**Blinded by His Light**

**By**

**Dr. Benjamin Shadwick**

**Proverbs 25:2 It is the glory of God to conceal a matter,**

**But the glory of kings is to search out a matter.**

 The material you are now holding contains information you most likely will find very controversial and even objectionable. This is not my intention at all but rather to bring out what I see as the truth, which needs to be told. Because of the nature of the material I believe it is necessary to lay down some most important foundation stones you may stand upon. I believe these stones are very solid, even though you may object. If you are honest with yourself you realize to object it is like telling the sun to stay in bed. I believe all people have a religion even if that is saying you believe in nothing. For even believing in nothing is a belief system. We as humans have no escape to believe in something. Most people I know have very strong beliefs and are usually quite willing to share what they believe. It also seems that most people are very defensive about what they believe and usually closed off from any kind of change as if what they believe is already perfect. This is the very place I hope to invade. I hope the material presented in this book will disturb the reader, cause an unrest, which will lead them to their own search for more truth, which is available to all of us.

 We all have our idea who God is and what He has done and most likely what He will do in the future. This is exactly the place I first want to upset in your personal system. I hope you are willing because if you are then you will grow in your faith and not away from it. The point is God is so much more than any one of us know. God is so much greater than any finite image, thought or imagination we could have of God. I hope to show you in general the greatness of God, the possibility of thinking you know much about God and then making the discovery you have been blind. There is a very powerful example of this in the Bible of a man who was zealous for God and yet did not know HIM. You will find how the truth of the Messiah is hidden and yet revealed all through the entire Holy Bible. Yet, so many people have not discovered this truth and so in essence are blinded by the same light, which reveals the truth. It is in this search of truth which I believe many who have been blind will have eyes to see and their blindness will be taken away.

 So let us begin our search first in Psalm 139 which has the subtitle added of course of the Omnipresence and Omniscience of God. ***For the choir director. A Psalm of David.*** *139 O Lord, You have searched me and known me. 2You know when I sit down and when I rise up; You understand my thought from afar.* So here we see from these first two verses the author is telling us that Ha Shem knows every move a person makes. We will often use the term Ha Shem denoting the name of God, which for many Jewish people is too Holy to be spoken or written. It says you know my thought from afar off. It is far to the one who has the thought, but to God every human thought is right before HIM. He knows what you are thinking when you think it but greater still is the fact HE knew every thought you would have before you were even born. This is too great a concept I think for any human to comprehend, yet it is exactly what God can do. Psalm 17:3 also expresses this idea of God knowing all about us. “*You have tried my heart; You have visited me by night; You have tested me and You find nothing; I have purposed that my mouth will not transgress.* Also, Jeremiah 12:3 *“But You know me, O Lord; You see me; And You examine my heart’s attitude toward You.*  Now, back to *Psalm 139:3You scrutinize my path and my lying down, and are intimately acquainted with all my ways.* We also see that the ancient faith of Job agrees with this passage. Job 31:4 “*Does He not see my ways and number all my steps? God is aware of everything about us.”*  It may seem that I am belaboring this point but please continue. Also know that God knowing all He does about us is not a bad thing at all but rather very good. Think about this simple teaching of Jesus in Luke 12 *4“I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that have no more that they can do. 5But I will warn you whom to fear: fear the One who, after He has killed, has authority to cast into hell; yes, I tell you, fear Him! 6Are not five sparrows sold for two cents? Yet not one of them is forgotten before God. 7Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear; you are more valuable than many sparrows.* Jesus said the hairs of your hair are numbered. Remember this was said before days of microscopes and high technology and was a statement anyone could understand knowing there are many hairs in a person’s head and yet who could count them. I think Jesus could have said He knows every cell, in fact every molecule, even more, every atom of a person’s body. He understood the things then which man would discover hundreds of years later. Just a reminder we are searching the “knowledge of God in which HE is actually unsearchable and past finding out. *Romans 11:* “*33 Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! 34 For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who became His counselor? 35 Or who has first given to Him that it might be paid back to him again? 36 For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.*

We continue on the knowledge of God with Him knowing what we say. In fact He knows all we will say our entire life even before we were born. *Psalm 139:4 “Even before there is a word on my tongue, Behold, O Lord, You know it all.”*  We turn to Hebrews 4:12-13 for agreement of this passage. *“12 For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. 13 And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.”*  To know that God knows this much about you can be unsettling, but the intent from God is completely opposite. He wants us to know that we should take comfort in His care for us. This is clear from the next verse. *5You have enclosed me behind and before, and laid your hand upon me.* God is always good, and always loving, always concerned for our best interest, which will bring Him honor. Yet, at the same time we cannot understand this great knowledge. Now, if we say we do and try to think we can explain God more than is really possible, we only harm ourselves. The reason is because we have begun to pretend and be religious. God tells us we cannot understand His knowledge. *6Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; It is too high, I cannot attain to it.*  Now, I would like to interject a commentary from the Romantic Period. I believe this age was so wonderful because people were not always in a rush of trying to produce things. They could listen to their hearts and this is especially important if their hearts were tuned to GOD. I strongly believe this to be the case for Henry Duncan (1774-1846). This is his words for this verse of Psalm 139:6. “Compared with our stinted knowledge, how amazing is the knowledge of God! As he made all things, he must be intimately acquainted, not only with their properties, but with their very essence. His eye, at the same instant, surveys all the works of his immeasurable creation. He observes, not only the complicated system of the universe, but the slightest motion of the most microscopic insect; -- not only the most sublime conception of angels, but the meanest propensity of the most worthless of his creatures. At this moment he is listening to the praises breathed by grateful hearts in distant worlds, and reading every groveling thought which passes though the polluted minds of the fallen race of Adam ... At one view, he surveys the past, the present, and the future. No inattention prevents him from observing; no defect of memory or of judgment obscures his comprehension. In his remembrance are stored not only the transactions of this world, but of all the worlds in the universe; -- not only the events of the six thousand years which have passed since the earth was created, but of a duration without beginning. Nay, things to come extending to a duration without end, are also before him. An eternity past and an eternity to come are, at the same moment, in his eye; and with that eternal eye he surveys infinity. How amazing! How inconceivable! -- Henry Duncan (1774-1846), in "Sacred Philosophy of the Seasons."

 Job witnesses to this as well Job 42:1 *“ Then Job answered the Lord and said, 2“I know that You can do all things, And that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted.* This is very important information of which to be aware. The plans of God cannot be thwarted. We can disqualify ourselves in God’s plans for us but HIS plans will happen. We need to agree with our Father in heaven what HE has planned for us will come to fruition. If HE has something for us to do there is no power on heaven or earth, which can prevail against it. This is wonderful for us when we really understand that the LORD is on our side. Verse 3 says, “*3‘Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?’ Therefore I have declared that which I did not understand, Things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.”*  Just because we cannot have the incredible knowledge of God or begin to understand it in no way removes us from His presence. *7Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence?* The prophet Jeremiah also gives his thoughts on this matter. Jeremiah 23:23 “*Am I a God who is near,” declares the Lord, “And not a God far off? 24“Can a man hide himself in hiding places So I do not see him?” declares Ha Shem. “Do I not fill the heavens and the earth?” declares Ha Shem.*

We have the account of Jonah who thought he could escape the presence of God. Jonah 1:1 “*The word of the Lord came to Jonah the son of Amittai saying, 2“Arise, go to Nineveh the great city and cry against it, for their wickedness has come up before Me.” 3But Jonah rose up to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord. So he went down to Joppa, found a ship which was going to Tarshish, paid the fare and went down into it to go with them to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord.”*

We have a very wonderful account of the presence of God given to us from the Book of Acts where Paul gives a Sermon on Mars Hill, Acts 17:22 *“ So Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, “Men of Athens, I observe that you are very religious in all respects. 23For while I was passing through and examining the objects of your worship, I also found an altar with this inscription, ‘TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.’ Therefore what you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you. 24The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; 25nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things; 26and He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation, 27that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; 28for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, ‘For we also are His children.’ 29Being then the children of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and thought of man. 30Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent, 31because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead.”* Several years ago I lived in Nashville, Tennessee and was the Minister to Youth of a large Baptist Church. In Nashville there is an exact replica of the Parthenon of Greece. I was able to take the youth group to this location and teach this passage of Scripture. It seemed to be a very great object lesson. Inside the Parthenon is a large statue of the goddess, Athena. With all this physical evidence it becomes clear that the world often looks away for the truth found in GOD alone. But not knowing the truth or believing the truth does not change the truth at all. The truth is always the truth and always remains the truth in every situation.

The Psalmist now takes another spin as if one could escape the presence of God as Jonah thought he might do. But, did he really think he could escape? Do we?

 *8If I ascend to heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, You are there. 9If I take the wings of the dawn, If I dwell in the remotest part of the sea, 10Even there Your hand will lead me, and Your right hand will lay hold of me.
11If I say, “Surely the darkness will overwhelm me, and the light around me will be night,” 12Even the darkness is not dark to You, and the night is as bright as the day. Darkness and light are alike to You.* Job also speaks to this fact of darkness cannot hide anything from GOD. Job 34:*“21 For His eyes are upon the ways of a man, and He sees all his steps. 22“There is no darkness or deep shadow where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves.* God has everything in HIS view and nothing escapes HIS vision. “Though the place we sin be to men as dark as Egypt, yet to God it is as light as Goshen.” – William Secker.

  *13For You formed my inward parts; You wove me in my mother’s womb.* In this verse the word wove is in Hebrew Sukkah. The Sukkah is the tent, hut, or booth spoken of during the Feast of Tabernacles or properly know in Hebrew as Sukkot. This is the time the LORD instructed the Children of Israel to build small tents or booths to commemorate the time when they lived in the desert and HE as their loving Father cared for them. So we can see here the idea is GOD has made us and has the heart for us that we will be protected and under HIS great care. The important thing is we realize this fact and have joy and love for HIM knowing even as we were formed it was for the purpose of us having a love relationship with HIM. There is no need for fear or doubt because the Great King of the Universe is our maker and our Father.  *14I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Wonderful are Your works, and my soul knows it very well.*  A quote from Thomas Adams “I will praise thee. All God's works are admirable, man wonderfully wonderful. "Marvelous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well." What infers he on all this? Therefore "I will praise thee." If we will not praise him that made us, will he not repent that he made us? Oh that we knew what the saints do in heaven, and how the sweetness of that doth swallow up all earthly pleasures! They sing honor and glory to the Lord. Why? Because he hath created all things: Revelation 4:11, “Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created.” When we behold an exquisite piece of work, we presently enquire after him that made it, purposely to commend his skill: and there is no greater disgrace to an artist, than having perfected a famous work, to find it neglected, no man minding it, or so much as casting an eye upon it. All the works of God are considerable, and man is bound to this contemplation. "When I consider the heavens", etc., I say, "What is man?" Psalms 8:3-4. He admires the heavens, but his admiration reflects upon man. Quis homo? There is no workman but would have his instruments used, and used to that purpose for which they were made ... Man is set like a little world in the midst of the great, to glorify God; this is the scope and end of his creation. --Thomas Adams.

Also from Joseph Caryl “Moses describes the creation of man (Genesis 2:7): "The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." Now what God did then immediately, he doth still by means. Do not think that God made man at first, and that ever since men have made one another. No (said Job), "he that made me in the womb made him": Job 31:15 . David will inform us: "I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are thy works", etc. As if he had said, Lord, I am wonderfully made, and thou hast made me. I am a part or parcel of thy marvelous works, yea, the breviate or compendium of them all. The frame of the body (much more the frame of the soul, most of all the frame of the new creature in the soul) is God's work, and it is a wonderful work of God. And therefore David could not satisfy himself in the bare affirmation of this, but enlargeth in the explication of it in Psalms 139:15 - 16. David took no notice of father or mother but ascribed the whole efficiency of himself to God. And indeed David was as much made by God as Adam; and so is every son of Adam. Though we are begotten and born of our earthly parents, yet God is the chief parent and the only fashioner of us all. Thus graciously spake Jacob to his brother Esau, demanding, "Who are those with thee? And he said, The children which God hath graciously given thy servant": Genesis 33:5 . Therefore, as the Spirit of God warns, "Know ye that Lord he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves" ( Psalms 100:3 ); which as it is true especially of our spiritual making, so 'tis true also of our natural. -- Joseph Caryl.

 I hope all these different perspectives of the makeup of man will cause you the reader to perhaps reconsider how really amazing all of this life really is and how past knowing it is as well. Andrew Fuller gives this most amazing perspective about Psalm 139:14 “I am fearfully and wonderfully made. The term "fearful" is sometimes to be taken subjectively, far our being possessed of fear. In this sense it signifies the same as timid. Thus the prophet was directed to say to them that were of a "fearful heart, be strong." At other times it is taken objectively, for that property in an object the contemplation of which excites fear in the beholder. Thus it is said of God that he is "fearful in praises", and that it is a "fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." In this sense it is manifestly to be understood in the passage now under consideration. The human frame is so admirably constructed, so delicately combined, and so much in danger of being dissolved by innumerable causes, that the more we think of it the more we tremble, and wonder at our own continued existence.

 "How poor, how rich, how abject, how august,

 How complicate, how wonderful is man!

 How passing wonder he who made him such,

 Who mingled in our make such strange extremes

 Of different natures, marvelously mixed!

 Helpless immortal, insect infinite,

 A worm, a god -- I tremble at myself!"

To do justice to the subject, it would be necessary to be well acquainted with anatomy. I have no doubt that a thorough examination of that "substance which God hath curiously wrought" ( Psalms 139:15 ), would furnish abundant evidence of the justness of the Psalmist's words; but even those things which are manifest to common observation may be sufficient for this purpose. In general it is observable that the human frame abounds with avenues at which enter everything conducive to preservation and comfort, and everything that can excite alarm. Perhaps there is not one of these avenues but what may become an inlet to death, nor one of the blessings of life but what may be the means of accomplishing it. We live by inhalation, but we also die by it. Diseases and death in innumerable forms are conveyed by the very air we breathe. God hath given us a relish for divers aliments, and rendered them necessary to our subsistence: yet, from the abuse of them, what a train of disorders and premature deaths are found amongst men! And, when there is no abuse, a single delicious morsel may, by the evil design of another, or even by mere accident, convey poison through all our veins, and in one hour reduce the most athletic form to a corpse. The elements of fire and water, without which we could not subsist, contain properties which in a few moments would be able to destroy us; nor can the utmost circumspection at all times preserve us from their destructive power. A single stroke on the head may divest us of reason or of life. A wound or a bruise of the spine may instantly deprive the lower extremities of all sensation. If the vital parts be injured, so as to suspend the performance of their mysterious functions, how soon is the constitution broken up! By means of the circulation of the blood, how easily and suddenly are deadly substances diffused throughout the frame! The putridity of a morbid subject has been imparted to the very hand stretched out to save it. The poisoned arrow, the envenomed fang, the hydrophobic saliva, derive from hence their fearful efficacy. Even the pores of the skin, necessary as they are to life, may be the means of death. Not only are poisonous substances hereby admitted, but, when obstructed by surrounding damps, the noxious humours of the body, instead of being emitted, are retained in the system, and become productive of numerous diseases, always afflictive, and often fatal to life. Instead of wondering at the number of premature deaths that are constantly witnessed, there is far greater reason to wonder that there are no more, and that any of us survive to seventy or eighty years of age. "Our life contains a thousand springs, and dies if one be gone: Strange that a harp of thousand strings should keep in tune so long." Nor is this all, if we are "fearfully made" as to our animal frame, it will be found that we are much more so considered as moral and accountable beings. In what relates to our animal nature, we are in most instances constructed like other animals; but, in what relates to us as moral agents, we stand distinguished from all the lower creation. We are made for eternity. The present life is only the introductory part of our existence. It is that, however, which stamps a character on all that follows. How fearful is our situation! What innumerable influences is the mind exposed to from the temptations which surround us! Not more dangerous to the body is the pestilence that walketh in darkness than these are to the soul. Such is the construction of our nature that the very word of life, if heard without regard becomes a savor of death unto death. What consequences hang upon the small and apparently trifling beginnings of evil! A wicked thought may issue in a wicked purpose, this purpose in a wicked action, this action in a course of conduct, this course may draw into its vortex millions of our fellow creatures, and terminate in perdition, both to ourselves and them. The whole of this process was exemplified in the case of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat. When placed over the ten tribes, he first said in his heart, "If this people go up to sacrifice at Jerusalem, their hearts will turn to Rehoboam; and thus shall the kingdom return to the house of David." 1 Kings 12:26-30 . On this he took counsel, and made the calves of Dan and Bethel. This engaged him in a course of wickedness, from which no remonstrance could reclaim him. Nor was it confined to himself; for he "made all Israel to sin." The issue was, not only their destruction as a nation, but, to all appearance, the eternal ruin of himself and great numbers of his followers. Such were the fruits of an evil thought! Oh, my soul, tremble at thyself! Tremble at the fearfulness of thy situation; and commit thine immortal all into his hands "who is able to keep thee from falling, and to present thee faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy." --Andrew Fuller, born 6 February 1754 – 7 May 1815) was an English Particular Baptist minister and theologian.

Finally for verse 14 is Richard Warner- I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Never was so terse and expressive a description of the physical conformation of man given by any human being. So "fearfully" are we made, that there is not an action or gesture of our bodies, which does not, apparently, endanger some muscle, vein, or sinew, the rupture of which would destroy either life or health. We are so "wonderfully" made, that our organization infinitely surpasses, in skill, contrivance, design, and adaptation of means to ends, the most curious and complicated piece of mechanism, not only ever executed "by art and man's device", but ever conceived by human imagination. --Richard Warner, 1828.

 Continuing in Psalm 139:*15My frame was not hidden from You, When I was made in secret, and skillfully wrought in the depths of the earth; 16Your eyes have seen my unformed substance; And in Your book were all written The days that were ordained for me, When as yet there was not one of them.* Joseph Caryl tells us, “A skillful architect before he builds draws a model, or gives a draught of the building in his book, or upon a table; there he will show you every room and contrivance: in his book are all the parts of the building written, while as yet there are none of them, or before any of them are framed and set up. In allusion to architects and other artisans, David speaks of God, In thy book all my members were written; that is, Thou hast made me as exactly as if thou has drawn my several members and my whole proportion with a pen or pencil in a book, before thou wouldst adventure to form me up. The Lord uses no book, no pen to decipher his work. He had the perfect idea of all things in himself from everlasting; but he may well be said to work as by pattern, whose work is the most perfect pattern. --Joseph Caryl.

 Also, Abraham Wright gives a very nice perspective on verse 16, “Verse 16. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfected, etc. From whence we may learn, first, not to be proud of what we are; all's the work of God. How beautiful or comely, how wise or holy so ever you are, 'tis not of yourselves. What hath any man, either in naturals or supernatural, which he hath not received? Secondly, despise not what others are or have, though they are not such exact pieces, though they have not such excellent endowments as you; yet they are what God hath made them. Thirdly, despise not what you are. Many are ashamed to be seen as God made them; few are ashamed to be seen what the devil hath made them. Many are troubled at small defects in the outward man; few are troubled at the greatest deformities of the inward man: many buy artificial beauty to supply the natural; few spiritual, to supply the defects of the supernatural beauty of the soul. --Abraham Wright.

  *17How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How vast is the sum of them!*  The following is from “The Treasury of David by Charles Spurgeon. Verse 17. How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! He is not alarmed at the fact that God knows all about him; on the contrary, he is comforted, and even feels himself to be enriched, as with a casket of precious jewels. That God should think upon him is the believer's treasure and pleasure. He cries, "How costly, how valued are thy thoughts, how dear to me is thy perpetual attention!" He thinks upon God's thoughts with delight; the more of them the better is he pleased. It is a joy worth worlds that the Lord should think upon us who are so poor and needy: it is a joy which fills our whole nature to think upon God; returning love for love, thought for thought, after our poor fashion.

How great is the sum of them! When we remember that God thought upon us from old eternity, continues to think upon us every moment, and will think of us when time shall be no more, we may well exclaim, "How great is the sum!" Thoughts such as are natural to the Creator, the Preserver, the Redeemer, the Father, the Friend, are evermore flowing from the heart of the Lord. Thoughts of our pardon, renewal, upholding, supplying, educating, perfecting, and a thousand more kinds perpetually well up in the mind of the Most High. It should fill us with adoring wonder and reverent surprise that the infinite mind of God should turn so many thoughts towards us who are so insignificant and so unworthy! What a contrast is all this to the notion of those who deny the existence of a personal, conscious God! Imagine a world without a thinking, personal God! Conceive of a grim providence of machinery! -- a fatherhood of law! Such philosophy is hard and cold. As well might a man pillow his head upon a razor edge as seek rest in such a fancy. But a God always thinking of us makes a happy world, a rich life, a heavenly hereafter.

Verse 17. How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, etc. So far from thinking it a hardship to be subject to this scrutiny, he counts it a most valuable privilege. However others may regard this truth, "to me", my judgment and my feelings, "how costly" valuable "are thy thoughts", i.e. thy perpetual attention to me. --Joseph Addison Alexander.

Verse 17. How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! How cold and poor are our warmest thoughts towards God! How unspeakably loving and gloriously rich are his thoughts towards us! Compare Ephesians 1:18 : "The riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints." --A.R. Fausset.

Verse 17. How precious ... how great is the sum of them? Our comforts vie with the number of our sorrows, and win the game. The mercies of God passed over in a gross sum breed no admiration; but cast up the particulars, and then arithmetic is too dull an art to number them. As many dusts as a man's hands can hold, is but his handful of so many dusts; but tell them one by one, and they exceed all numeration. It was but a crown which king Solomon wore; but weigh the gold, tell the precious stones, value the richness of them, and what was it then? --Thomas Adams.

