

Opening Scripture Reading/Prayer:

Exodus 31:12-17

The Sabbath

¹² And the Lord said to Moses, ¹³ “You are to speak to the people of Israel and say, ‘Above all you shall keep my Sabbaths, for this is a sign between me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I, the Lord, sanctify you . . . ¹⁶ Therefore the people of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, observing the Sabbath throughout their generations, as a covenant forever. ¹⁷ It is a sign forever between me and the people of Israel that in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed.’”

Leviticus 19:1-4

The LORD Is Holy

¹ And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ² “Speak to all the congregation of the people of Israel and say to them, **You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy.** ³ Every one of you shall revere his mother and his father, and **you shall keep my Sabbaths;** I am the LORD your God. ⁴ Do not turn to idols or make for yourselves any gods of cast metal: I am the LORD your God.

Ezekiel 20:20

*I am the LORD your God; walk in my statutes, and keep my judgments, and do them; and **keep my SABBATHS holy;** and they shall be a **SIGN between me and you,** that ye may now that I am the LORD your God.*

It has become a common desire of believers today to desire signs and wonders from God to assist in our faith, or simply to be able to say you witnessed a miracle. Nonetheless, in **Ezekiel 20**, the Lord tells us of the sign that we have:

¹¹ *I gave them My statutes and explained My ordinances to them, which, if a man keeps, he will live. ¹² Also I gave them My Sabbaths to be a sign between Me and them, that they might know [without any doubt] that I am the Lord who sanctifies them (separates and sets them apart).*

Notice two things here:

1. The sign is the sabbath! We look for physical manifestations of miracles - the blind receiving sight, the lame walking, the sick healed, the dead raised, or fire from heaven. The still small voice offers an alternative - His divine rest - peace, contentment, separation from the chaotic noise of the busy world to connect more intimately with Him.

2. Who is the sign for? Is it for the unbelieving world that they might believe in God? No. **The sign is for us,** that we might believe, walk in faith, love, holiness, and alignment with God and His ways **THAT** the world might see God and give Him glory. Without us walking in that manner, the world will not see God.

The Father understands that we need encouragement to walk in alignment with Him and contrary to the world around us. He is gracious in giving us literally a weekly sign that ought to spur our faith and fill us with hope for the glorious inheritance that awaits His children. So as His set-apart ones, redeem the time and give the Lord your set-apart time each week. – *Brandon Shirkey*

Before we move into the teaching of the story of Redemption, let us once again, together, Wrestle out these two portions of Scriptures in contemplation of God's work of Redemption:

Isaiah 45:6-7

⁶ . . . I am the LORD, and there is no other.

⁷ I form light and create darkness;

I make well-being and I create calamity;

I am the LORD, who does all these things.

Our Resolve:

And the second teaching I want us to Wrestle with as we contemplate God's work of Redemption:

Hebrews 12:28-29

²⁸ Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, ²⁹ for **our God is a consuming fire.**

Our Resolve:

James 4:4

⁴ You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

Matthew 6:19-21

Lay Up Treasures in Heaven

¹⁹ “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, ²⁰ but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Now let's together Learn how to Live this Redemptive Life out and demonstrate it to others, as the Light of God's Redemption in this dark world:

The Purpose of the Message today, to learn:

When God speaks a Word, it will be done as He has said, despite how circumstances appear in the natural.

... and ...

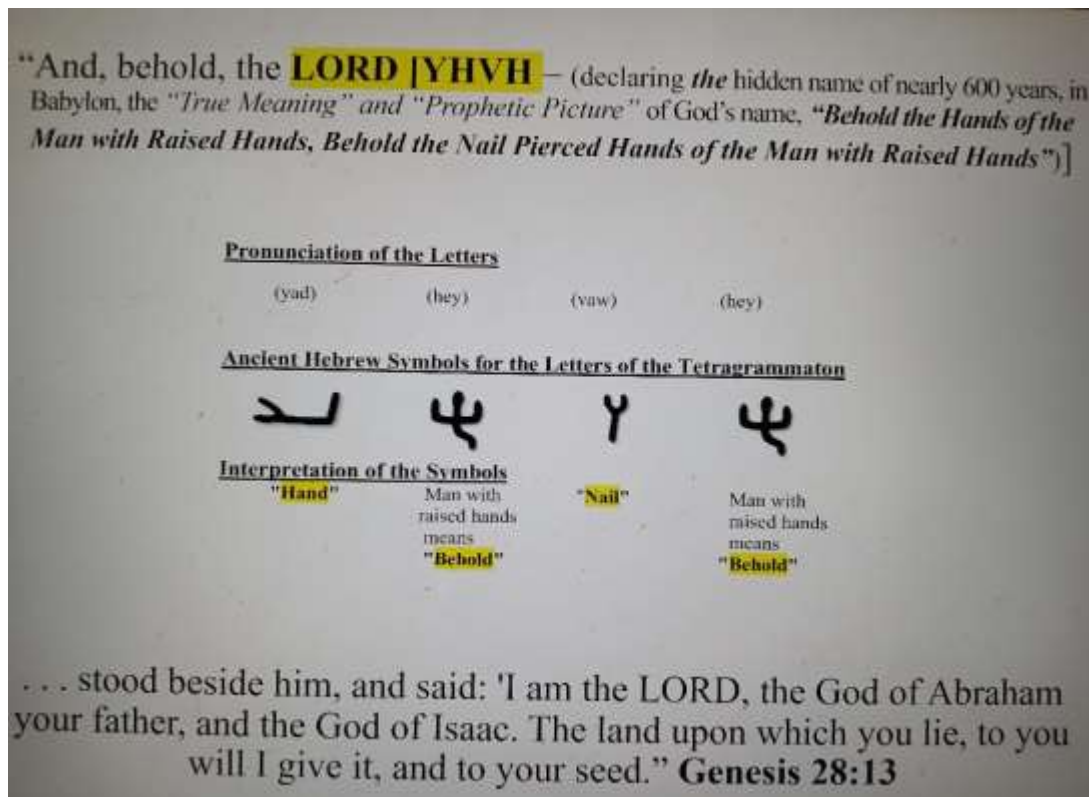
We are delivered through faith in Jesus, the Passover Lamb, not simply to walk away and “do our own thing.” As it was for the Israelites, the purpose of our freedom is to serve the living God.

