



TOLMM WEEKLY NEWSLETTER for 8-9-25 VAETCHANAN

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...

Home Groups joined:

Arizona – Elder Shawn Warren.

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

Beit HaMidrash 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.

Check out the Judaic Studies Institute Yeshiva 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. JSI Yeshiva is proud to announce it has received accreditation.

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 forming in Nevada: The Group name is ‘Yeshua’s Chessed 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 20 BOOKS.**

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

RABBI JOHNS, FROM JSI YESHIVA, **HAS SEVERAL BOOKS ON AMAZON AS WELL.**

Under His Wings,

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

Rabbi Michelle Johns, PhD (from JSI Yeshiva).

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.

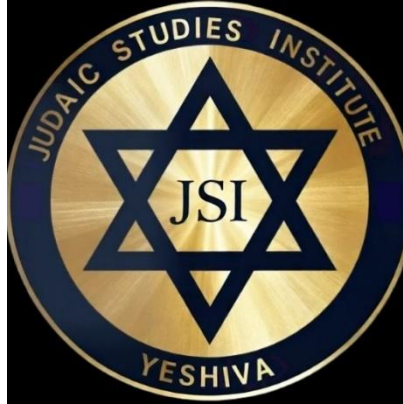
FOR RABBI HAMMOND'S BOOK, **HIS PERFECT GRACE**, GO TO AMAZON.COM AS WELL.

CHECK OUT RABBI MICHELLE JOHNS BOOKS ON AMAZON.

CHECK OUT RABBI MORDECAI SILVERS 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 2,300 INMATES ON OUR MAILING LIST.



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. JSI YESHIVA HAS RECEIVED ACCREDITATION WITH BEIT MESSIANIC JEWISH ACCREDITATION.

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 8-9-25 VAETCHANAN

V' Et'Chanan-And I pleaded

Devarim-Deuteronomy 3:23-7:11

Isaiah 40:1-26

Matt. 4:1-11, Romans 3:27-31, Ya'akov 2:14-26

A Tree of Life

The Sidra Va'et-chanan (Deuteronomy 6) turns from a review of history to a restatement of Scripture's laws. Moses pleads to the people that they diligently observe the laws and commandments that he is expounding—for the love of God. And Moses calls upon Israel to pass the Teachings on.

What is your tree of life? A tree of life—the soul's place of discernment, the mind's place of enlightenment, the heart's place of connection. Would we know the way to live without the fruit of this tree? For Believers, the Tree of Life is a metaphor for Torah, God's breath felt in and between the letters of the word. It is what Moses meant when he said: *Teach them diligently to your children...(6:7).*

Devarim-Deuteronomy 4:1-2; 29-35

1: Now, O Israel, listen to the decrees and to the ordinances that I teach you to perform, so that you may live, and you will come and possess the Land that YAHWEH, the God of your forefathers, gives you. 2: You shall not add to the word that I command you, nor shall you subtract from it, to observe the commandments of YAHWEH, your God, that I command you. 29: From there you will seek YAHWEH, your God, and you will find Him, if you search for Him

with all your heart and all your soul. 30: When you are in distress and all these things have befallen you, at the end of days, you will return unto YAHWEH, your God, and hearken to His voice. 31: For YAHWEH, your God, is a merciful God, He will not abandon you nor destroy you, and He will not forget the covenant of your forefathers that He swore to them. 32: For inquire now regarding the early days that preceded you, from the day when YAHWEH created man on the earth, and from one end of heaven to the other end of heaven: Has there ever been anything like this great thing or has anything like it been heard? 33: Has a people ever heard the voice of God speaking from the midst of the fire as you have heard, and survived? 34: Or has any god ever miraculously come to take for himself a nation from amidst a nation, with challenges, with signs, and with wonders, and with war, and with a strong hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with greatly awesome deeds, such as everything that YAHWEH, your God, did for you in Egypt before your eyes? 35: You have been shown in order to know that YAHWEH, He is the God! There is none beside Him!