Verse 17-18. Behold David's love to God; sleeping and waking his mind runs upon him. There needs no arguments to bring those to our remembrance whom we love. We neglect ourselves to think upon them. A man in love wastes his spirits, vexes his mind, neglects his meat, regards not his business, his mind still feels on that he loves. When men love that they should not, there is more need of a bridle to keep them from thinking of it, than of spurs to keep them to it. Try thy love of God by this. If thou thickest not often of God, thou love Him not. If thou canst not satisfy thyself with profits, pleasures, friends, and other worldly objects, but thou must turn other businesses aside, that thou may daily think of God, then thou love Him. --Francis Taylor, in "God's Glory in Man's Happiness", 1654. So from this I believe one can begin to understand how really wonderful it is that God thinks on us, He thinks on you. When you love someone, you think about them often. Now, just remember that GOD does think about you and often.

 *18If I should count them, they would outnumber the sand. When I awake, I am still with You.* I think of the wonderful words of Jesus Himself when I meditate on this one verse. “I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.” Matthew 28:20 and “For where two or three gather together in My name, there am I with them." Matthew 18:20. Thomas Horton-1673 also has wonderful words to consider on this verse. “Verse 18. When I awake, I am still with thee. It is the great advantage of a Christian, which he has above other men, that he has his friends always about him, and (if the fault be not his own) need never to be absent from them. In the friendship and converse of the world, we use to say, "Friends must part", and those who have delight and satisfaction in one another's society must be content to leave it, and to be taken off from it. But this is the privilege of a believer that undertakes communion with God, it is possible for him always to be with him. Again, in human converse and society we know it is ordinary for friends to dream that they are in company with one another; but when they awake they are a great way off. But a Christian that converses with God, and has his thoughts fastened upon him, when he awakes he is still with him, which is that which is here exhibited to us in the example of the prophet David.

A godly soul should fall asleep in God's arms, like a child in the mother's lap; it should be sung and lulled to sleep with "songs of the night." And this will make him the fitter for converse with God the next day after. This is the happiness of a Christian that is careful to lie down with God, that he finds his work still as he left it, and is in the same disposition when he rises as he was at night when he lay down to rest. As a man that winds up his watch over night, he finds it going the next morning; so is it also, as I may say, with a Christian that winds up his heart. This is a good observation to be remembered, especially in the evening afore the Sabbath.” --Thomas Horton, --1673.

  *19O that You would slay the wicked, O God; Depart from me, therefore, men of bloodshed. 20For they speak against You wickedly, And Your enemies* *take Your name in vain.* We don’t want to ever be connected to wickedness and we ask God to remove all hindrances from our lives which attempt to take us away from our sweet communion with God. Lancelot Andrews has some very excellent insight on this verse of scripture. He was born 1555 – and died 1626 was an English bishop and scholar, who held high positions in the Church of England during the reigns of Elizabeth I and James I. “In every action three things are considerable, -- the end, the agent, the work. These three duly weighed, we shall soon see what it is to take God's name in vain. 1.That which hath no end proposed or is done to no end, may truly be said to be done in vain. As the sowing of seed without reaping the fruit, the planting a vineyard without a vintage, or feeding a flock without eating the milk of it. These are labors in vain. So he that takes the name of God to no end, neither to God's glory, nor the private or public good, takes it in vain. If to no good, as good and better not undertaken at all; it is to no end, it is in vain. If a man has well fashioned legs, and they be lame, the lame man hath them in vain. The chief end, therefore, in taking this name must be, a.The glory of God, otherwise we open our mouths in vain, as it is in Job. God is willing to impart all his blessings to us, and requires nothing of as again but glory, which if we return not, he may say, as David did of Nabal, for whom he had done many good turns, in securing his shepherds and flocks, etc.; and when he desired nothing but a little meat for the young men he denied it: All that I have done for this fellow is in vain; in vain have I kept all he hath. So, God having done so much for us, and expecting nothing but the glory of his name, if we be defective herein, he may well say all that he hath done for us is in vain.

b) Next to God's glory is the good of ourselves and others; and so to take God's name without reference to this end, if we neither promote our own good nor the good of others, it is in vain, because it wants a right end; therefore Saint Paul rejoiced, having by his preaching labored for the saving of souls, c) rejoice, said he, that I have not run in vain, neither labored in vain.

1.In the agent the heart and soul is to be considered, which in the person acting is the chief mover. If the soul be Rachah, vain and light, as when we take God's name without due advice and reverence, though we propound a right end, yet we take his name in vain. Therefore the wise man advises "not to be rash with our mouth" ( Ecclesiastes 5:2 ); and the Psalmist professes that his heart was fixed when he praised God ( Psalms 57:7 ): the heart ought to be fixed and established by a due consideration of God's greatness when we speak of him. This is opposed to rashness, inconstancy, and lightness, such as are in chaff and smoke, which are apt to be carried away with every blast, and such as are so qualified do take God's name in vain.

2.In the work itself may be a twofold vanity, which must be avoided. Firstly, Falsehood. Secondly, Injustice.

a. If it be false, then is it also vain, as theirs in Isaiah 28:15 : "We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves." And this is that work of error, of which Jeremiah speaks. Vanity is opposed to verity and truth; therefore a thing is said to be vain when it is false or erroneous. "They are vanity, the work of errors", said the prophet ( Jeremiah 10:15 ); and as there is truth in natural things, so is there a truth in moral things, which if it be wanting, our speech is vain.

b) If unjust it is vain too. "If I be wicked, why then labor I in vain?" said holy Job 9:29 ; and, "The very hope of unjust men perished", said the wise man (Proverb 11:7); and, "They walk in a vain shadow, and disquiet themselves in vain" ( Psalms 39:6 ). If justice be wanting in our actions, or truth in our assertions and promises, they are vain; and to use God's name in either is to take his name in vain. So that if either we take the name of God to no end, but make it common, and take it up as a custom till it come to a habit, not for any good end; or if our hearts be not stable or fixed, but light and inconstant when we take it; or if we take it to color or bolster up any falsehood or any unjust act, we take it in vain, and break the commandment.” -- Lancelot Andrews.  *21Do I not hate those who hate You, O Lord? And do I not loathe those who rise up against You? 22I hate them with the utmost hatred; They have become my enemies. 23Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me and know my anxious thoughts;* Now, from Treasury’s of the Heart, “Verse 23. Search me, O God, and know my heart. David is no accomplice with traitors. He has disowned them in set form, and now he appeals to God that he does not harbor a trace of fellowship with them. He will have God himself search him, and search him thoroughly, till every point of his being is known, and read, and understood; for he is sure that even by such an investigation there will be found in him no complicity with wicked men. He challenges the fullest investigation, the innermost search: he had need be a true man who can put himself deliberately into such a crucible. Yet we may each one desire such searching; for it would be a terrible calamity to us for sin to remain in our hearts unknown and undiscovered.

Try me, and know my thoughts. Exercise any and every test upon me. By fire and by water let me be examined. Read not alone the desires of my heart, but the fugitive thoughts of my head. Know with all penetrating knowledge all that is or has been in the chambers of my mind. What a mercy there is one being who can know us to perfection! He is intimately at home with us. He is graciously inclined towards us, and is willing to bend his omniscience to serve the end of our sanctification. Let us pray as David did, and let us be as honest as he. We cannot hide our sin: salvation lies the other way, in a plain discovery of evil, and an effectual severance from it.

 Verse 23. Try me. True faith is precious; it is like gold, it will endure a trial. Presumption is but a counterfeit, and cannot abide to be tried: 1 Peter 1:7 . A true believer fears no trial. He is willing to be tried by God. He is willing to have his faith tried by others, he shuns not the touchstone. He is much in testing himself. He would not take anything upon trust, especially that which is of such moment. He is willing to hear the worst as well as the best. That preaching pleases him best which is most searching and distinguishing: Hebrews 4:12. He is loath to be deluded with vain hopes. He would not be flattered into a false conceit of his spiritual state. When trials are offered, he complies with the apostle's advice, 2 Corinthians 13:5 . --David Clarkson.

Verse 23. What fearful dilemma have we here? The Holiest changes not, when he comes a visitant to a human heart. He is the same there that he is in the highest heaven. He cannot look upon sin; and how can a human heart welcome him into its secret chambers? How can the blazing fire welcome the quenching water? It is easy to commit to memory the seemly prayer of an ancient penitent, Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts. The dead letters, worn smooth by frequent use, may drop freely from callous lips, leaving no sense of scalding on the conscience; and yet, truth of God though they are, they may be turned into a lie in the act of utterance. The prayer is not true, although it is borrowed from the Bible, if the suppliant invite the All seeing in, and yet would give a thousand worlds, if he had them, to keep him out for ever.

Christ has declared the difficulty, and solved it: "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." When the Son has made the sinner free, he is free indeed. The dear child, pardoned and reconciled, loves and longs for the Father's presence. What! Is there neither spot nor wrinkle now upon the man that he dares to challenge inspection by the Omniscient, and to offer his heart as Jehovah's dwelling place? He is not yet so pure; and well he knows it. The groan is bursting yet from his broken heart: "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Many stains defile him yet; but he loathes them now, and longs to be free. The difference between an unconverted and a converted man is not that the one has sins, and the other has none; but that the one takes part with his cherished sins against a dreaded God, and the other takes part with a reconciled God against his hated sins. He is out with his former friends, and in with his former adversary. Conversion is a turning, and it is one turning only; but it produces simultaneously and necessarily two distinct effects. Whereas his face was formerly turned away from God, and toward his own sins; it is now turned away from his own sins, and toward God. This one turning, with its twofold result, is in Christ the Mediator, and through the work of the Spirit.

 As long as God is my enemy, I am his. I have no more power to change that condition than the polished surface has to refrain from reflecting the sunshine that falls upon it. It is God's love, from the face of Jesus shining into my dark heart that makes my heart open to him, and delight to be his dwelling place. The eyes of the just Avenger I cannot endure to be in this place of sin; but the eye of the compassionate Physician I shall gladly admit into this place of disease; for he comes from heaven to earth that he may heal such sin sick souls as mine. When a disciple desires to be searched by the living God, he does not thereby intimate that there are no sins in him to be discovered: he intimates rather that his foes are so many and so lively, that nothing can subdue them except the presence and power of God. --William Arnot (--1875), in "Laws from Heaven for Life on Earth."

Verse 23-24. There are several things worthy of notice in the Psalmist's appeal, in the words before us. First, notice the Psalmist's intrepidity. Here is a man determined to explore the recesses of his own heart. Did Bonaparte, did Nelson, did Wellington, ever propose to do this? Were all the renowned heroes of antiquity present, I would ask them all if they ever had courage to enter into their own hearts. David was a man of courage. When he slew a lion in the way, when he successfully encountered a bear, when he went out to meet the giant Goliath, he gave undoubted proofs of courage; but never did he display such signal intrepidity as when he determined to look into his own heart. If you stood upon some eminence, and saw all the ravenous and venomous creatures that ever lived collected before you, it would not require such courage to combat them as to combat with your own heart. Every sin is a devil, and each may say, "My name is Legion, for we are many." Who knows what it is to face himself? And yet, if we would be saved, this must be done.

 Secondly, notice the Psalmist's integrity. He wished to know all his sins, that he might be delivered from them. As every individual must know his sins at some period, a wise man will seek to know them here, because the present is the only time in which to glorify God, by confessing, by renouncing, by overcoming them. One of the attributes of sin is to hide man from himself, to conceal his deformity, to prevent him from forming a just conception of his true condition. It is a solemn fact, that there is not an evil principle in the bosom of the devil himself which does not exist in ours, at the present moment, unless we are fully renewed by the power of the Holy Spirit. That these evil principles do not continually develop themselves, in all their hideous deformity, is entirely owing to the restraining and forbearing mercy of God.

 Thirdly, notice the Psalmist's wisdom. He presents his prayer to God himself. God is the only Being in the universe that knows himself -- that peruses himself in his own light. In the same light he sees all other beings; and hence it follows that, if other beings see themselves truly, it must be in the light of God. If the sun were an intelligent being, I would ask him, "How do you see yourself? In your own light?" And he would reply, "Yes." "And how do you see the planets that are continually revolving around you?" "In my own light also, for all the light that is in them is borrowed from me". You will observe that the Psalmist begins with his principles: his desire is to have these tried by a competent judge, and to have everything that is evil removed from them. This is an evidence of his wisdom. The heart and its thoughts must be made right, before the actions of the life can be set right. Those who are most eminent for piety are most conversant with God; and, for this reason, they become most conversant with themselves. David says, elsewhere, "Who can understand his errors? Cleanse THOU me from secret faults." And Job says, "If I wash myself with snow water, and make me never so clean, yet shalt THOU plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me." When these holy men perused themselves in God's light, they saw their sins of omission and commission, and prayed earnestly to be delivered from all. -- William Howels, 1832.

Verse 23-24. The text is a prayer, and it indicates, as we think, three great facts in regard to the suppliant: the first, that David thoroughly wished to become acquainted with himself; the second, that he felt conscious that God could see through all disguises; and the third, that he desired to discover, in order that by Divine help he might correct, whatsoever was wrong in his conduct.

 Now, the first inference which we draw from the text, when considered as indicating the feelings of the petitioner is, that he was thoroughly honest, that it was really his wish to become acquainted with his own heart. And is there, you may say, anything rare or remarkable in this? Indeed we think there is. It would need, we believe, a very high degree of piety to be able to put up with sincerity the prayers of our text. For, will you tell me that it does not often happen, that even whilst men are carrying on a process of self examination, there is a secret wish to remain ignorant of certain points, a desire not to be proved wrong when interest and inclination combine in demanding an opposite verdict? ... In searching into yourselves, you know where the tender points are, and those points you will be apt to avoid, so as not to put yourselves to pain, nor make it evident how much you need the caustic and the knife. Indeed, we may be sure that we state nothing but what experience will prove, when we declare it a high attainment in religion to be ready to know how bad we are ... And this had evidently been reached by the Psalmist, for he pleads very earnestly with God that he would leave no recess of his spirit unexplored, that he would bring the heart and all its thoughts, the life and all its ways, under a most searching examination, so that no form and no degree of evil might fail to be detected. -- Henry Melvill.

 Verse 23-24. Self examination is not the simple thing which, at first sight, it might appear. No Christian who has ever really practiced it has found it easy. Is there any exercise of the soul which any one of us has found so unsatisfactory, so almost impossible, as self-examination? The fact is this, that the heart is so exceedingly complicated and intricate, and it is so very near the eye which has to investigate it, and both it and the eye are so restless and so shifting, that its deep anatomy baffles our research. Just a few things, here and there, broad and open, and floating upon the surface, a man discovers; but there are chambers receding within chambers, in that deepest of all deep things, a sinner's heart, which no mere human investigation ever will reach, ... it is the prerogative of God alone to "search" the human heart.

 To the child of God -- the most intimate with himself in all the earth -- I do not hesitate to say -- "There are sins latent at this moment in you, of which you have no idea; but it only requires a larger measure of spiritual illumination to impress and unfold them. You have no idea of the wickedness that is now in you." But while I say this, let every Christian count well the cost before he ventures on the bold act of asking God to "search" him. For be sure of this, if you do really and earnestly ask God to "search" you, he will do it. And he will search you most searchingly; and if you ask him to "try" you, he will try you, -- and the trial will be no light matter!

 I am persuaded that we often little calculate what we are doing -- what we are asking God to do -- when we implore him to give us some spiritual attainment, some growth in grace, some increase in holiness, or peace. To all these things there is a condition, and that condition lies in a discipline, and that discipline is generally proportionate to the strength and the measure of the gift that we ask. I do not know what may have been the state of the Psalmist at the period when he wrote this Psalm; but I should think either one of Saul's most cruel persecutions, or the rebellion of his son Absalom, followed quick upon the traces of that prayer, Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts, etc. Still, whatever his attainment, every child of God will desire, at any sacrifice, to know his own exact state before God; for, as he desires in all things to have a mind conformed to the mind of God, so he is especially jealous lest he should, by any means, be taking a different view, or estimate, of his own soul from that which God sees it. -- Condensed from James Vaughan.

Verse 23-24. Hypocrisy at the fashionable end of the town is very different from hypocrisy in the city. The modish hypocrite endeavors to appear more vicious than he really is, the other kind of hypocrite more virtuous. The former is afraid of everything that has the show of religion in it, and would be thought engaged in many criminal gallantries and amours which he is not guilty of. The latter assumes a face of sanctity, and covers a multitude of vices under a seeming religious deportment.

 But there is another kind of hypocrisy, which differs from both of these: I mean that hypocrisy by which a man does not only deceive the world, but very often imposes on himself; that hypocrisy which conceals his own heart from him, and makes him believe he is more virtuous than he really is, and either not attend to his vices, or mistake even his vices for virtues. It is this fatal hypocrisy and self-deceit which is taken notice of in those words, "Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults."

 These two kinds of hypocrisy, namely, that of deceiving the world, and that of imposing on ourselves, are touched with wonderful beauty in the hundred and thirty-ninth Psalm. The folly of the first kind of hypocrisy is there set forth by reflections on God's omniscience and omnipresence, which are celebrated in as noble strains of poetry as any other I ever met with, either sacred or profane. The other kind of hypocrisy, whereby a man deceives himself, is intimated in the two last verses, where the Psalmist addresses himself to the great Searcher of hearts in that emphatic petition; "Try me, O God, and seek the ground of my heart: prove me, and examine my thoughts. Look well if there be any way of wickedness in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." --Joseph Addison (1672-1719), in "The Spectator."

Verse 23-24. How beautiful is the humility of David! He cannot speak of the wicked but in terms of righteous indignation; he cannot but hate the haters of his God; yet, he seems immediately to recollect, and to check himself -- "Try me, O Lord, and seek the ground of my heart." Precisely in the same spirit of inward humility and self-recollection, Abraham, when pleading before God in prayer for guilty depraved Sodom, fails not to speak of himself, as being dust and ashes: Genesis 18:27 . --James Ford, 1871.

Verse 23-24. Why did David pray thus to God, Search me, O God, and know my heart, having said before, in the first verse, "Thou hast searched me, and known me"? Seeing David knew that God had searched him, what needed he to pray that God would search him? Why did he beg God to do that which he had done already? The answer is at hand. David was a diligent self-searcher, and therefore he was so willing to be searched, yea, he delighted to be searched by God; and that not (as was said) because himself had done it already, but also because he knew God could do it better. He knew by his own search that he did not live in any way of wickedness against his knowledge, and yet he knew there might be some way of wickedness in him that he knew not of. And therefore he doth not only say, "Search me, O God, and know my thoughts"; but he adds, "See if there be any wicked way (or any way of pain and grief) in me"; (the same word signifies both, because wicked ways lead in the end to pain and grief); "and lead me in the way everlasting." As if he had said, Lord, I have searched myself, and can see no wicked way in me; but, Lord, thy sight is infinitely clearer than mine, and if thou wilt but search me thou may see some wicked way in me which I could not see, and I would fain see and know the worst of myself, that I might amend and grow better; therefore, Lord, if there be any such way in me, cause me to know it also. O take that way out of me, and take me out of that way; "lead me in the way everlasting." David had tried himself, and he would again be tried by God, that he, being better tried, might become yet better. He found himself gold upon his own trial and yet he feared there might be some dross in him that he had not found; and now he would be retried that he might come forth purest gold. Pure gold fears neither the furnace nor the fire, neither the test nor the touchstone; nor is weighty gold afraid of the balance. He that is weight will be weight, how often so ever he is weighed; he that is gold will be gold, how often so ever he is tried, and the oftener he is tried the purer gold he will be; what he is he will be, and he would be better than he is. -- Joseph Caryl.

 *24And see if there be any hurtful way in me, And lead me in the everlasting way.*

Finally, to sum all of Psalm 139 is to say, GOD is so very far and high above all the ways, thoughts, experiences, behaviors and the very lives of all people for all time and in ages past. So the question though is still simple. Could there be things about GOD we simply do not know? Could not GOD do things in ways that are opposed to what we have always believed? Now, to introduce you to what some of those things could be.

 We who believe they walk with GOD need to be certain that we do. Osward Chambers has critical thoughts on this matter. “*Dependent On God’s Presence*

 *July 20 devotion: “My Utmost For His Highest”*

*Dependent On God’s Presence*

*They that wait upon the Lord…shall walk, and not faint. — Isaiah 40:31*

*There is no thrill in walking; it is the test of all the stable qualities. To “walk and not faint” is the highest reach possible for strength. The word “walk” is used in the Bible to express the character — John, “looking upon Jesus as He walked, said, Behold the Lamb of God!” There is never anything abstract in the Bible, it is always vivid and real. God does not say — “Be spiritual,” but — “Walk before Me.”*

*When we are in an unhealthy state physically or emotionally, we always want thrills. In the physical domain this will lead to counterfeiting the Holy Ghost; in the emotional life it leads to inordinate affection and the destruction of morality; and in the spiritual domain if we insist on getting thrills, on mounting up with wings, it will end in the destruction of spirituality.*

*The reality of God’s presence is not dependent on any place, but only dependent upon the determination to set the Lord always before us. Our problems come when we refuse to bank on the reality of His presence. The experience the Psalmist speaks of — “Therefore will we not fear, though.…” will be ours when once we are based on Reality; not the consciousness of God’s presence but the reality of it — “Why, He has been here all the time.”*

*At critical moments it is necessary to ask guidance, but it ought to be unnecessary to be saying always — “O Lord, direct me here, and there.” Of course He will! If our commonsense decisions are not His order, He will press through them and check; then we must be quiet and wait for the direction of His presence.*

 *Wisdom From Oswald Chambers*

*Am I becoming more and more in love with God as a holy God, or with the conception of an amiable Being who says, “Oh well, sin doesn’t matter much”? Disciples Indeed, 389 L*

 Chapter 2

 Jewish Redemption

*“ GOD OF HISTORY: Blessed are you, Oh Lord our God and God of our fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob, the great, mighty and revered God, the Most High God who bestows loving kindnesses, the creator of all things, who remembers the good deeds of the patriarchs and in love came as a redeemer to their children's children for your name's sake. Oh king, helper, savior and shield. Blessed are you, Oh Lord, the shield of Abraham.”*

 This is the first part of the Amidah. The Amidah is the daily prayers of the Jewish people. It dates back at least 2000 years if not more. It is said every day, three times a day, by religious Jews. Notice in this first part of the prayer it speaks about God as a Father who came in love as a redeemer to their children’s children. In other words, God came as a redeemer to all the Jewish People. What is meant by redeemer? Did the Jewish people need a redeemer?

