEND THEM TO US AT TOLMM@ETZ-CHAYIM.ORG OR BY TEXT MESSAGE TO 575 644-7706 AND I WILL SEND THEM BY EMAIL ONLY.

Remember that you can support the work of Tree of Life Messianic Ministries with a donation made via PayPal or by check to PO Box 467, Organ, NM 88052. Your donation helps our continued outreach to inmates and the time it takes to put this Newsletter together.

Donate



Tree of Life Messianic Ministries is a 501 C-3 non-profit. To donate go to etz-chayim.org and click on the PayPal link.

Tree of Life Messianic Ministries primarily focuses on its Prison Ministry and helping form groups in the prisons. TOLMM also seeks to help Home Groups and offers a covering for Home Groups and the combined experience of leadership

from Rabbi Philip Hammond and Rabbi Mordecai Silver. Group leaders can receive recognition as Elders under TOLMM, which will help in an advisory role. Your support is needed for the Prison Ministry due to continuing rising costs. We now have an Affiliate in Australia.

HOME GROUPS, CONGREGATIONS AND PEOPLE SEEKING FELLOWSHIP...

Shalom all,

As usual - to catch up on our weekly Torah Notes + which is attached and online at our website www.etz-chayim.org.

PRISON MINISTRY NEWS:

256 BOOKS AND ASSOCIATED MATERIALS WERE SHIPPED OUT IN **NOVEMBER-DECEMBER** TO INMATES SEEKING A CLOSER RELATIONSHIP WITH YESHUA... OUR HEAVENLY FATHER IS EXPANDING THIS OUTREACH, AND WE PRAY LIVES ARE BEING CHANGED FOR HIS GLORY. SOME GROUPS HAVE TAKEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO BECOME AFFILIATED WITH TOLMM TO HELP WITH OVERSIGHT AND GUIDANCE – REQUIRING MORE WORK... BUT MORE BLESSINGS!

WANT TO DONATE TOWARDS THIS OUTREACH – GO TO WWW.ETZ-CHAYIM.ORG AND USE THE PAYPAL LINK.

WE ARE PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE WE HAVE **10** PRISON GROUPS AFFILIATING WITH TOLMM.

HOME GROUP NEWS.

TOLMM now offers affiliate status to Home Groups. Why this offer? Small groups no longer have to be alone [this never should be the case]. Experienced discipleship is available for servant leaders, and elders. Zoom meetings can be arranged for questions, and general discussion. Email us at: tolmm@etz-chayim.org or philip@etz-chayim.org

Home Groups joined:

Arizona – Elder Shawn Warren.

El Paso Texas – Rabbi Gabriel Levi Martinez. Phone: 915-407-1776.

Beit Ha Midrash is a Home Study Group in Las Cruces. They meet on Friday evenings. Contact them at frietze96@gmail.com. Group leaders are Ruben and Yvonne Gonzales and Jean Fietze-Gomez.

JSI-Judaic Studies Institute was founded by Rabbi Hammond and Rabbi Silver and is now called JSI Yeshiva, and you can check it out at www.jsiyeshiva.com. We have classes of all shapes and sizes from short term to long term with Certificates of Completion and up to all degrees for a ministry college established in Louisiana. Rabbi Michelle Johns is the Chief Administrative Officer, a Professor with JSI as is Rabbi Mordecai Silver who is President of JSI Yeshiva.

Ba-Peretz Messianic Ministries as an Affiliate from Illinois. If you live near Wheaton, ILL drop us a line and we will refer you to the contact person for the Home Group.

We have a new Home Group in Nevada: The Group name is ‘Yeshua’s Chesed Messianic Congregation’. We meet in Sun Valley (Reno Metro) on Shabbos morning. They can contact Elder Djan Fermaint at 775-462-5539.

Don’t forget... Rabbi Silver is available to answer any questions on his weekly Parashah teachings... plus more.

If you need prayer – send an email. Not only have we witnessed prayers answered, but new relationships have been formed in Yeshua... praise His Holy Name.

FOR THOSE INTERESTED.

Rabbi Philip Hammond has several ministry outreaches:

- Shabbat service 11am [AEST] 5:00pm Friday USA Mountain Time.
- Men’s group
- Weekly Bible Study.

Contact Rabbi Hammond at Philip@etz-chayim.org for more information. Check out Rabbi Hammond’s ministry outreach at <https://www.etz-chayim.org/australia-affiliate/>.

