



## **TOLMM WEEKLY NEWSLETTER for 2-15-25 YITRO**

### ***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](mailto: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](http://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](http://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](http://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](mailto:tolmm@etz-chayim.org) or [philip@etz-chayim.org](mailto: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](mailto: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](http://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](mailto: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.**

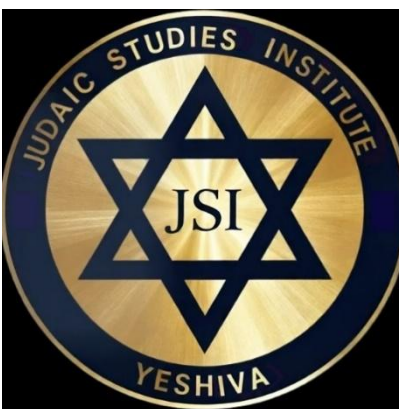
FOR RABBI HAMMOND'S BOOK, **HIS PERFECT GRACE**, GO TO AMAZON.COM AS WELL.

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](http://WWW.JSIYESHIVA.COM). OUR EMAIL ADDRESS IS [JSIYESHIVA@GMAIL.COM](mailto: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](mailto:tolmm@etz-chayim.org)

## **MESSAGE FOR 2-15-25**

*Yitro Jethro (Abundance)*

*Exodus 18:1-20:23*

*Isaiah 6:1-7:6; 9:5-6*

*Hebrews 3:12-14*

**Exodus 19:1-6**

**In the third month from the Exodus of the Children of Israel from Egypt, on this day, they arrived at the Wilderness of Sinai. They journeyed from Rephidim and arrived at the Wilderness of Sinai and encamped in the Wilderness; and Israel encamped there, opposite the mountain. Moses ascended to God, and the Lord called to him from the mountain, saying, "So shall you say to the House of Jacob and relate to the Children of Israel. 'You have seen what I did to Egypt, and that I have borne you on the wings of eagles and brought you to Me. And now, if you hearken well to Me and observe My covenant, you shall be to Me the most beloved treasure of all peoples, for Mine is the entire world. You shall be to me a kingdom of ministers and a holy nation.' These are the words that you shall speak to the Children of Israel."**

## **Exodus 20:1-14**

**God spoke all these statements, saying: I am the Lord, your God, Who has taken you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of slavery. You shall not recognize the gods of others in My presence. You shall not make yourself a carved image nor any likeness of that which is in the heavens above or on the earth below or in the water beneath the earth. You shall not prostrate yourself to them nor worship them, for I am the Lord, your God – a jealous God, Who visits the sin of fathers upon children to the third and fourth generations, for My enemies. But Who shows kindness for thousands of generations to those who love Me and observe My commandments? You shall not take the Name of the Lord, your God, in vain, for the Lord will not absolve anyone who takes His Name in vain. Remember the Sabbath day to sanctify it. Six days shall you work and accomplish all your work. But the seventh day is Sabbath to the Lord, your God; you shall not do any work – you, your son, your daughter, your slave, your maidservant, your animal, and your convert within your gates – For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and He rested on the seventh day. Therefore, the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and sanctified it. Honor your father and your mother, so that your days will be lengthened upon the land that the Lord, your God, gives you. You shall not kill; you shall not commit adultery; you shall not steal; you shall not bear false witness against your fellow. You shall not covet your fellow’s house, You shall not covet your fellow’s wife, his manservant, his maidservant, his ox, his donkey, nor anything that belongs to your fellow.**

**First Commandment:** Belief in God. This is the positive commandment to believe in the existence of the Lord as the only God.

**Second Commandment:** Prohibition of idolatry. This commandment comprises four negative injunctions: 1: It is forbidden to believe in idols; 2: it is forbidden to make or possess them; 3: it is forbidden to worship them through any of the four forms of Divine service (prostration, slaughter, offering upon an altar, libations of wine or other liquids upon an altar); and 4: it is forbidden to worship an idol by a means that is unique to it.

Children are punished only if they adopt and carry on the sinful legacy of their parents, or if it was in their power to protest, but they acquiesced to the lifestyle that was shown them.

**Third Commandment:** Prohibition of vain oaths. Just as it is forbidden to show contempt for God by making an idol, so it is forbidden to disgrace His Name by using it for no valid purpose.