 *When we consider Jewish prayer we must recall the Amidah as the mainstay of daily prayer with 18 separate blessings or you could say prayer points. Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik says, “How different is the world of prayer! Prayer has been called by the rabbis "the service of the heart." Prayer arises from the heart rather than from the mind, from a heart full of emotion, which knows no rational restrictions. Jewish prayer has been described by a master of Jewish law, Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, as arising from a heart, which beats "rapidly and with an irregular rhythm, "a heart which is "wild, savage, and primitive." 3 How can the world of halakhah, the world of law and order, attempt to regulate something which is by its very nature free and wild? It seems that such an attempt would tend to change the essence of prayer and transmute it into a "commandment of men, learned by rote" (Isaiah, 29:13).*

Now let us go back to the question of redeemer. The word in Hebrew for Redeemer is Go’el. The Hebrew letters are Hey for the, gimel, vav, alef, and lamed. The root word is used in three main situations: a. *Leviticus 25:* “*25 ‘If a fellow countryman of yours becomes so poor he has to sell part of his property, then his nearest kinsman is to come and buy back what his relative has sold.* So in this case the Go’el (Redeemer) would buy back the property of a relative who had fallen into debt. You can see how this would be a very important function to care for those who are having financial difficulty. b. *Leviticus 25:47 ‘Now if the means of a stranger or of a sojourner with you becomes sufficient, and a countryman of yours becomes so poor with regard to him as to sell himself to a stranger who is sojourning with you, or to the descendants of a stranger’s family, 48 then he shall have redemption right after he has been sold. One of his brothers may redeem him, 49 or his uncle, or his uncle’s son, may redeem him, or one of his blood relatives from his family may redeem him; or if he prospers, he may redeem himself. 50* This is not something we think of in the modern days we live, but it was a very certain remedy in ancient days. In this case the Go’el (Redeemer ) would buy back the slave. c. In this third case the Go’el (Redeemer) would avenge the blood for the murder of a relative. The next of kin would have the responsibility of payment life for life. This is a special Redeemer known as the Go’el Haddam or avenger of blood. Because we can develop many ideas of the Go’el in the human form as a (Redeemer) who takes care of so much human suffering, it seems that allusions to HaShem can be made. This of course would require a Divine Go’el and this is exactly what has already been mentioned as the first prayer point of the Shemoneh Esrei (Amidah) prayer.

 The Tanakh is dripping with the sweetness of many Redemptive reports of Ha Shem. Here are only a few that speak about GOD being a divine Redeemer: a. *Exodus 6:5 “ Furthermore I have heard the groaning of the sons of Israel, because the Egyptians are holding them in bondage, and I have remembered My covenant. 6 Say, therefore, to the sons 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 their bondage. I will also redeem (Go’el) you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. 7 Then I will take you for My people, and I will be your God; and you shall know that I am the Lord your God, who brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. 8 I will bring you to the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and I will give it to you for a possession; I am the Lord.’” 9 So Moses spoke thus to the sons of Israel, but they did not listen to Moses on account of their despondency and cruel bondage.* By the wonderful understanding of Ha Shem HE knows that Israel cannot respond appropriately to HIM because they have been suffering so greatly by this time. Yet, HE will make a way for them.

 The mighty plan of Redemption is described in the “Song of Moses”

*Exodus 15:1 Then Moses and the sons of Israel sang this song to the Lord, and said, I will sing to the Lord, for He is highly exalted; The horse and its rider He has hurled into the sea. 2 The Lord is my strength and song, And He has become my salvation;(Yeshua- יֵשׁוּעַ-yod-shin-vav-ayin) This is my God, and I will praise Him; My father’s God, and I will extol Him. 3 “The Lord is a warrior; The Lord is His name. 4“Pharaoh’s chariots and his army He has cast into the sea; And the choicest of his officers are drowned in the Red Sea. 5“The deeps cover them; They went down into the depths like a stone. 6“Your right hand, O Lord, is majestic in power, Your right hand, O Lord, shatters the enemy. 7“And in the greatness of Your excellence You overthrow those who rise up against You; You send forth Your burning anger, and it consumes them as chaff. 8 “At the blast of Your nostrils the waters were piled up, The flowing waters stood up like a heap; The deeps were congealed in the heart of the sea. 9“The enemy said, ‘I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; My desire shall be gratified against them; I will draw out my sword, my hand will destroy them.’ 10 “You blew with Your wind, the sea covered them; They sank like lead in the mighty waters. 11“Who is like You among the gods, O Lord? Who is like You, majestic in holiness, Awesome in praises, working wonders? 12“You stretched out Your right hand, The earth swallowed them. 13“In Your loving-kindness You have led the people whom You have redeemed; In Your strength You have guided them to Your holy habitation. 14 “The peoples have heard, they tremble; Anguish has gripped the inhabitants of Philistia. “Then the chiefs of Edom were dismayed; The leaders of Moab, trembling grips them; All the inhabitants of Canaan have melted away. 16“Terror and dread fall upon them; By the greatness of Your arm they are motionless as stone; Until Your people pass over, O Lord, Until the people pass over whom You have purchased. 17“You will bring them and plant them in the mountain of Your inheritance, The place, O Lord, which You have made for Your dwelling, The sanctuary, O Lord, which Your hands have established. 18 “The Lord shall reign forever and ever.” 19 For the horses of Pharaoh with his chariots and his horsemen went into the sea, and the Lord brought back the waters of the sea on them, but the sons of Israel walked on dry land through the midst of the sea. 20 Miriam the prophetess, Aaron’s sister, took the timbrel in her hand, and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dancing. 21 Miriam answered them, “Sing to the Lord, for He is highly exalted; The horse and his rider He has hurled into the sea.”*

The day is on the way and coming soon when the people of Ha Shem will be called by their redeemed name. *Isaiah* *62:12* “ *And they will call them, “The holy people, The redeemed of the Lord”; And you will be called, “Sought out, a city not forsaken.”* Because the fact of this verse expresses how Israel will be called by a Name which has to do with redemption, there is then the implication of the idea they needed to be redeemed. *Israel Redeemed Isaiah 43:1 “ But now, thus says the Lord, your Creator, O Jacob, And He who formed you, O Israel, “Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name; you are Mine! 2 “When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; And through the rivers, they will not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be scorched, Nor will the flame burn you. 3“For I am the Lord your God, The Holy One of Israel, your Savior (3467-Yahsu-Yod-shin-ayin;) I have given Egypt as your ransom, Cush and Seba in your place. 4 “Since you are precious in My sight, Since you are honored and I love you, I will give other men in your place and other peoples in exchange for your life. 5 “Do not fear, for I am with you; I will bring your offspring from the east, And gather you from the west. 6 “I will say to the north, ‘Give them up!’ And to the south, ‘Do not hold them back.’ Bring My sons from afar and My daughters from the ends of the earth, 7 Everyone who is called by My name, And whom I have created for My glory, Whom I have formed, even whom I have made.”*

Job says, “My Redeemer Lives” *Job 19:23 “Oh that my words were written! Oh that they were inscribed in a book! 24 “That with an iron stylus and lead They were engraved in the rock forever! 25 “As for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, And at the last He will take His stand on the earth. 26 “Even after my skin is destroyed, Yet from my flesh I shall see God; 27 Whom I myself shall behold, And whom my eyes will see and not another.* I find this verse to be so very clear and powerful of a demonstration of how Ha Shem will appear on a future day. It will be a time of great joy and wonder for all of us who love HIS appearing. There is conformation of this verse in *Psalm 17:15*  “*As for me, I shall behold Your face in righteousness; I will be satisfied with Your likeness when I awake.”* I know some could say that God having a face is just symbolic or something else. I believe the most straightforward way to interpret is by exactly what the Scripture is saying. Some day we shall behold the face of GOD. In the book of Zechariah it also speaks about GOD standing on the Mount of Olives and the mountain splits in two. *Zechariah 14:* *14 “Behold, a day is coming for the Lord when the spoil taken from you will be divided among you. 2 For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city will be captured, the houses plundered, the women ravished and half of the city exiled, but the rest of the people will not be cut off from the city. 3 Then the Lord will go forth and fight against those nations, as when He fights on a day of battle. 4 In that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south.* The problem so many have is that GOD cannot be human. Ha Shem is ONE. But, remember this ONE true GOD came and showed Himself in the form of a Burning bush. *Exodus 3:* *3 Now Moses was pasturing the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian; and he led the flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. 2 The angel of the Lord appeared to him in a blazing fire from the midst of a bush; and he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, yet the bush was not consumed. 3 So Moses said, “I must turn aside now and see this marvelous sight, why the bush is not burned up.” 4 When the Lord saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, “Moses, Moses!” And he said, “Here I am.” 5 Then He said, “Do not come near here; remove your sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.” 6 He said also, “I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” Then Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.* GOD can do as HE pleases. So if HE wants to come in the form of a bush, HE can do it. If HE chooses to reveal Himself in the form of a man, HE can. Is there anything GOD cannot do? Jeremiah 32: 26 “Then the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah, saying, 27 “Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh; is anything too difficult for Me?” *Psalm 78:* *And they remembered that God was their rock, And the Most High God their Redeemer.” Proverbs 23:11* *“For I am the Lord your God, who upholds your right hand, Who says to you, ‘Do not fear, I will help you.’ 14 “Do not fear, you worm Jacob, you men of Israel; I will help you,” declares the Lord, “and your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel.* *Isaiah 44:* *6 “Thus says the Lord, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the Lord of hosts: ‘I am the first and I am the last, And there is no God besides Me.*

 With the way the Redeemer is known in Hebrew we can see by the Hebrew prayers that the Israelites believe they need a redeemer. Now, the great arguments occur in the description of what this redeemer looks like. Could it be that the Redeemer is just a man howbeit a very good man? Could it be that the Redeemer is divine? This is where the person of the redeemer becomes a form of contention again with many people, especially the Orthodox Jewish people. The Redeemer could also be understood as the Messiah or in Hebrew the Meshiach. Over the history of the Jewish people there have been several men who have come to the surface as the possible Meshiach. One who is very well remembered was Simon Bar Koseva. Jewish sage Rabbi Akiva changed Simon’s name to Simon bar Kokhba. Bar Kokhba means son of the star. This is very interesting as this pertains to the prophecy given in Numbers 24 *“15 He took up his discourse and said, “The oracle of Balaam the son of Beor, And the oracle of the man whose eye is opened, 16 The oracle of him who hears the words of God, And knows the knowledge of the Most High, Who sees the vision of the Almighty, Falling down, yet having his eyes uncovered. 17 “I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near; A Star shall come forth from Jacob, A scepter shall rise from Israel, And shall crush through the forehead of Moab, And tear down all the sons of Seth.* Simon bar Kokhba continues to be a very important figure in Jewish and world history as He lead the last revolts against the Roman Empire. Bar Kokhba and the Zealots he commanded fought fiercely and bravely but in the end were all massacred by the Evil pagan Roman Machine. We can also consider the Rebbe as He is still remembered, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneersohn. The last Lubavitcher Rebbe, left the Lubavitch movement without any central, recognized authority. Rabbi Schneersohn had been an inspired and inspiring leader, who made Lubavitch, which used to be a small Hassidic group, into a major one in the Jewish world. His last years before his death, many of his followers insisted that he was the long-awaited messiah, and that all Jews were obligated to recognize him in that role. There is still to this day a significant number of Jews who consider Rabbi Schneersohn the Messiah, not just a very good Jewish Rabbi. Then we can consider Yeshua or as the Christian world would say Jesus. One very large point to make here is there has been no other Jewish Rabbi who has effected a change to the gentile world as Jesus has. Much of what has happened over the nearly two millennium since He has been away was and still is done from gentile influence. Because of this we see so much paganism and worldliness in Christian practices of today that would not have been found in the early days of the followers of the Jewish Messiah, Yeshua.

 Now, I would like to present a quote from the Jewish Artscroll Siddur, page 24. “*Assembly composed these eighteen blessings from Scripture sources in the early years of the Second Temple Era. Why do we continue to use a prescribed prayer that was written over two thousand years ago? Why do we not compose our own spontaneous. Personal prayers?*

 *Rabbi Joseph b. Soloveitchik provides an answer by pointing to the Talmud’s statement: “Rabbi Yochanan taught: One who connects the blessing of redemption (which concludes the Blessing of the Shema) to the evening prayer (the Shemoneh Esrei) is worthy of the World to Come” (Berachos 4b).*

 *What is the connection between prayer and redemption? Rabbi Soloveitchik explains, after recording that Moses killed an Egyptian for beating a Jew, the Torah writes, “And it happened during those many days that the king of Egypt died, and the Children of Israel groaned because of the work, and they cried out” (Exodus 2:23) The slaves had been subjected to a miserable existence, yet not even a sigh was heard from them until now. Why had they suffered silently?*

 *Because they had been born into slavery and knew no other way of life, they believed that this was their natural lot and they were not impelled to cry out. Not only were their bodies enslaved, notes the Zohar, but their power of expression was enslaved as well. The Kabbalists comment that the name of our festival of freedom, Pesach, alludes to the Hebrew words to signify the Jews newfound freedom to express themselves cogently, an ability that had been robbed form them during their long years of servitude.*

 *Moses actions changed all that. He demonstrated that a superior lifestyle existed and the people came to recognize their pain and call out to God for redemption.” [[1]](#footnote-1)* Remember redemption has the notion that something needs to be bought back, restored, given another opportunity as if it were.

 Look at the Exodus and what was redeemed. From the time of the flood people began to become more and more evil on the earth. It seems sadly enough the propensity of humans is to migrate away from GOD and not to Him. But, we have no problem inventing false or pagan god’s. The ancient world was no different and the people of the many nations of the world had their own multitudes of god’s. Egypt was the most powerful nation on earth at the time of the Hebrews. It seems that GOD had decided to make HIS own special people who would want to know HIM and love Him. He used the land of Egypt and the Egyptian people to provide the incubator in which to raise up HIS own special people. The Hebrews would live in the land of Egypt for over 400 years to make a great number of HIS special people. This had been told to Abraham as recorded in *Genesis 15:13 “God said to Abram, “Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years. 14 But I will also judge the nation whom they will serve, and afterward they will come out with many possessions.”*

 The problem with the children of Israel (Hebrews) being raised up in the land of Egypt would be they would see the ways of the Egyptians which included gross paganism. You could study the mythology of the Egyptians in enough detail to earn a Doctorate but let us just briefly share the main points. In Egyptian mythology, Ra was the god of the sun. Ra was the most important god to the Egyptians. When GOD brought the plague of darkness to the Egyptians HE was demonstrating HIS power over this false idea of a god of light. *Exodus 10: 21 Then the Lord said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand toward the sky, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, even a darkness which may be felt.” 22 So Moses stretched out his hand toward the sky, and there was thick darkness in all the land of Egypt for three days. 23 They did not see one another, nor did anyone rise from his place for three days, but all the sons of Israel had light in their dwellings. 24 Then Pharaoh called to Moses, and said, “Go, serve the Lord; only let your flocks and your herds be detained. Even your little ones may go with you.” 25 But Moses said, “You must also let us have sacrifices and burnt offerings, that we may sacrifice them to the Lord our God. 26 Therefore, our livestock too shall go with us; not a hoof shall be left behind, for we shall take some of them to serve the Lord our God. And until we arrive there, we ourselves do not know with what we shall serve the Lord.”*

 The next goddess I would like just to mention is Hathor. Hathor was a cow goddess and was associated with the Milky Way. Hathor was the daughter of Ra. She was the goddess associated with love. Interesting to note that according to myth she liked to eat human flesh and so her father Ra dyed beer red and Hathor just drank the beer and stopped eating human flesh. Also, the god Hapi was the god of the Nile and he was over the Nile flooding each year and the fish and the birds. When GOD turned the Nile to Blood he was making judgment of these two gods. There are many other examples of what GOD did in judgment against the Egyptian gods in the Book of Exodus. This is a matter of study 0n your own as I have already stated you could spend much time and effort leaning about false Egyptian gods. Then you could even go into other nations as the Greeks, Romans, Persians, etc. Etc.

 But GOD had a remedy for this problem and it was also the plan which would teach them how to live their lives for HIM. God would meet with Moses and tell Him how he would lead the Hebrews and eventually give them the land promised to them. This land of Canaan was already full of nations of people groups which were all very pagan. GOD was going to fight for the Hebrews as they took the land which would become the land of Israel and the Hebrews would become the people of Israel. GOD would give the people a system of coming to HIM which was the Tabernacle.

 The LORD GOD would give instruction of just exactly what HE wanted the Children of Israel to do: *Exodus 25:* *25 Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 2 “Tell the sons of Israel to raise a contribution for Me; from every man whose heart moves him you shall raise My contribution. 3 This is the contribution which you are to raise from them: gold, silver and bronze, 4 blue, purple and scarlet material, fine linen, goat hair, 5 rams’ skins dyed red, porpoise skins, acacia wood, 6 oil for lighting, spices for the anointing oil and for the fragrant incense, 7 onyx stones and setting stones for the ephod and for the breast piece. 8 Let them construct a sanctuary for Me, that I may dwell among them. 9 According to all that I am going to show you, as the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furniture, just so you shall construct it.* To begin with they had to gather all these items in order to make the Tabernacle in the way Ha Shem had already told Moses. By making all this the way Ha Shem said, they would have a way to meet with HIM.

 The requirements of what the Children of Israel were instructed to do is spoken of here in *Exodus 29*: 36 “*Each day you shall offer a bull as a sin offering for atonement, and you shall purify the altar when you make atonement for it, and you shall anoint it to consecrate it. 37 For seven days you shall make atonement for the altar and consecrate it; then the altar shall be most holy, and whatever touches the altar shall be holy. 38 “Now this is what you shall offer on the altar: two one year old lambs each day, continuously. 39 The one lamb you shall offer in the morning and the other lamb you shall offer at twilight; 40 and there shall be one-tenth of an ephah of fine flour mixed with one-fourth of a hin of beaten oil, and one-fourth of a hin of wine for a drink offering with one lamb. 41 The other lamb you shall offer at twilight, and shall offer with it the same grain offering and the same drink offering as in the morning, for a soothing aroma, an offering by fire to the Lord. 42 It shall be a continual burnt offering throughout your generations at the doorway of the tent of meeting before the Lord, where I will meet with you, to speak to you there. 43 I will meet there with the sons of Israel, and it shall be consecrated by My glory. 44 I will consecrate the tent of meeting and the altar; I will also consecrate Aaron and his sons to minister as priests to Me. 45 I will dwell among the sons of Israel and will be their God. 46 They shall know that I am the Lord their God who brought them out of the land of Egypt, that I might dwell among them; I am the Lord their God.*  You can see that the Children of Israel continuously made these daily offerings to the LORD. The children of Israel had to do this in order to continue their relationship with Ha Shem. The LORD required blood in order to meet with HIM. The very term covenant implies that blood had to be shed. A covenant is cut and in Hebrew is the word Brit. In *Leviticus 17*: *11 For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood by reason of the life that makes atonement.’* This is a very interesting Scripture coming from the Torah. Obviously, it is speaking about the blood which is given on the altar. The LORD is the ONE speaking here and HE says HE has given the blood on the altar. The Blood required is something of HIS doing. We see that blood is required for atonement but there seems to be the possibility for some discrepancy for Micah 6: 6-7 says this: 6*With what shall I come to the Lord*

*And bow myself before the God on high? Shall I come to Him with burnt offerings, With yearling calves? 7 Does the Lord take delight in thousands of rams, In ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I present my firstborn for my rebellious acts, The fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?* Also, in the book of Hebrews it says;*10: 5 Therefore, when He comes into the world, He says, “Sacrifice and offering You have not desired, But a body You have prepared for Me; 6 In whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You have taken no pleasure. 7 “Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come (In the scroll of the book it is written of Me) To do Your will, O God.’”* Now, even though this is from the Book of Hebrews, it is actually quoting Psalm 40. This Scripture also is telling us that Ha Shem is not finding pleasure in the offerings given by the Children of Israel. But, there are more Scriptures telling us this same thing: *Isaiah 1:11“What are your multiplied sacrifices to Me?” Says the Lord. “I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams And the fat of fed cattle; And I take no pleasure in the blood of bulls, lambs or goats.”* There are many other Scriptures that tell us of GOD’s tiring of the blood sacrifices. So what is one to do? How do we come before GOD if on the one hand HE requires the daily sacrifices and on the other hand HE is tired of the daily sacrifices? But, there is a bigger question and a more difficult question which arises. Now, today even if one wanted to offer the daily blood sacrifices, they could not. The reason is because the Temple of Jerusalem is not there. It was destroyed by the Romans in 70AD. After this happened a severe problem arose in the Jewish World. How could a soul find atonement if the Blood could no longer be offered? The Jewish sages came up with another way, and substitutes came about. People began to hope for atonement by keeping the Torah. Now, many would say because they are Jewish, they have atonement already because they are the seed of Abraham. So the keeping the Torah is the way to show Ha Shem they believe. Much of what Judaism does is in accordance with the Talmud. These volumes have to do with how one can interpret the Hebrew Scriptures. So in essence much of the Talmud and the books related to it are mostly the traditions of men, howbeit wonderful sages of the Jewish world, yet still only human. This means of coming to Ha Shem from an intellectual way actually came about before the destruction of the Temple and when the Temple was gone there was no other way but through intellectualism.