ALL OF RABBI MORDECAI'S BOOKS ARE AVAILABLE ON AMAZON BY SEARCHING - **BOOKS BY RAV MORDECAI SILVER. THERE ARE 19 BOOKS.**

RABBI HAMMOND HAS A BOOK ON AMAZON-SEARCH ON HIS NAME-**RABBI PHILIP HAMMOND OR EMUNAH CENTER.**

RABBI JOHNS HAS SEVERAL BOOKS ON AMAZON.

Under His Wings,

Rabbi Mordecai Silver, Ph.D. and Rabbi Philip Hammond, Ph.D.

General News

TO SEARCH FOR RABBI SILVER BOOKS ON AMAZON ENTER "**BOOKS BY RAV MORDECAI SILVER**". MINE ARE AVAILABLE IN PRINT FORMAT ONLY. I HAVE TWO NEW BOOKS ON AMAZON: RAV SHA'UL AND REFLECTIONS ON TORAH. TO SEE MORDECAI'S BOOKS, GO TO: [HTTPS://WWW.ETZ-CHAYIM.ORG/SHOP-OUR-STORE/PRINT-AND-KINDLE-BOOKS/](https://www.etz-chayim.org/shop-our-store/print-and-kindle-books/)

RABBI MORDECAI HAS A NEW BOOK AVAILABLE. IT IS A SPANISH TRANSLATION OF THE TORAH IS VALID: THE COVENANT OF ISRAEL. IT'S AVAILABLE ON AMAZON.

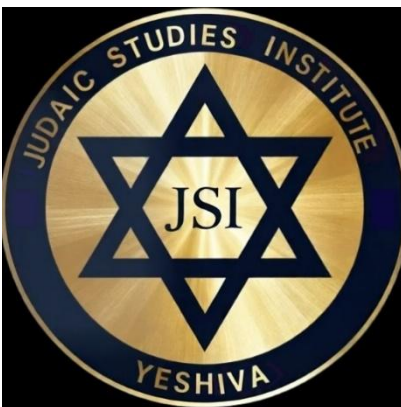
FOR RABBI HAMMOND'S BOOK, **HIS PERFECT GRACE**, GO TO AMAZON.COM AS WELL.

CHECK OUT RABBI MICHELLE JOHNS BOOKS ON AMAZON.

CHECK OUT RABBI MORDECAI SILVER'S 3 YEARS OF VIDEO TEACHINGS ON THE TORAH PORTIONS AND FESTIVALS ON YOUTUBE.

RABBI PHILIP HAMMOND HAS VIDEO TEACHINGS ON YOU TUBE AT [HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/@EMUNAHCENTER-CY9TQ](https://www.youtube.com/@emunahcenter-cy9tq)

WE HAVE 10 PRISON AFFILIATES THROUGHOUT THE UNITED STATES AND OVER 2,000 INMATES ON OUR MAILING LIST. ONE OF OUR PRISON GROUPS HAS 32 MEMBERS.



THE JUDAIC STUDIES INSTITUTE IS A POST-SECONDARY MESSIANIC YESHIVA THAT IS AUTHORIZED TO ISSUE ALL COLLEGE LEVEL DEGREES FOR MINISTERIAL PURPOSES. THE MISSION OF THIS INSTITUTION IS TO RESTORE THE ORIGINAL BELIEF SYSTEM FOLLOWED BY YESHUA AND HIS TALMIDIM (DISCIPLES) BY PROVIDING A TORAH-BASED, ACADEMICALLY SOUND, AND SPIRITUALLY VIBRANT EDUCATION FOR THOSE SEEKING A NEW OR IN-DEPTH UNDERSTANDING OF YHVH AND HIS WAYS. CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE AT WWW.JSIYESHIVA.COM. OUR EMAIL ADDRESS IS JSIYESHIVA@GMAIL.COM.

OUR CLASSES ARE SELF-PACED, AND MOST ARE AVAILABLE THROUGH SELF-STUDY. ALL HEBREW CLASSES ARE TAUGHT LIVE VIA ZOOM. THERE ARE OTHER LIVE CLASSES, BUT THEY ARE DEPENDENT ON STUDENT ENROLLMENT. WE TRY TO OFFER TWO TO FOUR LIVE CLASSES PER SEMESTER. THEY LAST FOUR TO EIGHT WEEKS.