**Fourth Commandment:** The Sabbath. This day serves as a constant reminder that God is the Creator, Who created for six days and rested on the seventh. Sabbath observance bears testimony to this concept.

The commandment of the Sabbath includes not only deed, but also attitude, for when the Sabbath arrives; one should feel that all his work is finished, even though his desk or workbench is still piled high. Six days shall you work and accomplish all your work means that no matter what is still left to be done, one should feel as much at ease as if everything was finished.

**Fifth Commandment:** Honoring parents. The Ten Commandments are inscribed on two tablets, five on each. The first tablet contains laws regarding Man's relationship with God while the second refers to relationships among people. This casts a revealing light on the significance God attaches to the honor He wants us to show parents. When people honor their parents, God regards it as if they honor Him.

**Sixth Commandment:** Prohibition against murder: Note that the first commandment of the second tablet corresponds to the first of the other one, faith in God. Someone with true belief in God as the Creator and Sustainer of human life will not commit murder.

**Seventh Commandment:** Prohibition against adultery. This term refers only to cohabitation with a married woman, which is a capital offense. It is parallel to the second commandment, which forbids idolatry, for someone who betrays the marital relationship can be expected to betray God.

**Eighth Commandment:** Prohibition against kidnapping. In this prohibition, "stealing" refers to kidnapping. A kidnapper forces his victim to work for him and then sells him into slavery is liable to the death penalty. The commandment against ordinary theft is found in Leviticus 19:11. Stealing is compared to the third commandment because one who steals may well seek to cover his tracks by swearing falsely.



**Ninth Commandment:** Prohibition against bearing false witness. In addition to its literal meaning, this passage prohibits gossip and slander.

**Tenth Commandment:** Prohibition against coveting. This last commandment is one that only a Divine Lawgiver could have decreed. A mortal ruler can legislate against murder and theft, but only God can demand that people sanctify their thoughts and attitudes to the point where they purge themselves of such natural tendencies as jealousy and covetousness.

### **Isaiah 6:9-10**

**He said, "go and say to this people, 'Surely you hear, but you do not comprehend; and surely you see, but you fail to know.' This people are fattening its heart, hardening its ears, and sealing its eyes, lest it see with its eyes, hear with its ears and understand with its heart, so that it will repent and be healed."**

"Wasting time" is not a phrase traditionally found in the Jewish lexicon. One might even go so far as to say that time is not ours to waste. For the Jewish concept of time is that it is a precious gift given to us by God. As the saying goes, "The past is history, the future is a mystery. Today is a gift. That's why it's called 'present.'"

Not using the gift of time in a manner deemed appropriate by the Gift-giver is, in essence, saying that the gift is not valued. Time not used, or not used properly, is lost; and lost time can never be regained.

When a person realizes the nature of the work before him - to conduct his entire life in accordance with God's will - he understands that one day, one lifetime, is indeed short.

And because life is so short, we must make use of every moment: the moments of our days and of our nights; the moments of our youth and of our maturity; the moments when we have the vigor to "burn the candle at both ends" and the moments when the candle is flickering and fading.

A thoughtful incident about time and the last moments of a candle's light is told concerning Rabbi Yisrael Salanter. One evening, Rabbi Salanter passed the house of a shoemaker and saw him working by the light of a candle that was almost dying out.

"Why do you work so late?" Rabbi Salanter asked. "The candle will soon go out, and you won't be able to do anymore."

"It does not matter that the candle will soon go out," the shoemaker replied. "While the candle burns, I can still make repairs."

Rabbi Salanter was deeply impacted and concluded, "A person works for material sustenance all the while that the candle is burning. So, too, should he work for the needs of his soul and repair as much as he possibly can as long as the lamp of God, which is the soul of person, is still burning."