 This is exactly what was happening when Yeshua began HIS public ministry. The main groups of the Jewish religious community were in fierce opposition to one another and the way to Ha Shem had been obscured. Let’s look at John Chapter 8:*31 So Yeshua was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, “If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; 32 and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.” 33 They answered Him, “We are Abraham’s descendants and have never yet been enslaved to anyone; how is it that You say, ‘You will become free’?” 34 Yeshua answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin. 35 The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son does remain forever. 36 So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed. 37 I know that you are Abraham’s descendants; yet you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you. 38 I speak the things which I have seen with My Father; therefore you also do the things which you heard from your father.” 39 They answered and said to Him, “Abraham is our father.” Jesus said to them, “If you are Abraham’s children, do the deeds of Abraham. 40 But as it is, you are seeking to kill Me, a man who has told you the truth, which I heard from God; this Abraham did not do. 41 You are doing the deeds of your father.” They said to Him, “We were not born of fornication; we have one Father: God.” 42 Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and have come from God, for I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me. 43 Why do you not understand what I am saying? It is because you cannot hear My word. 44 You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies. 45 But because I speak the truth, you do not believe Me. 46 Which one of you convicts Me of sin? If I speak truth, why do you not believe Me? 47 He who is of God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not hear them, because you are not of God.” 48 The Jews answered and said to Him, “Do we not say rightly that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?” 49 Jesus answered, “I do not have a demon; but I honor My Father, and you dishonor Me. 50 But I do not seek My glory; there is One who seeks and judges. 51 Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he will never see death.” 52 The Jews said to Him, “Now we know that You have a demon. Abraham died, and the prophets also; and You say, ‘If anyone keeps My word, he will never taste of death.’ 53 Surely You are not greater than our father Abraham, who died? The prophets died too; whom do You make Yourself out to be?” 54 Jesus answered, “If I glorify Myself, My glory is nothing; it is My Father who glorifies Me, of whom you say, ‘He is our God’; 55 and you have not come to know Him, but I know Him; and if I say that I do not know Him, I will be a liar like you, but I do know Him and keep His word. 56 Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad.” 57 So the Jews said to Him, “You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?” 58 Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am.” 59 Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him, but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple.*

 Many Orthodox Jewish people are greatly offended by the words of Yeshua when He says you are of your father the devil. We must remember that Yeshua told Peter a man He loved very much and one of His talmidim (students) as recorded in *Matthew 16:23 “ But He turned and said to Peter, “Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; for you are not setting your mind on God’s interests, but man’s.”* Why would Yeshua say these very terrible words to Peter? The reason is because just before this Yeshua had told them all HE had to go to Jerusalem and suffer many things. He was telling them about HIS coming crucifixion which HE knew would happen. It was foreordained before the creation of the world that HE would come for this purpose. *1 Peter 1:* *17 If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one’s work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth; 18 knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, 19 but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ. 20 For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you 21 who through Him are believers in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.* When Peter said to Yeshua as recorded in *Matthew 16:* *22 Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, “God forbid it, Lord! This shall never happen to You.”* Then Yeshua told Peter he was basically speaking for the devil. In the same way Yeshua was rebuking the Jewish leaders. He by no means hated them but was letting them know they were speaking and living in ways that were not of God. They were also one of the main reasons Yeshua came as HE did to them. To let them know so much of what they were doing was the ways and traditions of man and not the ways of Ha Shem. The Pharisees and Sadducees along with other religious groups were interpreting the Torah in ways that were not correct and made it impossible for others to follow. *Luke 11:* *42 “But woe to you Pharisees! For you pay tithe of mint and rue and every kind of garden herb, and yet disregard justice and the love of God; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others. 43 Woe to you Pharisees! For you love the chief seats in the synagogues and the respectful greetings in the market places. 44 Woe to you! For you are like concealed tombs, and the people who walk over them are unaware of it.” 45 One of the lawyers said to Him in reply, “Teacher, when You say this, You insult us too.” 46 But He said, “Woe to you lawyers as well! For you weigh men down with burdens hard to bear, while you yourselves will not even touch the burdens with one of your fingers. 47 Woe to you! For you build the tombs of the prophets, and it was your fathers who killed them.*

Yeshua began His public ministry in the first part of the CE around the years 26-30. He came in a very tumultuous time on earth. The religious Jewish people for a large part were simply that, religious. The extreme tragedy was Ha Shem wanted a relationship with people. But, there were still many Jewish people who wanted to reciprocate this relationship back to Ha Shem. One such person was Nicodemus as recorded in John Chapter 3: “*Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews; 2 this man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, “Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.” 3 Jesus answered and said to him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.” 4 Nicodemus said to Him, “How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born, can he?” 5 Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Do not be amazed that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ 8 The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit.” 9 Nicodemus said to Him, “How can these things be?” 10 Jesus answered and said to him, “Are you the teacher of Israel and do not understand these things?* As such a teacher he ought to have understood this doctrine. It was not new, but was clearly taught in the Old Testament. See particularly *Ps 51:10*; *Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me.*  Psalm 16:1-11; *Preserve me, O God, for I take refuge in You. 2 I said to the Lord, “You are my Lord; I have no good besides You.” 3 As for the saints who are in the earth, They are the majestic ones in whom is all my delight. 4 The sorrows of those who have bartered for another god will be multiplied; I shall not pour out their drink offerings of blood, Nor will I take their names upon my lips. 5 The Lord is the portion of my inheritance and my cup; You support my lot. 6 The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places;*

*Indeed, my heritage is beautiful to me. 7 I will bless the Lord who has counseled me; Indeed, my mind instructs me in the night. 8 I have set the Lord continually before me; Because He is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. 9 Therefore my heart is glad and my glory rejoices; My flesh also will dwell securely. 10 For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol;*

*Nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay. 11 You will make known to me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; In Your right hand there are pleasures forever.*

 It may be a little surprising that a man whose business was to teach the people as this man Nicodemus was and yet not know a plain and important doctrine as Yeshua is speaking of here; but when worldly-minded men are in offices of religion and sometimes for the soul purpose of ease or reputation, it is no wonder that they are strangers to the plain truths of the Bible. There have been many, and there are still, those who are in the ministry itself, to whom the plainest doctrines of the gospel are obscure. No man can understand the Bible fully unless he is a humble before Ha Shem. The easiest way to comprehend the truths of the Bible is to give ones heart to God and live for His glory. Many children have more real knowledge of the way of salvation than many who are pretended masters and teachers of Israel.

 Now back to John 3:*11 Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know and testify of what we have seen, and you do not accept our testimony. 12 If I told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things? 13 No one has ascended into heaven, but He who descended from heaven: the Son of Man. 14 As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; 15 so that whoever believes will in Him have eternal life. 16 “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. 18 He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. 19 This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. 20 For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. 21 But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God.”*

 We have to go back to the bedrock statement GOD has made in His eternal word. Leviticus there is no remission of sin without the shedding of blood. So the many years of the Tabernacle and then the Temple blood was shed. But, finally GOD says that HE is not pleased with the shedding of animal blood. So the dilemma seems to be we need blood to have atonement and yet GOD no longer wants the blood of animals and even if HE did we have no proper way to give it to HIM as there is no Temple. Remember the Temple is required in order to give proper sacrifices. This is just exactly where Yeshua enters. He came to be the once and for all times sacrifice for our sins. He offered the Blood of atonement for the whole world. Now, for the most part the Jewish world does not see this and yet this is what the Torah said would happen. But we will discuss this a bit later. For now we will speak about the man, Paul.

 Chapter 3

 Paul, Pharisee of Pharisee’s

 Of all the characters of the entire Bible, there is most likely not one more controversial than Paul. Sadly, it does not seem to be his fault, but due to the misunderstandings of others. So many times people just put words in Paul’s mouth that he never wrote. Also, his writings are many times taken out of context. So, to be fair to Paul I think it best to begin speaking about him by looking at what he said about himself. *Philippians 3: 3 Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things again is no trouble to me, and it is a safeguard for you. 2 Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the false circumcision; 3 for we are the true circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh, 4 although I myself might have confidence even in the flesh. If anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more: 5 circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; 6 as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless.* So, already we hear Paul tell us that he did not put any faith in his flesh or in his own ability to keep the Law. But, there had been a time when he as his contemporaries kept the Law in order as he believed to have right standing with Ha Shem. *Galatians 1: 13 For you have heard of my former manner of life in Judaism, how I used to persecute the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it; 14 and I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries among my countrymen, being more extremely zealous for my ancestral traditions.”* Again, here he is telling us that he does not put any confidence in his own abilities. He goes on to let us know that if anyone could put faith in their flesh it would be him because of the reasons he gave. Paul does not in this short discourse tell us that keeping of the Law is wrong or should not be done. This is where much of the problem comes in with many of Paul’s opponents both in his own day right up to the present. They would tell you that Paul said keeping of the Law is wrong and he never says this. In fact we will show you Paul continued to be zealous for the Law.

 *Acts 21:17*  *After we arrived in Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly. 18 And the following day Paul went in with us to James, and all the elders were present. 19 After he had greeted them, he began to relate one by one the things which God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry. 20 And when they heard it they began glorifying God; and they said to him, “You see, brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews of those who have believed, and they are all zealous for the Law; 21 and they have been told about you, that you are teaching all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs. 22 What, then, is to be done? They will certainly hear that you have come. 23 Therefore do this that we tell you. We have four men who are under a vow; 24 take them and purify yourself along with them, and pay their expenses so that they may shave their heads; and all will know that there is nothing to the things which they have been told about you, but that you yourself also walk orderly, keeping the Law.*

So you see Paul did keep the Law after he had believed and followed Yeshua. In this case He even encourages others to keep the Law as well. Now, back to Philippians chapter 3: *7 But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. 8 More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, 9 and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, 10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; 11 in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.”*

Paul was at one time a strong opponent to the church showing his loyalty to Judaism. The very sad thing is when we read the New Testament (Brit Ha Desha) we may think that Christianity is a new religion that comes out of Judaism. In truth Christianity is the end result or fruition of Judaism. Judaism was always looking for a Messiah and Jesus was that anointed ONE. I won’t try to explain this for now but it will be revealed in the continuance of this material. So, at first Paul didn’t believe that Yeshua (Jesus) was the Messiah but that would all change. Let’s look how this all came chronologically.

 First, as we have shown, Paul was a very zealous Jewish man who followed all the Torah. He hated this Christianity as he and many others believed it was a new false religion and an affront to Judaism. There is a very interesting story contained in the New Testament which gives us insight to how Paul felt about Christians. He surrounded himself by men who were vehemently opposed to this believe in Yeshua. Let’s look at a portion of a story where Stephen, a young believer in Yeshua, is supporting his own faith in Yeshua with the hope they would find this faith and believe.  *Acts:7:* *44 “Our fathers had the tabernacle of testimony in the wilderness, just as He who spoke to Moses directed him to make it according to the pattern which he had seen. 45 And having received it in their turn, our fathers brought it in with Joshua upon dispossessing the nations whom God drove out before our fathers, until the time of David. 46 David found favor in God’s sight, and asked that he might find a dwelling place for the God of Jacob. 47 But it was Solomon who built a house for Him. 48 However, the Most High does not dwell in houses made by human hands; as the prophet says: 49 ‘Heaven is My throne, And earth is the footstool of My feet; What kind of house will you build for Me?’ says the Lord, ‘Or what place is there for My repose? 50 ‘Was it not My hand which made all these things?’ 51 “You men who are stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears are always resisting the Holy Spirit; you are doing just as your fathers did. 52 Which one of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? They killed those who had previously announced the coming of the Righteous One, whose betrayers and murderers you have now become; 53 you who received the law as ordained by angels, and yet did not keep it.” 54 Now when they heard this, they were cut to the quick, and they began gnashing their teeth at him. 55 But being full of the Holy Spirit, he gazed intently into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God; 56 and he said, “Behold, I see the heavens opened up and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.” 57 But they cried out with a loud voice, and covered their ears and rushed at him with one impulse. 58 When they had driven him out of the city, they began stoning him; and the witnesses laid aside their robes at the feet of a young man named Saul. 59 They went on stoning Stephen as he called on the Lord and said, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!” 60 Then falling on his knees, he cried out with a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them!” Having said this, he fell asleep.* The young man in this story named Saul was present and in agreement with all the hate and murder that was happening before him. He would even lead some bands of Jewish persecutors himself. *Acts 8:1 Saul was in hearty agreement with putting him to death. And on that day a great persecution began against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. 2 Some devout men buried Stephen, and made loud lamentation over him. 3 But Saul began ravaging the church, entering house after house, and dragging off men and women, he would put them in prison.*

 Paul became well known for his attacks against believers of Yeshua. He was zealous for this operation of gathering up Christians for imprisonment, persecution, and martyrdom. He actually believed he was doing God’s will in his service of leading believers in Yeshua to prison and to their deaths. It is very important to understand just how committed Paul was to this persecution in order to discover what takes place after these horrific acts he was involved in. This turnaround in his beliefs comes about in a very magnificent way but before we look at this we must look at his behavior before the change. *Acts 22:* *22 “Brethren and fathers, hear my defense which I now offer to you.” 2 And when they heard that he was addressing them in the Hebrew dialect, they became even more quiet; and he said, 3 “I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated under Gamaliel, strictly according to the law of our fathers, being zealous for God just as you all are today. 4 I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and putting both men and women into prisons, 5 as also the high priest and all the Council of the elders can testify. From them I also received letters to the brethren, and started off for Damascus in order to bring even those who were there to Jerusalem as prisoners to be punished.* Also we have more evidence of Paul’s own admission in *Acts 26:9* “*So then, I thought to myself that I had to do many things hostile to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. 10 And this is just what I did in Jerusalem; not only did I lock up many of the saints in prisons, having received authority from the chief priests, but also when they were being put to death I cast my vote against them. 11 And as I punished them often in all the synagogues, I tried to force them to blaspheme; and being furiously enraged at them, I kept pursuing them even to foreign cities.* Paul also in another short letter to Timothy says and confirms this about himself: *1 Timothy 1: 13 even though I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor. Yet I was shown mercy because I acted ignorantly in unbelief;* Paul could accurately be described as a fanatical murderer before his most incredible turnaround.

 Now, the event which happened to Paul caused a complete 180 degree turn around from what he once was doing. This event would be known as the conversion of Paul. Many would say that once Paul was a Jew but he converted into a Christian. This is a very poor misrepresentation of what really happened. After the experience you are about to read it is known how Paul says his experience with Jesus was one that all Israel was looking toward but had not yet scene. This is a blindness we will soon discover in just a little while. Not, a physical blindness in the story below but a spiritual blindness caused by Ha Shem. Let’s see how Paul got over his own spiritual blindness. *Acts 9:* *9 Now Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest, 2 and asked for letters from him to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, both men and women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. 3 As he was traveling, it happened that he was approaching Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him; 4 and he fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?” 5 And he said, “Who are You, Lord?” And He said, “I am Jesus whom you are persecuting, 6 but get up and enter the city, and it will be told you what you must do.” 7 The men who traveled with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no one. 8 Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing; and leading him by the hand, they brought him into Damascus. 9 And he was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank.*  This event is not something Paul was expecting or planning but rather came completely by surprise. In fact Paul had murder on his mind and yet the grace of GOD came down on him. This is how salvation always occurs as something totally supernatural. It is really not in us as humans to believe and trust in this GOD MAN. But it is a born again experience by the spirit of GOD and from HIM alone do we come to real faith in Jesus. Many have a Christian religion and say what they believe and that Jesus died for their sins. But, the real question is have they, have you been born again by the Holy Spirit of God? *John 3: 3 Jesus answered and said to him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.”* Now, back to  *Acts 9:10 Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias; and the Lord said to him in a vision, “Ananias.” And he said, “Here I am, Lord.” 11 And the Lord said to him, “Get up and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying, 12 and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him, so that he might regain his sight.” 13 But Ananias answered, “Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he did to Your saints at Jerusalem; 14 and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name.” 15 But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel; 16 for I will show him how much he must suffer for My name’s sake.” 17 So Ananias departed and entered the house, and after laying his hands on him said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road by which you were coming, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” 18 And immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he regained his sight, and he got up and was baptized; 19 and he took food and was strengthened.* By the miraculous hand of GOD, Paul found the true Messiah of Israel. His life would be forever changed and he would be willing to go throughout the world proclaiming his personal faith and relationship with Jesus.

 This fantastic event changed Paul’s life and his name changed after he too became a believer in Yeshua. His name would be Paul. Later in his life, Paul would take this good message of Yeshua to the world. It continued to cause extreme friction in the Jewish world and would lead to Paul having to make a defense for his own life. In his defense Paul tells one of those who would judge him why he did what he did. *Acts 26:* *12 “While so engaged as I was journeying to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests, 13 at midday, O King, I saw on the way a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining all around me and those who were journeying with me. 14 And when we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew dialect, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.’ 15 And I said, ‘Who are You, Lord?’ And the Lord said, ‘I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. 16 But get up and stand on your feet; for this purpose I have appeared to you, to appoint you a minister and a witness not only to the things which you have seen, but also to the things in which I will appear to you; 17 rescuing you from the Jewish people and from the Gentiles, to whom I am sending you, 18 to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.’* A very important statement is made here from the Ha Shem according to Paul. He says as recorded in verse 18 he was being sent to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God. Paul is going to speak about this blindness and he will call it a great mystery. When we are able to understand this mystery from the LORD we can then function in a most amazing place in HIS Kingdom.

 Chapter 4

 The Mystery Revealed

 In hearing what Paul has to tell us we discover he speaks much about blindness and a mystery. Is it possible that the LORD revealed HIS Master Plan for the world and His return? Paul, simply tells us this plan. Those in the body of Messiah who understand and follow this plan will have the amazing and huge blessing of actually being a part of its unfolding. Before going into the Scriptures and showing their explanation I would like to look at the end of this mystery in another way first. The reason I want to do this is simple. When we hear what the Scriptures have to say we may become instantly argumentative and understandably so. The reason is, the mystery is a little hard to swallow. So here is the analogy. Imagine you have a large family full of young and old people. I have to imagine this as my family is very small. Now, all the family is very close and really cares for and loves one another. Your birthday is coming up, so everyone really wants to get together and have a surprise birthday party for you. They all love and care for you so much and want you to have a very special day. All the plans are made and your special day arrives. You do not have a clue and will be very surprised when the doors are opened to the party room. You just think you are going to look at some flooring in this hotel because you might be interested in having some similar flooring put down in your own home. The doors open and all your family is there. They are all dressed up and have big smiles on their faces. The air of the room is incredible and light. Balloons and banners are everywhere and then on perfect cue they all sing happy birthday to you. You are truly overwhelmed and happy. Your stomach is filled with butterflies and you feel the tears of joy flowing down your face. You know some of your family came from very far away and made great sacrifices to be there on your special day. You have never had or even been to a party as fabulous as this one.

 Now, as you calm down and after you have some cake it hits you. All the people there knew about this day and had planned for it. They had to make sacrifices and alter their own plans and agenda’s. They had much time to wonder and imagine how you would react to this very special day for you. While you on the other hand, had not thought much about your birthday. You had not thought about a plan or even considered who you would spend this day with. You had no idea anyone was planning this for you. It is possible that you could have considered someone giving you a party, but you hadn’t. So this most amazing day was totally and completely a surprise in every way. Now, if you had known, probably you would have tried to pick so many of the details. Maybe you would have wanted to pick where the party would be held and the time. You might have mentioned the decorations, the music, food and on and on. But, you see you picked nothing and you knew nothing about it. While everyone else in your family had various amounts of information and details. In the end, you where the happiest person in the room because the party was for you and about you. But, not only for you as you see these people cared for you and that is why they are there. They wanted to express their love for you and see your happiness. Now, you are a very smart person and very astute as well. To pull this surprise off was a great act of quiet and discreet planning. It was a covert operation all the way. But, some facts had to be in the open. A plan had to be made to get you to come to the hotel and look at floors. If too much pressure was put on you, you would have known something was going on and the whole surprise would have ended. The party could still go on, but not the surprise. You know it is so much better if it is a surprise. All your family had a part to play, some more than others but they are all important and they all showed up for your big day!

 This is the mystery that God has revealed to Paul and Paul is revealing to us right now today. We are all going to a big party full of great joy and surprise. It will be a surprise for all of us, but especially for the Jewish people. The children of Israel will be the guests of honor along with Yeshua of course. We who have already believed will look on with great joy as we see them understand HE was theirs all along. Now we will open His word and see how this really does come about.

 It is very common knowledge that the Jewish People believe in a Messiah. Some believe HE will be a man with special qualities from God in order to come and rule the world. This will make Israel the supreme nation of the earth. Others believe He has some divinity or is totally divine and brings salvation to the world. Many Jewish people have believed in various men who they think have been the Messiach. Now, I want to hold out to you that Yeshua ha Messiach was and is now the Messhiach. As I said at the first this may be difficult to hear if you don’t already believe HE is the Messiah. Please don’t give up yet but read on.

 In the book of John chapter 3:3 Jesus answered and said to him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.” Jesus was speaking to a very religious Pharisee, named Nicodemus, who was a ruler of the Jews. Then he tells Him as stated in verse 16: “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. 18 He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. 19 This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil.

 Now, Yeshua said he came to the lost sheep of Israel: Matthew 15: 22 And a Canaanite woman from that region came out and began to cry out, saying, “Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is cruelly demon-possessed.” 23 But He did not answer her a word. And His disciples came and implored Him, saying, “Send her away, because she keeps shouting at us.” 24 But He answered and said, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” 25 But she came and began to bow down before Him, saying, “Lord, help me!” 26 And He answered and said, “It is not good to take the children’s bread and throw it to the dogs.” 27 But she said, “Yes, Lord; but even the dogs feed on the crumbs which fall from their masters’ table.” 28 Then Jesus said to her, “O woman, your faith is great; it shall be done for you as you wish.”