Devarim-Deuteronomy 5:6-18

6: I am YAHWEH, your God, Who has taken you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of slavery. 7: You shall not recognize the gods of others in My Presence. 8: You shall not make yourself a carved image of any likeness of that which is in the heavens above or on the earth below or in the water beneath the earth. 9: You shall not prostrate yourself to them nor worship them, for I am YAHWEH, your God—a jealous God, Who visits the sin of fathers upon children to the third and fourth generations, for My enemies; 10: but Who shows kindness for thousands [of generations], to those who love Me and observe My commandments. 11: You shall not take the Name of YAHWEH, your God, in vain, for YAHWEH will not absolve anyone who takes His Name in vain. 12: Safeguard the Sabbath day to sanctify it, as YAHWEH, your God, has commanded you. 13: Six days shall you labor and accomplish all your work; 14: but the seventh day is Sabbath to YAHWEH, your God; you shall not do any work—you, your son, your daughter, your slave, your maidservant, your ox, your donkey, and your every animal, and your convert within your gates, in order that your slave and your maidservant may rest like you. 15: And you shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and YAHWEH, your God, has taken you out from there with a strong hand and an outstretched arm; therefore YAHWEH, your God, has commanded you to make the Sabbath day. 16: Honor your father and your mother, as YAHWEH, your God, commanded you, so that your days will be lengthened and so that it will be good for you, upon the land that YAHWEH, your God, gives you. 17: You shall not kill; and you shall not commit adultery; and you shall not steal; and you shall not bear vain witness against your fellow. 18: And you shall not covet your fellow's wife, you shall not desire your fellow's house, his field, his slave, his maidservant, his ox, his donkey, or anything that belongs to your fellow.

For the past several thousand years Jews -- and the majority of the world's non-Jewish population--believed that G-d gave the Torah to the Jewish people on Mt. Sinai 3,311 years ago. Almost the totality of Jews during this time believed that G-d dictated the Torah to Moshe who wrote it down word for word, letter for letter. This means that what is written in the Torah is precise and meant to convey a specific meaning.

The Torah is an instruction book for life. We study it to understand those lessons. This week's

Torah portion, Va'etchanan, contains the listing of the Ten Commandments (not the "Ten Suggestions" as some might think....)

The Ten Commandments were previously listed in the Torah portion of Yitro in the Book of Exodus. It is fascinating to note that there are many differences in the wording of the Ten Commandments in the two sections. Sloppy editor? Not if you believe that G-d dictated the Torah and that Moses wrote it down exactly word for word, letter for letter. So, what can we learn from these differences?

There is a fascinating sequence of verses in this week's portion which tell us that it is our responsibility to remember more than just the Commandments, but the manner in which they were given. Moshe exhorts the nation, "Now, Israel, listen to the decrees and the mandates that I teach you to observe. You shall not add to them nor subtract. See I have taught you decrees and ordinances as YAHWEH commanded me." Moshe warns the nation to "safeguard and perform them, for they are your wisdom and discernment in the eyes of the nations who will hear all the decrees and declare that surely this is a wise and sagacious nation" (cf. Deuteronomy 2:1-9).

What follows is a warning to remember the scenario of Sinai. And though its remembrance would seem much less significant than that of the observance of the laws themselves, the Torah uses stronger terminology in reminding us. "Only beware for yourselves and heed your very souls, lest you forget the words that your eyes saw and lest you remove them from your heart. You must make them known to your children and your children's children the day you stood before YAHWEH at Chorev" (Deuteronomy 2:9-11). Moshe continues to remind the Jews of the fiery scenario and the awe-filled events of the revelation at Mount Sinai. And we continue to see just who YAHWEH is in Isaiah.

Yesha'yahu-Isaiah 40:21-26

21: Do you not realize? Have you not heard? Has it not been told to you from the beginning? Have you not contemplated the foundations of the earth? 22: It is He Who sits on the circumference of the earth, with its inhabitants like grasshoppers; Who spreads the heavens like a thin curtain, and stretches them like a tent to dwell in; 23: Who turns governors into nothingness; Who makes judges of the land into naught—24: as if they were not even planted, as if they were not even sown, as if their stock was not even rooted in the ground; even if He were to blow on them they would wither, and a storm wind would carry them away like stubble. 25: 'To whom can you liken Me that I should be [his] equal?' says the Holy One. 26: Raise your eyes on high and see Who created these [things]! He brings forth their legions by number; He calls to each of them by name; by the abundance of His power and by vigor of His strength, not one is missing!

This message is brought home in the Brit Chadashah-the Renewed Covenant.

Mattityahu-Matthew 4:1-4

1: Then the Spirit led Yeshua up into the wilderness to be tempted by the Adversary. 2: After Yeshua had fasted forty days and nights, he was hungry. 3: The Tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, order these stones to become bread." 4: But he answered,

“The Tanakh says, ‘Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of YAHWEH’” [Deu. 8:3].

But listen to this caution from Romans.