WE ARE A NON-TRADITIONAL INSTITUTION AND DO NOT REQUIRE A STANDARD NUMBER OF CLASSES PER SEMESTER. STUDENTS ARE ALLOWED TO PAY PER CLASS. MOST CLASSES REQUIRE A 10–12-PAGE PAPER, BUT THERE ARE SOME THAT REQUIRE QUIZZES, AND WEEKLY HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS. MOST CLASSES HAVE AN ASSIGNED BOOK THAT IS ACCOMPANIED BY AUDIO TEACHINGS. CLASSES GENERALLY TAKE A MONTH BUT CAN TAKE LONGER DEPENDING ON THE STUDENT.

JSI YESHIVA DOES ACCEPT CREDITS FROM OTHER UNIVERSITIES, COLLEGES, AND YESHIVA'S. WHEN YOU SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION PLEASE SUBMIT UNOFFICIAL TRANSCRIPTS.

PASS ALONG THE INFORMATION. CHECK OUT THE WEBSITE FOR MORE INFORMATION AND CLASSES.

IN HIM,
*RABBI MORDECAI SILVER, PH.D. AND RABBI MICHELLE JOHNS,
PH.D.*

MESSIANIC TEACHING ON THE WEEKLY TORAH, HAFTARAH, AND APOSTOLIC SCRIPTURE PORTIONS...



Rabbi Mordecai Silver tolmm@etz-chayim.org

MESSAGE FOR 2-8-25

B'Shalach - when he let go

Ex. 13:17-17:16

Jud. 4:4-5:31

John 6:25-40

1 Cor. 10:1-13

Exodus-Shemot 14:31

Israel saw the great hand that HASHEM inflicted upon Egypt; and the people revered HASHEM, and they had faith in HASHEM and in Moses, His servant.

Pharaoh yields to the People of Israel, then changes his mind and pursues them. The people are terrified as they enter the sea, but they pass through on dry ground and the waters overwhelm their pursuers.

Exodus-Shemot 15:6

Your Right hand, HASHEM, is glorified with strength; Your Right hand, HASHEM, smashes the enemy.

The people had just passed safely through the waters and escaped to freedom. They saw and believed. What of the times when we don't see,

when our experience betrays our expectations? Our faith is tested by such times. But can we live without it?

Our souls are like spaceships. They can propel us into orbit, help us explore the moon, even reach Mars. But we have to put rocket fuel into the fuel tank, not potatoes, in order to get off the ground. Monetary achievements, degrees, recognition, are potatoes. When we find our faith in Messiah Y'shua and Torah, the tank finally gets filled with rocket fuel and it takes off."

John-Yochanan 6:25-40

25: When they found him on the other side of the lake, they asked him, 'Rabbi, when did you get here?' 26: Y'shua answered, "Yes, indeed! I tell you, you're not looking for me because you saw miraculous signs, but because you ate the bread and had all you wanted! 27: Don't work for the food which passes away but for the food that stays on into eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For this is the one on whom God the Father has put His seal." 28: So, they said to Him, "What should we do in order to perform the works of God?" 29: Y'shua answered, "Here's what the work of God is: to trust in the one He sent!" 30: They said to him, "Nu, what miracle will you do for us, so that we may see it and trust you? What work can you perform? 31: Our fathers ate manna in the desert - as it says in the Tanakh, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat [Psalm 78:24].' 32: Y'shua said to them, "Yes, indeed! I tell you it wasn't Moshe who gave you the bread from heaven. But my Father is giving you the genuine bread from heaven; 33: For God's bread is the one who comes down out of heaven and gives life to the world." 34: They said to Him, "Sir, give us this bread from now on." 35: Y'shua answered, "I am the bread which is life! Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever trusts in me will never be thirsty. 36: I told you that you have seen but still don't trust. 37: Everyone the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will certainly not turn away. 38: For I have come down from heaven to do not my own will but the will of the one who sent me. 39: And this is the will of the one who sent me: that I should not lose any of all those He has given me but should raise them up on the Last Day. 40: Yes, this is the will of my Father: that all who see the Son and trust in Him should have eternal life, and that I should raise them up on the Last Day."