**Week 14 - VA'ERA (And I Appeared)
 Exodus 6:2–9:35; Ezekiel 28:25–29:21, Revelation 15:1–16:20**

“God will Redeem Your Past, Present and Future.”

When God speaks a Word, it will be done as He has said, despite how circumstances appear in the natural.

“And I appeared [Va'era] to Abraham (Avraham), Isaac (Yitzhak), and Jacob (Yaacov) as El Shaddai (Lord God Almighty) but by My name, YHVH (“Havayah” – One Name to Rule Them All – The God Above all gods and Above all laws of nature), I did not make Myself known to them.” Exodus 6:2–3



AND ELOKIM (G-D) SPOKE TO MOSES AND HE SAID TO HIM, I AM HAVAYAH!” (6:2)

“That “**Havayah**” is greater than (any) Elokim,” Exodus 18:11 (and Ex. 6:2) . . . All the miracles performed by G-d in Egypt which defied all known laws of nature, were invoked by this **In – ef – fa – ble** (too great or extreme to be expressed or described in words) **Four-lettered Name of God**. All other attributes (i.e. names) of G-d are derived from the **Ineffable Name, “Havayah”** (One Name to Rule Them All), which symbolized G-d as a composite of the Hebrew words from “He **was**, He **is**, He **will be**”, the One who created the world and Who is eternal. The name “Elokim”, on the other had, symbolizes nature (i.e. the laws of nature).

Hebrews 13:8

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday (was) and today (is) and forever (will be).

It is here that we learn the name that God uses to demonstrate His Redemption, “**Havayah**” (the Ineffable (too great or extreme to be expressed or described in words) Four-lettered Name of G-d – “Now that’s a Four-Letter Word worth using!”).

Pharaoh had no difficulty in accepting G-d in His attribute as Elokim . . . but when the Torah writes, “*And **Havayah** hardened Pharaoh’s heart*”, the meaning is that it was the use of that name that made Pharaoh’s heart become obstinate. This the reason that Moses never used a different name for G-d when confronting Pharaoh.

Pharaoh duped himself . . .

In this we realize that G-d never interfered with Pharaoh’s decision-making process at all. *Pharaoh duped himself*. The case of his obstinacy was the meaning “I”, as in “**I am Havayah**” (6:2 and Ex. 4:22). When G-d said to Moses, “*I shall make the heart of Pharaoh obstinate*” (7:3), the implied meaning is: “*My revelation to him that **I am Havayah**, will harden his heart*” . . . **Pharaoh, therefore, limited his acknowledgement of the origin of G-d’s claim, “I am”, to Elokim, thereby excluding Havayah.**

In last week’s Torah study, **God appeared to Moses at the foot of Mount Sinai in a burning bush, instructing him to lead the Israelites out of Pharaoh’s bondage**. Because Moses perceived himself to be slow of speech, God appointed his brother Aaron to be his spokesperson.

When the brothers went before Pharaoh, he refused to let the Israelites go. **Instead of making the situation better, the Israelites’ enslavement became more oppressive** as Pharaoh required them to gather their own straw (whereas previously it had been provided for them) and still produce the same quota of bricks.

Of course, the children of Israel complained to Moses, so he brought their suffering before God. **God reassured Moses that things would turn around**. He told him that He would not only save the Israelites with a mighty deliverance, but Pharaoh would drive them from Egypt.

God Redeems Israel Past, Present and Future

In addition, we learned about the name of God YHVH Sabaoth (Sabi – oth – “The God of Infinite Resources”) and that there is Power and Authority in the Name.

While YHVH Sabaoth (Sabi – oth – “The God of Infinite Resources”) can be seen as **an intimate God who is with us in the details of our human experience calling us to answer the call of Repentance/to Return back to God with all of our Heart, Mind, Soul, and Strength, to do His Kingdom work according to His Kingdom Principles that are assigned by YHVH Sabaoth (Sabi-oth – “The God of Infinite Resources”).**

How do we respond to His call?

Like Hannah, we are to **pray**. He will answer according to His will.

Like David, we are to **call upon His authority** against enemies of His Kingdom.

Like Joshua, we are to **acknowledge** and show respect for His holiness.

And like Isaiah, we are to **go** (as we go about our days) into our workplaces, communities, and families as **humbled, forgiven ambassadors of YHVH Sabaoth (Sabi – oth – “The God of Infinite Resources”)**, spreading the Good News of the Kingdom of God – planting God’s *teaching and instruction* into the hearts of men and women, thereby extending His Kingdom, through the Great Commission to “*Make Disciples*”, turning *learners* into *teachers*, as the God of Infinite Resources has Commanded us to do, under His Authority and Empowerment.

In this Reading, God promises Moses that He will accomplish **four redemptive acts**:

Exodus 6:6-7

⁶Say therefore to the people of Israel, ‘I am the LORD, and **I will bring you out** from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and **I will deliver you** from slavery to them, and **I will redeem you** with an outstretched arm and with great acts of judgment. ⁷**I will take you to be my people**, and I will be your God, and you shall know that I am the LORD your God, who has brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.

1. He would **bring out** the Israelites from their suffering in Egypt,
2. **rescue** them from slavery,
3. **redeem** them from their oppression with His outstretched arm, and
4. **take** them as His own nation.

These four promises are called the Four Expressions of Redemption, and they are traditionally commemorated during the Passover Seder (ritual meal) with four cups of wine. With each cup meaning the following:

- **Cup One: Hotzeiti (הוצאתי)**, which means I will bring out;

- **Cup Two: Hitzalti** (הצילתי), which means I will rescue;
- **Cup Three: Ga'alti** (גאלתי), which means I will redeem; and
- **Cup Four: Lakachti** (לקחתי), which means I will take.

God also makes a **fifth expression of redemption**. He promises He will bring (**heveiti** הבהיתי) His people back into their own land.

Exodus 6:8

I will bring you into the land that I swore to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. I will give it to you for a possession. I am the LORD.”

Two thousand years ago, when the Jewish People lived in the Promised Land, this **fifth expression** may have been commemorated with a fifth cup of wine during the Seder.

