YOVEL

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HEBREW TREASURES IN THE BIBLE

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"Then have the trumpet sounded everywhere on the tenth day of the seventh month; on the Day of Atonement sound the trumpet throughout your land. Consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you; each of you is to return to your family property and to your own clan."

(Lev. 25:9-10)

In Hebrew the fiftieth year is called **Yovel**, a celebration year, jubilee. It is the year of the blowing of the ram’s horn. Thus Yovel got its name from the shofar announcing the beginning of the year.

The sound of the Yovel declares the beginning of a new era, the era of God’s favour towards Israel. In Hebrew the word yovel can be read in two ways. Either “yovel”, which means a ram or a ram’s horn like a shofar, or in passive voice “yuval”, is led or was led, like in Isaiah 53: “he was led like a lamb to the slaughter... for the transgression of my people he was punished.”

Like a lamb which has a desire to follow its shepherd humbly, to be led, “yuval”. The three names of the shofar are like a road signs on our salvation path: **Keren**, which is the name including the personal calling, rose up in smoke with the sacrificed ram instead of Isaac (Gen. 22:13). On Mount Sinai the Israelites heard the sound of that horn, **Shofar**, for the first time when it called the people to make the change, a turn a round, teshuva. The nation learned the sound of the shofar when The Lord himself blew the horn (Ex. 19:16).

From that point on the Israelites were commanded to blow themselves on the shofar (Lev. 25:9), until The Sovereign Lord himself blows it, this time the shofar called **Yovel** (Zech. 9:14). Then He will announce freedom, liberation, a jubilee to all nations, to all of those who will hear His voice.

Yeshua the Messiah, Jesus Christ, started his ministry in the synagogue declaring with the words of Isaiah 61:1-2 proclaiming good news to the poor, freedom for the captives, release from darkness for the prisoners and proclaiming the year of the Lord’s favor. Proclaiming the jubilee, which is The Messiah himself. In Him is the heritage restored, the one we lost in the garden of Eden. In Him is the essence of Yovel. (http://torah-art.net)

Markus Nurmesniemi

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Recently the question of the original language the New Testament was written in has been brought under discussion. There are substantial grounds for questioning the Greek origin of the texts. Scholars of old Greek have wondered the sometimes very uncharacteristic grammatical structures, which many scholars consider having been translated from another language. One of those scholars, the late Finnish Professor of oriental languages, Aapeli Saarisalo, maintained that the New Testament texts were originally written in Hebrew, from which they were later translated into Greek. The structures, untypical of the Greek language, prove that they are word-for-word translations, which, translated back to the Hebrew language, come out as fluent Hebrew. (Keijo Lindeman: The Apostolic Church and The Deception of The Antichrist).

This is no wonder: all the writers of the New Testament, possibly Luke excluded, were Jews who spoke Hebrew and used Hebrew and Aramaic while ministering and writing. In the beginning the majority of the early church were Aramaic and Hebrew speaking Jews. The Greek language was, however, the lingua franca of that time, but knowing the Jewish religious and cultural history it seems far fetched even to think that the Scriptures could have first been written in Greek. Taking into account the fact that the New Testament was not canonized until the fourth century, it seems logical that the Scriptures were also translated into Greek about the same time.

Significant findings and research support the fact that the Gospel of Matthew was originally written in Hebrew. Papias, a disciple of John, said this very clearly in the first century, that version, called Vulgate, over one thou-

sand years.

In 392, Jerome wrote that "Matthew wrote a Gospel of the Messiah, and it was first publis-}

hed in Judea in Hebrew. It has been kept until this day in the library in Caesarea. The Naz-

arenes of Beroa (in the beginning the followers of Yeshua were called Nazarenes) told me they used it among them.” (Nehemia Gordon: Hebrew Gospel of Matthew, Keith Johnson: Open Door -series) There are further evidence also in the Gospel of John (see John 1:38, John 1:41, John 1:42).

Many scholars have suggested that the Gos-
pels were originally written in Aramaic. There is evidence to back up this point of view, too. It is known that Aramaic texts existed before the Greek version, which is quite logical as Aramaic was kind of a ‘Yiddish’ of its time, with many divergent varieties or dialects. Aramaic is a Semitic language, related to Hebrew, Syriac and Phoenician, the lingua franca, if you wish, from 600 to 200 B.C. After the return of the Babylonian exile Aramaic was commonly spoken in Israel. The Gospels and the Epistles, except those by Paul, were written by people who spoke Aramaic in their everyday life. Hebrew was spoken primarily by rabbis and scholars.

The Aramaic Church in Israel does not use, however, Writings written in today’s Aramaic, it is probable that the first translations from the Hebrew texts were made into the Aramaic language. But the reverse order is equally probable; the first translations may have been made from Aramaic to Hebrew. The most famous Aramaic source, the Peshit-
ta, was translated from the Greek Septuagint. It contains additions that do not appear in the earlier texts.

In conclusion we can say that there are pretty solid grounds to believe that the whole Bible was originally written in Hebrew (Tanach, or the Old Testament contains also Writings in Aramaic). But as the oldest New Testament manuscripts we have so far are in Greek language (except for the Gospel of Matthew) we will have to settle for that for the time being. There is, however, reason to believe that Church Fathers who canonized the New Testament chose the Greek language as the language of the Writings in order to make the separation from the Jews complete.

Martin Luther acknowledged the Hebrew roots of the New Testament. In his Tischreider, ‘Tabletalk’ (first published in 1566), Luther states, after reading the Greek version: “The New Testament is full of Hebrew patterns of speech and Hebrew expressions. It is therefore right to say that the Hebrews drink from the source itself, the Greeks drink from a river that runs from the source, and the Latins from a pond downriver.”

We can fully understand the Bible’s multilevel message and depths only through the original language of the Bible, Hebrew culture and history, and the context of the Writings. However, blessed be the Lord that the main message of the Bible, the message of salvation, has remained unchanged through centuries.

Have a blessed readings!

Markus Nurmesniemi
Editor
In The Beginning Was The Word
Et - Alef and Tav

Written by:
Markus Nurmesniemi

The Bible gets straight to the heart of the matter in its first sentence:

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”

Everything is said in those few words. The first sentence of the Bible contains all information and revelation of our God’s sovereignty and status, Lordship and might as Creator. All this can be seen in all versions of the Bible in the world.

But: what do these many versions miss? Or is everything said in them?

If we read that sentence in Hebrew, a more profound picture appears before our eyes. In the message given in its original language huge depths are hidden throughout the Bible, and this first sentence alone opens us a world that takes away the breath and almost makes one dizzy with its magnitude and vastness. One could spend all hours of the day and life studying the Word and still not be able to scratch the surface.

Let us now try to scratch the surface of the first sentence of the Bible. We’ll start from the Hebrew context:

בראֶשְׁת́ בֵּרֶשְׁתִּ֣י אֶלֹהִ֑ים אֶתַּ֣ הָאָרֶץֲ. “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Bereshit bara Elohim et hashamajim v’et ha-arets). “In the beginning created God the heavens and the earth” (the word order is made to correspond the original Hebrew).

In the middle of the sentence you see printed in bold the letters alef and tav (תא) which form the word “et”. It is not a word you will find translated in any Bible version. It is a Hebrew word used as a sign to point to a direct, definite object. In this verse “et” points to the words ”the heavens” (השמים) and “the earth” (הארץ). What makes this interesting is that the word “et” comes from the word הוי (ו), which means “a sign”.

All in all, the evidence shows that this tiny word “et” has its own specific meaning. It appears in the first sentence of the Bible because it is supposed to draw the reader’s attention. It is meant to stand out from the text, because it has something to say.

God Authority Behind The Word

According to the Rabbis the word “et” is found in the first sentence because it stands as testimony of the fact that God’s word created the heavens and the earth. According to this interpretation God spoke the world into physical existence in Hebrew, which makes the Hebrew language a sacred and divine language.

There is one interpretation that says: “It is known... that the Hebrew alphabet was created first, and after that the Holy One created all worlds using these letters. This is the hidden meaning of the first sentence of the Torah: In the beginning God created et ת א, i.e. God’s first creative act was to create the letters from alef (ג) to tav (ת).” (Or Torah, p.35).

Thus God’s word(s) existed before the founding of the universe. And following this train of thought alef and tav, the “et” (תא), represent in its entirety God’s word or words. It comprises the whole spectrum of letters or the alphabet from the first to the last letter (in many languages the alphabet is referred to as ‘the ABC’, the Hebrew equivalent being ‘alef bet’, hence ‘alphabet’).

A And O = Alef And Tav

To a believer in Yeshua this context becomes highly interesting when we recall the name the Messiah used of himself as he revealed himself to John on the isle of Patmos.

“I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty” (Revelation 1:8,NIV).

“Alpha” and “Omega” are, of course, the first and the last letter of the Greek alphabet. People with knowledge in the Bible and history understand that Yeshua spoke to his Hebrew disciple in the disciple’s mother tongue, i.e. in Hebrew. It should be obvious that a Jewish Rabbi speaks to his fellow countryman and another Jew in their mutual mother tongue.

The Bible text was first translated into Greek, and the Greek Alpha and Omega have been passed on into other versions, the English as well.

“I am the first and I am the last” can be found in other places in the Scriptures; e.g. Isaiah 44:6 and Exodus 3:14 reveal to us these wonderful revelations about the name of our Lord. Take for instance Exodus 3:14, where YHWH reveals his name for the first time: “I AM WHO I AM”. Some scholars believe that the name YHWH, which God gave, comes from the verb hayah (יהי), to be, YHWH, or the Tetragram, being all the tenses (past, present and future) at the same time (I was, I am, I will be). Let us read Revelation 1:8 again in this context:

“If I am the Alpha (Hebrew: Alef) and the Omega (Hebrew: Tav),” says the Lord God, who was, who is, and who is to come, the Almighty” (Rev. 1:8, NIV)

This very first sentence of the Lord must have had a powerful impact on John, who, as a Hebrew disciple, grew up listening the Torah and the mysterious word “et” in its first sentence. Who knows if it was only on the isle of Patmos, inspired by the Lord’s words, that John got hold of the entire revelation of the Scriptures in all its vastness.

Yeshua told John he was the Word of God, the One who was from the beginning. John shares us this revelation in his gospel:

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made” (John 1:1-3, NIV).

Yeshua was the sign, the “et”, the Alef and the Tav, that the Creator gives in his Word to his people and for his people right at the beginning. He is the lighthouse who shows the way, the way to Father God and Creator Almighty.

Tips Given By God Are To Be Found In The Scriptures

The sign God gave of his Son is consistent and can be found throughout the Scriptures. The-
re is a sign in Exodus chapter 12: revelation of the lamb and of its saving blood on the door posts of the Israelites:

"The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are; when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt" (Exodus 12:13, NIV).

Normally the word “sign” in the text above would be written יָד (yt), but in this text it is written with alef and tav only, יָד (yt). It is meant to be a real sign, pointing to something with significance.

As believers in Yeshua we see in this God’s teaching about the blood that saves, and which is an early shadow of Yeshua’s future redeeming deed through his own blood. The word of God is similar in significance with the blood of the blameless lamb.

"Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29,NIV).

Let us go back to the first sentence of the Bible. In Hebrew, between the words “the heavens” and “the earth”, there is the letter “vav” (ו ) and the word “et” (ו). The “vav” binds together “heavens and earth” grammatically, but also spiritually. This letter “vav” is the sixth letter of the Hebrew alphabet, and the number six in the Scriptures refers to man or mankind.

When alef and tav and vav come together, we could interpret it as The Word became flesh and tabernacled among us.” This is the message, the sign of what was to come, which can be later read written by John in his Gospel:

"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory. The glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth"(John 1:14,NIV).

Yeshua is our true mediator, man and God at the same time, making atonement for our sins and reconciling us to God.

Each Hebrew letter has a rich meaning of its own. When God forms words of them in his Holy Scriptures, we can certainly expect the Bible to be a huge treasure chest the bottom of which man can never reach. In this essay, by the grace of God, we have but slightly scratched the surface of the first sentence of the Bible, or more accurately, only the surface of the combination alef - tav -.

God Builds A House To His Own

But let us return once again to the beginning, “in the beginning created” (bereshit =in the beginning, bara= created).

The word “bereshit”, and consequently the whole Bible, starts with the letter “bet”, which can be seen to represent the word "ben" = son, made from the letters bet and nun. Most versions of the Bible in the world (i.e. their Books of Revelation) end with the word “Amen”, the last letter of which is “nun”. Thus we can say as well that the Son is the first and the last.

“Bara” (ברא, created) is formed of three letters: bet, resh and alef. Bet represents “ben=son” (as above), resh represents the word “ruach”, spirit. Alef represents the word “av”, father.

“Bereshit” (בראשית, in the beginning) is made of two words: the first letter “bet” is a preposition corresponding the English “in”, and “reshit” is the word “beginning”. The root word for reshit is "rosh" (ראש), meaning “head, or chief”. Keeping in mind our Messianic perspective we remember that the Messiah is the head of the Bride, let us therefore study the word from this starting point.

“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the first-born from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy" (Colossians 1:15-18, NIV).

The Tabernacle And The Temple Are Models Of God’s House

Yeshua is the head, “rosh”, the first in everything from the beginning, and the very beginning of everything. We will find more evidence in John 1:1-3 or Revelation 3:14, which reads:

“And unto the angel of the church of Laodicea write: ‘These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God’” (King James version).

Here Yeshua says he is that “reshit”, beginning.