The Exodus and the events leading up to it and after it are miracles given by God to show the Israelites and the Egyptians who He is. The lesson here is a simple one. Miracles never sustain faith. As soon as a miracle has been granted, resolving an immediate problem, our attitude becomes "What have you done for me lately?" It was true back then, and it is true now. This is because freedom is difficult to handle. We are not truly free until we accept the responsibility that comes with freedom.

Freedom is a frightening prospect, so frightening that some would rather be slaves - beaten and reviled - than take on this responsibility.

But guess what, another miracle happens. God gives the Israelites some of His wisdom by which to live, wisdom that will help them make the right choices. These principles of life are designed to sustain a good and moral people, to bring sanctity into everyday life, and to shine like a beacon of good in a world crowded with evil. The Torah of God is alive and well. We have that Torah within us through our faith in Messiah Y'shua.

1 Corinthians 10:1-5

1: For, brothers, I don't want you to miss the significance of what happened to our fathers. All of them were guided by the pillar of cloud, and they all passed through the sea, 2: And in connection with the cloud and with the sea they all immersed themselves into Moshe, 3: Also they all ate the same food from the Spirit, 4: And they all drank the same drink from the Spirit - for they drank from a Spirit-sent Rock, which followed them, and that Rock was the Messiah. 5: Yet with the majority of them God was not pleased, so their bodies were strewn across the desert.

Listen to this prayer by an unknown author:

I am a fish swimming in water, and I am thirsty! This day satisfy my thirst for You. First of all, though, I must learn how very thirsty I am, and how much I need to drink of the life-giving water in which I swim all unawares. Give me this day eyes to behold Your being in all that I see, and in all that I cannot see.

1 Corinthians 10:12

Therefore, let anyone who thinks he is standing up be careful not to fall!

Exodus-Shemot 15:18
HASHEM shall reign for all eternity!

We include a Traditional Torah Commentary and my Messianic Commentary. The reason for this is so you can see a Messianic Perspective and a Traditional Jewish one. Remember to use discernment in approaching Traditional Jewish teachings as they do not recognize Yeshua as the Messiah. There are various ideas in traditional Jewish circles about the Messiah and Chavahn that there is no Messiah, the thinking in Reform Judaism. So, please be careful to balance the teachings.

We do not agree with the Jewish position on Yeshua, but Believers need to know the Jewish thinking on Yeshua and not buy into this thinking and forsake faith in our Messiah. For those who say they would never do this, we must beg to differ, because we have seen it over our lives as Jewish Believers in Yeshua. We have been Believers in Messiah Yeshua for decades. We have seen a lot and had many discussions with our fellow Jews and non-Jews who ultimately turned away from Yeshua because they steeped themselves in Jewish teachings. One does not come out of either traditional Judaism or Christianity and come into the Messianic walk, and then going back, or into, traditional Judaism. *There are many good things in Judaism but denying Yeshua as Messiah is not one of them.*

Berachot (Blessings), Rabbi Mordecai Silver, Ph.D., and Rabbi Philip Hammond, Ph.D.

A TRADITIONAL JEWISH PARASHAH AND HAFTARAH COMMENTARY



Parashat Beshalach: Summary

Moses leads the Israelites into the wilderness after their escape from Egypt. God sends manna to feed them and Amalek attacks the Israelites.

Exodus 13:17 - 17:16

An Indirect Route

Now God did not lead the Jews out of Egypt on the most direct route but took the people by way of the wilderness. God went before them in a pillar of cloud by day and in a pillar of fire at night so they could travel day and night.

Upon leaving Egypt, Moses takes Joseph's bones with him, recalling Joseph's dying words, "God will surely remember you and then bring my bones with you to the promised land."

God told Moses to camp by the Sea of Reeds. "I will then harden Pharaoh's heart so he will try to capture you there. Then I shall assert My authority over Pharaoh, and everyone will acknowledge that I am the Lord." It happened just as God predicted. Pharaoh went after the Jews with his best army.

As Pharaoh's army approached, the Israelites cried out to the Lord and Moses in fear. "Why did you bring us here to die? Let us go back to Egypt and be slaves." Watch how God will deliver you."

Then God said to Moses, "When you stretch forth your hand over the sea, it will split, and you shall cross safely. But with a stiffened heart, the Pharaoh's army will go in after you. They may be mighty, but I will prove that I am Almighty."

The Israelites Cross The River

Then the angel of God went behind the Jewish camp while a pillar of cloud went in front of the Egyptian camp so one would not come near the other.