Romans 3:27-31

27: So what room is left for boasting? None at all! What kind of Torah excludes it? One that has to do with legalistic observance of rules? No, rather, a Torah that has to do with trusting. 28: Therefore, we hold the view that a person comes to be considered righteous by God on the ground of trusting, which has nothing to do with legalistic observance of Torah commands. (The key is legalistic observance) 29: Or is God the God of the Jews only? Isn't He also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, He is indeed the God of the Gentiles; 30: because, as you will admit, God is one [Deu. 6:4]. Therefore, He will consider righteous the circumcised on the ground of trusting and the uncircumcised through that same trusting. 31: Does it follow that we abolish Torah by this trusting? Heaven forbid! On the contrary, we confirm Torah.

And again in Ya'akov-James 2:14-26

14: What good is it, my brothers, if someone claims to have faith but has no actions to prove it? Is such “faith” able to save him? 15: Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food, 16: and someone says to him, “Shalom! Keep warm and eat hearty!” without giving him what he needs, what good does it do? 17: Thus, faith by itself, unaccompanied by actions, is dead. 18: But someone will say that you have faith and I have actions. Show me this faith of yours without the actions, and I will show you my faith by my actions! 19: You believe that “God is one” [Deu. 6:4]? Good for you! The demons believe it too—the thought makes them shudder with fear! 20: But, foolish fellow, do you want to be shown that such “faith” apart from actions is barren? 21: Wasn't Avraham avinu declared righteous because of actions when he offered up his son Yitzchak on the altar? 22: You see that his faith worked with his actions; by the actions the faith was made complete; 23: and the passage of the Tanakh was fulfilled which says, “Avraham had faith in God, and it was credited to his account as righteousness” [Genesis 15:6]. He was even called God's friend [Isaiah 41:8]. 24: You see that a person is declared righteous because of actions and not because of faith alone. 25: Likewise, wasn't Rachav the prostitute also declared righteous because of actions when she welcomed the messengers and sent them out by another route? 26: Indeed, just as the body without a spirit is dead, so too faith without actions is dead.

So let me close with these verses from Devarim-Deuteronomy.

Devarim-Deuteronomy 5:29-30

29: You shall be careful to act as YAHWEH, your God, commanded you, you shall not stray to the right or left. 30: On the entire way that YAHWEH, your God, commanded you shall you go, so that you shall live and it will be good for you, and you shall prolong your days in the Land that you shall possess.

I give thanks for the heritage that has come to me from the past. It calls upon me to show mercy, to practice justice, to walk with humility. When I follow this path I enlarge my life and the life of those near to me. Grant me, O God, wisdom and strength always to walk the way of Torah-the Way of Yeshua.

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 Chavah 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 VAETCHANAN

***MOSES STRESSES TO THE ISRAELITES THE IMPORTANCE OF KEEPING GOD'S
COMMANDMENTS WHEN THEY ENTER THE LAND OF ISRAEL; MOSES REPEATS
THE 10 COMMANDMENTS AND UTTERS THE SHEMA AND V'AHAVTA.***

Deuteronomy 3:23-7:11

Moses looks at the promised land by the banks of the river Jordan and continues his final speech to the Israelites before he dies. Moses says, "I implored God to let me see this promised land, but God was angry with me because of you. God told me to appoint Joshua as your leader. "And now, O Israel, hearken to the commandments that I am teaching you so that you may live and possess this promised land. Do not add or subtract anything to that which I am commanding. Your own eyes have seen that everyone that followed Baal Peor was destroyed. Those of you who remained with God are all alive today.

"God's laws are your wisdom before the eyes of the nations. Nations will say, 'Who is this great nation? One that has a Deity near and available for the people. One that has righteous decrees and ordinances like this entire Torah.' Only take heed and guard your soul exceedingly so you do not forget... Make your experiences known to your children and your children's children.

"Remember the day at Mount Sinai when God spoke to you out of the midst of fire. God commanded you to observe the Ten Commandments and God inscribed them upon two tablets of stone. Take heed that you do not become corrupt and make yourselves an image of God, not in any form, not the likeness of male or female, nor any living thing, not sun nor moon nor stars. Do not allow yourself to be lured into bowing down to idols or serving them. These God allotted to the other peoples.

"When you beget children and grandchildren and have long been in this promised land, you will grow corrupt and do evil in the eyes of God. You will anger God. You shall not long endure in the land but be utterly wiped out. God will scatter you among the nations and you will be left few in number among the nations to which God will lead you. There you will serve man-made gods.