Yeshua is also the head of the family, and of the home, the house (בית “beit” in Hebrew). Originally Eden was that sacred place, home, where he and his bride were supposed to live together in harmony, and form a divine family that brings forth disciples and followers in generations to come.

Later on God gave instructions for a tabernacle to be built in the desert, where his glory could dwell among his own.

The tabernacle was followed by a temple, which in turn was followed by the collective Bride formed by born-again believers. Eventually, according to the Book of Revelation, we will be waiting for the fulfillment of everything in the coming of the New Jerusalem. Yeshua is and has been the head, rosh, in everything.

We the Bride, however, are expected to do our part in building that house, the house of God:

“You also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 2:5, NIV).

The word “bereshit” includes the letters bet, resh, alef, shin, yud, tav. When you take the first two and the last two letters, leaving away the two in the middle, you get the word “brit”, covenant. The two letters left behind form the word “esh”, fire.

Since the covenant which God cut with Abraham (Genesis 15:17), fire is present in almost all covenants the Almighty ever made, for instance at Mount Sinai when the Torah was given (Exodus 19:16-18).

Furthermore, Deuteronomy 4:24 tells us that our God is a consuming fire. The Apostle Paul declares that we should give ourselves as living sacrifices, symbolically speaking as if it were our flesh, our fleshly nature, we should give to be burnt in that divine fire.

Another interesting issue to discuss is the concept of the slaying of the Lamb of God. Revelation 13:8 tells us that the Lamb had been slain from the creation of the world. If we continue analyzing the first word of the Bible, “bereshit”, and divide the word in two, the first three letters form the word "bara" (create), and the last three form the word “shiyt” (to name, to appoint, to ordain).

A Home Must Stand On The Rock Of Christ

In its first word the Bible tells us that God had pre-appointed man “a house”, a dwelling place where people could live before God and God among them. This was the purpose and essence of the creation, and that is why YHWH appointed this definite place.

According to the Talmudic definition the word “shiyt” also means “foundation”. According to the Talmud, a natural formation is to be seen on Mount Moriah at the exact place where the altar of sacrifice of the first temple was built. The blood of the animal offerings ran down to the valley of Kidron along that natural for-
mation. Although this is found in Talmud, we can discern there Messiah symbolism. The house must have a solid foundation, and naturally that foundational rock is the Christ. He sees to it that the house is safe to live in.

“In my Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you: I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am” (John 14:2-3, NIV).

It’s A Blessing To Study The Word

In the first word of the Bible, and in the first sentence, everything is included. Different versions indeed miss a lot of the information God has given. And as I have said before, we have only scratched the surface of a couple of words.

God expects us to discover the contents of his treasure chest in prayer and in the Holy Spirit. And what kind of discoveries may there be in store for us, if we keep praying that the Jewish rabbis with their fellow countrymen find their Messiah in the Scriptures. They master the language and the Tanach, but when they (teachers of the law) find Yeshua as their Messiah, that revelation will send its blessing also to the nations.

“He said to them: ‘Therefore every teacher of the law who has been instructed about the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old’” (Matthew 13:52, NIV).

Sources:
- Bible
- Bill Cloud, “In the Beginning” (Shoreshim teachings)
- Bill Cloud, Hebrew Treasures: Et (Shoreshim teachings)
- Mark Biltz, “Hidden Treasures From Our Hebrew Roots”

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The Dead Sea Scrolls
And The ”Works of the Law”

Eddie Chumney presenting W.F. Dankenbring’s article:

One of the greatest hindrances to people in traditional Christianity to embracing their Hebraic roots is a lack of understanding and misinterpretation of the book of Galatians. One of the greatest stumbling blocks to understanding the book of Galatians is confusion over the meaning of the term “works of the law”. Traditional Christianity usually interprets this to mean “following Torah”.

However, the article below comes from an analysis of discoveries found in the dead sea scrolls which clearly reveals that the phrase “works of the law” refers to the ORAL law (Talmud) and various MAN-MADE rulings regarding how we should follow the Torah which are NOT in the WRITTEN TORAH. As the article points out, these MAN-MADE rules of code and conduct can also be present in TODAY’S churches.

Written by:
William F Dankenbring:

The title of an obscure Dead Sea Scroll is MMT, which stands for Miqsat Ma’ase Ha-Torah. This phrase was originally translated “Some of the Precepts of the Torah,” by Dead Sea Scholars (John) Strugnell and (Elisha) Qimron. However, the word miqsat does not just mean “some.” The same word is used in Genesis 47:2 where Joseph presents five of his brothers before Pharaoh – where the word could be translated as most important, select, or choice brothers.

More importantly, however, is the rest of the phrase – ma-ase ha-Torah. Strugnell and Qimron translated this as “precepts of Torah.” However, the most common GREEK word for ma-ase is ergon – which in the New Testament is usually translated “works.” The Hebrew word Torah is usually translated as nomos, which in the New Testament is generally translated “law.” Thus the expression ma-ase ha-Torah then simply means “works of the law.” This would be a very excellent translation.

The Septuagint version of the Old Testament leaves no doubt – it translated the Hebrew expression ma-ase ha-Torah by the Greek ergon nomou. This Greek expression is commonly translated in the New Testament as “works of the law.” This expression is found in Romans 3:20, 28, and Galatians 2:16, 3:2, 5, and 10.

Interestingly, when the British Bible Society translated the New Testament into modern Hebrew in 1976, when the text of the MMT Dead Sea Scroll was known only to a few scholars, they translated the Greek ergon nomou (works of the law) as ma-ase ha-Torah.

**Link Between Paul And Dead Sea Findings**


This Dead Sea scroll and Paul use the very same phrase. The connection is emphasized by the fact that this phrase appears nowhere in rabbinic literature of the first and second centuries A.D. – only in Paul and in MMT.

“The works of the law that the Qumran text refers to are obviously typified by the 20 or so religious precepts (halakakhah) detailed in the body of the text. For the first time we can really understand what Paul is writing about. Here is a document detailing works of the law (p.53, BAR, 11-12/94 issue).

Finally, then we can put to rest the question, just what are the “works of the law” that Paul wrote about! Finally, an argument which has raged for centuries, and still rages today, can be settled by clear evidence from the first century! Let’s take a look at this mysterious document MMT, and see what it is all about.

**The Dead Sea Scroll MMT**

The MMT scroll records the remains of nearly two dozen legal issues. Perhaps another dozen issues perished. The scroll calls attention to the subject of boundaries between what was to be considered pure and impure. The phrase rohorat haquodesh, “purity of the holy,” sums up the contents of the scroll and its purpose.

Says Abegg, this means, “Do not allow the holy to be profaned by what is impure.” The issues, says Abegg, were: “The issues include bringing Gentile corn into the Temple, the presentation of Gentile offerings, and the cooking of sacrificial meat in unfit (impure) vessels. Other rulings concern cleansing of lepers, admitting the blind and the deaf into the Temple; and permitting intermarriage with Ammonite and Moabite converts, long forbidden to enter the congregation of Israel (Deuteronomy 23:3).

Other issues involve the transmission of impurity by a flow of water (musaq), the intermixture of wool and linen (sha-atnez) and perhaps the climax of the discussion: the intermarriage of priests with the common people.

“Most of the rulings espoused by the author of MMT are based directly upon Biblical law (for example, the prohibition against plowing with unlike animals in Deuteronomy 22:10).

A few others are interpretations or amplifications of Mosaic prescriptions (for example, bans on Gentile
offerings and dogs in the Temple). The list clearly reflects a conservative reaction against a relaxation of Torah precepts” (ibid., p.53-54).

Notice! These “rulings” or “works of the law” included “INTERPRETATIONS OR AMPLIFICATIONS OF MOSAIC PRESCRIPTIONS.”

The Qumran sect spurned the “rabbinic extensions called Talmut, which effectively built a fence around the Torah, successive layers of which have become codified in the rabbinic works of the Mishnah and the two Talmuds.”

Notice again! The “RABBINIC EXTENSIONS” reflected in the Talmud – that corpus of Jewish religious and rabbinic literature accumulated over the centuries, known as the Babylonian and Jerusalem Talmuds – was spurned by the writers of the MMT Dead Sea Scroll. They developed their own interpretations, expans ions, and halakham.

But both systems came under the over-all description of “works of the law” – both included various rabbinic-style interpretations, amplifications, and extensions of the Law 16 of Moses as it was applied to Jewish life during the first century.

Paul Against Every Man Made “Works of the Law”

The expression miqsat ma-ase ha-torah – “pertinent works of the law” – nowhere appears in rabbinic literature. However, clearly the Qumranites, like the apostle Paul, were against the rabbinic “works of the law,” though from a different point of view.

They were against them because they were espousing their own version of the “works of the law.” Paul, very clearly, condemns in no uncertain terms ALL these human-devised “works of the law” in the books of Romans and Galatians!

Writes Abegg: “Looking at Galatians and Romans in the light of MMT, it seems clear that Paul, using the same terminology, is rebutting the theology of documents such as MMT. I do not mean to suggest that Paul knew of MMT or of the zealous members of the Qumran community, but simply that Paul was reacting to the kind of theology espoused by MMT, perhaps even by some Christian converts who were committed to the kind of thinking reflecting in MMT.”

Clearly, even in Paul’s day, the Jewish scribes and Pharisees and various groups, and even supposed Christian “converts,” were building “fences” around the law of God, and making it into a burden – a “yoke of bondage” (Gal.5:1). Paul warned of “false brethren SECRETLY BROUGHT IN,” who entered the church “BY STEALTH to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into BONDAGE” (Gal.2:4). He warned the Galatians that we are not justified before God by such “works of law” (Gal.2:16).

Paul was clearly very upset, disturbed, about the reports he had received concerning such ministers and teachers. He wrote, “O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?” (Gal.3:1).

He asked them, “This only would I learn of you. Received ye the Spirit by the works of law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?” (Gal.3:2-3).

Paul urged the Galatians not to become entangled in the “works of the law” – the deeds and decisions and rulings of rabbinic Judaism or its offshoots. He wrote, “Stand fast therefore in the LIBERTY wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage” (Gal.5:1).

Against The Cult

 Writes Martin Abegg in Biblical Archaeology Review: “Some scholars have suggested that Paul misunderstood the Jewish teaching of his day or, at the very least, that he created a straw man to bolster his own teaching regarding faith versus law. In the past, this view was supported by the fact that the phrase ‘works of the law’ nowhere appears in the foundational 17 books of rabbinic Judaism. MMT, however, provides the ‘smoking gun’ for which students have been searching for generations, not from the pages of rabbinic literature, but from the sectarian teachings of Qumran.

MMT demonstrates that Paul was not jousting with windmills, but was indeed squared off in a dramatic duel – not with mainstream Judaism but with a sectarian theology – that ultimately defined Christianity.

If I have understood rightly, the importance of MMT for New Testament research is nothing short of revolutionary” (ibid., p.55).

Clearly, in Romans and Galatians Paul taught against all types of “legalism” and legalistic, authoritarian “additions” to the Law of God!

This principle doesn’t just refer to Jewish or Rabbinical “additions.” On the other hand, we also need to be careful not to come under the “bondage” to the “oral law” or “decrees” of various Christian-professing churches, who create their own rules, regulations, prescriptions, and dogmas – traditions of “men” which Jesus clearly rejected – which violate the written Word and Law of God.

It is interesting that those churches which seem to object the strongest against the Jewish “oral law” themselves create their own “oral law,” although they do not call it that.

Historically, even the Sadducees, who rejected the “oral law” preserved by the Pharisees, found it necessary to create their own “oral tradition,” in order to exercise their own authority over the church members! However, any “tradition” or “church custom” which contradicts the Word of God – Torah, or divine Revelation of the Scriptures – must itself be rejected and avoided.

The bottom line, therefore, is that Christ Himself has the last word – He is the Prophet like unto Moses, who has FINAL AUTHORITY to interpret the Mosaic Law – and provide a true and full interpretation of the Law (see Matthew 5-7). He came to “fill full” the Law, and make it complete (Matt.5:17-19) – to MAGNIFY it (Isaiah 42:21)..

To really understand God’s Law, therefore, and its application to Christians, and the New Covenant, we need to search the Scriptures, and the words of Christ. We need to avoid all the “works of the law,” or man-made religious taboos and constraints, which men have added from time to time, for one reason or another, to the Scriptures, leading into a yoke of heavy-handed authoritarian bondage and spiritual slavery.

The “works of the law” that Christ and Paul condemned were the human additions to God’s Law which made it a system of bondage and misery. Neither of them were condemning the keeping of God’s commandments or referring to obedience to God’s Law as “works of the law” -- not at all!

Let’s thank God for this precious truth and revelation -- and for the beauty of His Torah Law and Revelation!

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Noah’s Ark
And the Coming of the Messiah

Written by:
Keijo Lindeman

“As the days of Noah were, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. For as in those days which were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and they didn’t know until the flood came, and took them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken and one will be left; two women grinding at the mill, one will be taken and one will be left. Watch therefore, for you don’t know in what hour your Lord comes” (Matthew 24:37-42, NIV).

“... who disobeyed long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water” (1 Peter 3:20, NIV).

“First of all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. They will say, ‘Where is this ‘coming’ he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation.’ But they deliberately forget that long ago by God’s word the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water and by water. By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed. By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men” (2 Peter 3:3-7, NIV).