### **Hebrews 3:12-14**

**Watch out, brothers, so that there will not be in any of you an evil heart lacking trust, which could lead you to apostatize from the living God! Instead, keep exhorting each other every day, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you will become hardened by the deceit of sin. For we have become sharers in the Messiah, provided, however, that we hold firmly to the conviction we began with, right through until the goal is reached.**

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**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 stepped 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 Yitro: Summary**

**Jethro, Moses' father-in-law suggests a system for establishing lower courts to settle disputes; God speaks the Ten Commandments to the Children of Israel amidst fire, smoke, and the sound of the shofar.**

#### **Exodus 18:1-20:23**

Jethro, Moses' father-in-law and the pagan priest of Midian, heard what God did for Moses and the Israelites. He took Moses' wife and two sons and brought them to Moses in the wilderness. After a passionate reunion, Moses shared with Jethro the whole story of how the Lord rescued the Hebrews from bondage to Pharaoh in Egypt.

Jethro rejoiced, saying, "Blessed be the Lord. Now I know that the Lord is greater than all the gods."

Jethro then made sacrifices to God, and everyone feasted.

The next day, Jethro watched Moses settle disputes between the people. "Why do you sit as judge, Moses, while the people stand about you from morning to night?"

"Because the people come to me to seek God. I decide between man and his neighbor and make known the laws of God."

"But this is not right," retorted his father-in-law. "You will tire yourself and the people out. Now heed my voice, I shall advise you. You be a representative to God and teach the people of the path God seeks of them. Then find capable men who fear God and trustworthy men who spurn

ill-gotten gain. Set these men over the people as chiefs of thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. Let them exercise authority over the people at all times. They will decide the minor disputes and bring the major disputes to you.”

Moses followed his father-in-law’s advice and set up this system. Then Jethro returned to his own land.

### **Camping at the Mountain**

The Israelites camped in front of the mountain in the wilderness at Sinai. God tells Moses to say to the Israelites, “You have seen what I, God, did to the Egyptians and how I brought you to Me. Now, if you will obey Me faithfully and keep My covenant, you shall be My treasured possession among all the peoples. Indeed, all the earth is Mine, but you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.”

Moses relays God’s message to the people and they answer as one, saying “All that the Lord has spoken, we will do.”

God then says to Moses, “In three days, I will come to you in a thick cloud in order that the people may hear when I speak to you and so trust you ever after. Now, warn the people they must be clean and pure, for the Lord will soon appear at Mount Sinai.” And Moses told the people to prepare for God’s presence.

On the third day, as morning dawned, there was thunder and lightning and a dense cloud upon the mountain and a very loud blast of the shofar horn. All the people trembled. Moses led the people out of the camp toward God and they took their places at the foot of the mountain.

Now Mount Sinai was all in smoke, for the Lord had come down upon it in fire and the whole mountain trembled violently. The blare of the shofar grew louder and louder. The Lord said, “Go down, warn the people and priests not to try to come up or look at the Lord, lest they perish.”

God spoke all these words, saying, “I the Lord am your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

“You shall have no other god beside Me. You shall not make for yourself a sculptured image, or any likeness of what is in the heavens above, or on the earth below, or in the waters under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the guilt of the fathers upon the children, upon the third and upon the fourth generations of those who reject Me, but showing kindness to the thousandth generation of those who love Me and observe My commandments.

“You shall not take in vain the name of the Lord your God; for the Lord will not clear one who swears falsely by His name.

“Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and accomplish all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of the Lord, your God; you shall not do any work—you, your son or daughter, your male or female slave, or your cattle, or the stranger who is within your settlements. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth and sea, and all that is in them, and He rested on the seventh day; therefore, the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and sanctified it.

“Honor your father and your mother that you may long endure on the land which the Lord, your God, is giving you.

“You shall not murder.

“You shall not commit sexual impropriety.

“You shall not steal.

“You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

“You shall not covet your fellow human’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or his male or female slave, or his ox or his ass, or anything that is your neighbor’s.”

When the people witnessed the thunder and lightning, the blare of the shofar and the mountain smoking, they fell back in fear. “You speak to us, Moses, and we shall hear. Let God not speak to us lest we die.”

### **Do Not Be Afraid**

“Do not be afraid,” responded Moses. “God only spoke directly so that the fear of the Lord may forever be with you, so that you do not go astray.”

The people stood from afar while Moses approached God in the thick cloud.

“Tell the Israelites,” God said to Moses “you, yourselves, saw that I spoke to you from the very heavens. Therefore, never make any gods of silver or gold. Make an Altar of earth for Me and sacrifice offerings. In every place My name is mentioned, I will come to you and bless you.”