"Then in the distress that will befall you, when all these decrees of fate will have come to you, in the end of days, you will return to God and listen to God's voice. For God, your God, is a merciful God. God will not turn you adrift nor let you be destroyed. God will not forget the covenant made with your forefathers.

"So, ask yourselves has any other god taken a nation from the midst of another nation with demonstrations of power, with signs and miracles, with a strong hand and an outstretched arm, and with great terrors, comparable to all that God did for you in Egypt before your own eyes?

"Therefore, know it today and take it to heart repeatedly that in heaven above and on earth below, God alone is God. Keep God's commandments that I command you today—which will do good to you and your children after you—and so that you may long remain upon the soil that God is giving you for all time.

"This is not a covenant with our ancestors, but with us, each of us that God commands:

'I am God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

'You shall not recognize the gods of others in My Presence. Do not make yourself a representation in the form of an image, nor in the form of any other likeness that which is in heaven above or that which is in the water far below the earth. Do not bow down before these idols and do not serve them, for I, your God am a God Who demands exclusive right. I remember the sin of parents for their children and for the third and fourth generations for those who hate Me, and I practice loving-kindness to the thousandth generation of those who love Me and those who keep My commandments.

'Do not take upon yourself the Name, your God, in vain, for God will not hold guiltless one who takes God's Name in vain.

'Keep the Sabbath day to sanctify it, as God has commanded you. Six days you shall serve and do all your creating work and the seventh day is a Sabbath to God. On it you shall not perform any kind of creating work, neither you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your manservant, nor your handmaid, nor your ox, nor your donkey, nor any of your livestock, nor your stranger who is within your gates, so that your manservant and your handmaid may rest just like you. And remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt when God, your God, brought you out from there with a strong hand and an outstretched arm; therefore, did God, your God, command you to observe the Sabbath in practice.

'Honor your father and your mother, as God, your God, has commanded you, so that your days may be long, and that it may go well with you upon the soil that God, your God, is giving you.

'You shall not murder.

'You shall not commit adultery.

'You shall not steal.

'You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

'You shall not covet the wife of your neighbor, and you shall not desire your neighbor's house, his field, his manservant, his handmaid, his ox, his donkey, or anything else that belongs to your neighbor.'

"Be careful to do just as God has commanded. Do not turn aside to the right or to the left. Walk in the way that God, has commanded you, so that you may live, and it may go well with you, and you will long remain in the land which flows with milk and honey.

"Hear O Israel, The Lord our God, the Lord is One. You shall love God, your God, with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your resources. These words which I command you today shall be upon your heart and teach them diligently to your children and speak of them when you sit in your house and when you walk upon the way; when you lie down, and when you get up. And bind them as a sign upon your hand, and they shall be frontlets between your eyes. And write them upon the doorposts of your house and upon your gates."

"Now," Moses continues, "when you arrive in this land promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, take heed that you do not forget God. Fear God. Do not go after other gods from among the gods of the peoples that surround you. For God, Your God, is a God Who demands Respect, lest the anger of God be stirred up against you and God will destroy you from the face of the earth."

"When God gives this land to you," Moses says, "God will deprive many nations of their land before you. God will strike down your enemies. Make no covenant with them, nor ally

yourselves with them by marriage, for this will cause your children to deviate from following God. Then your children will serve alien gods kindling God's anger. God will destroy you. Rather, tear down their altars and burn their images in fire for you are a holy people to God, your God. "It is you whom God has chosen to be a people belonging exclusively to God, more than all the other peoples that are upon the earth. God did not take delight in you and choose you because you were the most numerous among the peoples, for you are the smallest. It is out of God's love for you. It is because God kept the oath God swore to your forefathers and brought you out of slavery. God preserves the covenant for those who Love God and who keep God's commandments. But for those who hate God, God avenges them instantly. Therefore, keep the commandments I command you today."

Parashat Vaetchanan Discussion Questions

- 1) This passage includes the Shema and V'avta prayers. Do you think that the phrase "these words which I command thee this day" refers to The Ten Commandments or the whole Torah? Why?**
- 2) Why is it so important for the Israelites to follow the Ten Commandments in this promised land? Can the land fulfill its promise if the people do not follow the Ten Commandments?**
- 3) In this passage, a covenant between the Israelites and God is described. What are the terms of this covenant? Does the covenant still apply today? Why or why not?**
- 4) This section includes a prohibition against intermarriage. Do you think that it still applies today?**

Haftarah for Parashat Vaetchanan

The haftarah selection is from Isaiah 40:1-26.