 And her daughter was healed at once. Yeshua says in HIS own words that he came to bring salvation to the lost sheep of Israel and yet in John it says HE would give HIS life for the salvation of the world. His immediate plan was specific and HE came to Israel. These men with HIM, HIS disciples would be the ones who would then take HIS salvation message to the world.

 With most of Yeshua’s ministry one might sum it all up as HE ended a failure. In fact many people think that to this day, even religious Jews. Most of the Jewish people did not end up believing HE was the Messiah. This is supported by *John 1:* *1 He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. 12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, 13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.*

Also in John 12: 37 But though He had performed so many signs before them, yet they were not believing in Him. 38 This was to fulfill the word of Isaiah the prophet which he spoke: “Lord, who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?” 39 For this reason they could not believe, for Isaiah said again, 40 “He has blinded their eyes and He hardened their heart, so that they would not see with their eyes and perceive with their heart, and be converted and I heal them.” 41 These things Isaiah said because he saw His glory, and he spoke of Him. 42 Nevertheless many even of the rulers believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they were not confessing Him, for fear that they would be put out of the synagogue; 43 for they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God.

Very interesting as we read here about the Jewish people being blinded which had to be of supernatural origin. The prophecy speaks of this and now it was actually happening. But what could be the purpose? The answer is found in *Romans 11:11 I say then, they did not stumble so as to fall, did they? May it never be! But by their transgression salvation has come to the Gentiles, to make them jealous.* This stumble Paul speaks about is also what Yeshua alluded to in *Luke 21:* 24“*Jerusalem will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.”* This is not a popular statement if you are Jewish but history bears it out. The Romans destroyed Jerusalem and then gentile nation after nation continued to trample on Jerusalem. The Torah also speaks about this in *Ezekiel 36:* *16 Then the word of the Lord came to me saying, 17 “Son of man, when the house of Israel was living in their own land, they defiled it by their ways and their deeds; their way before Me was like the uncleanness of a woman in her impurity. 18 Therefore I poured out My wrath on them for the blood which they had shed on the land, because they had defiled it with their idols. 19 Also I scattered them among the nations and they were dispersed throughout the lands. According to their ways and their deeds I judged them. 20 When they came to the nations where they went, they profaned My holy name, because it was said of them, ‘These are the people of the Lord; yet they have come out of His land.’ 21 But I had concern for My holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the nations where they went. 22 “Therefore say to the house of Israel, ‘Thus says the Lord God, “It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for My holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you went. 23 I will vindicate the holiness of My great name which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst. Then the nations will know that I am the Lord,” declares the Lord God, “when I prove Myself holy among you in their sight. 24 For I will take you from the nations, gather you from all the lands and bring you into your own land. 25 Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. 26 Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances. 28 You will live in the land that I gave to your forefathers; so you will be My people, and I will be your God.*  Now after nearly 2000 years this time or age of the gentiles has ended. The Jewish people have and are continuing to return to their land, Israel. Jerusalem is now in the control if the Jewish people. The gentile nations of the world don’t like it but the fact remains. Ha Shem is now supporting Israel and will see HIS purpose and plan fulfilled.

 Here is the punch. The people who will help the Jewish people in this time of blindness are a people who at one time didn’t even know GOD. The information presented next is from Romans 9 but keep in mind Paul is quoting the most important information from the book of Hosea. *Romans 9:* *19 You will say to me then, “Why does He still find fault? For who resists His will?” 20 On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, “Why did you make me like this,” will it? 21 Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for common use? 22What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction? 23 And He did so to make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory, 24 even us, whom He also called, not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles. 25 As He says also in Hosea, “I will call those who were not My people, ‘My people,’ And her who was not beloved, ‘beloved.’” 26 “And it shall be that in the place where it was said to them, ‘you are not My people,’ There they shall be called sons of the living God.”* It is very understandable why this would be a hard pill to swallow if you are Jewish. After all they have kept the oracles of God, the Torah, the Shabbat. Then here comes a bunch of radicals who were not even looking for GOD or knew HIM and Ha Shem is going to use this group to tell you HIS final plan? Let’s consider the Scriptures backing this most strange idea. *Deuteronomy 32:21 ‘They have made Me jealous with what is not God; They have provoked Me to anger with their idols. So I will make them jealous with those who are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation.* Then in Paul’s writing to the Roman Jews Paul quoted this idea which is recorded in: *Romans 9:30 ¶ What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness of faith;* Also *Romans 10:19 But I say, surely Israel did not know, did they? First Moses says, “I will make you jealous by that which is not a nation, By a nation without understanding will I anger you.”* Paul reminds the Jews that Ha Shem would tell them of HIS way of salvation though a people of HIS own choosing. This people would be ones who were not even seeking GOD yet found HIM anyway. *Romans 10*:*20 And Isaiah is very bold and says, “I was found by those who did not seek Me, I became manifest to those who did not ask for Me.”*

Of course Yeshua knew very well how all this would come about. He knew HIS own people for the most part would reject HIM as their Messiah. Yet, HE still came for the salvation of the whole world. He was the Lamb of GOD who was slain for the sins of the world. It was in the foundation plans before GOD created anything. He knew HE would be crucified before creation! *1 Peter 1:* *17 If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one’s work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth; 18 knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, 19 but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ. 20 For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you 21 who through Him are believers in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.* Yeshua of course knew the whole plan as HE formulated it all. He knew that because the Jewish people at first would reject HIM the Good News Message of the Gospel would go to the nations. These nations who received Him would be the foolish nations the Torah speaks about in Deuteronomy and which Paul quotes. At the end the Jewish people would have the scales removed from their eyes just as Paul had his removed. Before Paul followed Yeshua, he was a very zealous and religious Jew steeped in Judaism. Then He is blinded temporally so that he realizes he is blind and finally he is able to see. His blindness healed and Paul calls on the Name of the LORD. This is what will play out in the days ahead as all Israel will be saved. Yeshua knows the Jewish people will call upon Him and then HE returns. *Matthew 23:* *37 “Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling. 38 Behold, your house is being left to you desolate! 39 For I say to you, from now on you will not see Me until you say, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!’”*

I believe this time of Yeshua returning is drawing near to us. Why? It is really very simply because of what Yeshua said in a parable soon after speaking about the fact that the Jewish people would call out for HIM. Here is the Parable in *Matthew 24:* *32 “Now learn the parable from the fig tree: when its branch has already become tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near; 33 so, you too, when you see all these things, recognize that He is near, right at the door. 34 Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. 35 Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away.*

He speaks of a fig tree in this verse and in *Luke 21: 29 Then He told them a parable: “Behold the fig tree and all the trees;* So the key here is not the fig tree as some would suppose because they say the fig tree represents Israel. Maybe it does, maybe it does not, either way is not important to show the simple truth. Yeshua is simply saying when a tree starts having leaves we know summer is coming soon. In the same way when a person sees all the things that Yeshua spoke of in Matthew 24, the time of the end is near. Well, everything HE spoke about is subject to much argument and discussion except for one single thing. In order for the people HE spoke of, the Jews of Jerusalem, there would have to be a future population of Jewish people inhabiting Jerusalem. For almost two thousand years there has only been a small amount of Jewish people in Jerusalem. But, now the population is increasing in Jerusalem and throughout the land of Israel. When there is a Biblical Set Time occurring many of the Jewish people throughout the land of Israel make a pilgrimage to Israel just like in ancient days only now of course they drive their cars, take a plane, train or bus. The point is now in these modern days after the Shoal (Holocaust) multitudes of Jewish people are in Jerusalem.

 The bottom line is now what Yeshua was talking about can actually happen. The Jewish people are in great number and I believe soon they will have their eyes open, they will cry out for HIM. He will return and the surprise party will begin. Christians call this great party the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. So this is what the Word of God says in a very simple explanation. It has deeper meaning but the key point is The Jewish people are back in the land in great numbers. However, many Jewish people still live in other parts of the world but even that is rapidly changing as many are coming home to Israel. The spiritual atmosphere in Israel is changing as well as more and more Jewish people are becoming inquisitive about the Gospel. This is now why I wrote this book, because of the Jewish interest in the Gospel.

 Chapter 5

 Changing Atmosphere

 As I said in the last chapter, the spiritual atmosphere is changing in Israel. This is not just some pie in the sky idea but a real tangible event going on in Israel right now as you are reading this book. I will explain this in just a moment but first think about this Scripture: *Joel 2:* *28 “It will come about after this that I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind; and your sons and daughters will prophesy, Your old men will dream dreams, Your young men will see visions. 29 “Even on the male and female servants I will pour out My Spirit in those days. 30 “I will display wonders in the sky and on the earth, Blood, fire and columns of smoke. 31 “The sun will be turned into darkness and the moon into blood before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes. 32 “And it will come about that whoever calls on the name of the Lord Will be delivered; For on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there will be those who escape, as the Lord has said, even among the survivors whom the Lord calls.* You can readily see that these verses speak of a time when the Spirit of Ha Shem will be poured out on the earth and many signs and wonders will follow. This has happened as prophesied and then recorded in the Book of Acts 2:*1 When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. 2 And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3 And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance. 5 Now there were Jews living in Jerusalem, devout men from every nation under heaven. 6 And when this sound occurred, the crowd came together, and was bewildered because each one of them was hearing them speak in his own language. 7 They were amazed and astonished, saying, Why, are not all these who are speaking Galileans? 8 And how is it that we each hear them in our own language to which we were born? 9 Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the districts of Libya around Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, 11 Cretans and Arabs—we hear them in our own tongues speaking of the mighty deeds of God.” 12 And they all continued in amazement and great perplexity, saying to one another, “What does this mean?” 13 But others were mocking and saying, “They are full of sweet wine.” Peter’s Sermon 14 But Peter, taking his stand with the eleven, raised his voice and declared to them: “Men of Judea and all you who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you and give heed to my words. 15 For these men are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only the third hour of the day; 16 but this is what was spoken of through the prophet Joel: 17 ‘And it shall be in the last days,’ God says, ‘That I will pour forth of My Spirit on all mankind; And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, And your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; 18 Even on My bond slaves, both men and women, I will in those days pour forth of My Spirit And they shall prophesy. 19 ‘And I will grant wonders in the sky above and signs on the earth below, Blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke. 20 ‘The sun will be turned into darkness and the moon into blood, before the great and glorious day of the Lord shall come. 21 ‘And it shall be that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.’ 22 “Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know— 23 this Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death. 24 But God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power. 25 For David says of Him, ‘I saw the Lord always in my presence; For He is at my right hand, so that I will not be shaken. 26 ‘Therefore my heart was glad and my tongue exulted; Moreover my flesh also will live in hope; 27 Because You will not abandon my soul to Hades, Nor allow Your Holy One to undergo decay. 28 ‘You have made known to me the ways of life; You will make me full of gladness with Your presence.’ 29 “Brethren, I may confidently say to you regarding the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. 30 And so, because he was a prophet and knew that God had sworn to him with an oath to seat one of his descendants on his throne, 31 he looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that He was neither abandoned to Hades, nor did His flesh suffer decay. 32 This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses. 33 Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear. 34 For it was not David who ascended into heaven, but he himself says: The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at My right hand, 35 Until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet.”’ 36 Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ—this Jesus whom you crucified.”*

 Now, any avid scholar of the Scriptures knows most prophecies have multiple fulfillments. So even though you have just read about this occurrence in Acts, be sure it will happen again. This one is no different and the next time it is fulfilled it will be as nothing ever known on the earth. We can actually experience this pouring out of GOD’s Holy Spirit now in Israel. It has a very consistent yet low magnitude at this time working directly on the hearts and minds of the people of Israel. But, in Ha Shem’s timing this pouring of HIS Holy Spirit will become a mighty roar. For anyone who has ever experienced living through a tornado will have a slight idea of what this may be like.

 I told you earlier that I wanted to share with you how the Holy Spirit is very tangible right now in Israel. The only way I could actually speak with authority on this matter is by having experienced it myself. So let me begin. My wife, Sheral and I have made many journeys to Israel over the past 20 years. The first time I was in Israel I noticed that the people of Israel were kind and friendly from my perspective. I was on a tour with over 170 students from Liberty University. Each evening after going to and fro throughout the land, we would have a meeting after supper. Mostly all the comments were very positive for the people of Israel. I have not found it to be much different in my many trips to the land. For the most part the Jewish and the Arab people would just ask very general questions. The number one question anyone who has ever been to Israel would say, Is this your first time to Israel?

 Of course there was, where are you from? Do you like Israel? As I said the people of Israel just asked very general questions. The people are easy to speak to and yet they keep a very superficial distance from you. They knew we were Christians so it seemed they wanted to avoid any sort of spiritual conversations. You can easily discern they all had been witnessed to in the name of Jesus many times. They could probably present the Gospel message better than most Christians. I was very moved by my first visit to Israel and deep in my heart there was a longing to know just how to share Jesus with His own people.

 My wife and I have made many trips to Israel sense that very first time what seems as a lifetime ago. But, during a trip on Passover of 2012 we would have a major revelation which has changed our lives and shown us our destiny. We believe there are many other believers who like us will come to this understanding then enlist their own lives for the furtherance of the Gospel in the lives of the Jewish people. On this particular trip to Israel of 2012 we first went to Tel Aviv. Here we had a comfortable but not too elaborate of a hotel just across the street from the beautiful Mediterranean Sea. Our first night there we just strolled on the beach after having a light supper at a local seaside restaurant. At about 2:00am I woke from a very restful sleep. I knew when I woke that it was the LORD who woke me. I felt very refreshed and willing to meet with Him. In order not to wake my wife, I just got up and went to the lobby of the hotel. This has become more or less routine on our trips to Israel. It seems I just don’t need as must sleep and the LORD always speaks more with me there. When I got to the lobby the very kind desk clerk, Samer, asked me if I needed anything. I just told him I would set at the computer that was dedicated to the guests. Well, I would soon discover this was an appointment from the LORD. Samer who is actually Arab quickly became my friend. In only moments we were engaged in deep conversation about what each of us believed. He of course told me his background was Muslim. But, no one in his family was really very dedicated to the religion. I shared with him the entire Gospel in our very first meeting. From this very first encounter back in Israel, I could see GOD was really up to something. This very exciting first night was only the beginning.

 About six in the morning after four hours of conversation I told Samer to have a good day. There were things in his job he had to see to and I needed to get back to my room and get ready for the day. I was really amazed at all that had happened between Samer and myself. We spoke about family, country and even things we struggled with in our lives. We had become like old friends in only short hours. This I know is something only our Father in heaven is able to do, especially with two men from entirely different cultures. But, you have to understand our Father is about building a Kingdom. It is a Kingdom which already exists but one which is also coming. *Malachi 2: 10“Do we not all have one father? Has not one God created us? Why do we deal treacherously each against his brother so as to profane the covenant of our fathers?*  So by the power of His Holy Spirit HE is able to do more than we can imagine. *Ephesians 3:20 Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us.* It really is a very wonderful thing how our Father in heaven makes it possible to do things that in the world rarely happen but in the Kingdom are the standard. It really is fun serving the King of Kings.

 We had plans to spend the day around Tel Aviv looking at some museums with our dear friends Bob and Alta. There was one museum in particular which we didn’t want to miss and it was the King David Museum in Tel Aviv. When you understand that King David was a type and shadow of Messiah, it makes for some very exciting discoveries. I would like to give some information on what I mean.

 We first need to go to *2 Samuel 5:1-12: “ Then all the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron and said, “Behold, we are your bone and your flesh. 2 Previously, when Saul was king over us, you were the one who led Israel out and in. And the Lord said to you, ‘You will shepherd My people Israel, and you will be a ruler over Israel.’” 3 So all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron, and King David made a covenant with them before the Lord at Hebron; then they anointed David king over Israel. 4 David was thirty years old when he became king, and he reigned forty years. 5 At Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months, and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty-three years over all Israel and Judah. 6 Now the king and his men went to Jerusalem against the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land, and they said to David, “You shall not come in here, but the blind and lame will turn you away”; thinking, “David cannot enter here.” 7 Nevertheless, David captured the stronghold of Zion, that is the city of David. 8 David said on that day, “Whoever would strike the Jebusites, let him reach the lame and the blind, who are hated by David’s soul, through the water tunnel.” Therefore they say, “The blind or the lame shall not come into the house.” 9 So David lived in the stronghold and called it the city of David. And David built all around from the Millo and inward. 10 David became greater and greater, for the Lord God of hosts was with him. 11 Then Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David with cedar trees and carpenters and stonemasons; and they built a house for David. 12 And David realized that the Lord had established him as king over Israel, and that He had exalted his kingdom for the sake of His people Israel.* David, as king, was an example or we could say a shadow or type of Messiah. The LORD says, *“But as for Me, I have installed My King upon Zion, My holy mountain.”*." (Psalm 2:6.) Paul says as recorded in the Book of Romans 11:26-27 "A*nd so all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, “The Deliverer will come from Zion, He will remove ungodliness from Jacob.” 27 “This is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins.”* When Yeshua walked the earth HE was often introduced or spoken of at least being the possible, “Son of David”. The Jews to this day use this term in speaking of the Messiah. It is just that many as of yet do not see it as applying to Jesus. The New Testament declares He is "King of the Jews"; "King of kings," and "of His kingdom there shall be no end." Now, let us make just a few correlations between Jesus and David. The possibility that this is just coincidence is beyond statistics.

 First, David was made King by Divine ordination as we know the LORD chose David to be King. But, also Yeshua is King and His Kingdom is without end. *Daniel 4:2-3” It has seemed good to me to declare the signs and wonders which the Most High God has done for me. 3 “How great are His signs And how mighty are His wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom and His dominion is from generation to generation.”*

Second, it is very obvious that David was made King the Scripture has stated to be a Shepherd. Jesus was also the Shepherd of Israel which has the duty to take care of and protect the people. *John 10:11* *“I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.*

 Thirdly, David was of course Jewish as was Jesus. Sometimes I think people forget this fact or at least don’t think about it. The Gospel of Luke it a very good place to explore and see the part of Jesus so important and that was HE was a man. *Philippians 2:*5 *Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. 8 Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.*

Fourthly, David enlarged the captured city. When David took Salem, he continued to build it larger. Thus the kingdom of David's Son, Yeshua is constantly being enlarged. Faith in the soul grows as seeds. Believer’s in Yeshua continue to increase in number and this Kingdom has no end as Isaiah tells us. *Isaiah 9:6 “For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. 7 Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.”*  The Kingdom of our Messiah is now but also coming in the future. At the end of time the Kingdom will come in all the fullness and glory. “*Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power.” 1Corinthians 15:25*

Fifthly*,* as we continue to compare and contrast David and Jesus. We know that David was a great warrior and was able to take the fortress of his enemies which were also the enemies of Ha Shem. Now, David’s greater Son, Yeshua lays siege to the human heart which has strongholds of unbelief and sin. He has to do warfare in our flesh and calls us to surrender. This we do as we find there is no escape from HIS unrelenting love. He brings to the fight all the truth which we have no defense and when we know HIS pardon then gates of our heart open widely to HIM. Jesus is able to overtake the most obstinate of foes and come in and make HIS abode. *John 14:* *23 Jesus answered and said to him, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him.* Jesus speaks of each of our individual human hearts as individual kingdoms all under the authority and rule of a king. In each case the individual person is the one in authority and only by the victory of Jesus in a life will the life be turned over into the Kingdom of Heaven. *John 14:* *14 “Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. 2 In My Father’s house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. 3 If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also. 4 And you know the way where I am going.” 5 Thomas said to Him, “Lord, we do not know where You are going, how do we know the way?” 6 Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.* In a kingdom in order for a person to expect and receive provision and protection, they must submit to the authority of the Kingdom. The most high and above all Kingdoms

 is the Kingdom of the LORD Jesus Christ. More correctly stated in Hebrew as Yeshua ha Messiach.

 One last expression of this ongoing study of King David and King Jesus is an ancient one going back to the period of the Dead Sea Scrolls. The writers of the Dead Sea Scrolls were Jews know as Essenes. They in the past few years have been looked upon as Jews who very likely were the followers of Jesus during the First century. They are a very interesting people who are very worthy of further study. I simply want to speak of them here to show a more complete picture of this shadow and type of David to Jesus. This can be found in one of the Dead Sea Scrolls named: The Text of Scroll 4Q246 - the Son of God Scroll: *"He shall be called the son of God, and they shall designate [call] him son of the Most High. Like the appearance of comets, so shall be their kingdom. For brief years they shall reign over the earth and shall trample on all; one people shall trample on another and one province on another until the people of God shall rise and all shall rest from the sword."* Compare the words in the scroll 4Q246 text to the inspired words found in *Luke 1:32 and 35: "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David... And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:32-35).*  This is just one of the facts about the Dead Sea Scrolls which many religious Jews would not want known. The reason shouts loud and clear the Essenes agreed with the fact of Messiah being God and not just a man with divine purpose. “Anyone comparing these two first century texts will be startled by the amazing similarity of concept and wording describing the Messianic leader. One of the great differences between Christian and Jewish conceptions of the promised Messiah revolves around His relationship to God. While the Jews believe the Messiah will be a great man, such as Moses, with a Divine mission, the Christians believe that the Bible teaches that the Messiah would be uniquely "the Son of God." The Jewish view usually held that the concept of a "son of God" violated the primary truth of monotheism found in Deuteronomy 6:4 "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord." The Christians believed that Jesus' claim to be the Son of God was not a violation of Deuteronomy 6:4. Rather, Christians believe in the Trinity, the doctrine that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are revealed in the Bible to be One God, revealed in three personalities. As Christians, we do not believe in three separate gods. Therefore, Christians understand the statements about Jesus as the Son of God to be in complete conformity to the truth of monotheism - there is only one God. It is fascinating in this regard to consider the presence of these statements in this first century Jewish text: "He shall be called the son of God, and they shall designate [call] him son of the Most High."” [[2]](#footnote-2)

 Another thing about David was the fact that he reigned in Hebron and Jerusalem for forty years. Yeshua, David’s Son reigns everywhere in the world. Also, His Kingdom has no end and praise will go up for ever and ever. *Luke 1:* *26 Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee called Nazareth, 27 to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the descendants of David; and the virgin’s name was Mary. 28 And coming in, he said to her, “Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you.” 29 But she was very perplexed at this statement, and kept pondering what kind of salutation this was. 30 The angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God. 31 And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus. 32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; 33 and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end.”* We will be able to praise the LORD forever *Psalm 86: 9 All nations whom You have made shall come and worship before You, O Lord, And they shall glorify Your name. 10 For You are great and do wondrous deeds; You alone are God. 11 Teach me Your way, O Lord; I will walk in Your truth; Unite my heart to fear Your name. 12 I will give thanks to You, O Lord my God, with all my heart, And will glorify Your name forever. 13 For Your loving-kindness toward me is great, And You have delivered my soul from the depths of Sheol.*

 David had the joy of being assured that God had exalted His throne. "He understood that the Lord had established him king over Israel." And David's Son *" Isaiah 53:11 As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see it and be satisfied; By His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify the many, As He will bear their iniquities.."* May we as individuals enter into covenant with Yeshua our King. May we open our hearts for Him to dwell in. Even though we are blind and lame, we know by faith He will heal us, and help us to fight His battles and share His Victory.