### **Parashat Yitro Discussion Questions**

- 1) Why do you think God chose to give The Ten Commandments to all the people at the same time and not just have Moses relate them to the people?
- 2) Which Commandment do you feel is most important? Why?
- 3) The first commandment says: “I the Lord am your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.” Why is this a commandment?
- 4) The second commandment says: “You shall have no other god beside Me...” What other gods were available to worship? What other gods do people worship now?

5) Which is the hardest commandment to keep for you? Which is the easiest? Why?

## Haftarah for Yitro

### Isaiah's initiation as a prophet.

Ashkenazic Custom: **Isaiah 6:1-7:6, 9:5-6**

Sephardic Custom: **Isaiah 6:1-13**

In Parashat Yitro we read about God's wondrous revelation of the Torah. The Israelites were awestruck as they experienced God's presence: "All the people saw the thunder and lightning, the blare of the horn and the mountain smoking; they fell back and stood at a distance" (**Exodus 20:15**).

Appropriately, the Haftarah selection for this portion retells another account of a vivid divine revelation—Isaiah's first vision, in which he was inaugurated as a prophet for Israel. In Isaiah's vision, God is seated on a throne on high, surrounded by attendants who are six-winged creatures. These creatures, called Seraphs, call to one other: "Holy, holy, holy! The Lord of Hosts! His presence fills all the earth!" (**Isaiah 6:3**) This refrain has been incorporated into our synagogue liturgy, in the *Kedushah* prayer.

As the Seraphs cry out to each other, the doorposts shake, and God's house fills with smoke. Isaiah is appropriately startled and humbled: "Woe is me; I am lost! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; yet my own eyes have beheld the King Lord of Hosts" (6:5).

Despite Isaiah's hesitation and self-doubt, his initiation continues. One Seraph takes a coal and touches it to Isaiah's lips, declaring that with this action Isaiah's sin is purged. Then Isaiah is addressed directly by God. God asks: "Whom shall I send? Who will go for us?" Isaiah volunteers himself: "Here I am send me" (6:8).

#### Isaiah's Mission

Isaiah learns that he is being sent on a mission to tell the people of Israel about their upcoming destruction. Their fate is so definite, in fact, that he is told to dull their minds, stop their ears, and seal their eyes—lest they understand, or hear, or see, and then attempt to repent (6:10).

The destruction will be complete, Isaiah is told. Towns and houses will be emptied of their inhabitants, and the ground will be completely deserted (6:11). But all hope should not be lost. Like terebinth and oak trees, whose stumps live on even after they are cut down, one-tenth of the people will remain a "holy seed" (6:13). This illusion, though open to interpretation, seems

to indicate that the entire people will be ravaged, but one-tenth will survive and regenerate Israel.

Ashkenazim conclude this haftarah with another hopeful message: a depiction of a king who will rule Israel justly, and in peace.



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

Rabbi Hammond can be contacted at – [Philip@etz-chayim.org](mailto:Philip@etz-chayim.org)

### **FALLING AWAY PART 2 (6-10)**

#### **Falling Away...**

- After this, the man of sin will be revealed – this has to happen before the return of HaMoshiach. This same one, powered by , will see himself as God. He will demand allegiance... and God help those who refuse.
- Verses 5 & 6: Paul says – Remember the “discussions” we had before about this. These things must happen – the falling away, will occur. Then it will begin to unfold...
- Verse 7: Another verse of intrigue, and much discussed. Personally, the message seems very clear. It goes back to the falling away – rejecting torah, and the void being filled by another set of instructions, embraced by the world.
- The Word of YHVH a restraining force against immoral, evil, bad behaviour is almost extinct. Only a presence of God, can restrain evil, otherwise lawlessness [that which is void of Torah] does it’s evil dark work.
- When peoples minds are empty of God’s Word, then evil abounds. We witness this everyday everywhere – even in those institutions that claim to follow YHVH.