Although God has been rescuing the Jewish people from their exile and bringing them back into the Land, **the fifth cup is considered to represent a complete Redemption through Messiah.**

- **Fifth Cup:** This fifth cup at the Passover Seder, therefore, is called the **Cup of Elijah**, which is left untouched for the **Prophet Elijah**, *who is expected to return to earth to herald the coming of the Messiah and His Messianic reign.*

Matthew 17 The Transfiguration

¹ And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. ² And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light. ³ And behold, there appeared to them Moses and **Elijah**, talking with him. ⁴ And Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you and one for Moses and one for **Elijah**.” ⁵ He was still speaking when, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.” ⁶ When the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces and were terrified. ⁷ But Jesus came and touched them, saying, “Rise, and have no fear.” ⁸ And when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only.

⁹ And as they were coming down the mountain, Jesus commanded them, “Tell no one the vision, until the Son of Man is raised from the dead.” ¹⁰ And the disciples asked him, “Then why do the scribes say that first **Elijah** must come?” ¹¹ He answered, “**Elijah** does come, and he will restore all things. ¹² But I tell you that **Elijah** has already come, and they did not recognize him, but did to him whatever they pleased. So also the Son of Man will certainly suffer at their hands.” ¹³ Then the disciples understood that he was speaking to them of John the Baptist.

Revelation 11 The Two Witnesses

¹ Then I was given a measuring rod like a staff, and I was told, “Rise and measure the temple of God and the altar and those who worship there, ² but do not measure the court outside the temple; leave that out, for it is given over to the nations, and they will trample the holy city for forty-two months (3 ½ Years). ³ And I will grant authority to my **two witnesses (Moses & Elijah)**, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days (3 ½ Years), clothed in sackcloth.”

⁴ These are the **two olive trees (Moses & Elijah)** and the **two lampstands (Moses & Elijah)** that stand before the Lord of the earth. ⁵ And if anyone would harm them, fire pours from their mouth and consumes their foes. If anyone would harm them, this is how he is doomed to be killed. ⁶ They have the power to shut the sky, that no rain may fall during the days of their prophesying, and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood and to strike the earth with every kind of plague, as often as they desire. ⁷ And when they have finished their testimony, the beast that rises from the bottomless pit will make war on them and conquer them and kill them, ⁸ and their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city that symbolically is called Sodom and Egypt, where their Lord was crucified. ⁹ For *three and a half days* some from the peoples and tribes and languages and nations will gaze at their dead bodies and refuse to let them be placed in a tomb, ¹⁰ and those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them and make merry and exchange presents, because these two prophets had been a torment to those who dwell on the earth. ¹¹ But after the *three and a half days* a breath of life from God entered them, and they stood up on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them. ¹² Then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, “Come up here!” And they went up to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies watched them. ¹³ And at that hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell. Seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven.

When God speaks a Word, it will be done as He has said, despite how circumstances appear in the natural.

Still, we live in a fallen world. **Many of us suffer from spiritual short-sightedness caused by focusing on our own suffering and loss.**

The Israelites were no different. **They were so downtrodden and grieved in spirit that they simply could not believe what Moses said the Lord would do for them:**

They couldn't even listen to his words of hope.

Exodus 6:9

9 Moses spoke thus to the people of Israel, but **they did not listen** to Moses, **because of their broken spirit and harsh slavery.**

This should remind us to be patient and merciful with ourselves, as well as those we minister to.

Even today, there are those whose bondage is so cruel and whose spirit so broken that they also cannot hear those who preach the Good News. Sometimes, they must watch us walk in the power of God, seeing signs and wonders before they will listen and believe.

We must faithfully be people who sow seeds, patiently waiting as God grows them.

"I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow." 1 Corinthians 3:6

As God had commanded them, Moses and his brother Aaron returned to Pharaoh over and over again, demanding that he let God's people go **so that they may serve Him in the wilderness.**

This whole account of God's redemption of Israel from Egypt has a spiritual parallel in our salvation from the kingdom of darkness, ruled by Satan and the Kingdom of Light, ruled by God. Following are those spiritual parallels:

"The Story of the Israelites Who Came Out of Egypt"

Let's be reminded of the parallels:

- The Israelites were in bondage while living in Egypt.
 - Christians were in bondage to sin while living in the world.
- On the night of their deliverance the Israelites applied the blood of an unblemished lamb to the lintel and doorposts of their homes. Then they entered through the door and were spared by the death angel when he recognized the blood on their doorways (Exodus 12).
 - Jesus Christ is the unblemished Lamb of God. His blood was smeared on the cross of Calvary in the same pattern as the Israelites applied it. The lintel is where the crown of thorns caused the blood to flow from His head and doorposts are where the nails pierced His hands (John 10:9).
- The Israelites were all under the cloud (the specific cloud that is being talked about is called the Sh'khinah: the cloud of glory) and all passed through The Red Sea. And all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea (1 Corinthians 10:1-2).
 - Christians are all baptized into Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit and in water (1 John 5:7-8).
- The Israelites received the Law of Moses written on tablets of stone at Mt Sinai.
 - Christians received the Law of Christ written on their hearts at Mt Zion (Jeremiah 31:31-34, Hebrews 8:1-13).
- The Israelites all ate the same spiritual food ... manna, the bread from heaven.
 - Christians all eat the same spiritual food ... communion bread, which is the body of Christ.
- The Israelites all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from the spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Christ.
 - Christians all drink the same spiritual drink ... communion wine, which is the blood of Christ.
- God was not pleased with **most** of the Israelites and they died in the wilderness. These people 1) craved evil things, 2) were idolaters, 3) acted immorally, 4) tried the Lord, and 5) grumbled against Him. They did not enter the Promised Land because of their unbelief (lack of faith).
 - Christians are cautioned against doing these things.
- The Israelites never lacked for food, clothing or shelter on their journey.
 - Christians will not lack for food, clothing or shelter in their life.
- When the Israelites engaged in battle they always won.
 - When Christians engage in spiritual warfare they always win.
- The Israelites had their sins forgiven when they confessed them while laying their hands upon the head of a lamb.
 - Christians have their sins forgiven when they confess them to Jesus, the Lamb of God.
- The Israelites were healed of their afflictions when by faith they looked to the bronze serpent on the staff.
 - Christians are healed when they look to Jesus Christ who was crucified on the cross.
- The Israelites entered the Promised Land following Joshua.
 - Christians will enter the Promised Land (Heaven) following Joshua.