Some 2000 years ago the disciples asked their Master about the sign of his coming and the sign of the end of the age (Matt. 24:3). Yeshua answered his disciples by giving a prophetic speech in which He mentioned many signs of His coming and of the end of the current age. Yeshua’s teaching about the signs of His coming are in Matthew chapters 24 and 25, Mark 13 and Luke chapters 21 and 17, and in other parts of the New Testament.

Among these signs of the coming of the Messiah are religious deception, false prophets and messiahs, persecution of believers, falling away; believers’ love grows cold as lawlessness increases, confusion, riots, news of war, nation against nation, and finally kingdom against kingdom in a world war. There are birth pains in the creation anticipating the coming of the Messiah: famine, big earthquakes, storms and hurricanes, heat and draught on the other hand and intense cold and heavy rains and hailstorms on the other.

The days of Noah and the ark of Noah also relate to the End times, and they speak their exemplary language of the world’s situation as the coming of the Messiah draws near. There will be those who mock and jear, those who won’t take any heed of the warning the judgment of the flood has given to mankind. They jeer at the coming of the Messiah and consider it a myth in the midst of a corrupted world. Everything will culminate in the judgments of the Lord’s Day that will take the world by surprise, like the flood the ancient world (Isaiah 13:9-13; Revelation 9:13-21).

In this article we will discuss in which way the world of Noah’s time was an example for the End time world close to the Messiah’s coming. We will also discuss the significance of Noah’s ark as an example for the Church age and the Messiah’s coming. We will look at the events related to the flood and Noah’s ark in the light of the etymology of the Hebrew language and the message of the root words.

The world’s moral situation in Noah’s days

“When men began to increase in number on the earth and daughters were born to them, the sons of God saw the daughters of men were beautiful, and they married any of them they chose. Then the Lord said, ‘My Spirit will not contend with man for ever, for he is mortal; his days will be a hundred and twenty years.’ The Nephilim were on the earth in those days — and also afterwards — when the sons of God went to the daughters of men and had children by them. They were the heroes of old, men of renown. The Lord saw how great man’s wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time. The Lord was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain. So the Lord said, ‘I will wipe mankind, whom I have created, from the face of the earth — men and animals, and creatures that move along the ground and birds of the air — for I am grieved that I have made them.’ But Noah found favour in the eyes of the Lord. This is the account of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God. Noah had three sons: Shem, Ham and Japheth. Now the earth was corrupted in God’s sight and was full of violence. God saw how corrupt the earth had become, for all the people on earth had corrupted their ways” (Genesis 6:1-12, NIV).

In Noah’s days the sons of God, or the fallen angels, came to live among mankind and married their daughters, and “hybrid beings”, giants, were born of union between daughters of men and fallen angels. The Hebrew Bible uses the word Nephilim for giants. The root word is “naphal” which means “to fall” (concretely and spiritually).

One interpretation proposes that the word “nephilim” refers to the fact that they were descendants of Lucifer’s fallen angels that fell (or were thrown out) from the heavens, and daughters of men. Evidently by getting into sexual relations with human beings, these fallen angels crossed the line set by God and they were taken to the Abyss (tehom in Hebrew) to be kept there waiting for the judgment of the great Day in the End time, when they would be let loose to torment the world for a short time (Jude 6-7; 2 Peter 2:4).

(There are Bible scholars who do not agree with the interpretation that the sons of God, i.e. fallen angels, could have had sexual relations with people’s daughters. In their opinion the sons of God are possibly famous people from the line of Seth.)

It is obvious that those fallen angels had their share in corrupting the mankind in Noah’s days. Those were the days magic, astrology, and Satanism came about. People lived normal lives eating, drinking, getting married, and giving in marriage, but at the same time corruption, evil, violence, and robberings were ordinary. Mankind was corrupted, even
thought of their heart was evil all the time. Close to the Messiah’s coming the situation of the world will be like it was in Noah’s days before the judgment of the flood.

An interesting point is the mention of violence that filled the whole earth in Noah’s days. Violence is filling the earth right now in the form of radical Islam terrorism and suicide bombs, and in local or wider wars (Matt. 24:3-13). In the Hebrew Scriptures “violence” is chamas, which happens to be the name of a radical Palestinian organization in Gaza.

This organization has been extremely active, with another radical organization called Jichad (holy war), in making suicide and other terrorist attacks against Israel and the Jews. That, too, is a sign, for prophecies often come true first on Israeli soil, then elsewhere.

**Examples for Noah’s ark**

“Then God said unto Noah, ‘The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence because of them; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth. Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shall pitch it within and without with pitch. And this is the fashion which thou shalt make it of: The length of the ark shall be 300 cubits, the breadth thereof 50 cubits, and the height thereof 30 cubits. A window shalt thou make to the ark, and in a cubit shalt thou finish it above; and the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side thereof; with lower, second, and third stories shalt thou make it. And behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and every thing that is in the earth shall die. But with thee will I establish my covenant; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons’ wives with thee’ (Genesis 6:13-18, KJ).

Noah’s ark is in itself a very interesting example. In Hebrew the word ark is גְּוָרָה (tevah). It is made of three letters: tav, vet, and hey. The first letter “tav” had the form of a cross in ancient Hebrew, a foreshadow of the cross at Calvary.

The second letter, vet/bet is a symbol of a house or a temple, foreshadowing the New Covenant Church, the temple of the Holy Spirit that was born as a result of the atoning work of the Cross and the pouring out of the Holy Spirit.

The last letter hey, symbolizes the Lord, and His coming at the end of the Church age. We can picture the ark as a foreshadow of the atonement on the Cross and the age of the Holy Spirit and the Church, which will come to an end at the Lord’s coming.

According to the original Hebrew text the ark was coated with pitch or tar (petroleum?), “gofer” in Hebrew, which was evidently in the soil even then. Nowadays we make oil from it, which makes most of the modern world go round. The word “gopher” in the Old Testament Hebrew text also means redemption price, compensation. The word “gopher” also gives Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, Sabbath of the Sabbaths, which is celebrated in the autumn, the tenth of the seventh month of the biblical calendar. (Leviticus 23:26-32)

That is the time for fasting and repentance for the Israelites. At the time of Jerusalem Temple it was the national day for the atoning of sins with relevant sacrifices (Lev.16).

Yom Kippur had its New Testament fulfillment in Yeshua the Messiah’s death on the Cross as He made atonement for the sin of the world. Hebrews nine tells us about this atoning sacrifice of the Messiah. The ark was to be coated with “gopher”, which is a symbolical act of “pitching” the ark with redemption, atonement for sin accomplished by Yeshua the Messiah on the Cross, with the Messiah’s atoning blood.

The dimensions of the ark are symbolic as well: 300 cubits in length, 50 cubits in breadth and 30 cubits in height (Genesis 6:15-16, KJ). Hebrew letters have numerical value. The letter “shin” ש (abbr from El Shadday, the Almighty or the AlSufficient) symbolizes the Almighty Father God. The letter “shin” appears in the “Mezuzah” in all doorposts in Israeli houses. The numerical value of shin is 300.

That is why Yeshua was anointed with “the Father’s anointing”, nard worth of 300 denarii for His burial, and that is why Gideon overcame the Midianites with 300 men (John 12:1-8; Judges 7).

The number 50 is related to the Messiah’s redemption. (2 Sam.24:18-25; Araunah is a foreshadow of the Calvary). It is the Messiah’s five wounds multiplied by 10 commandments (=50) that he fulfilled for us. Number 50 relates also to Yovel, Year fo Jubilee. In this year freedom was declared to every one, and every one could return to their own property (Leviticus 25).

The height of the ark was 30 cubits. In the Old Covenant the price of a slave was 30 pieces of silver, the price the Messiah was betrayed for. (Exodus 21:32; Matt. 26:14-16). The ark had three internal divisions, storeys, in the image of Father, Son and the Holy Spirit.

Interestingly enough, the proportion between the length and the width of the ark is six to one, which has been found perfect for seafaring.

**Noah’s family and the animal creation were saved in the ark**

“And of every living thing of all flesh, two of every sort shalt thou bring into the ark, to keep them alive with thee; they shall be male and female. Of fowls after their kind, and of cattle after their kind, of every creeping thing of the earth after his kind, two of every sort shall come unto thee, to keep them alive. And take thou unto thee of all food that is eaten, and thou shalt gather it to thee; and it shall be for food for thee, and for them. Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he. And the LORD said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation. Of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee by sevens, the male and his female: and of beasts that are not clean by two, male and his female. Of fowl also of the air by sevens, the male and the female; to keep seed alive upon the face of all the earth. For yet seven days, and I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights; and every living substance that I have made will I destroy from off the face of the earth. And Noah did according unto all that the LORD commanded him. And Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of waters was upon the earth. And Noah went in, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons’ wives with him, into the ark, because of the waters of the flood” (Genesis 6:19-7:7, KJ).

Noah’s family, that is Noah, his sons Shem, Ham and Japheth, and their wives, altogether eight people, entered the ark and were saved from the judgment of the flood while all other people perished. The representatives of the animal creation also entered the ark so that they could go on living after the flood.

Of unclean animals one pair of each was taken, male and female; of clean animals seven pairs were taken into the ark. Clean animals outnumbered the unclean so that, among other things, Noah could sacrifice them as burnt offerings to the Lord after the flood (Genesis 8:18-22).

As clean and unclean animals are mentioned in this connection, in Noah’s times, it means that there was already knowledge of clean animals that God had intended as food for people, and of unclean animals not to be eaten by people.

Later on, in the times of Moses, God gave in His Torah a list of clean animals meant for food and
unclean animals not meant for food (Leviticus 11). Before the flood people ate “green plants”, but after the flood God allowed people to eat flesh, but forbid people to eat blood and flesh with blood in it (Genesis 9:1-4; Acts 15:19-21).

There has been much talk and wondering, especially among evolutionists, how on earth all the world’s birds and creatures of the dry land could find place in the ark. But let us bear in mind that the ark was very spacious. It has also been proposed that only representatives from all species entered the ark.

From canine creatures one pair, felines one pair etc. After the flood different types and variations now found on the earth have developed from these representatives. This theory is backed up by the Hebrew text that says “le’minehu” = according to its kind. The Hebrew word “min” means species, quality and gender. According to this theory there would have been ample space for all representatives of each species.

These exemplary events of the time of Noah show us how the righteous, godfearing Noah and his family, eight persons altogether, were kept safe in the ark of the Almighty while God’s judgment hit the ungodly mankind and drowned the violent and corrupt world (1 Peter 3:20-21).

As the Messiah’s coming draws near similar things will happen. When God judges the world on the Lord’s Day, with judgment of fire for instance, those who fear God and put their trust in the Messiah’s atoning sacrifice will be safe in “salvation’s ark”, protected by the Almighty.

Nothing will happen to those who belong to God without His knowledge or consent. Just as the Lord gave a new beginning to mankind through Noah and his family, the Lord will raise a new mankind from the remnant saved from God’s Day of wrath, as the Messiah’s Kingdom of Peace is established on the earth (Isa.13:6-13; 24:1-6;2:1-4; 66:15-24; Zach. 14:16-19; Rev.20).

Noah’s ark and the flood - foreshadows of salvation and baptism

“...who disobeyed long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water, and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also - not removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 3:20-21,NIV).

When the Israelites walked through the Sea of Reeds (Red Sea) in the days of Moses, they were baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea (1Cor. 10:1-2). It is a foreshadow of the baptism of the New Covenant in Holy Spirit and water. Noah’s ark and the flood are also foreshadows of the baptism of New Covenant believers.

God was long-suffering in the days of Noah, and Noah, preacher of righteousness, went on building the ark and preaching the coming judgment, but people did not believe him, and so the flood took them by surprise (2 Peter 2:5).

Water was to salvation to Noah’s godfearing family inside the ark, but at the same time, water drowned the ungodly outside the ark. The same applies to baptism. Whoever believes and is baptized, to them the water of baptism is unto salvation, because their faith has made them enter “the ark of salvation”. But those who have themselves baptized without faith and think of baptism as some kind of a magic ritual, will be drowned like those outside the ark in the days of Noah (Mark 16:15-16; Matt. 3:7-12).

The days of Noah foreshadowing the Messiah’s coming

“Just as it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man. People were eating, drinking, marrying and being given in marriage up to the day Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all. It was the same in the days of Lot. People were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building. But the day Lot left Sodom, fire and sulphur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all. It will be just like this on the day the Son of Man is revealed”(Luke 17:26-30,NIV).

“There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea. Men will faint from terror; apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken. At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is near”(Luke 21:25-28,NIV).

The days of Noah and of Lot are a picture of the coming of Yeshua the Messiah and the taking up of the believers, or the resurrection. When the world, in its corruption, reaches a similar stage of moral and spiritual decay and violence as in Noah’s days, we will know that the Lord’s coming is near.

The degeneration of Lot’s days and the sins of Sodom announce the approach of the Lord’s coming, the time when the Church will be rescued from under nuclear war and burning sulphur, like Lot was rescued from Sodom’s fire and burning sulphur (Genesis 19).

Those who have their faith in God and believe in Yeshua the Messiah do not need to be afraid, for when these things start to happen, we can lift our heads and be encouraged, for the Messiah’s coming and believers’ redemption is near. If, through faith in Yeshua, we are already “in the ark of salvation”, we are safe when the judgments fall on the world.

If we are not in the ark of salvation, we need to believe in Yeshua and receive forgiveness of sins and salvation and invite Yeshua the Messiah to be our Saviour and the Lord of our lives.