 Now, what makes all this information so exciting for us as we were visiting the museum was how it was used to speak to an employee of the museum. The Holy Spirit was strongly influencing Bob to speak to the man tending the museum. By using much of this information, Bob was able to present many wonderful seeds of the Gospel for this man to ponder. The fact that the man was very intellectual and scholarly only helps the case as Bob presented only facts. A man such as this would have to consider the mathematical probability of all these things of David and Jesus lining up. This is all we are called to do is share the good news. It is not a sales presentation but rather facts of what has actually happened in history. Each individual then is going to be called into battle with the LORD. Remember HIS weapons will the victory. His love is inescapable.

 I woke again about 2:oo am and like the day before and got up to go to the lobby. Of course Samer was there at the desk taking a langue course from his computer. We again began into a very deep conversation as if it we were sitting casually in the afternoon in a comfortable lounge. But, here we were at 2:00am in the morning talking like old friends. It was all of the LORD’s doing I am sure. We had originally planned to stay in Tel Aviv three nights but it seemed that we had done all we felt we were supposed to do. So, we told Samer we needed to cancel our last night in the hotel. What happened next was pretty special. He said, “I am very sorry to see you go my friend.” I told him I would miss him and even that I loved him.” He asked if maybe our plans could include coming back and staying our last night in Israel at the hotel. As much as I would have liked to do this, I knew for some reason there was much more we needed to do on this trip. So I had to let Samer know we would not be coming back. This is often how it is for the life of an evangelist. You are able by the power and grace of the LORD to make fast friendships but then you may never see them again. It is a very strange dichotomy of great joy and yet sadness at the same time. Yet, it is all in the plans of our Father in heaven. I have come to know other evangelists to Israel. Life is the same for them as they have many friends, yet know the silent force of loneliness. With our goodbyes we left Tel Aviv to go to Haifa to spend one night. We had the reason to go there because of the great seaport and the importance of it in the future according to the Bible.

 Now, after just three days in Israel we were on our way to the Galilee. Galilee is the wonderful place of the ministry of Jesus which is a region and a lake. All around the Sea of Galilee are the little towns where Jesus would go and share the good News of the Kingdom of God. Of course HE expressed on many occasions that HE was the entrance to the Kingdom. Our first stop was to the Astoria Hotel in Tiberius.

 Tiberius is on the western side of the Sea of Galilee and was named for emperor Tiberius. The city was established about 20 CE. The city was first called Rakkath (or Rakat or Rakkat) and is mentioned in *Joshua 19:35 The fortified cities were Ziddim, Zer and Hammath, Rakkath and Chinnereth*. as a fenced or fortified city in the territory of the Tribe of Naphtali and is considered according to Jewish tradition to be the location developed as the city of Tiberias. With this you can see Tiberius is a city with much history. As were came to Tiberius we remembered our original plan before leaving the states was mostly about touring and leaning more about the Bible. But, after what happened in Tel Aviv we all wondered if GOD was doing something none of us anticipated or expected. We all knew how he had already worked using us to spread Gospel Seeds in the first two days in Israel. This made us open to what he might do next.

 At the Astoria Hotel it began to happen rather quickly. We arrived on our fourth day in Israel at the Astoria Hotel with such a rich history. Everyone was a little tired and opted for a little rest before going to have supper. I instead went to the outdoor pool. I was the only one there except for the lifeguard, Moshe. I swam for about thirty minutes and then decided to get out and dry in the warm Israel sun. Moshe began talking to me right away. In a short time I had discovered he was a Junior High School teacher at the school nearby. He also worked at the Astoria for a second income. It is rather expensive to live in Israel. Soon we began to talk about our faith. I was able to share so much about Yeshua. He was both interested and attentive to all I had to say. I offered Moshe a English translation of the New Testament Bible and he gladly took it. He said he could read English and he spoke it very well. I would see Moshe on several more occasions during our short stay in Tiberius. He was always very kind and cordial towards me.

 On a short side note, I had been very impressed to bring six pocket sized English Translation New Testaments on this trip. I had found them tucked away in the glove compartment of our car about two months before our departure to Israel. I remember very well thinking it was not such a good idea for a few reasons. One, I had been on many tours to Israel in the past and the congregation I went with always were instructed not to try and witness to the Jewish people. We were mostly told our tours there where to show them we care for them and stand with them. In all truth it was better that we didn’t try and witness to them because none of us really knew how to share the Gospel with the Jewish people. We have to remember of all the things done against the Jewish people over the centuries in the name of Jesus. Because of this I never tried to share the Gospel with any Jews. I only tried to show love. Another reason I doubted myself about bringing Bibles was because they were in English and most Jews read Hebrew and only some can read English. So it seemed in a way like a waste. But, I just couldn’t seem to get past the idea that I should take them. I figured at the very worst I would just have to bring them back. They took up very little room in my luggage so why not?

 I would discover later that I could have taken a case of Bibles. I had no idea then, two months before my trip how amazing the Holy Spirit was going to move. This day in Tiberius was going to show us some very powerful acts of which we would all be amazed. We had a rental car and drove to Yardenit, the Jordan River baptismal site for Christians. When Christians visit Israel, they always come to this very popular site. There is a very nice restaurant here and gift shop. They offer Baptismal robes for rent as well as locker rooms for males and females complete with hot showers. I have stood in the Jordan River during the month of February assisting in baptisms for close to 3o minutes. The water is quite cold and the hot shower is very nice after such an experience. We decided to visit Yardenit for our lunch. We were seated near a beautiful overlook of the Jordan River. It really was quite beautiful and peaceful. As I saw a young waitress approaching, I was impressed by the LORD to tell her name. I thought to myself LORD, I don’t know her name, at which I instantly though Hannah. So, in next few seconds she was standing in front of our table and I said, “Hi Hannah.” She had the most shocked look on her face as she looked back toward the kitchen as if she thought we were playing a joke on her. She said very startled, “How did you know my name?” I simply said, “The LORD told me.” Hannah was not wearing a name tag. Nothing else out of the ordinary happened after that with our party and Hannah. But, I know that this little event impacted Hannah in ways we don’t even know. I know it did because I know how powerful something so small can be when it is from the LORD.

 After lunch Bob, Alta, Sheral, and myself decided to just walk over to the gift shop at Yardenit and brose for a little while. While there we met a clerk of the store and of course she was Jewish. She felt compelled to tell us she was a believer in Yeshua and asked for prayer on several matters. These two events happening in such close proximity of one another really convinced us we were moving in the spirit. This was very exciting for us and caused us to be full of joy. Our sweet LORD was walking with us and we were partnering with HIM in what HE was doing in the lives of the people we were meeting. It was a moment by moment thing and you actually begin to feel light and free. So with this we moved in early afternoon to the Galilee Experience.

 The Galilee Experience has a very nice show they present but we appreciate them more as a place to purchase Messianic Jewish Materials. They have many good books, and music for the Messianic congregations. While at the Galilee experience something very powerful and prophetic was shared with us concerning the Messianic congregations in the area surrounding the Galilee. For nearly two thousand years there were no congregations in this area. So no Jewish believers in Jesus could be found on the Galilee at least not in any real numbers. It seems strange in many ways that the very place Messianic Jewish belief began there were no modern believers in the area. But, in the last few years this has all changed and now there are multiple Messianic congregations in the area. This is a sign of the last days when the followers of Yeshua would again be restored on the Galilee. This was very interesting to learn as our main interest to come to the Galilee Experience was to retrieve some Hebrew New Testaments if possible. The young man who had been helping us told us they of course had Hebrew New Testaments. He asked how many we needed. Well, Bob and I looked at each other wondering what we should say. Finally, I said, “Bob, pray about a number and I am going to walk around the store and pray as well.” So, as I was praying, I just told the LORD HE knew how many Bibles we needed. We didn’t know and we did not want to get too many and be wasteful and yet we wanted to get enough so we would have one for all the people we were supposed to give one to. The number 25 came to my mind. I wrote the number down on a small piece of paper. I went back to Bob and said, “Do you have a number?” Bob said, “I believe the LORD told me 25.” So you know we got 25 New Testament bibles to give out during the remainder of our time in Israel.

 The next morning after getting ready to leave we met the two housekeeping women working at the Astoria. They were making up the room adjacent to ours. I could easily see them as they could me as we left our room. I said good morning and they kindly replied good morning to me. Then it struck me suddenly to ask them if they would like to have the New Testament. It of course is all in Hebrew. They said they would and when I handed the first one to the young lady she kissed the cover and explained, “The Brit Ha Desha, I have wanted One for so long.” This triggered a spiritual explosion in my own heart. Here was a Jewish woman working as a housekeeper in a small hotel in Israel. Many people would simply overlook her. She could easily and probably had gone unnoticed by most visitors of the Astoria. Yet, she took the New Testament and said she had wanted one for a long time. This spoke volumes to me that we had to get the Word into the hands of the Jewish people. It just was not happening and it was up to us to do it. Since that day for this reason alone I have dedicated myself to the task of taking the Gospel to Israel. How many more Jewish people are longing to have the Word of God? But, even more, to have the life that it gives which they are now seeing happen in many of their own people.

 Now, the final stage of this Israel trip was Jerusalem. Before taking you to a few of the evangelistic experiences there I believe it is important to remind you with some Scriptures of why this all was happening. *Matthew 9:* 35 *Jesus was going through all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness. 36 Seeing the people, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd. 37 Then He said to His disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. 38 Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest.”*  Just like in the ancient days of Jesus the Jewish people today are like sheep without a shepherd. They are Ha Shem’s Chosen People but most don’t know Him. Like sheep they are anxious to know their GOD. Many I know will dispute this Scripture simply on the premise it is New Testament and to them not Scripture at all. But, the Torah itself paints this same picture and ironically it foreshadows Yeshua as well. *Number 27:* *15 Then Moses spoke to the Lord, saying, 16 “May the Lord, the God of the spirits of all flesh, appoint a man over the congregation, 17 who will go out and come in before them, and who will lead them out and bring them in, so that the congregation of the Lord will not be like sheep which have no shepherd.” 18 So the Lord said to Moses, “Take Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand on him; 19 and have him stand before Eleazar the priest and before all the congregation, and commission him in their sight.”* This event occurred not long before Moses would be relieved so to speak of his duties and another would need to be appointed to take over the job of leading the “Children of Israel.” It is interesting to note that Joshua is Yeshua in Hebrew. So, you can easily understand the foreshadowing here or you can just say it is all coincidence. The choice is yours to make. Joshua was anointed to lead Israel when the time would soon come. Yeshua is the King of the Universe and HE will take His rightful place soon on HIS throne. This idea of being without a Shepherd can also be found in *Ezekiel 34:* *4 Those who are sickly you have not strengthened, the diseased you have not healed, the broken you have not bound up, the scattered you have not brought back, nor have you sought for the lost; but with force and with severity you have dominated them. 5 They were scattered for lack of a shepherd, and they became food for every beast of the field and were scattered. 6 My flock wandered through all the mountains and on every high hill; My flock was scattered over all the surface of the earth, and there was no one to search or seek for them.”’”* This is a very interesting Scripture and the prophecy is so obvious. We know that by the prof of history the Jews were scattered over the whole earth after their complete decimation by the Romans after the failed Simon bar Kokhba revolt of Batar 136. This is when all Jews were barred from Israel. So they were actually scattered over the world.

 A look at this from a very scholarly prospective was given to us by the wonderful Rabbi Joseph Schwarz, 1850. “ After this devastation of the country, Hadrian had Jerusalem rebuilt, though less than its former extent, and called it Aelia Capitolina, after his own name Aelianus Hadrianus, and Jupiter Capitolinus; whence Jerusalem is called in Greek books Ailia. He also placed on the temple mount the images of Jupiter and Venus נוגה and כוכב, which remained standing 180 years, till destroyed by the Empress Helena, mother of Constantine. Even at this day there is found, on the farthest end of the southern city and temple mount wall, a large stone placed by Hadrian claiming himself to be the one placing the monuments there. This stone, however, is placed accidentally upside down, so that the writing has to be read reversed. It would appear that formerly there stood on this spot a monument, to which this stone was affixed; and as it fell down at a later period, the Muslims found this large stone when they rebuilt or repaired the city and temple mount wall, and placed it in its present position in the clumsy manner we find it, without troubling themselves about the inscription. Hadrian also caused a wall to be built around Jerusalem, and allowed no Jews to come even within the surroundings of the city (*Lamentation 5:* *Remember, O Lord, what has befallen us; Look, and see our reproach!2 Our inheritance has been turned over to strangers, Our houses to aliens.3 We have become orphans without a father, Our mothers are like widows. 4 We have to pay for our drinking water, Our wood comes to us at a price. 5 Our pursuers are at our necks; We are worn out, there is no rest for us.* ). It was only at a later period that they were permitted to go to the surrounding mountains, probably the Mount of Olives, to cast a mournful, sorrowing look towards the seat of their ancient glory. Later yet, they purchased from the Greek and Roman garrison the permission to enter its precincts once a year, on the day of its destruction, the 9th of Av(August), in order to weep there for their mournful fate, and the fall and dispersion of Israel. [[3]](#footnote-3) Descriptive Geography and Brief Historical Sketch of Palestine, By Rabbi Joseph Schwarz, 1850

 To continue to discover from the Scriptures why the Jews are so open now to the Gospel let’s go to *Luke 10:* *1 Now after this the Lord appointed seventy others, and sent them in pairs ahead of Him to every city and place where He Himself was going to come. 2 And He was saying to them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest. 3 Go; behold, I send you out as lambs in the midst of wolves. 4 Carry no money belt, no bag, no shoes; and greet no one on the way. 5 Whatever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace be to this house.’ 6 If a man of peace is there, your peace will rest on him; but if not, it will return to you. 7 Stay in that house, eating and drinking what they give you; for the laborer is worthy of his wages. Do not keep moving from house to house. 8 Whatever city you enter and they receive you, eat what is set before you; 9 and heal those in it who are sick, and say to them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’ 10 But whatever city you enter and they do not receive you, go out into its streets and say, 11 ‘Even the dust of your city which clings to our feet we wipe off in protest against you; yet be sure of this, that the kingdom of God has come near.’ 12 I say to you, it will be more tolerable in that day for Sodom than for that city.* I really do enjoy this Scripture story and I believe it is a diagram for how future missions should be carried out. It is a model of evangelism. The LORD sent them out two by two and they were to carry with them only the bare necessities. The reason is so obvious because as they or we are doing HIS work we have to trust that HE will take care of our needs. Yes, HE does enlist others to do this but ultimately it is HE who cares for us. This should be very comforting to the ones who are sent to the lost. Also, there is no need to waste our time trying to convince certain lost people of the Kingdom because they will not accept it from us. But, when we find those who are willing (men of peace) then we can share the beauty of the Gospel with them. The most interesting revelation we found in Israel is that almost all the Jewish people we have met want to hear the Gospel. They engage and talk about the story of Jesus.

 The idea that there is a large harvest comes up several times in the Gospel and in hidden ways in the Tanach. We need to remember that there is fruit falling from the vines so to speak. SO many people have been made ready to hear the Gospel. The question is; are we telling them the sweet story of Jesus? When we do share the Gospel in Israel we find over and over again those who are people of peace. One such one was the first person I spoke with when we arrived in Jerusalem.

 Hopefully with now more understanding you will appreciate what happened in Jerusalem. We arrived just after check in time in the early afternoon at the Dan Jerusalem Hotel near the Hebrew University. The young front desk clerk I spoke with to check in had perfect English. I thought she must have made Aliyah from the United States. I asked her if she was from the States as she had such good English with even a Midwest type accent. She surprised me when she said she was born and grew up right there in Jerusalem. She was rather proud of the thought of having very good English. Right there in just moments after meeting her we were talking about Yeshua and she wanted a New Testament Bible. I told her I would bring her one back after I put my things in my room. I went to my room and got out a New Testament Bible and placed it in an envelope she had given me. She did not want anyone at the desk to see what I was giving her. It is rather sad as still the Jewish people have to be so careful in dealing with Jesus. But, for even listening to the Gospel they care be ostracized if the wrong person hears or sees them interested. This makes it very important for us to be very sensitive to the situation. The last thing we want is for someone to be in trouble for taking something from us or listening to us speak about Yeshua. But, this desk clerk was so kind and so grateful for the information. We simply sometimes give out seeds and trust the LORD to water.

 I have spoken about Bob and how he shared at the museum in Tel Aviv. He had many other experiences sharing seeds of the Gospel on this trip as well. His wife Alta summed up her experience saying, “Bob and I had made several trips to Israel prior to 2012 but we always traveled with the “Perry Stone Ministries Tour Group.” “In 2012 Bob and I were very excited to be making our first trip to Israel with Benny and Sheral. As we traveled and met new friends we found that the LORD seemed to be telling us repeatedly (4 x in Israel) that Paragould Path 2 Restoration Ministries would be a place of refuge for Jewish people as they make aliyah from the United States to Israel. When we travel in Israel the LORD always increases our love for HIS land and HIS people. HE gives us yearnings to also “come Home.”” I want to use the testimony of others that have been on our mission trips as well so you can understand that this is happening to anyone with a heart to share the love of Yeshua with the Jewish people.

 There were many other times we were able to share the Gospel and give New Testament Bibles. But for this trip the most meaningful experience was sharing the Gospel to our dear friend Eliyahu Swartz. In Jerusalem he is simply known as the artist. He was the designer of many Israeli Military emblems used in metals worn by soldiers and displayed in flags and banners. He also has a book of artwork called “Hear Our Voices-Women at Prayer.” During a visit with Eli in 2006 we purchased 50 of these books to give as gifts to our congregation in Florida. We did this mostly to bless Eli.

 On this visit with Eli at his studio next door to the Temple Institute we were able to sit and have a very nice conversation. So after all these years of being his friend the conversation worked around to speaking of the Messiah. I took his Bible and turned to *Isaiah 53:* *53 Who has believed our message? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? 2 For He grew up before Him like a tender shoot, And like a root out of parched ground; He has no stately form or majesty That we should look upon Him, Nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him. 3 He was despised and forsaken of men, A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; And like one from whom men hide their face He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. 4 Surely our grief’s He Himself bore, And our sorrows He carried; Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, Smitten of God, and afflicted. 5 But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed. 6 All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; But the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him. 7 He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He did not open His mouth; Like a lamb that is led to slaughter, And like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, So He did not open His mouth. 8 By oppression and judgment He was taken away; And as for His generation, who considered That He was cut off out of the land of the living For the transgression of my people, to whom the stroke was due? 9 His grave was assigned with wicked men, Yet He was with a rich man in His death, Because He had done no violence, Nor was there any deceit in His mouth. 10 But the Lord was pleased To crush Him, putting Him to grief; If He would render Himself as a guilt offering, He will see His offspring, He will prolong His days, And the good pleasure of the Lord will prosper in His hand. 11 As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see it and be satisfied; By His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify the many, As He will bear their iniquities. 12 Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great, And He will divide the booty with the strong; Because He poured out Himself to death, And was numbered with the transgressors; Yet He Himself bore the sin of many, And interceded for the transgressors.*  I showed Eli how Yeshua was the suffering servant who died for his sins as so accurately shown in this Scripture. He received all this information and I believe Eli believed it all.

 Chapter 6

 Secret Agent

 In the last chapter I gave you just a few stories of just how receptive and open the people of Israel are now to the Gospel. That is why it was called Changing Atmosphere. Again the year was 2012 and I had been on a half dozen journeys to Israel before that one. Those trips span a period of sixteen years going back to 1996 when I had my first experience of Israel. Each and every time I would go back to Israel it was always different and always amazing. I always found the people to be very kind and enjoyable to be around. But, I never found them to be willing or open to speak about the Gospel. That is not until 2012 and then we saw that change in the atmosphere so to speak.

 I wondered about the trip so many times after getting back to the states. I begin to think maybe it was just me that something new had happened to me. Maybe I was more perceptive to the Jews. So then it occurred to me to investigate this more. I have some dear friends in Israel who are believers in Yeshua. Their lives are dedicated to sharing the Gospel with other Jewish people in Israel. So I asked them if they had noticed a change in the way the Jewish people were concerning being open to the Gospel. They assured me that a change in the atmosphere had indeed happened and was increasing. They have a ministry “Heart of God” which can be easily visited from their website. Also, their son has a ministry to reach the people of Israel and his ministry is “Tree of Life.” He also agrees that the Jewish people are much more open to the Gospel. I believe this really shows that the Holy Spirit is moving very deeply among the people of Israel, Jews and Arabs alike.