The reason I used the name Joshua here is to make the point that Jesus' name in Hebrew is Yawshua (Joshua), which means, "I AM SALVATION". You should be reminded that Moses could not take the Israelites into the Promised Land because of his disobedience. This occurred when he struck the Rock, which was Christ, a second time to bring forth water. God had told Moses to speak to the Rock and it would bring forth water. The effect of this was that Moses gave a false prophetic sign: saying the Christ would be struck twice. However

God only permitted His Son, Jesus, the Christ to be struck once: on the Lord's Passover . . . at His trials, beatings and crucifixion. Moses also told the Israelites, “God shall raise up for you a prophet like me from your brethren.” The book of Numbers 27:12-23, indicates that it was Joshua whom God chose and it was he who led the Israelites into the Promised Land. Jewish people today have never made this connection concerning Jesus (Yawshua or Joshua) Christ as the one prophet who will lead the people to the Promised Land (Heaven).

We are delivered through faith in Jesus, the Passover Lamb, not simply to walk away and “do our own thing.” As it was for the Israelites:

The purpose of our freedom is to serve the living God.

Colossians 1:13–14

“For He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son He loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.”

1 Peter 2:9-10

*“But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, **that you may PROCLAIM the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.**”
¹⁰ Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.”*

Pharaoh Remains Proudful Despite Marvels and Wonders

God gave Moses and Aaron a special sign to show Pharaoh, which in Hebrew word "sign" means "a marvel or wonder". Aaron was to throw his stick down before Pharaoh, and it would be transformed. In most English translations, we read that the stick became a serpent; but in the Hebrew, the word used is **tannin**, which means a crocodile.

However, Pharaoh, as God foreknew, still refused to let the people go; therefore, God sent His judgment on Egypt in the form of the Ten Plagues.

“Pharaoh will not listen to you. Then I will lay My hand on Egypt and bring My hosts, My people the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great acts of judgment.” Exodus 7:4

These plagues are remembered each year at the Passover Seder during the second cup of wine. One drop is removed from the cup for each of the plagues, while the leader recites the list of judgments in Hebrew.

The idea behind this custom is that our cup (which represents joy) cannot be full while others are suffering.

First, the waters of the Nile River were turned to blood, **making it undrinkable**. Then frogs swarmed the land, and then an infestation of lice tormented man and beast.

Until the plague of lice, the Egyptian magicians and sorcerers were able to duplicate the plagues but, with this plague, they could not. Therefore, they recognized this to be the finger of God.

“Then the magicians said unto Pharaoh: 'This is the finger of God!'; and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had spoken.” Exodus 8:19

The 10 Plagues – “Havayah*” Versus the gods of Egypt

***Havayah** (One Name to Rule Them All – The God Above all gods and Above all laws of nature)

1. WATER TURNED TO BLOOD - Exodus 7:14-25

Egyptian god: Guardian of river's source - **Spirit of the Nile/Nile was his bloodstream.**

- Duplicated by the Egyptians.

2. FROGS - Exodus 8:1-15

Egyptian god: Frog goddess to Egypt - **Related to fertility.**

- Duplicated by the Egyptians.

3. LICE - Exodus 8:16-19

Egyptian god: **The earth god of Egypt.**

- Not duplicated by the Egyptians.

- Attributed to the "finger of God."

4. Flies - Exodus 8:20-32

Egyptian god: The fly god of Egypt.

- Not duplicated by the Egyptians.
- Attributed to the "finger of God."
- God now makes a separation between the Egyptians and the Israelites.
- No more plagues will come upon the Israelites.

5. DISEASE ON CATTLE - Exodus 9:1-7

Egyptian god: associated bulls and cows.

- Affects property
- Death of livestock.
- Not duplicated by the Egyptians.
- God makes a separation between the Egyptians and the Israelites.
- No more plagues will come upon the Israelites.

6. BOILS - Exodus 9:8-12

Egyptian god: gods of healing.

- Affects physical bodies.
- Pharaoh's magicians cannot even appear in court.
- Not duplicated by the Egyptians.
- God makes a separation between the Egyptians and the Israelites.
- No more plagues will come upon the Israelites.

7. HAIL - Exodus 9:13-35

Egyptian god: sky goddess.

- Not duplicated by the Egyptians.
- God makes a separation between the Egyptians and the Israelites.
- No more plagues will come upon the Israelites.

8. LOCUSTS - Exodus 10:1-20

Egyptian god: deity protector from Locusts.

- Not duplicated by the Egyptians.
- God makes a separation between the Egyptians and the Israelites.
- No more plagues will come upon the Israelites.

9. DARKNESS - Exodus 10:21-29

Egyptian god: sun gods.

- Not duplicated by the Egyptians.
- God makes a separation between the Egyptians and the Israelites.
- No more plagues will come upon the Israelites.

10. DEATH OF FIRSTBORN - Exodus 12:29-36

This plague was a judgment on all of Egypt's gods, including Pharaoh himself. In Exodus 1, Pharaoh had killed the sons of Israel. Now the Lord kills the firstborn sons of the Egyptians (Exodus 11-12). Pharaoh will now let Israel go. He will later lose his army to death in the Red Sea (Exodus 14:4-31)

The Meaning of Numbers: The Number 10

In the Bible, the number 10 is used 242 times. The designation "10th" is used 79 times. Ten is also viewed as a complete and perfect number, as is 3, 7 and 12. It is made up of 4, the number of the physical creation, and 6, the number of man. As such, **it signifies testimony, law, responsibility and the completeness of order**.

In Genesis 1 we find the phrase "God said" 10 times, which is a testimony of His creative power. God gave the 10 Commandments to man. **Ten therefore represents man's responsibility to keep the commandments.** A tithe is a 10th of our earnings and is a testimony of our faith in the Lord.

The Passover lamb was selected on the **10th day** of the 1st month (Exodus 12:3), as was Jesus, the Lamb that takes away the sins of the world (John 12:28 - 29; 1Corinthians 5:7). **The 10th day** of the 7th month is the Holy Day known as the **Day of Atonement**. This unique day of fasting pictures the removal of Satan, the author of sin, before the Millennial reign of Jesus begins (Revelation 20:1 - 2).

The last great world-ruling kingdom of man under Satan is symbolized prophetically by the **10 toes** of **Daniel 2** and the **10 horns** of **Revelation 13 and 17**.