## Falling Away...

- The world is taking away anything that is of biblical relevance and throwing it in the trash bin. It will only have itself to blame. But wait there is a more serious matter before us...
- So-called believers are throwing away the very Word of YHVH. It no longer matters what YHVH says or said – it matters what man says and feels. Dangerous position to take:
- **Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.** Ephesians 5:6
- **And YHVH saith, Because they have forsaken my torah which I set before them, and have not obeyed my voice, neither walked therein; <sup>14</sup> but have walked after the imagination of their own heart, and after Baalim, which their fathers taught them: <sup>15</sup> therefore thus saith YHVH of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will feed them, *even* this people, with wormwood, and give them water of gall to drink. <sup>16</sup> I will scatter them also among the heathen, whom neither they nor their fathers have known: and I will send a sword after them, till I have consumed them. Jeremiah 9:13-16**

## Falling away...

- The great news amongst all this is YHVH will destroy evil, and the evil ones...
- **<sup>10</sup> And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.**
- We must love the truth [YHVH's Word], without it there is no salvation...
- **<sup>11</sup> And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:**
- Who is sending this STRONG DELUSION? A deluding influence. A deceiving error. Links with verse 3... choice is always before us:
- **Now therefore fear YHVH, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye YHVH. <sup>15</sup> And if it seem evil unto you to serve YHVH, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that *were* on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve YHVH. Joshua 24:14-15**

## Falling Away...

- That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. Again we witness the importance of believing the truth. So the obvious question is: What is this truth spoken of here?
  - We know it is the opposite of unrighteousness – so therefore it must be righteousness according to our Father's instructions... so let's wrap of some thoughts on these passages.
1. Our Saviour Yeshua HaMoshiach is coming again.
  2. A falling away of faithfulness will take place before hand.
  3. It appears that which is holding back the tidal wave of wickedness will be removed.
  4. The man of sin will be revealed but eventually destroyed.
  5. YHVH will be sending a delusion on those who are not engaging in repentance.
  6. Those who take pleasure in wickedness will be condemned.

## Falling Away...

- The Master said:
- And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. <sup>13</sup>I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. Revelation 22:12-13.
- As we close, let us take a peak at the following in reference to the above his work.
- Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? <sup>29</sup>Yeshua answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent. John 6:28-29
- Who has been sent? None other than Yeshua... the living Word. As that old Hymn goes: Trust, and obey there is no other way...
- There is no God...

## ***Hebraic Life***



### **Elijah the Prophet**

***As the herald of the messianic age and a recurring figure in Jewish folklore, Elijah's legacy surpasses that of virtually all the other prophets of Israel.***

Elijah is a biblical prophet and a central figure in Jewish folklore, which is riddled with stories of his roaming the earth, performing miracles, and providing spiritual and physical healing. The Talmud features many tales of ancient rabbis encountering Elijah, who weighs in on their legal conversations, answers questions, gives advice, and reports what is going on in heaven.

In Jewish tradition, Elijah is the one who will announce the coming of the messiah and the redemption of Israel, a fact celebrated in a song traditionally sung during the Havdalah service at the close of Shabbat, which prays for Elijah's return "speedily in our time." Some also sing this song during the Passover Seder, as they invite Elijah into their homes to drink from a cup of wine poured just for him, and during ritual circumcisions, as a newborn male is brought into the covenant between God and the Jewish people.

Although his story spans only a handful of chapters of the Bible and there is no biblical book that bears his name, Elijah's legacy surpasses that of virtually all his colleagues. But who was Elijah and how did he come to earn such a prominent place in Jewish tradition?

Elijah's Hebrew name literally means "my God is Yahu," a form of the biblical name of God, symbolizing perhaps his zealotry for God and his efforts to keep the Israelites from straying from God's path. He hailed from Tishbeh, a town in Gilead, east of the Jordan River in present day Jordan, which makes him an outsider of sorts in the king's court in northern Israel, where he was sent to deliver God's message.

Elijah's time as a prophet coincided with a period in which the Israelite people have been led astray, induced to worship the foreign deity Baal, who they believed was a bringer of rain. A defining moment comes when Elijah summons the people to Mount Carmel and challenges the

prophets of Baal to offer a sacrifice without the use of fire. The prophets call out to Baal repeatedly, but to no avail — their sacrifice remains unconsumed.

In response, Elijah places a sacrifice upon the altar and douses it with water. He calls out to God and summons a fire from the heavens which consumes not only the sacrifice, but the stone altar and surrounding earth as well. Transformed for the moment, the people proclaim that God alone is the true God — a peak moment for Elijah.