 As I report more and more of what has happened on succeeding mission journeys it will become quite obvious that the LORD is moving powerfully in Israel. But, back to the time of 2012 it needs to be reported that there are actually many thousands of Jewish followers of Yeshua in Israel. Just a few years before 2012 there were only a few hundred Jewish followers of Yeshua. This is proved out by the fact there were only a handful of Messianic Jewish congregations just a few years before 2012 and by 2012 there were over 100. This number has been eclipsed and continues to grow. Because of finding out these facts and from the experiences we had in 2012, I was very motivated to go back to Israel as soon as I could. After we returned home in April of 2012, I hoped to be back to Israel in less than six months. To be totally forthcoming I wanted to go right back to Israel. I had experienced something as never before. I had been around people who were so very open to hear the Gospel. They were not mean or disrespectful but open, very open and inquisitive. This I found to be downright amazing, exciting, and actually addicting. Addicting because once you experience this kind of sharing, you just want more.

 At the time of our return I was still employed as a nurse. It had been my lifelong career. I served as a pastor in a small congregation but my work was a nurse. With that said, of course I just could not get off again so soon. Having a job is a real deterrent to doing something like being an evangelist. I was beginning to sense a new call on our lives. Sheral and I had this unexplainable love for the people of Israel. We knew it could have only come from the LORD. We had it for years but after our Passover trip with Bob and Alta in 2012 it had mushroomed to a whole new level. By the spring of 2013 I was hopeful of going back to Israel but it just didn’t work out. This was discouraging to say the least. Actually, I had a broken heart as all I wanted to do was be in Israel and share the love of Yeshua with the people there. Then the spontaneous way the LORD speaks came to me and showed me we needed to establish a new ministry in order to go to Israel more often. This ministry would make the way to fulfill the dream we have of sharing the Gospel in Israel more frequently. So in February of 2013 the LORD gave me the name for the ministry, “Ruth’s Choice.” The simple explanation for this is the Book of Ruth in the Bible is about a gentile woman who had married into a Jewish family. They lived in Moab and Ruth’s husband would die as would her father-in-law. Ruth made the choice to stay with her mother-in- law. *Ruth 1:* *15 Then Naomi said, “Behold, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and her gods; return after your sister-in-law.” 16 But Ruth said, “Do not urge me to leave you or turn back from following you; for where you go, I will go, and where you lodge, I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God, my God. 17 Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. Thus may the Lord do to me, and worse, if anything but death parts you and me.” 18 When she saw that she was determined to go with her, she said no more to her.* The point with “Ruth’s Choice” is we have decided to stay with the Jewish people and do as Ruth did in the Bible. Now, this includes telling them who is their Messiah, Yeshua of course.

 Not long after getting our non-profit minister approved a friend of ours from Florida sent me an e-mail with a you-tube video. The Video was about a book, “The Ruthless Church” by Matthew Wilson. The book is about the need for the church to take the Gospel to the Jewish people. It is named the Ruthless Church for those in the church who lack the understanding or concern of taking the Gospel to the Jewish people. It is a book I think every believer should read. We need to have this understanding of telling Jewish people about Yeshua. In His book, Matthew Wilson speaks about many organizations who take the Gospel to Israel. Indeed there are many groups who do this but not nearly enough. Matthew mentions larger groups like Jews for Jesus, Chosen People Ministries, Jewish Voice Ministries then goes on to say: “In addition to these, there are a significant number of smaller organizations which are also well worth partnering with and supporting. We like to encourage people to partner with smaller organizations as much as possible. Doing so can have a huge impact on their ability to reach many people though they are not all in the land of Israel, they are all doing the work of the servants and reapers outside Israel where the majority of Jewish people still live.”[[4]](#footnote-4) I found it very interesting how this was a brand new book when published 2013. The same time Ruth’s Choice was established. God is so good. A few years later I would use this book as the textbook for a class I have taught for Kidron Christian College and Seminary. My dream and desire to see more and more people come to the harvest field is happening. Speaking of a dream, I had a funny word come to me while walking down my driveway.

 It was still in the winter of 2012 and I could only hope to go back to Israel. Each day I get up and walk up and down my long driveway having my morning prayer. This morning it was very early and barely light as I was praying and thanking the LORD for all His goodness. I was just walking up and down and not really hearing anything from the Father when it came out of nowhere. That spontaneous though shot from the Holy Spirit into my heart, “You are a secret agent.” That was it. I only had those few words. It seemed so very strange to me. I wondered what could it mean? I didn’t get it right away and most definitely wasn’t really thinking it was from the LORD. But, like so many other words which often don’t seem to make sense this was really like that. But, that on its own merit does not prove anything. But after a while it did make sense. When I went to Israel, I needed to function like a secret agent. I would need to function under the radar so to speak. The question is why? In Israel at that time it was legal to share the Gospel. You could just not use money or rewards to do it and you cannot share with minors under the age of 18. So why be careful? Because the religious Jews can and will cause problems for those who would be very loud in their approach. If you are stopped from sharing what have you accomplished? *Ephesian 5:* *3 But all things become visible when they are exposed by the light, for everything that becomes visible is light. 14 For this reason it says, “Awake, sleeper, And arise from the dead, And Messiah will shine on you.” 15 Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, 16 making the most of your time, because the days are evil. 17 So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. Matthew 10:* *16 “Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; so be shrewd as serpents and innocent as doves.* This sharing of the Gospel is very serious business and we need to use the wisdom which only comes from the LORD.

 Finally, by the fall of 2013 Sheral and I made our plans of return to do our second mission trip to Israel. This was to be no tour but a Mission trip. Bill was one of men of our congregation, Path 2 Restoration Ministries. He had become very excited about all we shared from our last trip during Passover of 2012 and he wanted to go on the next trip. Bill was so willing to go he planned on a trip which would last longer than our trip. So I helped him secure a room with a professor of Hebrew University. Now, Bill would spend over a month with professor Nathan. Bill is a very spirit filled believer and him just being in Nathan’s home for a month would have a very wonderful effect. *1 John 1:* *5 This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. 6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; 7 but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.* Now, I can tell you Bill is a brother who does walk in the Light and because of this fact the Light of Yeshua was brightly placed in front of Nathan everyday while Bill was there. *Matthew 5:* 1*3 “You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. 3 “You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. 14 “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; 15 nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. 16 Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.* I have known Bill for many years and he really lives this Scripture. He lives his life to allow Yeshua to shine through. Bill is a true witness to others for the Gospel. *Psalm 119:46*  *I will also speak of Your testimonies before kings And shall not be ashamed.* *Romans 1:* *16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “But the righteous man shall live by faith.”*  Bill was the first person who would be part of our dream for many others to bring the Gospel to Israel. Bob and Alta were in the very first wave when we were just discovering this new thing the LORD was doing. There will be others to tell you about before this story is done.

 When we visit Jerusalem, we always go to Shorashim Bookstore. Shorashim is a small bookstore in the center of the Old Jewish Quarter of Jerusalem. They sell beautiful artwork and jewelry along with many small items of Jewish interest. While in the store I was approached by a nice lady telling me about Yeshua. I asked her if we could go outside and perhaps have some coffee. I thought she was wanting to share the Gospel with me. I didn’t want her to continue in the store as I believed it could have caused problems with the owners as this is not their belief. When we got outside she told me she knew I was a follower of Yeshua and she said, “You are one of His secret agents.” This was astounding to me as I immediately remembered what I had heard from the LORD back a few months before. It was “you are a secret agent.” Now, I knew this had to be from the LORD or a very big coincidence of which I don’t believe in coincidence. I am of the school of thought that everything happens for a reason. All things have a purpose in this life we have been so generously given.

 At the time I really didn’t understand what all this meant. As time passed I would discover it had many meanings. At the moment she told me this she went on to add, “But, don’t think this makes you someone special. Remember the LORD can use anything HE wishes.” I agreed with her and laughed a little. Then she told me why she was visiting Israel. It was actually amazing to me. She said she was from Tennessee and was traveling on her own. She had made many friends in Israel while coming there many times over the years. She then said, “Benny, I am a secret agent as well. I come to Israel to share Jesus with the beautiful Jewish people.” My heart was overflowing with a good theme. She also told me you are not alone, I know you have been feeling like you are the only one doing this but remember what the LORD said to Elijah? I am going to interject what Marie was talking about from the Bible. The reason is if you are living your life for the GOD of the Bible then the best way to explain things in your life is through the stories of the Bible *1 Kings 19:* *And behold, a voice came to him and said, “What are you doing here, Elijah?” 14 Then he said, “I have been very zealous for the Lord, the God of hosts; for the sons of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars and killed Your prophets with the sword. And I alone am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.” 15 The Lord said to him, “Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus, and when you have arrived, you shall anoint Hazael king over Aram; 16 and Jehu the son of Nimshi you shall anoint king over Israel; and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah you shall anoint as prophet in your place. 17 It shall come about, the one who escapes from the sword of Hazael, Jehu shall put to death, and the one who escapes from the sword of Jehu, Elisha shall put to death. 18 Yet I will leave 7,000 in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal and every mouth that has not kissed him.”*

 It is also very interesting that Paul uses this same story speaking about sharing the Gospel with the Jews as recorded in: *Romans 11:* *11 I say then, God has not rejected His people, has He? May it never be! For I too am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. 2 God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says in the passage about Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel? 3 “Lord, they have killed Your prophets, they have torn down Your altars, and I alone am left, and they are seeking my life.” 4 But what is the divine response to him? “I have kept for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal.” 5 In the same way then, there has also come to be at the present time a remnant according to God’s gracious choice. 6 But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace. 7 What then? What Israel is seeking, it has not obtained, but those who were chosen obtained it, and the rest were hardened; 8 just as it is written, “God gave them a spirit of stupor, Eyes to see not and ears to hear not, Down to this very day.”* Paul is speaking about a remnant of people who Ha Shem always uses to partner with HIM to share HIS WORD. Obviously, the LORD does not need human beings to do spread HIS word, yet HE does as HE chooses. Now, I realized Marie was letting me know that I had been called to Israel as an evangelist. This was for me a conformation of something I had already believed. I was eager to continue sharing the Good News of Yeshua.

 We continued to meet new people and visit old friends during this stay in Jerusalem. We were able to share the Gospel and give New Testament Bibles to many Israelis before our time to depart. It seems the time we have is never enough as we know there are so many people to reach. On Yom Kippur everything is closed and we just visit with people and praise the LORD. We met a young man who works at God TV. The LORD used this meeting to show me something I would not realize until a much later date. God TV is a large network and is broadcast all around the world. I believe the Father was letting us know that our work would also reach all over the world. Just a few years later and we would learn that this really is true. We now have been blessed in being able to minister with people from Germany, France, England, Israel, China, Argentina, Ukraine and many others. Still we believe we are only on the tip of the iceberg as much more is coming. *Matthew 28:* *16 But the eleven disciples proceeded to Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had designated. 17 When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some were doubtful. 18 And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”*

 When in Jerusalem we also like to visit the many fine art studios. Jerusalem has so many wonderful artists and there is an abundance of beautiful art pieces. The most important thing is to meet the dealers of these wonderful places. On one particular studio Sheral and I were so blessed to meet a young man by the name of Asi. He was very kind and helpful in the studio where he was the owner. He was Orthodox Jewish and very open to speak about his faith. It was very interesting how the door was opened to speak to Asi about Yeshua. I saw many religious pamphlets in studio and so I asked Asi if he followed the Torah Portions each week. Now, before I asked this question please know that I knew it was a pretty ridiculous question. Because any religious Jewish person would of course follow the Torah Portion each week because this is what is done each week in the synagogue. Here is an example of flying under the radar by acting like I didn’t know. Asi answered my question, “Of course I read the Torah Portion each week.” I said, “I understand, so I suppose you read the Torah Portion for this week.” Then I went on to say that this weeks Torah portion was Ha’azinu which can really only be paraphrased into English and means “Listen Heaven and Earth as I speak.” This is contained in the first verse of *Deuteronomy 32:* *“Give ear, O heavens, and let me speak; And let the earth hear the words of my mouth.*  Asi would understand that this weeks Torah Portion had to do with listening to what God was going to say. I find it so amazing that this Torah Portion would be the one for the very time on the schedule. This could be no coincidence but something very divine. Then I went on to share with Asi these verses and by the way Jewish people have incredible regard for the Scriptures as you would expect. So they do listen when you share their Bible with them. *Deuteronomy 32: 15 “But Jeshurun grew fat and kicked—You are grown fat, thick, and sleek—Then he forsook God who made him, And scorned the Rock of his salvation. 16 “They made Him jealous with strange gods; With abominations they provoked Him to anger. 17 “They sacrificed to demons who were not God, To gods whom they have not known, New gods who came lately, Whom your fathers did not dread. 18 “You neglected the Rock who begot you, And forgot the God who gave you birth. 19 “The Lord saw this, and spurned them Because of the provocation of His sons and daughters. 20 “Then He said, ‘I will hide My face from them, I will see what their end shall be; For they are a perverse generation, Sons in whom is no faithfulness. 21 ‘They have made Me jealous with what is not God; They have provoked Me to anger with their idols. So I will make them jealous with those who are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation.*  Now, understand that Asi understood these verses very well. He would have studied them all his life. So I said to him that I understood these verses to mean Israel would turn from God, is that right? Asi agreed that is of course exactly what these verses meant. Then I asked him if he understood a foolish nation (a people who once did not know God) would be used by God to bring Israel to jealousy? He did understand this at which point I put out my hand and said, “Asi, I want to introduce myself as one from that foolish nation. I could see that Asi was clearly dumbfounded and I know the only reason was because the Holy Spirit was speaking to him though the Word of God which he had learned all his days. I didn’t feel lead to give any more seeds. I strongly believe the LORD would use what was spoken that day. The point for you at this time is to say how very important it is to know the Scriptures because the Word of God is what the Spirit of God uses as HIS tool to speak to others. I will speak more on this subject in subsequent chapters. Thankfully HE also uses very fallible people as well. There is no greater joy than to see God work in your life to speak HIS Words of Life into the hearts of you fellowman.

 Not long before we were to leave Israel we decided to go to a favorite restaurant of ours, Café Rimon at Mamillia Mall. It has really nice Mediterranean Food with a view of the people walking by the open mall. It is the kind of place where the tables are small and arranged close together. It has a really nice and lite atmosphere. Well, we are sitting at our small table and the lady at the table adjacent to us is alone. When the waitress took our order in English, this lady asked where we were from because we had just spoken English. We told her the United States and she smiled and said she had made Aliyah recently from Philadelphia. A very fun conversation ensued. Her name was Elaine and the important information she gave was for us to come back. Imagine that. Come back. It is as if the LORD had Elaine tell us to come back. But, she didn’t just say to come back, but to come back at Shavuot. She said this was the most wonderful time to come to Israel. We asked her why and she just said, “It is a surprise.” So then and there, Sheral and I made the decision to return to Israel at Shavuot.

 Chapter 7

 Intercessory Prayer

 Sheral and I were so very thankful as the LORD made a way for us to go to Israel the following spring to Israel. It was during the Celebration of Shavuot. It was as Elaine had said a very good time to come to Israel. The climate is so wonderful during this time of year. So many flowers, trees, and bushes are blooming. The sky is so blue and clear. The air is very light and fresh. It seems everything comes back to life during Shavuot. This trip marked our third mission trip to Israel. We had made many tours to Israel prior to this one but this was the third actual mission trip for the main purpose of taking the Gospel to the people of Israel. We had dear friends from Oklahoma acting in our behalf as prayer intercessors the whole time we were gone. They are known as the “Oasis Team.” Our Heavenly Father knew we would need this kind of intense prayer and we were introduced to them after our return from Israel in 2012. What we were doing in Israel was very obviously growing. Many more people were being made aware and our prayer and physical support was increasing in miraculous ways. We knew the Oasis Team was vital for us while we were in Israel. We had to stay under the radar as many in Israel oppose what we are doing in sharing the Gospel. Sadly, they think we are trying to convert Jews to a Christian religion. They think they are no longer Jewish if they believe Jesus is the Messiah. There have been other Jews in history who many believed were the Messiah but turned out not to be the Messiah. Many Jews had believed in them and yet no other Jews objected to the point they would say they were no longer Jewish. But, with Jesus it is all different. So, again we needed to stay as secret agents if we hoped to have a successful mission trip.

 Not only did we need prayer for our success at home but we needed to have a powerful intercessor on the trip as well. For this we had a dear sister in the LORD from our congregation, Roberta. We had also enlisted Betty for this trip as we believed it would be very good to have a pair of intercessors. A few weeks before we were to go, Betty had to cancel herself from the trip due to illness. This caused Sheral and me to become very heavyhearted as we knew Betty to be a very powerful prayer warrior. We know of many instances things had been changed due to her prayers. It is important to understand when you plan to go to Israel with the purpose of taking the Gospel you will encounter much resistance from the devil. It was discouraging with one of our team of four to have to drop out. But, these missions must take place and the Gospel must go forth with the Power of the Holy Spirit. Praise be to the LORD on High.

 As we go to Israel you recall very well that you are meeting many times Jewish people who have studied the Bible their entire lives. If you want to take the Gospel to these kinds of people you must be heavily armed with the Word of God. *Hebrew 4:* *12 For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. 13 And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.* We must be very familiar with the Word of God because this is the tool our Sweet Holy Spirit will use to show Yeshua to them. We believe in the 10 Commandments as do the Jewish people, even the secular Jewish people know the 10 Commandments. But, they know them in the letter of the Law and not by the Spirit. We have the 10 Commandments in the Spirit of LOVE. I want to explain this now.

 To do this we need to look at the 10 Commandments from *Deuteronomy 5:* *5 Then Moses summoned all Israel and said to them: “Hear, O Israel, the statutes and the ordinances which I am speaking today in your hearing, that you may learn them and observe them carefully. 2 The Lord our God made a covenant with us at Horeb. 3 The Lord did not make this covenant with our fathers, but with us, with all those of us alive here today. 4 The Lord spoke to you face to face at the mountain from the midst of the fire, 5 while I was standing between the Lord and you at that time, to declare to you the word of the Lord; for you were afraid because of the fire and did not go up the mountain. He said, 6 ‘I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. 7 ‘You shall have no other gods before Me. 8 ‘You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. 9 You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, and on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me, 10 but showing loving-kindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments. 11 ‘You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not leave him unpunished who takes His name in vain. 12 ‘Observe the Sabbath day to keep it holy, as the Lord your God commanded you. 13 Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 14 but the seventh day is a Sabbath of the Lord your God; in it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter or your male servant or your female servant or your ox or your donkey or any of your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you, so that your male servant and your female servant may rest as well as you. 15 You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God brought you out of there by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm; therefore the Lord your God commanded you to observe the Sabbath day. 16 ‘Honor your father and your mother, as the Lord your God has commanded you, that your days may be prolonged and that it may go well with you on the land which the Lord your God gives you. 17 ‘You shall not murder. 18 ‘You shall not commit adultery. 19 ‘You shall not steal. 20 ‘You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. 21 ‘You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, and you shall not desire your neighbor’s house, his field or his male servant or his female servant, his ox or his donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbor.’* When you read these ten basic rules of the LORD it may seem that all GOD is really interested in is for us to obey HIM. In just reading and even in exhaustive study of the Commandments they can seem to be very dry and sterile. They may not seem to contain any feeling. If many were honest they might even say the 10 Commandments seem boring. We could see these Laws as just guidelines and really not that important because no one can keep them anyway. There are actually whole groups that declare these Commands are done away with because Jesus nailed these rules to the cross. Paul writes in *Romans 2:* *12 For all who have sinned without the Law will also perish without the Law, and all who have sinned under the Law will be judged by the Law; 13 for it is not the hearers of the Law who are just before God, but the doers of the Law will be justified. 14 For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves, 15 in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them, 16 on the day when, according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus.* We can say therefore, we cannot be justified before God except through faith in the sacrifice of God's Son, Yeshua ha Messiach , and then God gives us grace. This does not excuse us from keeping the law because He says those who keep the law will be justified; therefore, keeping the law cannot justify. It cannot save a person, but those who keep the law are doing so because of the Grace of God. They are not keeping the law in order to be saved but because they are faithful in showing God that they are preparing their lives for His Kingdom, where everybody will live the same godly life, according to the same rules. That is what God's law outlines—His way of life. The Laws of GOD in essence show us who HE is.

 Paul says keeping the law in Galatians just won’t get a soul saved. *Galatians 3:* *6 Even so Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness. 7 Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham. 8 The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “All the nations will be blessed in you.” 9 So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer. 10 For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law, to perform them.” 11 Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for, “The righteous man shall live by faith.” 12 However, the Law is not of faith; on the contrary, “He who practices them shall live by them.” 13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree”— 14 in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we would receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.* Obedience to the Laws of God is vitally important but not for the purpose of Salvation or even approval. Keeping the Laws for this purpose will ultimately lead to death but finding Messiah Yeshua leads to life everlasting. *Romans 11:* *15 For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?*

The issue seems to be that most who follow the Laws of God do so just to be in obedience or relationship to HIM. Others who don’t see the need to follow HIS laws say it was all taken care of by Jesus. There seems to be such a wide disparity of ideas concerning the most simple of articles in the Bible. Why is there such a great gulf of differences about the 10 commandments? Before I answer this question I must tell you the answer is of supreme importance if you plan to share the Gospel with the Jewish People. Obviously, there is misunderstanding and miscommunication about the 10 commandments. The first thing which must be understood about the Commandments is they are at the very essence of GOD Himself. We seldom in this earthly life ever see, hear, or feel GOD and yet HE is all around us. But, most important HE has given us HIS Word that reveals Himself to us. Think about this, the 10 Commandments are one major way the LORD reveals Himself to us. So it is not so much about obeying the commands because HE commanded me to. It is not so much as not worrying about not obeying the Commandments because I don’t feel I have to; maybe, because I think I’m free because of what Jesus did. The real issue is that the Commandments reveal who HE is really! Now, knowing this shows me the real reason why I want to follow these Words and it is because they show me Him. The Commandments bring me unto the presence of GOD. If you know this then it seems you want to follow His commands even more.