Only then can we feel secure as we wait for His coming and the taking up of believers to the Lord to live with Him for eternity.
The Hebrew Revival
Resurrecting Israel’s Language

Written by:
John Garr

Because of the extent and the duration of the dispersion of the Jews following the destruction of Jerusalem first by the Babylonians in 587 BC, then by the Romans in AD 70 and again in AD 132, the sacred tongue that the prophets, kings, and sages of Israel had used became essentially a dead language. (1) Indeed, the language that God used to communicate with this Chosen People (2) gradually faded almost into oblivion, preserved only for ceremonial purposes in rituals and prayers in the synagogues. (3) Certainly by the time of Hadrian, Hebrew had come to be used only in written form and was no longer spoken as the common vernacular of the Jewish people.

Language is a powerful aspect of human thought patterns and, hence, human beliefs. David Blumenthal says, “Each language has an elegance of its own and a power of expression which is peculiar to it, and these constitute the identity and character of the people who speak it.” (4)

In truth, it is language that “gives to all beings their own form, it makes them creatures in themselves with their own characteristics and peculiarities.

As soon as a community on a particular piece of land speak a particular language, it constitutes a people apart, and the land where that people has settled is the state of that people.” (5) The Hebrew language, therefore, has always been a central element in Jewish self-identity. Hebrew even goes beyond Jewish self-identity. It is the Holy Tongue. Indeed, it was the holy language even when it was universally the vernacular of the Hebrew peoples. As Peter Wortsman has said, “It was with Hebrew words that the Judeo-Christian God quite literally called the world into being . . . . The Hebrew language as such is a bridge, a lasting link between God and man.” (6)

Tragically, some of this sense of continuing relationship between God and the Jewish people in daily life was lost when the language of Scripture was replaced by the babel (confusion) of the polyglot world.

Translations, no matter how objective and well-conceived, still do not capture the full essence and import of the original words of Scripture in its original language. So many of the very important aspects of biblical faith are difficult to express or understand when wrenched from their Hebrew matrix. Indeed, many of the Hebrew words of Scripture are virtually untranslatable in other languages, and the Hebrew idiom is distinct from those of all other languages.

1 The term dead language means that a language is no longer used for everyday conversation.

2 In Acts 24:16, Paul declares that when Jesus appeared to him on the Damascus Road, the Master addressed him in “the Hebrew tongue” (“Ebrai?,; diale,ktw—Hebrais dialekto). Though most scholars insist that Hebrew became a dead language after the Babylonian captivity, which was replaced in the vernacular by Aramaic, it is clear that Hebrew was still being spoken after the time of Jesus, for Paul speaks of addressing his audience in “the Hebrew tongue” (Acts 21:40; 22:2). It was certainly understood in Jesus’ day as well, for the titulus crucis at his crucifixion was written in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek (Luke 23:38). Some scholars have argued that the term Hebrais meant Aramaic, not Hebrew; however, in his Antiquities of the Jews, Flavius Josephus made a clear distinction between the two languages and their Greek titles when he pointed out that he would appeal to the “Hebrew Scriptures” by referring to 2 Kings 18:26: “When Rabshakeh had made this speech in the Hebrew tongue (“Ebrai?sti—Hebraiasti) . . . Elkim . . . desired him to speak in the Syrian tongue (suristi.—syristi or Aramaic).” Flavius Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews, 10, 1, 2. Since Josephus wrote after the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70, it is clear that Hebrew was still a language that was commonly spoken in Israel. For a detailed discussion of the use of Hebrew in the first century, see Doug Hamp, Discovering the Language of Jesus: Hebrew or Aramaic? (Santa Ana, CA: Calvary Chapel Publishing, 2005), pp. 23–38.


Preparation for Restoration

This is why it was so important for a revival of interest in Hebrew to appear in Europe to set the stage for the restoration of Israel. After benign neglect—and even outright contempt—for at least eleven centuries, such an interest erupted spontaneously across the European religious academic landscape at the turn of the sixteenth century.

At that time, Christian scholar Johann Reuchlin and others began to insist that it was vital “to delve into a linguistic domain that [has] long been considered at best obsolete,” (7) just like the Jewish people themselves. Reuchlin and his colleagues became enthusiastic students of Jewish sacred literature because they saw in it “the spiritual foundation of Christianity.” (8) Christian scholars of that time came to understand that “just as the Jews themselves were reviled as . . . an alien body that had long since outlived its usefulness, so too was their language and literary heritage . . . held in ill repute,” (9) and they determined to do something about it.

The growing interest in the Hebrew language among the dominant Christian culture of that day, even if it represented a small minority of Christians, reintroduced the church to the importance of both the culture and the language of the Jewish people. Indeed,
the scholars who led this effort at restoration were styled Christian Hebraists, and they described their teaching as “veritas Hebraica” (“Hebrew truth”).

**Restoration and Hebrew**

As time progressed, calls began to arise in the Jewish community for the restoration of ancient Hebrew. During late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Maskilim, members of the Jewish enlightenment or Hasidalah, had begun this process in earnest.(11) “Much like the humanists of the Renaissance era, who wanted to rescue Latin from the clutches of the Roman church and reclaim its original literary and scientific qualities, Maskilim wanted to return to the beauty and grace of ancient Hebrew and rediscover its more secular (literary, intellectual) qualities.”(12)

They also wanted “to turn written Hebrew into a secular language,” even though the very idea “provoked traditionalists.”(13) Among the leaders of the Maskilim who advocated restoring the Hebrew language for Jewish discourse, Isaac Satanov expressed a view that would prove prescient when he argued that “the political restoration of the people to Zion would enrich the language.”(14)

Without a doubt, God was setting the stage for an important restoration that would accompany the coming resurrection of the Jewish nation. He was preparing the minds and hearts of people for the restoration of the language with which the prophets, kings, and sages of Israel had communicated.

7 Wortsman, p. 4, author’s emphasis.
8 Wortsman, p. 3.
9 Wortsman, p. 3.
10 Maskilim is the plural of maskil, which means “scholar” or “enlightened man.” It was first used in fourteenth-century Italy by Isaac Israel ben Joseph to describe his colleagues.
12 Kaplan and Penslar, eds., 168.

Through the efforts of restorationists and the Maskilim, the attention of the Jews was increasingly turned toward a redefinition of Jewish identity. “Jewish communities experienced a new need for Jewish identification, something Jewish nationalism was able to provide.” (15)

As it turned out, this “new Jewish nationalism focused on two issues: the restoration of a Jewish language (whether Yiddish or Hebrew) and some sort of political autonomy.”(16)

When the idea of Jews from around the world immigrating into Israel suddenly became a reality, the question arose as to what would be the language of the newly emerging people and nation? “The question of language was one of the most critical cultural issues that the early Zionists faced.”(17)

Would it be Yiddish, the blend of Hebrew and German that was popular in Western Europe? Would it be Ladino, a combination of Hebrew and Spanish? Or would the restored Israel be a polyglot nation like Switzerland? Theodor Herzl, the founder of Zionism, opted for the latter solution.(18)

Such an approach to language in the restored state of Israel, however, would surely have resulted in a Balkanization of Israeli society.

**Language Restoration**

“A small number of intellectuals and activists believed that a revolutionary movement that aims to upend the course of Jewish history should not rely on the languages of the Diaspora but rather resurrect the ancient Jewish national tongue, Hebrew.”(19)

Even before Herzl came to prominence, therefore, another advocate of what came to be known as Zionism had an entirely different—and, as it turned out, right—view that would have a powerful impact upon the emergence of the restored nation and its people.

This man, Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, was a passionate advocate for the restoration of the Jewish nation before there was a Zionist movement. As a matter of fact, it was in 1877 that this Lithuanian Jewish linguist, “came to believe that the Jewish people could also revive the Jewish nation on its ancient national soil.”(20)

Even while he was still a student at the Sorbonne in Paris, as a Francophile, he came to understand the decisive role that French language had in the arousal of French nationalism. (21) In 1880, he reached a conclusion that stunned even him: “I have decided that a national revival of the Jewish people could only be successfully accomplished if it were accompanied by a revival of the Jews’ ancient language, Hebrew.”(22)

After he immigrated to Palestine in 1881 and saw the social and political realities there, Ben-Yehuda at first dismissed the claim that Jews did not count as a nation because they lacked a common spoken language, citing the example of multilingual Switzerland, but he later changed views. “Just as the Jews cannot really become a living nation other than through their returning to their ancestral land, so too, they are not able to become a living nation other than through their returning to their ancestral language.”(23)

15 Lilievik, p. 241.
16 Lilievik, p. 241.
18 La Guardia, p. 83.
19 Kaplan and Penslar, p. 168.
20 Karesh and Hurvitz, p. 52.
23 Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, quoted in La Guardia, p. 81.

Himself a polyglot, Ben-Yehuda came to understand that language was one of the most important core identities of any nation or people.

The one thing that distinguished Ben-Yehuda from his fellow Zionists, therefore, was his understanding that the restored nation of Israel needed a restored language and that language could only be the language of the Jewish ancestors, Hebrew. He came to believe that a conjunctive symbiosis existed between Zionism and the Hebrew language.

Ben-Yehuda’s agenda was simple: “The Hebrew language can live only if we revive the nation and return it to the fatherland.”(24) He also understood that the long-term success of the nation would depend to a large degree upon its adoption of a common language—in this case, the language common to ancient ancestors of all Jews, Hebrew.

After he moved to Israel in 1881, Ben-Yehuda decided to begin restoring Hebrew in the right place, in the Jewish home, and he chose his own home for his experiment. He and his wife decided that they would speak Hebrew exclusively in their home.

As a result, their son, Ben-Zion, “became the first all-Hebrew speaking child in modern Jewish history.”(25) By implementing his personal vision in his own family, Ben-Yehuda created the first Hebrew-speaking family in over 1500 years.(26)
At the same time, he proved that a total revival or resurrection of the Hebrew language was both possible and practical. While he had made his own grand experiment in the context of his own family, Ben-Yehuda believed that the full restoration of Hebrew as the Israeli language would unfold in a process: “The Hebrew language will go for the synagogue to the house of study, and from the house of study to the school, and from the school it will come into the home, and . . . become a living language.”(27)

“Zionists were faced with more practical considerations—to turn Hebrew into a living, everyday language.”(28)

Ben-Yehuda’s task was daunting in more ways than one. His undertaking was profoundly stressful not only because of the incredible amount of work that he had to do in order to transform the 8,000-word vocabulary of biblical Hebrew into a modern language but also because he was confronted with significant opposition from the ultra-Orthodox and other traditionalists of the Jewish society of Palestine who objected to his “profaning” of the sacred language of Scripture by promoting it for everyday use.

In fact, Ben-Yehuda “was excommunicated by the ultra-Orthodox who rejected the use of the holy tongue for day-to-day discourse”(29) and he and his family were targeted for verbal—and sometimes physical—abuse.(30)

Ultimately, however, by the second decade of the twentieth century, the intellectuals of the Zionist movement were joined “by the broader Jewish population in Palestine by the second decade of the twentieth century in their schools, public institutions, and their homes embracing Hebrew as their national language.”(31)


With Ben-Yehuda’s work, Hebrew became the unifying language of the Jewish people and the unifying language of the nation of Israel. Regardless as to what language and nation the Jewish people left when they made aliyah to the Promised Land, when they arrived in Israel, they found a polyglot people speaking one universal language, Hebrew.

Ben-Yehuda became a scientific lexicographer who, despite his ongoing battle with tuberculosis, labored tirelessly with sixteen-hour days to complete the work that he knew he had been called to do on behalf of his people. His works culminated in his seventeen-volume Complete Dictionary of Ancient and Modern Hebrew.

In reality, Eliezer Ben-Yehuda was a prophet(32), though a prophet of a different sort(33). He was not an ecstatic voice bubbling up with spiritual truth; however, he was a prophet of restoration, driven by a passion to make the language of his ancestors the language of his nation and people. He even spoke of his mission in life in highly spiritualized terms: “During this time, suddenly—it was as if the heavens opened and a light shone forth—a pure and gleaming ray flashed before my eyes, and a mighty inner voice called in my ears. Israel’s Rebirth on the Soil of the Fathers!”(34)

Cecil Roth encapsulated Ben-Yehuda’s mission well: “Before Ben-Yehuda, Jews could speak Hebrew, after them, they did.”(35)

A Living Language for a Living People

Another of the great miracles connected with the restoration of Israel as a people, a nation, and a land was the resurrection of the dead language of an “as good as dead” people. Hebrew became a living language for a rejuvenated, revived, reinvigorated people. What happened with the Jews happened with their language, and it was something that had never taken place in all of human history.

“No nation has ever lost its language (which is a country’s national identity), only to have it restored and revived after 2000 years. It has happened to NO other nation.”(36)

In 1930, Shalom Spiegel spoke of the degree of importance that restored Hebrew would have for the emerging Jewish nation: “The revival of Hebrew and its transformation into a colloquial tongue with all the defects and virtues of a living language . . . and such progress in vocabulary as would have filled any civilized people with pride—these things have proven beyond a doubt the physiological genuineness of our rejuvenation as a people.”(37)

Shortly after the restoration of the state of Israel in 1948, Menahem Ribalow made this argument about how essential the Hebrew language has been to the restored nation of Israel: “Only through communication, through some communion with the Hebrew language, will [our children] behold the full revelation of Judaism and become initiated into the mystery that preserved the Jewish people since the beginning of its history to this day of the renewal of Jewish sovereignty.”(38)

Today, Hebrew is the living language of Israel, spoken by 6 million Israelis, and studied by much of world Jewry. “Hebrew is the mortar holding together Israel’s disparate ethnic traditions.”(39)

As David Blumenthal notes, “the natural place for Hebrew is the land of Israel. The proper locus of the holy tongue is the holy land. There, the language and environment resonate together. There, the echoes of the one rebound naturally from the landscape of the other.”(40) Surely, Hebrew “is this language which unites all the children of Israel from the four corners of the globe . . . it is the language of our forefathers, the language of our prophets, the language of our sages.”(41)

my indignation.” Whatever may

lead to the restoration of the Jewish people, as a people, to their land and for the restoration of their long-lost nation. Supporting this restoration would also be the resurrection of the dead language of Hebrew and its eventual restoration as the vernacular of the people of Israel and the nation of Israel. Surely the God of Israel foresees the need for unifying his chosen people with a common language, and what better language could he help restore than the one he gave them in the beginning of their corporate existence, Hebrew?