Moses then stretched out his hand and the Lord commanded a strong east wind to split the water. With walls of water on either side, the Israelites crossed the river on dry land.

Then when the Egyptian army raced after them, God confounded them with mud to break their chariots' wheels.

Afterwards, God told Moses to stretch out his hand again and let the water return. By morning the sea had covered Pharaoh's army so that not even one of them remained.

When the Jewish people saw what the Lord did to the Egyptians, they trusted in God and Moses as God's prophet. The Moses and the Israelites sang this song unto the Lord:

**Who is like Thee, O Lord,
Among all the gods who are worshipped?
Who is like Thee, majestic in holiness?
Awesome in splendor, working wonders!
The Lord will reign for ever and ever.**

Miriam, the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, with her drum in her hand led the women in song and dance. "Sing unto the Lord for God has triumphed gloriously."

Searching for Water

From the Sea of Reeds, Moses led the people into a new wilderness. For three days they could find no water and when they finally did at Marah, the water was too bitter to drink. The Jewish people cried. So God showed Moses how to cast a certain tree into the waters to make it sweet. There God proclaimed, "If you will listen Me and do what is right in God's sight, then I will not plague you as I have the Egyptians, for I am the Lord and your Healer."

As they journeyed, the Jews became hungry. They complained to Moses and Aaron, "You brought us into the wilderness to starve."

The Lord spoke to Moses, "By evening you shall eat meat and in the morning, you shall have your fill of bread. Then you shall recognize that I, The Lord, am your God."

Food From God

That evening quail appeared and in the morning there was dew all around. When the dew lifted, there was a fine, flaky substance everywhere. "This is food from God," Moses announced, "But only gather what you need to eat, one *omer*(portion of grain) per person."

When some families gathered extra, they woke up to find their food rotten with maggots. However, on the sixth day, Moses told the Israelites, "God instructs you to gather double the amount of food on the sixth day, for the seventh day is a day of rest, a holy Sabbath of the Lord. The extra you gather will be edible in the morning." And it was.

But there were some Jews who went out to gather food on the Sabbath anyway. They found nothing.

God lamented to Moses, "How long will you refuse to follow My commandments and My teaching? Mark the seventh day as My Sabbath and keep it holy for all generations."

The People Protest

The Israelites named the food "manna" and it tasted like honey wafers. God instructed them to keep one omer of manna in a jar by the Ark of the Testimony for all generations to remember how the Lord fed the Israelites for forty years in the wilderness.

At the next camp, at Rephidim, again, there was no water. The people got angry with Moses.

"Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you put God to the test?" retorted Moses to the people. To God, however, Moses says, "What shall I do with these people? A bit more and they will stone me."

God instructs Moses to go in front of the elders of Israel at Horeb and strike a rock to bring water for the people to drink. Moses does so. The place is named Massah and Meribah because the people tested and contended the Lord, saying, "Is the Lord present among us or not?"

At this camp, an enemy, Amalek came to fight with Israel. Moses sent Joshua with an army to do battle against Amalek. Meanwhile Moses stood at the top of the hill with the rod of God in his hand. As the fighting began, whenever Moses held up his hand, Israel prevailed but whenever he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed.

But Moses' arms grew heavy. So, Aaron and Hur, one on each side, supported Moses' hands until Joshua beat the Amalekites. Moses built an altar on the site knowing that war with Amalek would be present throughout the generations.

Parashat Beshalach Discussion Questions

- 1) When God parted the Sea of Reeds, it was a miracle. Can you think of a miracle God performed for you in your life?
- 2) If you were one of the Israelites with Moses, how would you feel upon seeing the Egyptian army drowned? How do you feel when someone who is your enemy is hurt or defeated?
- 3) God tells the Jewish people that the seventh day is a Sabbath of rest. What is your definition of rest? How is that the same or different from God's definition in this portion?
- 4) The Israelites test God in this portion. Do you ever test God? Why? How?

Haftarah for Beshalach

Deborah leads a nation in war and sings a victory song.

Judges 4:4-5:31

Most of the Bible is written as prose, though there are examples of poetry (such as in Psalms), as well as song. The two most famous biblical songs are the Song of the Sea, which is in this week's Torah portion, and the Song of Deborah, which is in this week's Haftarah.