Exodus 7:1-7

Moses and Aaron Before Pharaoh

And the LORD said to Moses, “See, **I have made you like God to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron shall be your prophet.** ² **You shall speak all that I command you,** and your brother Aaron shall tell Pharaoh to let the people of Israel go out of his land. ³ But **I will harden Pharaoh's heart,** and though I multiply my signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, ⁴ Pharaoh will not listen to you. Then I will lay my hand on Egypt and bring my hosts, my people the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great acts of judgment. ⁵ The Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I stretch out my hand against Egypt and bring out the people of Israel from among them.” ⁶ Moses and Aaron did so; they did just as the LORD commanded them. ⁷ Now Moses was eighty years old, and Aaron eighty-three years old, when they spoke to Pharaoh.

⁸ Then the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, ⁹ “When Pharaoh says to you, ‘Prove yourselves by working a miracle,’ then you shall say to Aaron, ‘**Take your staff and cast it down before Pharaoh, that it may become a serpent.**’” ¹⁰ So Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and did just as the Lord commanded. Aaron cast down his staff before Pharaoh and his servants, and it became a serpent. ¹¹ Then Pharaoh summoned the wise men and the sorcerers, and they, the magicians of Egypt, also did the same by their secret arts. ¹² For each man cast down his staff, and they became serpents. But **Aaron's staff swallowed up their staffs.** ¹³ Still **Pharaoh's heart was hardened,** and he would not listen to them, as the Lord had said.

AND AARON'S ROD SWALLOWED UP THEIR RODS (7:12)

G-d said: “If Aaron's serpent will swallow up the serpents of the Egyptians, there will be nothing remarkable in that, for serpents usually swallow each other. Therefore let it resume its original form and swallow up their serpents.”

(Midrash Rabbah)

The Torah's “ways are ways of pleasantness, and all its paths are peace” - (Proverbs 3:17) - our task is to create light, not to battle darkness.

Nevertheless, there are times when we are forced to resort to battle, when we must vanquish those who seek to vanquish us. Thus Moses, the gentle shepherd of Israel, and Aaron, the ultimate man of peace, find themselves in the role of “judge and chastiser of Pharaoh,” crushing the might of Egypt and obliterating its icons and myths.

Therein lies the lesson to be derived from the fact that Aaron's rod swallowed the “serpents of the Egyptians” after it had reverted back to its original form, rather than as a serpent itself. For even when he wages war, the Jew is not a warrior. Even when he consumes the serpents of the enemy, he is not a serpent himself, spewing poison and hate. His instrument of vengeance is as devoid of vengeful feeling as a petrified rod, as cold to the rage of war as a lifeless stick.

(The Lubavitcher Rebbe)

Pharaoh had **hardened his heart** and would not listen to the voice of reason — one of the surest signs of pride. **A humble man will receive correction willingly, but a person with pride immediately becomes defensive and will not listen to others.** This can bring about his downfall:

Proverbs 16:18

Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.

Proverbs 9:8

Do not reprove a scoffer, or he will hate you; reprove a **wise man**, and he will love you.

Proverbs 9:9

Give instruction to a **wise man**, and he will be still **wiser**; teach a righteous **man**, and he will increase in learning.

Proverbs 12:15

The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but a **wise man** listens to advice.

Note the contrast between Pharaoh and Moses, who even today is considered to be the most humble man to walk the earth.

In contrast, Pharaoh's Heart was Hardened, which warrants the question: **Why did God harden Pharaoh's heart?**

The best, most direct, simple answer to this question is:

Exodus 9:16

¹⁶ But for this purpose I have raised you up, to show you my power, so that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth.

The reason that is the best, most direct, simple answer to the question is because it is God's own answer. See Exodus 9:16 and Romans 9:17. God raised up Pharaoh and hardened Pharaoh's heart in order to promote His own glory, as commented by Paul in Romans 9:17-24:

¹⁷ For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, “For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.” ¹⁸ **So then he has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills.**

¹⁹ You will say to me then, “Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?”²⁰ But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, “Why have you made me like this?”²¹ Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use?²² What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, **has endured with much patience** vessels of wrath prepared for destruction,²³ in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory—²⁴ even us whom he has called, not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles?

Romans 9:27

²⁷ And Isaiah cries out concerning Israel: “Though the number of the sons of Israel be as the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them will be saved . . .

“But,” you may say, “that doesn’t sound right to me. It just doesn't seem to me that God would arrange for a person to actually sin and rebel just to make Himself great.” At which point I would ask, “How do you propose that we determine the truth about what motivates the heart of God? Will we base our conclusions on our own feelings about what seems right? Or will we base our conclusions on what God Himself says in the Bible to be true about what motivates Him?” I propose that when the Bible says that God hardened Pharaoh's heart, what it really means is that God simply facilitated a process that Pharaoh himself initiated. After all, the Bible repeatedly also states that Pharaoh hardened his own heart:

Exodus 8:15

¹⁵ But when Pharaoh saw that there was a respite, **he hardened his heart** and would not listen to them, as the LORD had said.

Exodus 8:32

³² But **Pharaoh hardened his heart** this time also, and did not let the people go.

God did not directly harden Pharaoh's heart (or anyone else's heart for that matter) contrary to their own free choice, but only indirectly, through their own choice. “God in His omniscience foreknew exactly how Pharaoh would respond, and He used it to accomplish His purposes. God ordained the means of Pharaoh's free but stubborn action...”

Are we saying that God Himself actually arranged for Pharaoh to sin? Yes, in much the same sense that He arranged for Joseph's brothers to sell Joseph into slavery (Genesis 50:20), Satan to attack Job (Job 1:12), Jews and Romans to crucify Jesus (Acts 2:23), and sin to exist in the first place.

How many times did God give Pharaoh an opportunity to Repent (or Stop doing things his way and start doing things God's way) before He executed his Judgment on the Egyptians, in line with setting His people Free from over 400 years of Bondage, which got set in motion over eighty years earlier through the Birth of Moses.

The answer is, **12 opportunities** God gave Pharaoh the opportunity to Repent.

The Meaning of Numbers: The Number 12

Twelve can be found in 187 places in God's word. Revelation alone has 22 occurrences of the number. **The meaning of 12, which is considered a perfect number, is that it symbolizes God's power and authority (God's divine authority - Matthew 28:18), as well as serving as a perfect governmental foundation.** It can also symbolize completeness or the nation of Israel as a whole.