42 Zephaniah 3:9.
45 Blumenthal, p. 136.

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Hebrew Idioms in the Gospels
Detecting Hebraisms

Written by:
David Bivin

Introduction

There are many expressions in the Greek texts of the synoptic Gospels that seem to derive from Hebrew idioms. These are phrases that mean something different from the literal meaning of the words they use. Every language has its own idioms, many of which seem strange when translated literally out of their native setting.

Think of such common English idioms as ‘hit the ceiling’, ‘kill time’, ‘eat one’s heart out’, ‘lose one’s head’, ‘be in hot water’, ‘throw in the towel’, or ‘kick the bucket’. A non-English-speaker who heard these idioms translated literally into his own language would probably find them amusing.

However, if he did not suspect that they were literal translations of English idioms and took them at face value, the information he received would be very misleading.

The Hebrew language has hundreds of idioms. For example: be’arba enayim, literally ‘with four eyes’, means face to face without the presence of a third person, as in, ‘The two men met with four eyes’. Lo dubim v’lo ya’ar is literally ‘[There are] neither bears nor forest’, but means that something is completely false. And ta’man et yado bataa la-hat, ‘buried his hand in the dish’, means that someone idles away his time.

A translator faced with putting these idioms into another language such as English must be careful to find an equivalent idiom for each Hebrew expression. If he merely translates them word for word, he will not end up with English but Hebrew in English dress.

 Literal Translation

Because Biblical texts generally have been translated very literally, many idioms have found their way into the English versions of the Bible that most of us know. The words are there, but their meaning has often been left behind.

These literal translations of the Scriptures might prove useful for scholars of ancient languages; however, they tend to confuse or mislead the general reader. I am reminded about a little boy who thought that God had to do everything with his left hand, because he had always been taught that Jesus was sitting on the right hand of God.

Most English translations of the Hebrew Scriptures are full of Hebrew idioms. In Genesis 6:8, for instance, we read that "Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord". This does not mean that Noah looked into God’s eyes and found in them the quality of grace. Rather it means simply that God was fond of Noah.

 Elevated Vision

English translations of the Gospels also preserve Hebrew idioms, such as "lift up the eyes and see", which appears in Luke 16:23 in a parable about a miserly rich man and a poor man named Lazarus. This same expression, nasa et haenayim vera ah, had been current in Hebrew since biblical times, and appears thirty five times in the Hebrew Scriptures. For instance, in the dramatic account of the first meeting of Isaac and his bride-to-be Rebekah, Isaac “lifted up his eyes and saw” the approaching Rebekah, and she “lifted up her eyes and saw” Isaac (Genesis 24:63-64).

Note that the Hebrew expression uses two verbs, whereas in English one simply would say ‘He looked’ or ‘He saw’. This doubling of the verb seems superfluous to English-speakers, but it is part of the beauty of the Hebrew language.

There is no evidence of this expression being used in the normative Greek of Jesus’ day, yet it is found in the Greek texts of the synoptic Gospels. When Luke 16:23 is translated word-for-word into English, the result is a Hebrew idiom other examples of which are found in Hebrew literature of the period (e.g. Ta’anit 4:8).

 Detecting Hebraisms

Overly literal translating seems to have produced Hebraisms such as ‘lift up the eyes and see’ in the Greek texts of the Gospels. If one is fluent in both Greek and Hebrew, many Hebraisms become readily apparent. They are detected in the same way that we would immediately notice alien elements in the speech of a non-native English speaker.

If you have ever heard someone speaking English who was thinking in another language, you probably have heard several non-English expressions. And if you also happened to be familiar with the speaker’s native language, you probably could identify the language in which the speaker was thinking. For instance, if a native German speaker told you to ‘mind your own beer’, there would be no need to check that your mug is nearby. Your knowledge of German language and culture would tell you that he meant ‘mind your own business’.

In the same way, scholars who are familiar with Greek and Hebrew are able to recognise Hebrew idioms in the Greek texts of the synoptic Gospels.

The many Hebraisms such as ‘lift up the eyes and see’ are part of the evidence which leads scholars of the Jerusalem School of Synoptic Research to conclude that the story of Jesus as found in the synoptic Gospels is based upon a Hebrew document.

If the Greek of the synoptic Gospels was originally translated from Hebrew or perhaps Aramaic, an English translator’s task is first to put the Greek back into Hebrew, understand the Hebrew idiom, and then translate the Hebrew - not the Greek - to English. If the translator does not recognise Hebraisms for what they are, his translation is likely to create confusion.

It is important to realize that there may be Hebrew idioms preserved in translations of the Gospels. Just being aware of this can help us read English versions of the Gospels with more understanding.

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Some words in Scripture are so familiar, we seldom ask what they mean in the original languages. “Hallelujah” and “Amen” come to mind. “Hosanna” is another. It’s how the crowds greeted Yeshua (Jesus) when he approached Jerusalem to celebrate his last Passover.

In the gospels, hosanna is bursting with messianic associations. We know this because of the Bible texts surrounding it. According to Scripture, the Messiah will be a king, as a future son of King David [2 Sam 7:12-16; Isa 9:7; 11:1-10]. Thus, we hear the crowds exclaim:

Hosanna to the Son of David. (Matthew 21:9, 15)

Hosannal...Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David. (Mark 11:9, 10)

Hosanna! Blessed is...the King of Israel. (John 12:12, 13)

They also shout the welcoming verse from Psalm 118:26: “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.” (Matt 21:9; Mark 11:9; John 12:13)

Linguists say Hosanna is a Greek adaptation of the Aramaic phrase Hosha Na. (Greek has no “sh” sound.) Aramaic is likely what the local Jews spoke when welcoming Yeshua. Hosha na is then an echo of the Hebrew of previous verse 25 in Ps 118.

Ana Adonai Hoshia Na — O LORD, do save, we beseech You!

Here’s the language chain: Hosha Na (Heb) > Hosha Na (Ara) > Hosanna (Grk)

**The Hosha Na –Yeshua Link**

Hoshia is the command (imperative) form of the verb yasha: to deliver, rescue, or save. The words na and ana from Ps 118:26 are emotional utterances meaning “O please, (I/we) beseech, beg you to...”

Messiah’s name “Yeshua” comes from the same root yasha, coupled with the name of God: “the LORD [Adonai, YHVH] saves.”

Remember the angel’s words to Joseph: “She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Yeshua, for it is he who will save his people from their sins” (Matt 1:21; see also Acts 4:12).

So what we hear in Jerusalem are communal pleas to this son of David, that he would fulfill the prophetic text of Psalm 118 and be their saving king. The hope-filled Jews shouted to Yeshua: “Save us, O Son of David, we beseech you. Blessed are you – you who comes in the LORD’s name.”

Here are the full texts of the four “Hosanna” greetings. (Punctuation is only my opinion.)

Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest places! (Matt 21:9)

Hosanna to the Son of David! (Matt 21:15)

Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest places! (Mark 11:9-10)

Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel! (John 12:13)
Sacred Assemblies
And Set Times

Written by:
Karl Coke

I am a guide in Israel. One day, while teaching on the Feasts of the LORD at David's tomb on Mt. Zion, the LORD revealed that the Menorah is a perfect visual aid for teaching on this subject. I was standing beside the Aaron Kodesh. It was covered with a cloth upon which the Menorah was embroidered.

I saw three branches on the left, one in the middle and three on the right. Immediately, I saw Pesach, Hag haMatzos and Bikkorim in the Spring, Shavuot in the Summer, and Hag Shofarim (Rosh haShana), Yom Kippor and Succoth in the Fall.

Moses told Pharaoh in Exodus 5:1 that HaShem’s reason for the Israelis to leave Egypt was “… that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness.”

Significant to this request is that no feast had ever been held by the Israelis nor had Moses written the Torah! These two facts make the definitions of the LORD’s feasts (that Moses later wrote as Leviticus 23:1-2) imperative to be understood.

Moses defines the feasts of the LORD as ydi[rmw] vdq, yao re q; m j i (“Miq-rah-ey Qodesh w’Mo-a-di”). The best English translations of these Hebrew words are “Sacred Assemblies” and “Appointed Seasons.”

Even clearer English would be “Rehearsals” and “Set Times.”

Why did Moses call the LORD’s feasts “rehearsals?” A rehearsal is not the real event. However, to properly “rehearse” any event, one must have complete knowledge of its “purpose.” Details of the event must be fully known in order to properly “rehearse” it. A “rehearsal” cannot take place without full knowledge of what is being “rehearsed.” Moses had such “first-hand” knowledge.

Hebrews 11:24–28 says of Moses that by faith he: 1) refused to be prince of Egypt choosing to suffer the affliction of his fellow Jews; 2) esteemed the reproach of Messiah greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; 3) forsook Egypt and endured because he had “seen” Messiah; and 4) observed Pesach and the shedding of blood which allowed God’s firstborn to be Israel’s propitiation.

This can only mean that Moses met Messiah “face to face” and God’s Messiah revealed to him all that He would do to redeem His people—Israel as the firstfruits and all believers in the end. Moses knew God’s plan of salvation and wrote its blueprint known to us as the Torah.

God’s idea was to redeem believing mankind from the foundation of the earth (Eph. 1:4; Rev. 13:8). Messiah revealed His plan to Moses at the burning bush. Moses wrote God’s plan in the blueprint form we call the Torah. Yeshua is the fulfillment of God’s plan and Moses’ blueprint. In Yeshua, we can all now see God’s plan of salvation as outlined by Moses.

Moses knew Messiah would: 1) die (Pesach); 2) be buried sinless (Hag haMatzos); 3) resurrect (Bikorim); 4) return to Jerusalem as the Holy Spirit (Shavuot); 5) announce His return with a trumpet (Hag Shofarim); 6) judge the living and the dead (Yom Kippor); and, 7) return to live on earth with His people (Succoth). How did Moses know these facts? Moses knew Messiah face to face (Ex. 33:11 & Deut. 34:10).

Moses knew God’s complete plan of redemption—not just a portion. Moses knew it so well that he called the major Messianic acts “set times.” His knowledge of God’s plan was so precise that he was able to write down the exact months, days and hours that Yeshua would carry out God’s redemptive plan. The overlay of the Gospel’s account of Yeshua’s redemptive acts with the feasts of the LORD are breathtakingly accurate. Not one significant detail is missing.

Moses spoke of Yeshua in Deuteronomy 18:15-18. Jesus spoke of Moses writing about Him. In John 5:39, Jesus said to the Jews, “Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify (moedim - set times) of me. Then in John 5:46 Jesus affirmed that Moses was writing about Him by saying, “For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me.”

Moses’ writings are all about God as Messiah redeeming believing mankind. Moses revealed Messiah in the Tabernacle, the sacrificial system, His encounters with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the Feasts of the LORD, the Exodus, the Manna in the wilderness and other such items. Moses wrote every word about Messiah without ever once writing an error, an exaggeration or an ambiguity. The Torah is filled with information about the Gospel. This is precisely where the Jewish scholar, Paul, got all his information about Yeshua (I Cor. 15:1-4). Read Moses. Find Yeshua!

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www.karlcoke.com
The Entrances of the Tabernacle

The Way, the Truth and the Life

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Written by:
Roger Finch

Exodus 40:1-11; 1 ADONAI said to Moshe, 2 On the first day of the first month, you are to set up the tabernacle, the tent of meeting. 3 Put in it the ark for the testimony, and conceal the ark with the curtain. 4 Bring in the table, and arrange its display. Bring in the menorah, and light its lamps. 5 Set the gold altar for incense in front of the ark for the testimony, and set up the screen at the entrance to the tabernacle. 6 Place the altar for burnt offerings in front of the entrance to the tabernacle, the tent of meeting. 7 Set the basin between the tent of meeting and the altar, and put water in it. 8 Set up the courtyard all the way around, and hang up the screen for the entrance to the courtyard. 9 Take the anointing oil, and anoint the tabernacle and everything in it, consecrate it with all its furnishings; then it will be holy. 10 Anoint the altar for burnt offerings with all its utensils, consecrate the altar; then the altar will be especially holy. 11 Anoint the basin and its base, and consecrate it.

The Entrances of the Tabernacle

There were three entrances, and they are:

- The gate to the outer court (Exodus. 27:16-19; 16 For the gateway of the courtyard there is to be a screen thirty feet long made of blue, purple and scarlet yarn and finely woven linen. It should be in colours, the work of a weaver. It is to be on four posts in four sockets. 17 All the posts all the way around the courtyard are to be banded with silver and to stand in sockets of bronze. 18 The length of the courtyard is to be 150 feet and the width seventy-five feet everywhere; with the height seven-and-a-half feet. The tapestries and screen are to be of finely woven linen, and the sockets are to be of bronze. 19 All the equipment needed for every kind of service in the tabernacle, as well as the tent pegs for the tabernacle and for the courtyard, are to be of bronze.)