But it turns out to be short-lived. The people's faith wavers and the king's wife Jezebel seeks to have Elijah killed. Fearing for his life, Elijah flees to the desert, where, in a moment that echoes the revelation at Sinai, God sends a shattering wind, an earthquake, and then a fire. Elijah does not encounter God in any of these powerful phenomena, but in the calm that follows, when he hears a "still, small voice" — and within it, he finds God. For theologians, this moment is an archetypal one, underscoring that Spielbergian special effects are not a prerequisite for a revelatory encounter with the Divine.

Elijah's powerful moment of intimacy with God in the desert does not restore him and he is unable to continue serving as prophet. He seeks out Elisha, who assumes his role as God's spokesperson to the kings of Israel.

On the face of it, Elijah's story is not unique for a biblical prophet — others also perform miracles, chastise the people, face resistance and retribution and have personal experiences of revelation that bring them closer to God. Yet, Elijah's story sets him apart from his peers and helps explain the unusually prominent place he has come to occupy in the Jewish imagination.

The chapters in which he appears are among the most dramatic in all of the Bible. Elijah's zealotry for God, his prophetic angst, and his existential loneliness have an intensity that is unmatched by other prophets. The Torah declares that "never again did there arise in Israel a prophet like Moses, whom God encountered face to face." But Elijah's encounter with God makes him a close second — except for the one way in which Elijah's intimacy with God surpasses even that of Moses.

When his time on Earth comes to a close, Elijah does not die; rather, the Bible reports that God transports him to the heavens on a fiery chariot. While God honored Moses by attending to him at the moment of his death, it is Elijah who is invited into the divine realm.

While the Book of Kings provides little explanation about this curious feature of Elijah's story, his journey to the heavens has captured the imagination of many early interpreters of the Bible, who began to develop visions of Elijah's unique afterlife. Already in the Second Temple period, his role as the harbinger of divine redemption was noted by the biblical prophet Malachi.

The rabbis of the Talmud imagined Elijah sitting intimately with God in the heavenly court and traveling back and forth between the divine and human realms. These stories, and those that followed, depict an Elijah who continues to take interest in the world he left behind, offering assistance to those in need and seeking out the one who will usher in the messianic era.

Elijah became a part of not only the Jewish past, but the Jewish present and our hopes for the Jewish future. Chance meetings with a stranger that led to a fortuitous reversal of fortune were spun into tales of personal encounters with Elijah. Over the centuries, Jews came to look out for Elijah at times of difficulty in the hope of personal or communal redemption.

And so, Elijah became part of our ritual life. We sing of him as Shabbat comes to an end in the hope that in the new week, he will announce that redemption is at hand. We welcome him into our homes during Passover, the holiday that celebrates our redemption. We look for him as we bring a newborn into the covenant, in the hopes that the newborn child might be the messiah who will usher in the era of our redemption. And those of us who have been fortunate enough to encounter him along the way tell the tales of how he assisted us at a time of need.

## עֲבָרִי - Hebrew

### **Word (s) of the Week**

Repair / תיקון

**Pronounced: tee-KOON**

The word *tikkun* means to repair and it is familiar to many as part of the expression *tikkun olam*, repairing the world. A *tikkun* is also a book that contains the entire text of the Torah with vowels and cantillation marks that is used by Jews preparing to chant Torah.



### **A Taste of Jewish Humor**

#### **A Rabbi walks into a Bar**

Rabbi Epstein was a particularly tenacious clergyman and couldn't stand seeing Jewish people getting drunk. So one day he went into a particular tavern frequented by Jewish patrons.

Rabbi Epstein walks into the pub and sees Stan from shul. "Stan, do you want to go to heaven?" The man said, "I do Rabbi."

The Rabbi said, "Then stand over there against the wall."

Then Rabbi Epstein asked another man he recognized, "Do you want to go to heaven?"

"Certainly, Rabbi," was the man's reply.

"Then stand over there against the wall," said the Rabbi. Then Rabbi Epstein walked up to Chaim Yankel Rabbinowitz and said, "Do you want to go to heaven?"

**Chaim Yankel said, "No, I don't Rabbi."**

**The Rabbi was in disbelief, "You mean to tell me that when you die you don't want to go to heaven?"**

**Chaim Yankel said, "Oh, when I die, yes. I thought you were getting a group together to go right now."**

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