The Shabbat after Tisha B'Av is known as Shabbat Nahamu—the Shabbat of comforting. The special name for this Shabbat is derived from the first words of the haftarah, "nahamu, nahamu"—meaning "be comforted, be comforted." These words open one of Isaiah's most famous prophecies of consolation.

Isaiah promises that, after the people of Israel are punished and exiled, they will experience remarkable reconciliation with God. "Speak tenderly to Jerusalem," God instructs, and tell the city that her term of service is over (40:2). She has finished paying the price for her crimes, and has atoned for her sins. Now is time to prepare for an amazing revelation of God's presence.

The valleys will be raised, the hills flattened, and on a vast level plain God's presence will appear for all people to behold.

Isaiah emphasizes that this prophecy will no doubt come to fruition. Unlike grass and flowers, which wither and fade, God's word is always fulfilled.

Again, Isaiah addresses the city of Jerusalem with comforting words: “Ascend a lofty mountain, herald of joy to Zion. Raise your voice with power, herald of joy to Jerusalem” (40:9). The message is explicit: God is here for all to behold. Like a shepherd taking his flock out to pasture, God carries His people with tender love.

A Celebration of God’s Greatness

Isaiah illustrates God’s awesome strength with a series of questions: “Who measured the waters with the hollow of His hand? Who meted the earth’s dust with a measure? Who weighed the mountains with a scale?” (40:12) Compared to God’s incredible power, the nations are like a drop in a bucket, like nothing in His sight.

Twice in the haftarah Isaiah asks: “To whom, then, can you liken God? What form compares to Him?” (40:18, 25) Isaiah outlines how foolish it would be to compare God to idols, made from silver and wood. A skilled woodworker can make a firm idol that will not topple, but God Himself made the entire earth.

“Lift your eyes and see,” the haftarah closes, “Who created these?” (40:26) Referring to the stars, the text indicates that God fashioned them all. He numbers them one by one. His great might and vast power are unmistakable.



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

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

[GALATIANS STUDY-LONG TERM STUDY SLIDES 150-155](#)



GALATIANS STUDY

Galatians— 4:24

- Paul then explains how he is going to use these examples to help the Galatians understand their position.
- He goes on to say - I am doing a Midrash = seek and study out thoroughly.
- Listen how the Emphasized Bible translates the beginning of this verse:
- "Which things indeed may bear another meaning....."
- So it is without doubt Hagar and Sarah are to represent something Paul is wishing to explain and teach.
- Perhaps this is a good time to once again remind ourselves of the battle of authority, and the words of our Messiah in:
- **Matt 7:15-20**

Galatians— 4:24

- Matt 7:15-20
- Why have I mentioned this?
- Because the two covenants can be responsible of bearing two fruits. Fruits of the flesh and fruits of the Spirit.
- Now Hagar is associated with the covenant proceeding from Mount Sinai whose children are described as slaves - remembering this is also connected to that which called "**of the flesh.**"
- The Galatians were very much in danger of becoming enslaved in the bondages associated with the rules and regulations of man. This then carries into the realm of being a slave to lawlessness.

Galatians– 4:25-26

- Now we are exposed to the Midrash Paul was talking about.
- The question - Who were those that came down from Jerusalem?
- **Acts 25:7**
- Paul here connects Hagar, Mt Sinai, the children from Hagar with the then present day Jerusalem.
- A city locked down and ruled by the religious elite of the day who had strayed from the true written Biblical Torah, as found in Yeshua HaMashiach.
- All these were sadly aligned with the flesh, trying to justify their position by their so called good works.

Galatians– 4:25-26

- How different to the picture Paul paints of the other woman, who is seen as our mother, the Heavenly, the new Jerusalem.
- Only open to those who come via YHVH's instructions as found in the written Torah of scripture.
- None of the statements made by Paul through his epistle are against the written Torah of YHVH.
- They are against the distortion of the instructions of our Father... pearls that are not to be given to dogs or cast before swine.

Galatians– 4:27-28

- Verse 27 comes straight from **Isaiah 54:1**
- It would appear that the **barren woman** represents Sarah, and she had a husband who would with her produce a son called Isaac. A son promised by HaShem, who is a husband to Israel – **Isaiah 54:5**
- The wonderful news Paul is teaching is that they[the Galatians] were just like Isaac, children of promise, whose life was in the hands of the Elohim of Israel and as such they would be absolute clowns to reject Him and His ways putting their faith in man instead - Just like the story of Hagar.