- The entrance to the holy place (Exodus 36:37-38; 37 For the entrance to the tent he made a screen of blue, purple and scarlet yarn and finely woven linen, in colours, the work of a weaver; 38 with its five posts and their hooks. He overlaid their capitals and their attached rings for hanging with gold, while their five sockets were of bronze.)

- The curtain or veil to the holy of holies (Exodus. 26:31-33; 31 "You are to make a curtain of blue, purple and scarlet yarn and finely woven linen. Make it with k'ruvim worked in, that have been crafted by a skilled artisan. 32 Hang it with gold hooks on four acacia-wood posts overlaid with gold and standing in four silver sockets. 33 Hang the curtain below the fasteners. Then bring the ark for the testimony inside the curtain; the curtain will be the divider for you between the Holy Place and the Especially Holy Place.)

Each of these was made of the same material a fine white woven linen with Blue, Purple and Scarlet threads running through the material (Exodus.38:18 The screen for the gateway to the courtyard was the work of a weaver in colours, of blue, purple and scarlet yarn and finely woven linen. Its length was thirty feet and its height seven-and-a-half feet all the way along, like the tapestries of the courtyard.). They were also the same size 100 square cubits. The gate was 20 x 5 cubits, the entrance and the veil were 10 x 10 cubits. (In Hebrew, the significance of numbers is also interesting to note; The number one hundred indicates fullness especially when it comes to age. A hundred denotes not only what is full; but also, the principle of return or increase.

"Luke 8:8 8 And other seed fell into the good soil; and when it came up, it produced fruit a hundredfold." While saying these things, He would call out, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear." (also see Matthew 13:8; and Mark 4:20). The number 10 has the meaning of completion and order.

You may be asking yourself why I should be interested in this? I hope as we continue you will realize that there is much that we can gain from understanding the symbolism and significance of all that is spoken of here. Remember that God said to Moses "be sure to make everything according to all that I have shown you on the mountain (Exodus 25:9)". This should tell us God had a purpose and a message “all scripture is God breathed and given for instruction and teaching (2 Timothy 3:16).”

Scripture tells us that these things were also written for us. 1 Corinthians 10:11 These things happened to them as prefiguratively historical events, and they were written down as a warning to us who are living in the acharit-hayamin (Last days).

Hebrews 8:5 But what they are serving is only a copy and shadow of the heavenly original; for when Moshe was about to erect the Tent, God warned him, “See to it that you make everything according to the pattern you were shown on the mountain.”

The curtains of the Tabernacle

The curtains each speak of Yeshua Ha-Mashiach and give many insights into his character and nature.

1) The linen, speaks of his humanity, a man amongst men yet with a special task just as the entrances had a special task.

2) The colour white of his purity, He was the one without sin without stain or blemish (1 Peter 1:19 on the contrary, it was the costly bloody sacrificial death of the Messiah, as of a lamb without defect or spot.).

3) The colour blue of his heavenly origin, He came from heaven although born of a woman. (Philippians 2: 5-9 5 Let your attitude toward one another be governed by your being in union with the Messiah Yeshua: 6 Though he was in the form of God, he did not regard equality with God something to be possessed by force. 7 On the contrary, he emptied himself, in that he took the form of a slave by becoming like human beings are. And when he appeared as a human being, 8 he humbled himself still more by becoming obedient even to death - death on a stake as a criminal! 9 Therefore God raised him to the highest place and gave him the name above every name;)

1) Peter 1:20 God knew him before the founding of the universe, but revealed him in the acharit-hayamin (last days) for your sakes.)
4) The colour purple of his kingship, Yeshua Ha-Mashiach is king of a kingdom not of this world (John 18: 33-39; 33 So Pilate went back into the headquarters, called Yeshua and said to him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" 34 Yeshua answered, "Are you asking this on your own, or have other people told you about me?" 35 Pilate replied, "Am I a Jew? Your own nation and head cohanim have handed you over to me; what have you done?"

36 Yeshua answered, "My kingship does not derive its authority from this world’s order of things. If it did, my men would have fought to keep me from being arrested by the Judeans. But my kingship does not come from here." 37 "So then," Pilate said to him, "You are a king, after all." Yeshua answered, "You say I am a king. The reason I have been born, the reason I have come into the world, is to bear witness to the truth. Every one who belongs to the truth listens to me." 38 Pilate asked him, "What is truth?"

Having said this, Pilate went outside again to the Judeans and told them, "I don’t find any case against him. 39 However, you have a custom that at Passover I set one prisoner free. Do you want me to set free for you the ‘king of the Jews’?"

When Yeshua said that his kingdom was not of this world, he did not mean that his kingdom was not on earth. The kingdom is where ever the King is obeyed, wherever he sits on the throne of men’s hearts.

5) The colour scarlet representative of his suffering and death, Peter captures the thought here in saying "it was not with .... silver and gold you were redeemed..... but with the precious blood of Yeshua Ha-Mashiach" (1 Peter 1: 17-23). The Entrance to the Court Is Called the Gate of the Court

It was the only way into the court and was also known to the Israelites as "WAY". It was wider than each of the other entrances and enabling all Israel to enter the court. Entrance to the court was made by lifting the bottom of the curtain.

1) There was only one access into the tabernacle and there is only one way into the presence of God and that is through Yeshua Ha-Mashiach

2) This entrance “the Gate” was wider than any of the others. The width of the entrance shows that God makes grace available to all, to whosoever will enter in.

3) To enter one had to bend down to go under the curtain. This bowing to enter shows a right attitude of heart, for when we come to Yeshua Ha-Mashiach we come humbly in need of a saviour. The man who will not bow his knee and his heart to Yeshua Ha-Mashiach cannot enter in.

Between the entrance to the court and the entrance to the holy place we find;

As I explain for some all of this may feel that all the detail is this not just too much. I have discovered that it is often in the detail that we see how great and how wonderful is our God. As in many great paintings it is the detail that makes us say "wow isn’t that wonderful". In his word God is often painting a picture for us.

The altar of sacrifice.

In Hebrew the word for altar is very earthy, holy place we find; sacrifice and therefore altar specifically means ‘a place where sacrifice is made’.

Its Size

- It was foursquare having four equal sides (has the meaning of unlimited)
- It was 5 cubits square (5 is the number of grace) which represents man’s inability because he needs God’s breath of life without which we cannot live (Acts 17:28 28 ‘for in him we live and move and exist.’ Indeed, as some of the poets among you have said, ‘We are actually his children.’)
- It was 3 cubits high the number 3 (Gods provision, fully and completely)

Its Nature

- It was made of acacia wood (indestructible) Note: Symbolism: Indestructible

Acacia trees and acacia wood has taken on meaning beyond a common wood used in construction. The acacia wood used as the foundation of the Tabernacle symbolizes the humanity of Yeshua while the gold overlay of the boards and poles symbolizes Yeshua’s deity. Isaiah described Yeshua as “a root out of dry ground” similar to the acacia tree growing out of arid desert soil (Isaiah 53:2 For before him he grew up like a young plant, like a root out of dry ground. He was not well-formed or especially handsome; we saw him, but his appearance did not attract us.).

- It was overlaid with bronze (Sin and judgment) Note: Bronze in scripture has a connection with sin and with forgiveness. When the Israelites complained and spoke against God and against Moses, God sent snakes into the camp which bit the people. When they sought forgiveness, Moses was told to make a bronze serpent and put it on a pole. The person looking up in faith to the snake on the pole would live.

"Moshe made a bronze snake and put it on the pole; if a snake had bitten someone, then, when he looked toward the bronze snake, he stayed alive." Numbers 21:9

In the new covenant scriptures, we see the link between this and faith in the Lord Yeshua Christ, who said: "John 3:14-15 14 Just as Moshe lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of Man be lifted up; 15 so that everyone who trusts in him may have eternal life." The metal bronze is also associated with armour and the trusting in human strength. For example, Goliath wore a helmet and armour of bronze, yet was defeated by David, who trusting in God, slew Goliath with a stone.

"1 Samuel 17:4-6 4 There came out a champion from the camp of the P’lishtim named Golyat, from Gat, who was two meters ninety-seven centimetres tall. 5 He had a bronze helmet on his head, and he wore a bronze armour plate weighing 54.5 kilograms. 6 He had bronze armour protecting his legs and a bronze javelin between his shoulders."

The use of bronze in the construction of the Tabernacle taught a lesson about the human tendency to sin and the need for redemption, through sacrifice, that is the death of human nature. Yeshua overcame human nature and sin, submitting Himself in perfect service to His Father’s will.
"Hebrews 10:3-5 3 No, it is quite the contrary - in these sacrifices is a reminder of sins, year after year. 4 For it is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins. 5 This is why, on coming into the world, he says, “It has not been your will to have an animal sacrifice and a meal offering; rather, you have prepared for me a body.”

- It was of the earth (But not man-made the design came from God) Exodus 25:40 See that you make them according to the design being shown you on the mountain.

The Laver (Basin) For Washing

The laver was placed between the curtain of the Holy Place and the altar.

(1) It came after the altar (sacrifice first)
The altar always came first for the priest. Salvation and then service. God was approached by way of the blood of sacrifice and the water of cleansing.

(2) It came before the door (wash before entering)
Within the door of the Holy Place were vessels that represented God Himself. No priest would dare to enter with any trace of uncleanness. "Be holy as I am holy" was commanded to the priests.

(3) It came after leaving the Holy Place (wash before going out)
In the outer court, everything was bronze. Inside the Holy Place everything was gold. As the priest came out of God's Presence and back into service he washed at the laver.

Its size (Immeasurable)

No measurements or instructions are given as to the shape and size of the laver. The only thing mentioned is that it had a stand (Ex 31:9), which made it easier to wash, and it was made of solid bronze, no wood at all. Also, it was made from mirrors given by the women: When we come to the Word of God, the Bible, it is to us a mirror for our soul that will cleanse us if we are willing to apply its purifying water to our lives.

Ephesians 5:26 26 To make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word,
2 Corinthians 3:18 So all of us, with faces unveiled, see as in a mirror the glory of the Lord; and we are being changed into his very image, from one degree of glory to the next, by ADONAI the Spirit.

The Entrance to the Tabernacle or the Holy Place is Called the Door of the Tabernacle

It was hung on 5 pillars made of acacia wood, which stood in bronze sockets, this shows that this entrance is part of the court. Yet the tops of the pillars were plated in gold, showing that the curtain was a part of the holy place. This was truly a cross over point and only priests were able to enter through the door into the tabernacle.

The door separated the earthly from the heavenly. The wood becomes gold and the bronze became silver. The Israelites knew this door as "TRUTH".

1) Through His offer Yeshua Ha-Mashiach made all sinners priests and gave access to the spiritual reality not experienced by the world, yet they can only enter through him.
2) This is the place of revelation where the truth of God, the truth of the universe comes to man. Not based on Human understanding or the finite minds of those who were created but on the omniscience of God.
3) Priest ministers in the Holy Place. Their purpose is to serve and worship.

When you enter the Holy place, gold becomes the metal of choice. What are some of the symbols of gold in scripture?

1. Wisdom and knowledge

A good name is worth more than fine gold and seeking the wisdom and knowledge of God is of far more value than riches of gold or silver. The only way to gain a 'good name' in the sight of God is by learning His Word and having the wisdom to put it into practice.

"Proverbs 22:1 Rather than wealth, choose a good reputation, esteem over silver and gold.
"Proverbs 8:10 Receive my instruction, rather than silver; knowledge, rather than the finest gold."
"Proverbs 16:16 How much better than gold is it to gain wisdom! Yes, rather than money, choose to gain understanding."

Gold also refers to those who impart the wisdom and knowledge of God to others who are willing to learn Proverbs 25:12 12 Like a gold earring, like a fine gold necklace is a wise reprouser to a receptive ear.

2. Faith

The nation of Israel which should have learned the spiritual lessons of the Tabernacle and Law of Moses failed to do so, they lacked faith thus Jeremiah writes in Lamentations: "Lamentations 4:1-2 1 How the gold has lost its lustre! How the fine gold has changed! How the stones of the sanctuary lie scattered at every street corner! 2 The precious sons of Tziyon, as precious as fine gold—to think they are now worth no more than clay jars made by a potter!"

What Do We See In the Construction of the Tabernacle?

In the Tabernacle construction we see that even though the various items were made of wood, they were overlaid with gold which is incorruptible. This symbolises corruptible human nature overlaid with the gold of a pure and refined faith, thus making the true believer acceptable to God.

"1Peter 1:7 ..Even gold is tested for genuineness by fire. The purpose of these trials is so that your trust's genuineness, which is far more valuable than perishable gold, will be judged worthy of praise, glory and honour at the revealing of Yeshua the Messiah."
"Revelation 3:18 My advice to you is to buy from me gold refined by fire (tried and tested faith), so that you may be rich; and white clothing, so that you may be dressed and not have to be ashamed of your nakedness;"

Between the entrance to the Holy place and the Holy of Holies we find;
The Menorah

Jewish Tradition

Still today the Jews use pure olive oil (shemen zayit) to light the menorah because it is the finest quality to be found. The word shemen is an acronym for: shemen - oil mizayit- from olives nivhar - chosen

The first Hebrew consonant of each word spells shemen.