Although Pharaoh promised to let the Jewish People go after the **plague of lice**, he **hardened his heart** and **renege**d on his promise. As a result, *God sent swarms of flies* that covered the land, then a **disease that killed all the cattle.**

God made a distinction between Israel and Egypt. While all the cattle of Egypt died, not even one of Israel's cattle fell to the disease. **Exodus 9:4**

This underlines the importance and reliability of being in a covenantal relationship with the Almighty God. None of Egypt's best sorcerers and masters of the occult could save them from the hand of God.

In the **sixth plague**, when God turned dust into painful boils upon man and beast, even the magicians suffered, and they could not stand before Moses because of them. **Exodus 9:9–11**

This week's Reading ends with the seventh plague of hail.

God sent thunder, fire and a grievous hail that destroyed anything and everything in the field — man and beast and all vegetation. **Only in Goshen, where the Israelites lived, was there no hail.** **Exodus 9:26**

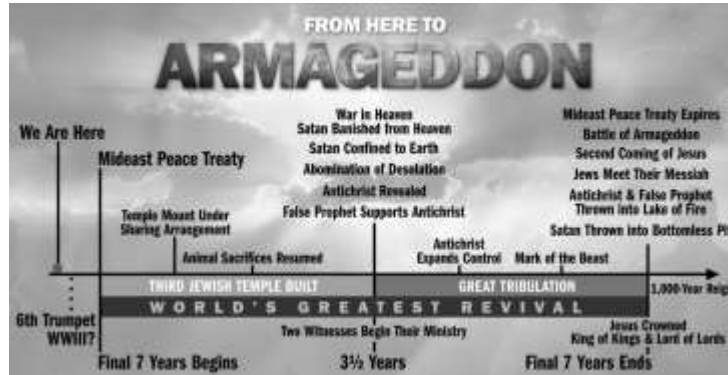
AND THE THUNDERS AND HAIL CEASED, AND THE RAIN WAS NO LONGER Poured UPON THE EARTH (9:33) The hailstones which were on the way down when Moses prayed were suspended in midair, and did not reach the earth. When did they descend? In the days of Joshua they descended upon the Amorites, as it is written (Joshua 10:11): “And it came to pass, as they fled from before Israel... that G-d cast down great stones from heaven upon them.” **The remainder will descend in the days of Gog and Magog.**

Exodus 8:22

But on that day I will set apart the land of Goshen, where my people dwell, so that no swarms of flies shall be there, that you may know that I am the Lord in the midst of the earth.

Like Egypt, Like the World

We know from the book of Revelation that many of these plagues will again strike the inhabitants of the earth in the end times. **These events that happened in Egypt foreshadow what is to come — possibly on a global scale — in the final days.**



Rev

The Seven Angels with Seven Plagues

15 Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and amazing, seven angels with seven plagues, which are the last, for with them the wrath of God is finished.

2 And I saw what appeared to be a sea of glass mingled with fire—and also those who had conquered the beast and its image and the number of its name, standing beside the sea of glass with harps of God in their hands. 3 And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying,

(Exodus 15:14-16 – “Song of Moses”)
“Great and amazing are your deeds,
O Lord God the Almighty!
Just and true are your ways,
O King of the nations!^{1a}
4 Who will not fear, O Lord,
and glorify your name?
For you alone are holy,
All nations will come
and worship you,
for your righteous acts have been revealed.”

5 After this I looked, and the sanctuary of the tent of witness in heaven was opened (the Feast of Atonement – only once a year – when the Messiah will return), 6 and out of the sanctuary came the seven angels with the seven plagues, clothed in pure, bright linen, with golden sashes around their chests. 7 And one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God who lives forever and ever, 8 and the sanctuary was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from his power, and no one could enter the sanctuary until the seven plagues of the seven angels were finished.

The Seven Bowls of God's Wrath

16 Then I heard a loud voice from the temple telling the seven angels, “Go and pour out on the earth the seven bowls of the wrath of God.”

“For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. . .” 1 Thessalonians 5:9

2 So the first angel went and poured out his bowl on the earth, and harmful and painful sores came upon the people who bore the mark of the beast and worshiped its image.

3 The second angel poured out his bowl into the sea, and it became like the blood of a corpse, and every living thing died that was in the sea.

4 The third angel poured out his bowl into the rivers and the springs of water, and they became blood. 5 And I heard the angel in charge of the waters say,

“Just are you, O Holy One, who is and who was,
for you brought these judgments.
⁶For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets,
and you have given them blood to drink.
It is what they deserve!”
⁷And I heard the altar saying,
“Yes, Lord God the Almighty,
true and just are your judgments!”

⁸The fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and it was allowed to scorch people with fire. ⁹They were scorched by the fierce heat, and they cursed the name of God who had power over these plagues. They did not repent and give him glory.
¹⁰The fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and its kingdom was plunged into darkness. People gnawed their tongues in anguish ¹¹and cursed the God of heaven for their pain and sores. They did not repent of their deeds.

¹²The **sixth angel poured out his bowl** on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, to prepare the way for the kings from the east. ¹³And I saw, coming out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet, **three unclean spirits like frogs**. ¹⁴For they are demonic spirits, performing signs, who go abroad to the kings of the whole world, **to assemble them for battle on the great day of God the Almighty**. ¹⁵ (“Behold, I am coming like a thief! Blessed is the one who stays awake, keeping his garments on, that he may not go about naked and be seen exposed!”) ¹⁶And they assembled them at the place that in Hebrew is called **Armageddon**.

The Seventh Bowl

¹⁷The seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple, from the throne, saying, “It is done!” ¹⁸And there were flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, and a great earthquake such as there had never been since man was on the earth, so great was that earthquake. ¹⁹The great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell, and God remembered Babylon the great, to make her drain the cup of the wine of the fury of his wrath. ²⁰And every island fled away, and no mountains were to be found. ²¹And **great hailstones** (the **Seventh plague** of Exodus resumes – Exodus 9:13-15), about one hundred pounds each, fell from heaven on people; and they cursed God for the plague of the hail, because the plague was so severe.

In his vision, John describes the **seven last plagues** on the earth:

*“I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels having the **seven last plagues**; for in them is filled up the wrath of God.” Revelation 15:1*

As God pours out the full bowl of His wrath upon the earth, loathsome sores appear on all those who have taken the mark of the beast and worship his image (*Revelation 16:2*). Then, just like in Egypt, the waters turn to blood (*Revelation 16:3–6*). Other plagues also bombard the earth, such as darkness, scorching fire, and destructive hail.