Deborah is one of the Israelite leaders in the Book of Judges. She is a prophet and a judge, and she keeps court under a palm tree in the hill country, where people come for guidance.

Barak & Deborah Fight Sisera

Deborah also communicates God's wishes to the people, and one day she calls for Barak, a general in the military, and tells him that God commands him to report to Mount Tabor, with a company of 10,000 soldiers. There, she tells him, he will meet Sisera, the commander of the army of Hazor. They will fight, and Barak will win.

Barak answers that he will go into battle only if Deborah accompanies him. She accedes to this request but warns him that he will receive no glory if she comes, “for now the Eternal will hand Sisera over to a woman” (Judges 4:9).

Barak accepts these terms and together with Deborah and his warriors, he ascends the mountain. At once, “the Eternal throws Sisera, his chariots, and his whole army into disarray” (Judges 4:15). Sisera himself is thrown from his chariot and runs away on foot. All his troops are killed, but Sisera is kept alive. He retreats to the camp of Yael, a powerful woman who is married to one of Sisera’s allies. Yael takes him in and covers him in a blanket.

Yael Secures A Victory

When Sisera asks for water, Yael instead gives him milk, which lulls him to sleep. Once asleep, she takes a tent-peg and a mallet and drives it through his head. Then, when Barak comes searching for him, Yael shows him Sisera’s pierced head.

To commemorate this victory, and in particular Yael’s role in it, Barak and Deborah sing a song. The song dramatizes this battle, as well as others fought by Barak, and tells of the military victories of different tribes of Israel.

It concludes with a tribute to Yael, retelling her murder of Sisera in more detail than the original verses, and a plea to God to continue to support the Israelites in battle, so long as they continue to love God.

Both the Torah portion this week, and the Haftarah are a curious combination of military battles and victory songs. But, while Miriam’s song in the Torah straight forwardly praises God for defeating Egypt, the Song of Deborah is a testament to both God and Israel, extolling both divine miracles and human effort.



From the Desk of Rabbi Philip Hammond. Ph.D.

Rabbi Hammond can be contacted at – Philip@etz-chayim.org

FALLING AWAY PART 1 (1-5)

Falling Away...

- Something is ready to collapse, die or change if it has little support or if support begins to erode...



- Take the supporting structure away, and collapse is guaranteed.

Falling Away...

- Pondering on these things led me to the following:
- Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Yeshua Messiah, and by our gathering together unto him,
- ² That ye be not quickly shaken in mind, or lament, neither through spirit, nor through word, nor through letter as from us, as that the day of Messiah is at hand.
- ³ Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;
- ⁴ Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.
- ⁵ Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?
- ⁶ And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time...
-

Falling Away...

- For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.
- ⁸ And then shall that Wicked [Rejector of torah] be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:
- ⁹ Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,
- ¹⁰ And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.
- ¹¹ And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:
- ¹² That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12

Falling Away...

- How many times have I read these passages. There is so much more to these passages, that I never saw as a Pentecostal Minister...
- So let us take a brief journey through these passages:
- Verse 1: A call to attention **Besech/erotah** = a request by someone on equal terms or footing. A call to fellow believers... gathering together unto Messiah. In one accord...
- Verse 2 needs a little explaining, as it is very current for us today. Firstly it tells us that believers can become, shaken, disturbed and in fact in danger of toppling off their faith perch.
- This can be done by teachers writing letters of unbiblical doctrine. In this case something had stirred up the community to the point of lament in believing that the Day of the Lord had already come... it appears these thoughts had come via letter, claimed to be written by Paul and Co.

Falling Away...

- Verse 3 – It all becomes very intriguing. The big statement: “Let no man deceive [**Seduce, beguile**] you by any means.” Kind of mirrors the incident in the Garden of Eden... serpent beguiling Eve.
- **Any means**: By any presentation that has you turn from the truth found in Yeshua and the Word. Especially flattering words that appeal to itching ears...
- Then comes the address of truth: “**That day shalt not come except...** so for that day to come certain things must take place first. That should get our attention!!
- **Falling away/Apostasia** = Departing, rejecting, defection, revolt. Surely we are witnessing this more and more each and every day... In saying that, what **falling away** are we witnessing?
- Suggestion – Departing further and further from YHVH’s instructions/torah. The list of evidence grows each and every day. It started way back in the Garden, and is now picking up speed at a rate hard to keep up.