It was the high priest alone who trimmed and dressed the lamp. He alone was responsible for the light shining.

All day and all night, whether anyone was present or not, these seven lamps constantly lit up the glory of the Holy Place and especially on the table of the showbread as a reminder that Gods Presence is always with His people.

The Menorah stands for light, wisdom, and Divine inspiration. In this period of darkness (the time in which we live), we should remember that we need the light of the world to be in us.

The Menorah is a seven-branched candleabrum beaten out of a solid piece of gold that served as one of the sacred vessels in the Holy Temple. It stood in the southern part of the Temple and was lit every day by the High Priest. Only pure, fresh olive oil of the highest quality was suitable to light the Menorah.
The Seven Lamps of the Menorah

The seven lamps of the Menorah also allude to knowledge, with six of the branches representing human wisdom, guided by the center branch of Divine light. The Menorah’s design and the ideas it communicates endure as an inspiration for universal enlightenment.

Since God dictated the creation of the Menorah from 100 percent pure gold, we should strive for “solid gold” with regard to our motives and behavior. In other words, our shining character traits on the inside should reflect the holy actions we take on the outside, and vice versa. In this way, the Menorah teaches us to bring out every soul’s inner Divine light so that we shine internally and externally.

The Menorah’s structure also inspires us to embrace holiness. The Menorah begins with a central stem that branches outwards, just as our demeanor, behavior, personality, and especially good deeds should branch out and influence others to illuminate the world around us.

“John 8:12 Yeshua spoke to them again: “I am the light of the world; whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light which gives life.””

“Matthew 5:14-16 14 “You are light for the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Likewise, when people light a lamp, they don’t cover it with a bowl but put it on a lampstand, so that it shines for everyone in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before people, so that they may see the good things you do and praise your Father in heaven.”

The Table of Showbread or Bread of Presence

The historian Josephus indicates that the bread was unleavened. This bread is sometimes referred to as being the ‘showbread’ because its literal meaning is ‘bread of the face’, i.e. bread set out before the face or presence of God.

- Fine Flour (representing from the earth)
- Baked (representing agony and suffering)
- Unleavened (representing nothing artificial)
- Two-tenths (two deals of ten)
- Sprinkled with pure frankincense (symbolic of priesthood)

The table of showbread was a small table made of acacia wood and overlaid with pure gold. It measured 91.5 cm by 46 cm and was 69 cm high. It stood on the right side of the Holy Place across from the lampstand and held 12 loaves of bread, representing the 12 tribes of Israel.

The priests baked the bread with fine flour and it remained on the table before the Lord for a week; every Sabbath day the priests would remove it and eat it in the Holy Place, then put fresh bread on the table. Only priests could eat the bread, and it could only be eaten in the Holy Place, because it was holy.

“Showbread” also was called “bread of the presence” because it was to be always in the Lord’s presence. The table and the bread were a picture of God’s willingness to fellowship and communion (literally speaking, sharing something in common) with man. It was like an invitation to share a meal, an extension of friendship.

Eating together often is an act of fellowship. God was willing for man to enter into His presence to fellowship with Him, and this invitation was always open.

Yeshua exemplified this when He ate with tax collectors, prostitutes and the sinners of Jewish society. But this was more than just a gesture of friendship on earth. Yeshua came to call sinners to Him, make them right with God, so that they could enjoy everlasting fellowship with God.

John 6:35 35 Yeshua 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. . . . John 6:49-50 9 Your fathers ate the man in the desert; they died. 50 But the bread that comes down from heaven is such that a person may eat it and not die.

God so desires our fellowship that He was willing to come to earth from heaven as our “bread of life” to give eternal life to all those who would partake in it. At Yeshua’ last Passover meal with His disciples, Yeshua described Himself as bread again:

Matthew 26:26 26 While they were eating, Yeshua took a piece of matzah, made the b’rakhah, broke it, gave it to the talmidim and said, "Take! Eat! This is my body!"

Yeshua’ broken body is our only access to fellowship with God. Today, we celebrate the Lord’s Supper, or communion, to remember this important truth. And today, as in the day of Moses’ tabernacle, God still desires to have fellowship and sit down for a feast with His people.

Revelation 3:20 20 Here, I’m standing at the door, knocking. If someone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he will eat with me.

The Golden Altar of Incense

- The sweet incense was to be kept burning at all times.
- It was before the veil, and the throne of God (Yeshua for us)

The golden altar of incense tells us of the ministry of Yeshua as our intercessor whose prayers never stop ascending to God on our behalf. Yeshua said to Peter, “I have prayed for you.”

The four horns speak of the Messiah’s ministry extending to the four corners of the earth. He will always pray for His own no matter where they are. He can intercede on our behalf because of the atoning work on the cross of Calvary.

The incense was fuelled by the fire from the altar. It is not just anyone praying for us but the King Himself as represented by the crown of gold. He knows our weaknesses and our failings and He is praying for us always.

The Entrance to the Holy of Holies Is Called the Veil of the Tabernacle

It was made of the same materials as the other but was embroidered with cherubim as were the walls, as explained earlier, but it is popularly believed there were two cherubim with their wings touching. The veil was hung on four pillars of acacia wood that were gold plated and stood upright in silver sockets. The veil divided the tabernacle into two, the holy place at the front 20 x10 cubits and the holy of Holies that became a room 10 cubits long x
10 cubits wide x 10 cubits high. Only the high priest was able to go beyond the veil and then only once a year on the Day of Atonement.
The veil which means “to hide or conceal” hid from view the Ark of the Covenant and the mercy seat.

It also acted as a barrier

a) The veil was a barrier that shut man out from God’s presence; it allowed no approach to God.

b) The veil formed a barrier that barred man’s approach to the mercy seat

c) It concealed from man the glory of God

It therefore shut man out from the life of God and the reality of eternal life itself. Just as the cherubim guarded the way to the tree of life (Gen.3:24), so the cherubim guarded the way to the life of God.

It is no surprise to learn that the Israelites knew the veil by the name “LIFE”.

1) The cherubim of the veil protecting the means to life (Gen 3:24), all approach to God for only the righteous could enter.

2) The veil torn from top to bottom at the crucifixion (Matthew 27:51 At that moment the parokhet in the Temple was ripped in two from top to bottom; and there was an earthquake, with rocks splitting apart.,

Hebrews 10:19-20; 19 So, brothers, we have confidence to use the way into the Holiest Place opened by the blood of Yeshua. 20 He inaugurated it for us as a new and living way through the parokhet, by means of his flesh.), It was torn from top to Bottom, from above to below showing that this opening of the way to God came from God.

3 When Yeshua was asked “how can we know the way “he answered “I am the WAY, the TRUTH and the LIFE. No one comes to the father except through me.” (John 14:5-6).

Yeshua was explaining that he was the three entrances into God’s presence. That access to God the Father is found only in Yeshua Ha-Mashiach the Son.

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Prophetic Perspectives
Jerusalem—an intoxicating cup of poison for the nations

Written by:
Keijo Lindeman

“For we know in part and we prophesy in part” (1 Cor.13:9).

“This is the word of the LORD concerning Israel. The LORD, who stretches out the heavens, who lays the foundations of the earth, and who forms the spirit of man within him, declares: I am going to make Jerusalem a cup that sends all the surrounding peoples reeling (Hebrew sa’ ra’ al = a cup of poison). Judah will be besieged as well as Jerusalem. On that day, when all the nations of the earth are gathered against her, I will make Jerusalem an immovable rock (Hebrew even ma’amasa = a heavy stone, a heavy burden-stone) for all the nations. All who try to move it will injure themselves” (Zechariah 12:1-3,NIV).

“This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, said to me: Take from my hand this cup filled with the wine of my wrath and make all the nations to whom I send you drink it. When they drink it, they will stagger and go mad because of the sword I will send among them. So I took the cup of the LORD’s hand and made all the nations to whom he sent me drink it: Jerusalem and the towns of Judah, its kings and officials, to make them a ruin and an object of scorn and cursing, as they are today… But if they refuse to take the cup from your hand and drink, tell them: This is what the LORD Almighty says: You must drink it! See, I am beginning to bring disaster on the city that bears my Name, and will you indeed go unpunished? You will not go unpunished, for I am calling down a sword upon all who live on the earth, declares the LORD Almighty. Now prophesy all these words against them and say to them: The LORD will roar from on high; he will thunder from his holy dwelling and roar mightily against his land. He will shout like those who tread the grapes, shout against all who live on the earth. The tumult will resound to the ends of the earth, for the LORD will bring charges against the nations; he will bring judgment on all mankind and put the wicked to the sword” (Jeremiah 25:15-18, 28-31,NIV).

Jerusalem is built like a city that is closely compacted together. That is where the tribes go up, the tribes of the LORD, to praise the name of the LORD according to the statute given to Israel. There the thrones for judgment stand, the thrones of the house of David” (Psalm 122:3-5,NIV).

Finland celebrated its 100 years of independence on December 6th 2017. On that same day US President Donald Trump recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and promised to transfer US embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, according to his election promise.

After the decision of the US a few other countries, such as Guatemala, Czech and Hungary, plan to transfer their embassies to Jerusalem. The decision made by the US has caused much anger and protest in the Arab union who demand cancellation of that decision.

President Trump’s decision has been widely criticized in the Muslim world. Palestinians insist on having their own state with eastern Jerusalem as its capital, and they are furious about President Trump’s decision because according to them it debilitates their chances to reach their goal. The United Nations make their most to invalidate Trump’s decision. The most fanatic radical Muslims (such as Hamas militants) do not even acknowledge the existence of the state of Israel, and they are prepared to violence and war to deliver Israel and Jerusalem from Zionist occupiers, as they put it. The European Union also objects to US President’s decision and is prepared to support the establishment of a Palestinian State on the Westbank area, with eastern Jerusalem as its capital.

Israel, on the other hand, is happy about President Trump’s decision and considers Jerusalem as its undivided capital, whose history as the capital of a Jewish state is as old as 3000 years, ever since the days of King David. According to the Psalm 122 Jerusalem is “a closely compacted” (undivided) capital, where “the thrones for judgment stand, the thrones of the House of David”.

Zechariah’s and Jeremiah’s prophecies are becoming true. Jerusalem is about to become a bone of contention, an intoxicating cup of poison, a cup filled with wine of wrath, and an immovable rock to the nations surrounding Israel and even to all nations.

The Temple Mount is a very sensitive area in religious sense. All those who try to move that Jerusalem rock will injure themselves badly. There comes a time when God will make the surrounding nations and eventually all nations drink that cup of God’s wine of wrath. All nations have to drink that cup of God’s wine of wrath, even those who don’t want to.

Jerusalem is the place of God’s feet and the city of the great King, and when the nations rise to attack and divide her, they rise against God, and they will be judged (Isa. 60:13; Matt.5:34-35). Joel also prophesies that trying to divide the land of Israel brings judgment on the nations, and the Lord will judge every nation that tries to divide the land of Israel and touch Jerusalem with evil in their minds (Joel 3:1-3 or 4:1-3).

The generals of Israel and the atom war

“On that day I will strike every horse with panic and its rider with madness”, declares the LORD. “I will keep a watchful eye over the house of Judah, but I will blind all the horses of the nations. Then the leaders of Judah (Hebrew alufei Jehudah= the princes or generals of Judah) will say in their hearts, ‘The people of Jerusalem are strong, because the LORD Almighty is their God.’ “On that day I will make the leaders of Judah (Hebrew alufei Jehudah= generals of Judah) like a brazier in a woodpile, like a flaming torch among sheaves. They will consume right and left all the surrounding peoples, but Jerusalem will remain intact in her place. The LORD will save the dwellings of Judah first, so that the honour of the house of David and of Jerusalem’s inhabitants may not be greater than that of Judah. On that day the LORD will shield those who live in Jerusalem, so that the feeblest among them will be like David, and the house of David will be like God, like the Angel of the LORD going before them. On that day I will set out to destroy all the nations that attack Jerusalem” (Zechariah 12:4-9,NIV).

This text speaks about the leaders of the tribe of Judah. The original Hebrew text uses the word alufei Jehudah, which in modern Hebrew has the meaning “gene-
rals of Judah”, who will play a decisive role in this war, consuming like a brazier and a flaming torch the surrounding peoples who attack Israel. The horses of the nations will be struck with panic and the riders with madness. The Book of Revelation speaks about flying war horses, i.e. fighter planes.

“The locusts like horses prepared for battle. On their heads they wore something like crowns of gold, and their faces resembled human faces. Their hair was like women’s hair, and their teeth were like lions’ teeth. They had breastplates like breastplates of iron, and the sound of their wings was like the thundering of many horses and chariots rushing into battle” (Revelation 9:7-9,NIV).

In that war the technology of the enemy’s planes fails, their system goes blind and confused and the pilots won’t be able to control the planes any more. The pilots themselves get mad. One may ask if Israel has such superior military technology that she can throw in disorder the information technology of enemy planes in a way to make their system go wild, or is it God working there His miracles, or both.

All will culminate in an atom war. The atom fire sent by the generals of Judah will consume the attacking nations surrounding Israel, and the devastation will be huge. In chapter 14 Zechariah speaks about the use of atom weapons.

“This is the plague with which the LORD will strike all the nations that fought against Jerusalem: Their flesh will rot while they are still standing on their feet, their eyes will rot in their sockets, and their tongues will rot in their mouths. On that day men will be stricken by the LORD with great panic. Each man will seize the hand of another, and they will attack each other. Judah too will fight at Jerusalem. The wealth of all the surrounding nations will be collected – great quantities of gold and silver and clothing. A similar plague will strike the horses and mules, the camels and donkeys, and all the animals in those camps” (Zechariah 14:12-15,NIV).