“From the sky huge hailstones, each weighing about a hundred pounds, fell on people. And they cursed God on account of the plague of hail, because the plague was so terrible.” Revelation 16:21

May we be ever mindful that we are living in the end times; and while we remain safe in the security of our holy covenant with God, let us patiently share the Good News and diligently pray for mercy upon those who stubbornly continue to rebel against God.

“You will again have compassion on us; **You will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea.**” Micah 7:19

Conclusion:

When God speaks a Word, it will be done as He has said, despite how circumstances appear in the natural.

... and ...

We are delivered through faith in Jesus, the Passover Lamb, not simply to walk away and “do our own thing.” As it was for the Israelites, the purpose of our freedom is to serve the living God.

Final Passage I want us to properly understand and wrestle with today, as we work out our Salvation with Fear and Trembling (Philippians 2:12):

Romans 6:14 (15-23)

¹⁴For sin will have no dominion over you, since **you are not under “law” but under grace**.

Slaves to Righteousness

¹⁵What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! ¹⁶Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? ¹⁷But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to

which you were committed, ¹⁸and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness. ¹⁹I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification.

²⁰For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. ²¹But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. ²²But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life. ²³For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Contextual Passage:

2 Peter 3:15-17

¹⁵And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, ¹⁶as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them (*Paul’s letters*) that are **hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction**, as they do the other Scriptures. ¹⁷You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, **take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability.**

The most popular Bible verses from Psalms 119

Psalms 119:105

Bible Rank: 192

Nun. Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path. NIV

#Ps119_105

Psalms 119:11

Bible Rank: 1,191

I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you. NIV

#Ps119_11

Psalms 119:9

Bible Rank: 1,539

Beth. How can those who are young keep their way pure? By living according to your word. NIV

#Ps119_9

Psalms 119:89

Bible Rank: 2,120

Lamedh. Your word, LORD, is eternal; it stands firm in the heavens. NIV

#Ps119_89

Psalms 119:97

Bible Rank: 2,389

Mem. Oh, how I love your law! I meditate on it all day long. NIV

#Ps119_97

Psalms 119:1

Bible Rank: 2,467

Aleph. Blessed are those whose ways are blameless, who walk according to the law of the LORD. NIV

#Ps119_1

Psalms 119:130

Bible Rank: 14,776

The unfolding of your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple. NIV

#Ps119_130

Psalms 119:18

Bible Rank: 15,191

Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law. NIV

#Ps119_18

Psalms 119:160

Bible Rank: 15,510

All your words are true; all your righteous laws are eternal. NIV

#Ps119_160

Psalms 119:165

Bible Rank: 16,174

Great peace have those who love your law, and nothing can make them stumble. NIV

#Ps119_165

Psalms 119:64

Bible Rank: 16,334

The earth is filled with your love, LORD; teach me your decrees. NIV

#Ps119_64

Psalms 119:107

Bible Rank: 17,869

I have suffered much; preserve my life, LORD, according to your word. NIV

#Ps119_107

Psalms 119:33

Bible Rank: 18,504

He. Teach me, LORD, the way of your decrees, that I may follow it to the end. NIV

#Ps119_33

Psalms 119:14

Bible Rank: 18,966

I rejoice in following your statutes as one rejoices in great riches. NIV

#Ps119_14

Psalms 119:103

Bible Rank: 19,112

How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth! NIV

John 1

The Word Became Flesh

I In the beginning was the **Word** (*Torah – Jesus is the Torah, in the Flesh*), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Matthew 4:3-5 (Deuteronomy 8:3)

3 And the tempter came and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.” **4** But he answered, “It is written, **5** “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.””

Paul mentions seven laws (instructions):

1. The Law of God (Romans 3:31; 7:22-25; 8:7)
2. The Law of Sin (Romans 7:23-25)
3. The Law of Sin and Death (Romans 8:2)
4. The Law of the Spirit of Life (Romans 8:2)
5. The Law of Faith (Romans 3:27)
6. The Law of Righteousness (Romans 9:31)
7. The Law of Christ (1 Corinthians 9:21)

1) The Instruction of God:

- Quite often, we simply refer to this as the Torah of God, or Torah for short.
- The Law of God defines what is sin and what is not sin.
- This instruction comes from God. To do the law of God is obedience.
- To break the law of God is sin.

Romans 3:31

³¹ Do we then overthrow the law by this faith? By no means! On the contrary, we uphold the law.

Romans 7:7 What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means! Yet if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. For I would not have known what it is to covet, if the law had not said, “You shall not covet” (1 John 3:4 – Sin is Lawlessness)

Romans 7:22-25

²² For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, ²³ but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. ²⁴ Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? ²⁵ Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.

Romans 8:7

For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot.

2) The Instruction of Sin:

- The Law of Sin is something we all followed before we came into the faith. The instruction comes from ourselves, or more specifically, it comes from our flesh.
- It is our flesh nature that hates the law of God. This nature is the desire to do things our own way instead of God's way.
- After we come into the faith, there is a battle inside of us between the Law of God and the Law of Sin. The Spirit in us directs us or instructs us toward the Law of God.
- The flesh directs or instructs us toward the Law of Sin that is against the law of God. At the resurrection, the Law of God will finally completely prevail over us and the battle and internal struggle between the flesh and spirit will be over for us. The race will have been run and won. However, before that happens, we are in sin, and sin leads to death.

Romans 7:23-25 (Ezekiel 18:21; Daniel 9:11)

3) The Instruction of Sin and Death:

- The instruction of the flesh, or sin, leads us to death, and this is known as the Law of Sin and Death.
- We were all under the law of Sin and Death before we entered the faith, yet we did not realize it at the time. Our flesh calls the Law of Sin freedom, when in reality, sin is bondage, and it is bondage that leads to death.
- The instruction of sin from our flesh leads to the instruction from God that demands our death because of our sin. We live our lives under the Law of Sin and Death until we have a desire for truth; that desire comes not from the flesh, but from the Spirit.

Romans 8:2

4) The Instruction of the Spirit:

- The Law of the Spirit tells us that the Law of God is truth once it is heard. It leads us toward the law of God, and away from the instructions of the flesh.
- The Spirit exposes the flesh and its natural predisposition for sin. Thus, it is the moment when the Law of the Spirit enters into us that we immediately realize we are under the Law of Sin and Death. It is then that we realize that we are in prison and in bondage to our own sin. We then understand that we are in a hopeless state.
- Once we realize that we are in prison, we desire a way out. We look to God for the way out. The Spirit, or desire for truth and desire for freedom, causes us to establish the faith in our Creator and his eternal and authoritative unchanging Word.