Hebraic Life



How the Jews Changed the World

And we don't even realize it

“The Jews started it all – and by "it" I mean so many of the things we care about, the underlying values that make all of us, Jew and gentile, believer and atheist, tick. Without the Jews, we would see the world through different eyes, hear with different ears, even feel with different feelings. And we would set a different course for our lives... Their worldview has become so much a part of us that at this point it might as well have been written into our cells as a genetic code.”

--- Thomas Cahill, *The Gifts of the Jews*

The number of fundamental ideas and values the Jewish People have given to the world is truly remarkable. And it's also remarkable how most people don't realize this.

We simply forget that these concepts and ideals were once not the way of the world. In fact, they were not only revolutionary but often at complete odds with conventional wisdom of the times. As Paul Johnson wrote in *The History of the Jews*, “All the great conceptual discoveries of the intellect seem obvious and inescapable once they have been revealed, but it requires a special genius to formulate them for the first time. The Jews had this gift.”

Let's stop to appreciate some of the Jewish inventions taken for granted in our world:

1. Sabbath Day: The Romans ridiculed the Jews for their idleness but we have none but the Jews to thank for our weekend. Until the Jewish invention of Sabbath, every day, every month, every year was the same. We introduced the concept of taking out time to focus on the higher things in life and enjoying being and not just doing. Christians adapted the Jewish Shabbat to Sunday in the 2nd and 3rd centuries.¹

2. Peace on Earth: In a world that revered the warrior above all others, survival of the fittest was the highest value. If you could get it, you took it. The cost in human life was irrelevant.

Judaism introduced the altruistic concept that peace amongst men was preferable to my tribe's enrichment.

As the prophet Isaiah wrote, "The wolf will live with the lamb, and the leopard will lie down with the goat; the calf and young lion and fatling will be together, and a little child will lead them" (11:6).

And "They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore" (2:4).

3. Universal Literacy and Education: In a world where literacy was a luxury enjoyed by the vast minority, the People of the Book taught that the pursuit of wisdom and learning was the highest pursuit and the right and obligation of every child and adult. No Jewish community existed without a school. Even the Greeks and Romans came nowhere near creating a written culture, and the medieval world saw even greater drops in literacy. The Church, ancient Greece and the United States not only discouraged literacy for some (e.g. Blacks, slaves, non-clergy), but it took until 1918 for every US state to require students to complete elementary school. It took India until 2009 to adopt what the Jewish nation has been practicing for 3,500 years.

4. Sabbatical Year: The idea for academics and some professionals (20% of UK companies now have a career break policy, and many more joining the trend! 4) to take a year off every seven years to focus on academic advancement, comes directly from the Torah. Judaism requires every farmer to take the entire seventh year off from work to focus on studying, self-improvement and inspiration. One can imagine the impact of that intellectual focus on the entire nation.

5. Justice for All: In a world where women, children, the poor, immigrants and other vulnerable members of society were systematically abused, the Jewish legal system was the first to protect the rights of the underdog and the helpless. As the Torah states, "You shall not wrong or oppress a foreigner, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt. You shall not abuse the widow or orphan. If you do abuse them, when they cry out to me, I will surely heed their cry" ([Exodus 22:21-23](#)).

Jewish law ensured that every man and woman has the right to a fair trial, is innocent before proven guilty, and allows for no prejudice towards the rich or powerful.

6. Monotheism: Judaism revolutionized the concept of God; from a belief in multiple deities and idols that require our sacrifice (even humans), are created in the image of Man and can be bribed and manipulated, to recognizing the One Infinite, loving, altruistic Creator who is the unifying source of the entire universe, who needs nothing from mankind, and is equally available to every human being.

7. Infinite Value of Every Human Life: In a world of human sacrifice, murder of children (particularly baby girls), and wanton war and killing to further material gains, Judaism taught

that every life is holy, created in the image of God, and of infinite value – even the old, the mentally or physically handicapped and the sick. If you think that is obvious, consider the practice of human sacrifice that was central to most South American civilizations until the Spanish Christians conquered them just 500 years ago.

8. The Right to Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness: While the founding fathers of America may have found “these truths to be self-evident”, in fact it was far from self-evident unless you were highly influenced by Jewish values (otherwise the Declaration of Independence in 1776 would not have been so revolutionary!). Many societies up to modern times have sought to limit individuality in the name of service to the state or religion or feudal lord (Communism, Nazism, many religions and all totalitarian regimes). But 3,000 years before 1776, Judaism introduced to the world that every human has the right, and obligation, to aspire to reaching his/her goals, personal fulfillment and potential.