The attacking forces will get in a state of utter chaos and start fighting against each other. The atom weapons of the generals of Judah will destroy them. Zechariah’s description refers to the use of neutron bombs whose explosive power doesn’t do much damage to buildings or infrastructure, but their neutron radiation kills/rots all the animate. By the way, the scientist who developed the neutron bomb was a Jew called Samuel Cohen.

Psalm 83 also speaks about this battle and names the attacking nations: Edom, Moab and Ammon, i.e. Jordan, the Hagrites, i.e. Egypt (Hagar was Abraham’s Egyptian concubine), Gebal and Tyre, i.e. Lebanon, Assur, i.e. Syria, and Irak, and Philistia, i.e. Palestinians. Egypt and Jordan, in spite of their peace treaty with Israel, are in the enemy lines. Those who attack Israel want to wipe out the name of Israel from the face of the earth, and take possession of the dwellings of God, i.e. Jerusalem.

The Psalm tells us that the enemies of Israel will be destroyed. The fire will burn the attacking forces and the destruction and shame of the attacking nations will be great, and God gets the glory.

The land area of Israel will enlarge as a result of the war

“The LORD will save the dwellings of Judah first, so that the honour of the house of David and of Jerusalem’s inhabitants may not be greater than that of Judah” (Zechariah 12:7,NIV).

“People from the Negev will occupy the mountains of Esau, the people from the foothills will possess the land of the Philistines. They will occupy the fields of Ephraim and Samaria, and Benjaminites will possess Gilead. This company of Israelite exiles who are in Canaan will possess the land, as far as Zarepath; the exiles from Jerusalem who are in Seapharad (Hebrew sfarad = Spain) will possess the town of the Negev. Deliverers will go up on Mount Zion to govern the mountains of Esau. And the kingdom will be the LORD’s” (Obadiah 19-21,NIV)

“He will raise a banner for the nations and gather the exiles of Israel; he will assemble the scattered people of Judah from the four quarters of the earth. Ephraim’s jealousy will vanish, and Judah’s enemies will be cut off; Ephraim will not be jealous of Judah nor Judah hostile toward Ephraim. They will swoop down on the slopes of Philistia to the west; together they will plunder the people to the east. They will lay hands on Edom and Moab, and Ammonites will be subject to them. The LORD will dry up the gulf of the Egyptian sea; with a scorching wind he will sweep his hand over the Euphrates River. He will break it up into seven streams so that men can cross over in sandals. There will be a highway for the remnant of his people that is left from Assyria, as there was for Israel when they came up from Egypt” (Isaiah 11:12-16,NIV)

“I will signal for them and gather them in. Surely I will redeem them; they will be as numerous as before. Though I scatter them among the peoples, yet in distant lands they will remember me. They and their children will survive, and they will return. I will bring them to Gilead and Lebanon, and there will not be room enough for them. They will pass through the sea of trouble: the surging sea will be subdued and all the depths of the Nile will dry up. Assyria’s pride will be brought down and Egypt’s scepter will pass away. I will strengthen them in the LORD and in his name they will walk, declares the LORD” (Zechariah 10:8-12,NIV).

The area occupied by Palestinians is called Westbank, but in the Bible that area belongs to Judah and Samaria. According to Zechariah the area of Judah will be delivered from enemy occupation and returned to Israel. Along with Samaria also the areas of Esau in southern Jordan will be connected to Israel, as Obadiah prophesies. Sefardic Jews, descendants of so called Anusim Jews of Spain, Portugal, Brazil and the rest of South America, and other countries, who were forced to convert, will come and settle the “Sepharad”, the Negev.

The areas of Edom and Moab in southern and central Jordan will be in Israel’s possession. According to Zechariah, Gilead, the area towards Syria and northern Jordan from Golan, as well as Lebanon, will be connected to Israel for the Exodus of the End times. The peninsula of Sinai in the south will be Israeli area as far as the river of Egypt, probably even up to the Nile, as God had promised Abraham. That is how God will enlarge, as the result of the storms of war, the land of Israel for the return of the End time Exodus Jews.

Something happens that causes a wave of global antisemitism and hatred against Israel, which will compel the Jews to flee the persecutions to the land of Israel, so that no Jew will be left among the nations (Jeremiah 16:14-16; Zechariah 2:6-8; Ezekiel 39:28).

Why does the Devil want to take Jerusalem and destroy Israel?

The devil knows that when Yeshua the Messiah returns to Jerusalem on the Mount of Olives the time of his judgment has come. The devil is well aware that he and his troops will be thrown to the Abyss for a thousand years, after which he will be released for a short time to raise a last revolt against Jerusalem, but he will be overcome and thrown into the lake of burning sulphur with his troops, as the Book of Revelation chapter 20 tells us (Matt.25:41).

The devil has no power to resist the Almighty God, but he tries to prevent the judgment from falling on him by taking Jerusalem in his control and inciting the enemies of Israel against Jerusalem
and Israel. The devil tries to put obstacles in order to achieve that there would be no people of Israel in Jerusalem to shout “Blessed be He who comes in the Name of the Lord!”, in which case the Messiah couldn’t return to the Mount of Olives. The schemes of the devil will fail, however, because the God of Israel is Alknowing and Almighty and takes care of His people Israel.

Israel will be purified through fire to be a people of priests

“In the whole land”, declares the LORD, “two-thirds will be struck down and perish; yet one-third will be left in it. This third I will bring into the fire; I will refine them like silver and test them like gold. They will call on my name and I will answer them; I will say, “They are my people”, and they will say, “The LORD is our God” (Zechariah 13:8-9,NIV).

“However, the days are coming”, declares the LORD, “when men will no longer say, ‘As surely as the LORD lives, who brought the Israelites up out of Egypt,’ but they will say, ‘As surely as the LORD lives, who brought the Israelites up out of the land of the north and out of all the countries where he had banished them.’ For I will restore them to the land I gave their forefathers. “But now I will send for many fishermen,” declares the LORD, “and they will catch them. After that I will send for many hunters, and they will hunt them down on every mountain and hill and from the crevices of the rocks. My eyes are on all their ways; they are not hidden from me, nor is their sin concealed from my eyes. I will repay them double for their wickedness and their sin, because they have defiled my land with the lifeless idols. Jeremiah sheds more light on the matter in his prophecy. He prophesies that before the great Exodus from the northern country and from other countries, when fishermen coax and hunters (persecutors) chase the Jews as to make them return to Israel, God will first revenge them two times their iniquities and sins. Isaiah has a similar expression. Before the time of consolation for Israel and Jerusalem in the End time, the Jewish people has had twice (Hebrew kiflaim) for her sins from the Lord’s hand.

This has come true twice: twice has the land of Israel and the Temple been destroyed, twice has the people been sent to exile. The first it happened in two parts.

First the northern part of the divided Israel, the ten tribes or Efraim, i.e. Joseph, were deported to Assyria in 722 BC. The southern Judah was taken to exile in Babylon in the days of Nebuchadnezzar in 586 BC, and Solomon’s Temple was destroyed. The second time came about in 70 AD: the Romans destroyed Jerusalem and the Second Temple, and surviving Jews were deported to Rome and sold as slaves among the nations, and the land was deserted for two thousand years.

Now, in the End time, it will be the third time; the people of Israel will have to undergo God’s purifying fire which cleanses them from their sins and turns their hearts to receive Yeshua, their Messiah. The prophet Malachi speaks about this:

“See, I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come, says the Lord Almighty. But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner’s fire or a launderer’s soap. He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver. Then the LORD will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness and the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem will be acceptable to the LORD, as in days gone by, as in former years” (Malachi 3:1-4,NIV).

In the last moments before the Messiah’s coming the people of Israel will be refined in fire in order to make them a holy people of priests in the Messiah’s Millennial Kingdom of Peace (Revelation 20; Isaiah 61:4-6). The Church of the Lord will also be purified and refined in fire, so that it would be holy and blameless for the Messiah’s coming and the taking up of the Church (Ephesians 5:25-27).

Israel will repent in the synagogues

“And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they have pierced and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son. On that day the weeping in Jerusalem will be great like the weeping of Hadad Rimon in the plain of Megiddo. The land will mourn, each clan by itself, with their wives by themselves: the clan of the house of David and their wives, the clan of the house of Levi and their wives, the clan of Shimei and their wives, and all the rest of the clans and their wives. On that day a fountain will be opened to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and impurity. On that day, I will banish the names of the idols from the land, and they will be remembered no more, declares the LORD Almighty. I will remove both the prophets and the spirit of impurity from the land” (Zechariah 12:10-13:2,NIV)

The Spirit of grace and prayer will be poured on the Jewish people in those days of distress. They will look upon their Messiah Yeshua nailed to the Cross and they will receive Him. All Israel will be saved, as Paul writes to the Romans (Rom.11:25-29). The first to repent will be the house of David, i.e. political leaders of Israel; the house of Nathan i.e. prophets; the house of Levi, i.e. religious leaders, and the house
of Shimei, i.e. government officials. The whole nation will join in the repentance with secular and religious leadership.

Special mention is made to “their wives” several times. This means synagogues which maintain the orthodox tradition of men and women sitting separately. This is to say that when Israel repents, synagogues and worship that takes place in them have an important role in Israel getting saved through faith in Yeshua as their Messiah. Why synagogues? Because God will not allow the people of Israel be led astray by unbiblical doctrines infiltrated into Christianity by the Roman Church. The Israeli people of priests need to be rooted in biblical teaching and the model of the Early Church to be the people of priests in the Messiah’s Kingdom.

All nations will gather against Israel and Jerusalem

“Tribes of the north will rise against them, and the tribes of the south will rise against them. You will flee as you fled from the earth, for it will extend to Azel. You will flee (Hebrew nastem=“closes”). According to this theory, the Mount of Olives will be split in two from east to west, forming a vast valley, and that may be the moment for Islamic abominations, the Dome of the Rock and Al Aqsa, together with Catholic abominations, to fall down into the ravine. (They may also be destroyed through an earthquake.) People will flee to this valley for shelter.

Moshe Ben Meir, a late Messianic pioneer, had an interesting theory. The word “you’ll flee” is “nastem” in Hebrew, but as there was no vocalization, the word could be read “nistam,” which means “closes”. According to this interpretation the people of Israel will flee (nastem) to the valley born through the split in two of the Mount of Olives, the enemy will come after them, and then the Mount of Olives will close (nistam), and the enemy will be destroyed just like the Egyptians in the Sea of Reeds, when they were chasing the Israelites. The Book of Revelation suggests this possibility, too (Rev. 12:15-16). The river, or the forces, sent by the enemy to overtake the wife Israel, will perish when the earth swallows them like it swallowed the rebellious Korah and his family in the days of Moses (Numbers 16). The Mount of Olives will close up and swallow the enemies. The holy ones in their resurrection bodies will come with the Messiah to fight against Israel’s enemies, to save Israel from destruction, to judge the ungodly world and to establish the Messiah’s Millenial Kingdom on earth, as Jude also writes (Jude 14-15).

The Messiah’s Millennial Kingdom and the Temple

“On that day living water will flow out from Jerusalem, half to the eastern sea and half to the western sea in summer and in winter. The LORD will be king over the whole earth. On that day there will be one LORD, and his name the only name. The whole land, from Geba to Rimmon, south of Jerusalem, will become like the Arabah. But Jerusalem will be raised up and remain in its place, from the Benjamin Gate to the site of the First Gate, to the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Hananel to the royal winepresses. It will be inhabited; never again will it be destroyed. Jerusalem will be secure... Then the survivors from all the nations that have attacked Jerusalem will go up year after year to worship the King, the LORD Almighty, and to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles. If any of the peoples of the earth do not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD Almighty, they will have no rain. If the Egyptian people do not go up and take part, they will have no rain. The LORD will bring on them the plague he inflicts on the nations that do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles. This will be the punishment of Egypt and the punishment of all the nations that do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles. On that day “Holy to the Lord” will be inscribed on the bells of the horses, and the cooking pots in the LORD’s house will be like the sacred bowls in front of the altar. Every pot in Jerusalem and Judah will be holy to the LORD Almighty, and all who come to sacrifice will take some of the pots and cook in them. And on that day there will no longer be a Canaanite in the house of the LORD Almighty” (Zechariah 14:8-11, 16-21, NIV).

The end of all will be that the Messiah establishes a thousand year kingdom, where the resurrected holy ones will rule with the Messiah, as it is written in Revelation chapter 20, for instance (Luke 19:11-28).

In Jerusalem the third temple will be constructed, and the glory of the Messiah will dwell there (Isa.2:1-4; Ezek.40-48). The survivors of the nations that attacked Israel, and all nations, will come up to Jerusalem and worship the Lord Almighty and celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles, and learn the Word of God, the Torah, taught by the believing people of priests of Israel. Mount Zion will be the highest mountain on earth, other mountains will collapse, and the earth will be like plains of the Garden of Eden (Rev. 6, 16).

We are all invited to this wonderful Kingdom of the Messiah and, after that, to the eternal Kingdom of God in a new heaven and a new earth, the ultimate home of those whose names are in the Lamb’s book of life (Rev. 21-22).

I urge every one to receive in faith Yeshua the Messiah as their Saviour and King, and thus have part in that final and wonderful future that awaits those who belong to the Lord.
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