Romans 8:2

5) The Instruction of Faith:

- The Law of Faith is to conform your way of thinking to the Word of God. Paul refers to this as becoming the new man. In the faith, one adopts the Word of God as the authority over their lives.
- It is contrary to the flesh as your authority, which sees the Word of God as bondage. This is not a mental assent, but in fact, a transformation of our core beliefs and foundation that directly impacts how we perceive the world and interact with it.
- In obedience to the Law of Faith, we see the Word of God as freedom and the way to live. It is also once we enter into this faith, and run the race in the faith, that we are granted eternal life through his grace.

5) The Instruction of Faith:

- It is our internal transformation and spirit or desire for his Word that leads to salvation from the Law of Sin and Death.

Romans 3:27

6) The Instruction of Righteousness:

- The Law of Righteousness is the instruction to live out our faith, it simply means to practice righteousness. It is the doing of the right ways of God.
- This is an effect of our faith. Because we believe the Word of God to be truth and the right way to live, our lives should resemble living righteously.
- This is in contrast to living in the flesh, which is after our own ways, which are like filthy rags to our Creator.
- YHWH's ways are righteous, and the righteousness we practice is the evidence or fruit of our faith. This righteousness, or right way to walk out the Law of God, has been evidenced in the lives of many throughout the ages. The most popular is through Jesus Christ, or in Hebrew, Messiah Yeshua.

Romans 9:31

7) The Instruction of Christ (Messiah):

- The Law of Christ is his instructions, as an example, to follow the Law of God in the faith. Our Messiah never once spoke his own instructions from his own authority.
- He simply repeated and practiced the valid interpretation of the eternal unchanging Word of God that has existed since the beginning.
- It is in Yeshua that all of these laws are reconciled and understood. Yeshua taught us the Law of God as the truth. He pointed out our sin, teaching us that our sin leads to death.
- He told us that we need to be saved from the Law of Sin and Death. For that to happen, we need to listen to the Spirit to enter into the faith in the Word of God.

7) The Instruction of Christ (Messiah):

- Our Messiah lived his life in the Word of God perfectly. That enabled two things. One, he now serves as the perfect example on how to walk out the Torah, or the Law of God.
- Two, because he did not sin, and never was under the Law of Sin and Death, but took on death anyway as instructed by our Father, the death we deserve is removed from us in his grace.
- We can live practicing righteousness in his faith and live out the Word of God in our lives, dying to our flesh daily that is against the Word of God.
- In the end, we are resurrected into a new body, permanently removing the flesh and desire to sin. We then walk out the freedom of the Law of God forever.

1 Corinthians 9:21

<https://youtu.be/a8bXSU50ouU>

Next Week's Reading:

Week 15 - Parasha Bo (Come!)
Exodus 10:1–13:16; Jeremiah 46:13–28; Revelation 9:1–21

Extra:

“Give thanks to God for He is good – His love endures forever,”
Psalm 136:1

Because his loving kindness can only be seen in an expanse of time, in eternity you actually see his loving kindness. Peering through the key hold of the present, our vision is just too limited. But over time, in expanse, in eternity, in context of the whole, only with the eyes of expanse/eternity can we see his loving kindness.

You may be lost in slavery . . . and . . . lost the idea of freedom . . . wait . . . You are going to need a lot of time to finally see how things unfold, you just need time in your life, you do not always get your answer immediately, you need the expanse of time, in eternity, in the context of the whole.

The Book of Genesis ends off with the people of God in Egypt . . . fleeing the Promise Land . . . all of God's people lost in the exile, far away from the promise of the Land of Israel on their way to slavery. Abraham started the journey with the promise to inherit the Land and build a Kingdom, but the Book Ends with the people of God fleeing the Promise Land in hunger and settling down in Egypt . . . **why . . . this is so key . . .** it is one of the most beautiful ideas and themes you see throughout the whole Bible . . . constantly, the Bible is taking us away from the End-Zone and the Victory Dance . . . no, that is not the way we live . . . they are always taking us away from the goal of the story . . . the world is always so focused on results, the bottom-line, on the end-zone . . . and the Scripture is like a counter pressure, teaching us, guiding us away from the goal, away from the final destination . . . it's like the destination and promise that Abraham is given is something beyond his life time, beyond his children's life time . . . the destination is definitionally beyond them . . . **so what do we focus on? . . . we focus on LIFE, choose LIFE that you may live, because every day is a gift, everyday is an entire creation . . .** the Journey of LIFE is where value is, the Journey of life is where happiness can be found, meaning is happening right now . . . do not just wait for the top of the mountain, there is a much longer journey to get there than a little celebration at the top of the mountain . . . achieving our goal is in God's hands anyway . . . but **it is on the way to achieving the goal that life happens . . . and the quality of our life is determined entirely on the days towards that goal . . .** and the Book of Genesis Ends before the Finish Line, making it to the Promise Land ends off in Egypt . . . because **crossing the Finish Line is not the point . . .** the Scriptures is guiding us to focus on how we live our lives on our way to the destination . . . and that is the theme across all the stories of the Bible . . . in fact, the end of the whole Torah is Moses and the children of Israel are at the End-Zone, at the One Yard-Line, overlooking into the Land of Israel, and they never go in . . . the whole Torah . . . the Covenant of the Land of Israel . . . and Finally fulfilling Abraham's Vision . . . and the Torah Ends . . . Joshua never fully conquers the Land . . . David is called to build the temple, but he never builds the temple . . . none of our Hero's cross the Finish Line, because LIFE is not about the moment you reach the top of the mountain . . . that moment will come and go . . . most of our lives are spent on our Journey towards the destination, that is where LIFE happens, that is where the living Torah comes to life, and that is where the Torah is telling us to live.

It's like on one hand we have the story of Esau selling his birth right for the present, and so obviously, do not sell your future for the fleeting moment of now, but at the same time, do not sell your life now for some hope of the future that one day . . . *when one arrives at the destination . . . I will be happy . . . O, one day . . . when I arrive at the destination . . . then I can really live life . . . no, every day is a gift, live it up, breath it in, every day towards are target . . . living, focused, and aligned toward the ultimate good is a GIFT. – Jeremey Gimpel*