Galatians– 4:29-31

- Paul then goes on to talk about a subject he is well qualified to do so - persecution.
- Those of the flesh have need to shoot the messenger, in this case the child born of the free woman. Yet scripture says cast out the bondwoman... **THIS IS NOT** the Torah - but any system that relies on the might of man instead of the grace and mercy of YHVH as brought to us through the promise of Torah and Yeshua.
- Chapter four is not teaching or proclaiming that the Torah should be cast aside and avoided at all costs by those who profess Yeshua as Messiah. It is a teaching believers to place Torah in its correct place and setting.

Hebraic Life



Why Do Some Jews Write G-d?

Because the Torah prohibits erasing God's name.

Among observant Jews, it's not uncommon to see God rendered as "G-d," particularly, though by no means exclusively, in Orthodox communities.

The source of this practice is a passage in Deuteronomy commanding the Israelites to destroy the altars and obliterate the names of non-Israelite gods worshipped by other nations who once lived in the land of Israel. "Do not do so to the Lord your God," the passage concludes (Deuteronomy 12:4). The commentator Rashi understands this verse to prohibit the erasure of the name of God. This is also why sacred texts containing God's name, like Torah scrolls and prayer books, are stored in a genizah and/or buried once they have fallen out of use.

The Talmud (Shevuot 35a) elaborates a specific list of God's names that may not be erased: El, Elohecha, Elohim, Eloheichem, Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh, Ad, Yah, Shadai and Tzevaot. Maimonides offers a slightly different list: the Tetragrammaton (pronounced as Adonai), El, Eloha, Elohim, Elohei, Shadai and Tzevaot.

There is some question about whether this prohibition technically applies to God's name when written in a language other than Hebrew, with many authorities ruling that it does not. More recently, there has been further debate about whether it should apply when God's name is written digitally, on a website or in an email. Though there are reasonable grounds for concluding that the prohibition ought not apply in these cases, as in many situations where the law is less than fully clear, some Jews prefer to err on the safe side and avoid the practice anyway. Some also consider it a sign of respect to avoid writing God's name in any language or medium, or as a means of avoiding the tendency to relegate God to a mere concept that can be captured on paper.

Rabbi Alan Lew, asked during his rabbinical school interview why he wrote G-d instead of God, invoked the latter consideration. He writes:

I didn't want to speak of God without really thinking of or experiencing God. So, I used a hyphen to remind me that that word is not the same thing as God. Well, what happens when you get habituated to G-d? he asked me. Well, then I guess I'll go to an asterisk, I replied. Indeed, while G-d is still the most common way God's name is rendered in print by those mindful of this concern, some have in recent years taken to using G*d or G!d.

עברִי - Hebrew

Word (s) of the Week

Thunder / רעם

Pronounced: RAH-ahm

When the Torah was revealed on Mount Sinai, the Israelites, we're told, heard lightning and saw *ra'am*.



A Taste of Jewish Humor

A Typical Day?

One afternoon Max comes home from work to find total mayhem. His two young children are in the front garden, soaking wet and playing with the garden hose. There is food all over the lawn, garbage spilled everywhere and some of their plants have been pulled up and are lying on the sidewalk.

The front door to their house is wide open and there's no sign of their dog. As Max enters his house, he finds an even bigger mess. The tables are lying on their sides, all the vases have been knocked over and wet flowers are on the floor, the armchair cushions are lying on the ground, and the carpet is stained where one of the children was sick. The TV is blaring, and the children's room is strewn inches deep with toys and clothes.

Max goes into the kitchen and finds the sink full of unwashed dishes from the morning breakfast, none of the food has been cleared, the fridge door is wide open and there's dog food on the floor.

He's worried now and heads up the stairs to look for his wife Fay. He has to step over yet more toys and piles of clothes. He's worried Fay might be ill, or even worse.

As Max passes the bathroom, water trickles under the door and into the hall. So, he peers inside and sees wet towels, spilt bath oils, his shaver lying on the floor and toothpaste smeared everywhere. He turns off the bath tap and rushes to his bedroom. There he finds Fay.

She's curled up in bed, still in her pajamas and reading a book. She smiles at him and says, "How did your day go, darling?"

Max looks at her bewildered and asks, "What happened here today, Fay?"

She again smiles, "You know every day when you come home from work, and you ask me what in the world did I do today?"

"Yes," he replies.

"Well," says Fay, "today I didn't do it."

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Philip Hammond
Phone: 0416087400 or
61 + 416087400
Philip@etz-chayim.org