9. Limited Governmental Powers: It took until the Magna Carta in medieval England for the first small limitations on the power of the ruler to be instituted. Until then despots of all kinds could and would take advantage of their citizens monetarily, militarily and judicially for their own gain. The king was omnipotent. The Torah was the first system to place limits on the powers of the monarch. His powers were overseen by an independent judicial branch of government (Sanhedrin/Supreme Court), thousands of years before the rest of the world was ready to adopt these ideas. And the Jewish king carried with him a Torah scroll, reminding him that he too is subjugated to all of its laws.

10. Tzedaka and Tikkun Olam: In a world where the idea of giving away one’s property to others was seen as both bizarre and foolhardy, Judaism taught that we are obligated to donate 10-20% (tithe) of what we earn to make the world a better place. Judaism was trend-setting by millennium when it required us to lend money to our fellow man with no interest, to return lost objects, to refrain from verbal abuse and gossip, not to take revenge or bear a grudge, to protect animals from suffering, and to demand that we love every human being regardless of race, religion or color. “Love your neighbor as yourself” ([Lev. 19:18](#)) was introduced 2,000 years before Christianity.

11. Sexism: Judaism taught that men and women are equal in the eyes of God (in fact the first “Man” was not actually a man but an androgynous male/female being which was then separated into two). From the earliest times women have held important leadership positions in the Jewish world. Our matriarchs were considered even greater than their husbands in prophecy and other areas. Judaism forbade sexual harassment of any kind. Way ahead of its time, a woman’s rights to sexual and emotional intimacy were enshrined by the first Jewish marriage contracts (ketuba). Men are obligated to honor their wives even more than themselves. Women in Judaism enjoyed more rights than in most of Western civilization. For example, it took until 1900 for all US states to allow women to buy, sell and own property or to write her own will and contracts.

Without the Jewish nation, the world as we know it would simply not exist. Paul Johnson summed it up beautifully: “To them (the Jews) we owe the idea of equality before the law, both

divine and human; of the sanctity of life and the dignity of the human person; of the individual conscience and so of personal redemption; of the collective conscience and so of social responsibility; of peace as an abstract ideal and love as the foundation of justice, and many other items which constitute the basic moral furniture of the human mind. Without the Jews, it might have been a much emptier place."

And while the world was busy absorbing Jewish inventions into their culture, they were simultaneously persecuting and frequently attempting to destroy us. How strange it is that one of humanity's most positive contributors has been singled out for more hate than any other. Cahill observed this phenomenon: "Our history is replete with examples of those who have refused to see what the Jews are really about, who – through intellectual blindness, racial chauvinism, xenophobia, or just plain evil – have been unable to give this oddball tribe, this raggle-taggle band, this race of wanderers who are the progenitors of the Western world, their due."

Let us keep in mind the words of American President John Adams who said, "I will insist that the Hebrews have done more to civilize man than any other nation. If I were an atheist, and believed in blind eternal fate, I should still believe that chance had ordered the Jews to be the most essential instrument for civilizing the nations."

1. "Sabbath." Cross, F. L., ed. The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church. New York: Oxford University Press. 2005
2. Ancient Literacy, 1991 William V. Harris
3. Graham, P.A. 1974). Community and Class in American Education, 1865–1918. New York: Wiley
4. Confederation of British Industry survey, 2005

עֵבְרִי - Hebrew

Word (s) of the Week

Sign, Mark / סימן

Pronounced: see-MAHN

At a Sephardic Rosh Hashanah seder, participants eat symbolic foods (*simanim*) and make blessings for the new year.



A Taste of Jewish Humor

A Questionable Conversion

A Jewish immigrant arrives by ship to New York City from Europe. The immigration inspector at Ellis Island asks him his first and last name, age, and national origin. Because of all the suffering he went through in his native land, when inspector asks him what religion he belongs to, the Jew is very uncomfortable and hesitates before answering.

Finally, he lifts his head, on top of which is his peasant hat and he responds with questionable pride, "I am Christian!"

To that, the immigration inspector answers him with a question, "Christian Ashkenazi or Christian Sephardi?"

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