 Think of the words of David in *Psalm 1:* *How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, Nor stand in the path of sinners, Nor sit in the seat of scoffers! 2 But his delight is in the law of the Lord, And in His law he meditates day and night. 3 He will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, Which yields its fruit in its season. And its leaf does not wither; And in whatever he does, he prospers.*

 How can a person meditate on the Law of GOD if it is dry and sterile? I hold out to you that a person can’t do it for long except for sheer duty. Maybe they can do it for others. It can be done but the verse says they delight in this meditation. A person like David and like you can delight in the Law of God because they know it for what it really is, which is HIS character. This can only be revealed to us by the Spirit of God. David understood this as it grieved him after his sin with Bathsheba. *Psalm 51:* 51 *Be gracious to me, O God, according to Your loving-kindness; According to the greatness of Your compassion blot out my transgressions. 2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity And cleanse me from my sin. 3 For I know my transgressions, And my sin is ever before me. 4 Against You, You only, I have sinned And done what is evil in Your sight, So that You are justified when You speak And blameless when You judge. 5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me. 6 Behold, You desire truth in the innermost being, And in the hidden part You will make me know wisdom. 7 Purify me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. 8 Make me to hear joy and gladness, Let the bones which You have broken rejoice. 9 Hide Your face from my sins And blot out all my iniquities. 10 Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me. 11 Do not cast me away from Your presence And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me. 12 Restore to me the joy of Your salvation And sustain me with a willing spirit. 13 Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, And sinners will be converted to You. 14 Deliver me from blood guiltiness, O God, the God of my salvation; Then my tongue will joyfully sing of Your righteousness. 15 O Lord, open my lips, That my mouth may declare Your praise. 16 For You do not delight in sacrifice, otherwise I would give it; You are not pleased with burnt offering. 17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise. 18 By Your favor do good to Zion; Build the walls of Jerusalem. 19 Then You will delight in righteous sacrifices, In burnt offering and whole burnt offering; Then young bulls will be offered on Your altar.*  The only way to really get close to God is through true worship and David understood this. He knew He could not regard sin in his own life. *John 4:* *23 An hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. 24 God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”*  It can only happen because of true love. The letter of the Law is beautiful but without the Spirit it becomes cold. The Spirit of God equals love. *Look at 1 Corinthians 13:* *13 If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. 2 If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. 3 And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing. 4 Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, 5 does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, 6 does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; 7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. 8 Love never fails; but if there are gifts of prophecy, they will be done away; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be done away. 9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part; 10 but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away. 11 When I was a child, I used to speak like a child, think like a child, reason like a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things. 12 For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known. 13 But now faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love.*

 Now, let us examine the Commandments with the love of God added. Because this is how the people of Israel need to see the Commandments. Actually, all people need to see the Commandments this way. It is through the Ten Commandments that God reveals His very own nature and character. The characteristics and attributes of God are so numerous that to try to list and expound upon them thoroughly would be impossible. *John 21:* *25 And there are also many other things which Jesus did, which if they were written in detail, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that would be written.*  This is speaking about what Jesus did and how it would not be possible to write them all down. It is the same with His character. It is so far above anything we can perceive or grasp with our finite human brain. *Deuteronomy 5:* *5 Then Moses summoned all Israel and said to them: “Hear, O Israel, the statutes and the ordinances which I am speaking today in your hearing, that you may learn them and observe them carefully. Now we skip ahead to verse 4 The Lord spoke to you face to face at the mountain from the midst of the fire, 5 while I was standing between the Lord and you at that time, to declare to you the word of the Lord; for you were afraid because of the fire and did not go up the mountain. He said, 6 ‘I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.* Now, think about what these verses are saying. First, the LORD had all Israel come together so HE could speak to them fact to face. This shows the intimacy the LORD had for the people. HE could have just told Moses to tell the people. HE could have sent them a letter. HE is GOD so HE could have informed the people anyway HE chose. But, remember GOD is love. *1 John 4:* *15 Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. 16 We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.* I really like the way this translation says. “We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us.” You know a person can hear that GOD is love and it can mean nothing to them. But, here it says they have come to believe GOD loves them. This is the way it was for Israel, God had love for them. Sadly, many would never believe that HE did. God will not tolerate unbelief forever and one day each person will be judged for their unbelief or rewarded for their trust in HIS love.

 Now, we come to the first Commandment *Deuteronomy 5:* *7 ‘You shall have no other gods before Me.* The LORD demands everyone to be totally devoted to HIM. As humans we could think that this makes GOD seem arrogant. But, God is worthy of our praise. *Psalm 145:* *I will extol You, my God, O King, And I will bless Your name forever and ever. 2 Every day I will bless You, And I will praise Your name forever and ever. 3 Great is the Lord, and highly to be praised, And His greatness is unsearchable. 4 One generation shall praise Your works to another, And shall declare Your mighty acts. 5 On the glorious splendor of Your majesty And on Your wonderful works, I will meditate. 6 Men shall speak of the power of Your awesome acts, And I will tell of Your greatness. 7 They shall eagerly utter the memory of Your abundant goodness And will shout joyfully of Your righteousness. 8 The Lord is gracious and merciful; Slow to anger and great in loving-kindness. 9 The Lord is good to all, And His mercies are over all His works. 10 All Your works shall give thanks to You, O Lord, And Your godly ones shall bless You. 11 They shall speak of the glory of Your kingdom And talk of Your power; 12 To make known to the sons of men Your mighty acts And the glory of the majesty of Your kingdom. 13 Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, And Your dominion endures throughout all generations. 14 The Lord sustains all who fall And raises up all who are bowed down. 15 The eyes of all look to You, And You give them their food in due time. 16 You open Your hand And satisfy the desire of every living thing. 17 The Lord is righteous in all His ways And kind in all His deeds. 18 The Lord is near to all who call upon Him, To all who call upon Him in truth. 19 He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him; He will also hear their cry and will save them. 20 The Lord keeps all who love Him, But all the wicked He will destroy. 21 My mouth will speak the praise of the Lord, And all flesh will bless His holy name forever and ever.*  Also *Psalms 18:3* *I call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised, And I am saved from my enemies.* The LORD is worthy and the LORD is good.  *Nahum 1:* *7 The Lord is good, A stronghold in the day of trouble, And He knows those who take refuge in Him. Psalm 106:*1 *Praise the Lord! Oh give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; For His loving-kindness is everlasting. 2 Who can speak of the mighty deeds of the Lord, or can show forth all His praise? 3 How blessed are those who keep justice, Who practice righteousness at all times! 4 Remember me, O Lord, in Your favor toward Your people; Visit me with Your salvation.* “General Remarks. - This Psalm begins and ends with Hallelujah - "Praise ye the Lord." The space between these two descriptions of praise is filled up with the mournful details of Israel's sin, and the extraordinary patience of God; and truly we do well to bless the Lord both at the beginning and the end of our meditations when sin and grace are the themes. This sacred song is occupied with the historical part of the Old Testament, and is one of many which are thus composed: surely this should be a sufficient rebuke to those who speak slightingly of the historical Scriptures; it ill becomes a child of God to think lightly of that which the Holy Spirit so frequently uses for our instruction. What other Scriptures had David beside those very histories which are so depreciated, and yet he esteemed them beyond his necessary food, and made them his songs in the house of his pilgrimage?[[5]](#footnote-5)

 There is a blessing for those who as verse 3 says, “practice righteousness at all times.” Sadly, I think we now live in a day where people everywhere are so very selfish and only really living for themselves. Oh, they care about others but mostly in how others can benefit them. Obviously this has always been the ways of the world. But, here I am speaking about the church. It is difficult to find how this verse should be spoken of in today’s society so I want to give a quote from a day long gone by with hopes that some would desire to go back to this place which can happen with God’s help. “Verse 3. Since the Lord is so good and so worthy to be praised, it must be for our happiness to obey him. Blessed are they that keep judgment, and he that doeth righteousness at all times. Multiplied are the blessings which must descend upon the whole company of the keepers of the way of justice, and especially upon that one rare man who at all times follows that which is right. Holiness is happiness. The way of right is the way of peace. Yet men leave this road, and prefer the paths of the destroyer. Hence the story which follows is in sad contrast with the happiness here depicted, because the way of Israel was not that of judgment and righteousness, but that of folly and iniquity. The Psalmist, while contemplating the perfections of God, was impressed with the feeling that the servants of such a being must be happy, and when he looked around and saw how the tribes of old prospered when they obeyed, and suffered when they sinned, he was still more fully assured of the truth of his conclusion. O could we but be free of sin we should be rid of sorrow! We would not only be just, but "keep judgment"; we would not be content with occasionally acting rightly, but would "do justice at all times."[[6]](#footnote-6)

 There is so much which could be spoken of concerning the Goodness and worthiness of GOD. But, if we think of HIM in love as we should, then there should be a great desire within us to give HIM the worship HE is due. We should desire with all that is in us to keep HIS first Commandment. When we have this desire within us we are then able to tell others of our great desire to share HIS love and worship HIM.

 The second Commandment is *Deuteronomy 5:* *8 ‘You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth.* Only the LORD is worthy of praise and worship. He created so many things for us to enjoy on this earth as well as in the seas and in the heavens. Truly there is not a lack of creation to please the heart and mind of man. But, all creation is only a shadow of GOD. Much as an artist may make a beautiful art form and yet the work they make is not them. It may show what they are like to some extent but their work of art is really totally separate from the artist themselves. A marvelous artwork should cause one to think about the character of the artist. Maybe cause one to desire to meet them and speak about their work, perhaps give them accolades. How much more should we desire to meet GOD? How much more should we reflect on HIS amazing character and attributes? *Psalms 19:1The heavens are telling of the glory of God; And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands.* The LORD sets above earth and looks on all HE has made. Should we not look for HIM? *Isaiah 40:21 Do you not know? Have you not heard? Has it not been declared to you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth? 22 It is He who sits above the circle of the earth, And its inhabitants are like grasshoppers, Who stretches out the heavens like a curtain And spreads them out like a tent to dwell in.*  This verse should have the effect of putting us in our place so to speak. We as humans often become very arrogant and may even start to believe that we are in control and perhaps we are the center of everything. We need to constantly remember that GOD is the center of everything and as well in control of everything. Paul speaks to us about what happens when people continue to believe they are in control and place GOD’s creation ahead of HIM. *Romans chapter 1: 18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, 19 because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. 20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. 21 For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. 22 Professing to be wise, they became fools, 23 and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures. 24 Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them. 25 For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.* These scriptures are very telling and very dreadful with dire consequences. It is very serious indeed to worship what is not GOD. *Hebrews 10: 29 How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace? 30 For we know Him who said, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay.” And again, “The Lord will judge His people.” 31 It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.* Yet and even still GOD is so full of mercy and grace as shown in  *2 Peter 3:* *3 Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts, 4 and saying, “Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation.” 5 For when they maintain this, it escapes their notice that by the word of God the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and by water, 6 through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water. 7 But by His word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. 8 But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day. 9 The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.* God is worthy and we need only worship HIM. We thank HIM for all HIS mighty hands have made. We may enjoy HIS creation to the full but worship belongs to only Ha Shem.

 The third Commandment is *Deuteronomy 5:* *11 ‘You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not leave him unpunished who takes His name in vain.* We must remember the power of spoken words because it was through the spoken word God created. *Genesis 1:* *3 Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light. Genesis 1: 6 Then God said, “Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.” 7 God made the expanse, and separated the waters which were below the expanse from the waters which were above the expanse; and it was so. 8 God called the expanse heaven. (Second day) Genesis 1:* *9 Then God said, “Let the waters below the heavens be gathered into one place, and let the dry land appear”; and it was so. 10 God called the dry land earth, and the gathering of the waters He called seas; and God saw that it was good. Genesis 1:* *11 Then God said, “Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees on the earth bearing fruit after their kind with seed in them”; and it was so. (Third Day) Genesis 1:* *14 Then God said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night, and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years;(Forth Day) Genesis 1:* *20 Then God said, “Let the waters teem with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth in the open expanse of the heavens.” (Fifth Day) Genesis 1:* *24 Then God said, “Let the earth bring forth living creatures after their kind: cattle and creeping things and beasts of the earth after their kind”; and it was so. 25 God made the beasts of the earth after their kind, and the cattle after their kind, and everything that creeps on the ground after its kind; and God saw that it was good. 26 Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” 27 God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Genesis 2:*1*Thus the heavens and the earth were completed, and all their hosts. 2 By the seventh day God completed His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done.* God created everything by HIS words, by HIS breath, this is HIS Spirit. We are made in HIS image which means we should behave as HE behaves. Our words are very powerful so not taking GOD’s name in vain is not as simple as speaking literally against HIS name although that is true. But, it is so much more than just speaking against GOD. Speaking ill of what GOD has created is a form of taking HIS name in vain. GOD is love and all HE made was due to HIS love. We also need to be plugged into this divine love. Our words can create and destroy.

 “Words are powerful forces of nature. They are destruction. They are nourishment. They are flesh. They are water. They are flowers and bone. They burn. They cleanse and they erase. They etch. They can either leave you feeling homeless or brimming with home.” ― Sanober Khan

 “When we say disparaging things, even about inanimate objects, they can stick, so use discernment as to what you put out to the universe.”―Russell Eric Dobda I think this quote is so true as again remembering that the LORD made all things. *Matthew 5:* *33 “Again, you have heard that the ancients were told, You shall not make false vows, but shall fulfill your vows to the Lord.’ 34 But I say to you, make no oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, 35 or by the earth, for it is the footstool of His feet, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. 36 Nor shall you make an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. 37 But let your statement be, ‘Yes, yes’ or ‘No, no’; anything beyond these is of evil. “Words are living force. The words you use create your life.”*

 *Lailah Gifty Akita, Pearls of Wisdom: Great mind Matthew 12:* *33 “Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for the tree is known by its fruit. 34 You brood of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak what is good? For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart. 35 The good man brings out of his good treasure what is good; and the evil man brings out of his evil treasure what is evil. 36 But I tell you that every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment. 37 For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.”* I think perhaps people often don’t think of the power of their words. We live in the age of so much information and of course information is words. We have such an abundance of words it is practically impossible to check our words and make them always count for the LORD. But it is possible if we but remember and say this little prayer from Psalms 19: *14 Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart Be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my rock and my Redeemer.* Our voice was made for us to praise the LORD and to bless others. Make we claim this Psalm for ourselves as well. *Psalm 51:* *15 O Lord, open my lips, That my mouth may declare Your praise.* I could go on and on about the importance of praise. As you recall this chapter is how prayer and praise is so important in order to share the Gospel in Israel. There will be some very exciting examples of real sharing at the end of this chapter but let us continue with the Ten Commandments remembering adding love to them is what will grasp the hearts of the Israeli people.

 The Forth Commandment is *Deuteronomy 5:* *12 ‘Observe the Sabbath day to keep it holy, as the Lord your God commanded you. 13 Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 14 but the seventh day is a Sabbath of the Lord your God; in it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter or your male servant or your female servant or your ox or your donkey or any of your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you, so that your male servant and your female servant may rest as well as you. 15 You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God brought you out of there by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm; therefore the Lord your God commanded you to observe the Sabbath day.* This commandment truly shows love as the LORD desires for HIS creation to have a whole day of rest. It is amazing to hear so many people say I don’t have to do this. I don’t have to rest as if being given a time of rest is a bad thing. I think it shows the real concern of our Father in heaven to give us this special day to rest and think on HIM. We don’t have to be concerned for one day of the things of this world as we just rest in our LORD. This Sabbath day of rest also reminds us that a day is coming when the Kingdom of God comes to earth. When this happens it will be rest from disharmony, and there will be no more war, no more competition, and no more hatred. The world will be ruled in perfect love and peace. *Luke 6:* *6 On another Sabbath He entered the synagogue and was teaching; and there was a man there whose right hand was withered. 7 The scribes and the Pharisees were watching Him closely to see if He healed on the Sabbath, so that they might find reason to accuse Him. 8 But He knew what they were thinking, and He said to the man with the withered hand, “Get up and come forward!” And he got up and came forward. 9 And Jesus said to them, “I ask you, is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the Sabbath, to save a life or to destroy it?” 10 After looking around at them all, He said to him, “Stretch out your hand!” And he did so; and his hand was restored. 11 But they themselves were filled with rage, and discussed together what they might do to Jesus.* You see the truth of the Commandments is they are all about love and so Jesus healed on the Sabbath. He didn’t break the Sabbath in doing this as it is good to do good on the Sabbath. It all has to do with love. The religious there were filled with rage at Jesus because they had believed a lie. The lie which said you cannot heal on the Sabbath. The Commandment never says this, nowhere in the Torah can this be found. But, the religious men had added to the Commandment and made a fence around them. In this instance the fence prohibited doing good. This is what religion does, it lies. But the WORD of God sets us free.

 The Fifth Commandment is *Deuteronomy 5:* *16 ‘Honor your father and your mother, as the Lord your God has commanded you, that your days may be prolonged and that it may go well with you on the land which the Lord your God gives you.* Giving honor to our parents is such a beautiful way to honor the LORD. Honoring others is also important to show GOD’s love. *Ephesians 6:* *6 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 2 Honor your father and mother (which is the first commandment with a promise), 3 so that it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth.* Also, *Colossians 3:* *20 Children, be obedient to your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing to the Lord. 21 Fathers, do not exasperate your children, so that they will not lose heart.* It should be so obvious how beautiful this picture can be when a family is in harmony and unity.

 The sixth Commandment is do not murder. *Deuteronomy 5:* *17 ‘You shall not murder.* You see murder is not something I think many of us feel we have to be too concerned with because we really think we can control ourselves about this one. We need to remember that the Commandments are the attributes and characteristics of Ha Shem. Murder is the complete opposite of who GOD is and what HE is like. The heavenly Father is about life. Yeshua who comes from the Father says, *John 10:* *9 I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. 10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.* This life from the LORD is all about goodness, love, and kindness. So when we have in our hearts the opposite of these characterizes, we are not acting as the Father. Our heart should be about having a burning desire to immolate our Father in Heaven. Yeshua was our earthly example. Too many times we believe the lies that are always spreading in this life. The lies won’t always be with us but the truth of GOD will. May we listen to the Scriptures and find the truth in them. *Luke 6:* *35 But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men. 36 Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. 37 “Do not judge and you will not be judged; and do not condemn, and you will not be condemned; pardon and you will be pardoned. 38 Give and it will be given to you. They will pour into your lap a good measure—pressed down, shaken together, and running over. For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return.”* The word teaches us how to live in this life. May the power of HIS Holy Spirit assist us in this endeavor. *Ephesians 4:25 Therefore, laying aside falsehood, speak truth each one of you with his neighbor, for we are members of one another. 26 Be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, 27 and do not give the devil an opportunity. 28 He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have something to share with one who has need. 29 Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear. 30 Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. 32 Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.*

I find these ideas are difficult to find in the “Post Modern” world in which we now life. The world we live is very cold as the Scriptures say they will become before the return of Yeshua to the earth. *2 Timothy 3:* *3 But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. 2 For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3 unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, 4 treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; Avoid such men as these. 6 For among them are those who enter into households and captivate weak women weighed down with sins, led on by various impulses, 7 always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.* Now, compare these verses with a simple definition of Post Modern. “Postmodern Worldview – A Worldview of Contingency In the postmodern worldview, everything is contingent; nothing is fixed. There are several implications of confronting reality this way. First, reality is ultimately unknowable. Our “situatedness” prevents us from directly accessing the real world or having true knowledge about it. This is not to say that the real world is not there (though some would suggest this), only that we can never shed our perspectives to access it. No one has a “god’s eye view” of reality; therefore no one can claim to have the truth about it. Stanley Fish describes this dilemma this way: Moreover, not only is there no one who could spot a transcendent truth if it happened to pass through the neighborhood, but it is difficult even to say what one would be like. Of course we would know what it would not be like; it would not speak to any particular condition, or be identified with any historical production, or be formulated in the terms of any national, ethnic, racial, economic, or class traditions.” We are trapped in our situatedness. There are no foundations that are not themselves contingent from which to build a certain and agreed-upon body of knowledge. Knowledge really comes down to one’s perspective: we never really have the facts; there is only interpretation.”[[7]](#footnote-7) There really is an expanse of information on what is Post Modernism. I don’t really want to waste time reading and trying to figure it out. The truth is found in the Scriptures, only in the Scriptures.

 The seventh Commandment *Deuteronomy 5:* *18 ‘You shall not commit adultery.* The sin of adultery is when a person’s heart turns away from the one it should be devoted to. In marriage that would of course be the spouse. As it pertains to GOD, when ones heart turns away from GOD to love other things. GOD is devoted to the one who is devoted to HIM. Look at the sin of David when he commented Adultery with Bathsheba. *2 Samuel 12:* 13 *David said to Nathan, “I have sinned against the Lord.” Nathan said to David, “Now the Lord has put away your sin; you shall not die.*  You see David says, “I have sinned against the LORD.” A person can only act in the sin of Adultery if their heart is turned away from Ha Shem. For the believer the LORD loves you as HIS Bride for indeed you are. *2 Corinthians 11: 2 For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, so that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin.* Also consider the beautiful passage of *Isaiah 54:* *“Fear not, for you will not be put to shame; And do not feel humiliated, for you will not be disgraced; But you will forget the shame of your youth, And the reproach of your widowhood you will remember no more. 5 “For your husband is your Maker, Whose name is the Lord of hosts; And your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel, Who is called the God of all the earth. 6 “For the Lord has called you, Like a wife forsaken and grieved in spirit, Even like a wife of one’s youth when she is rejected,” Says your God. 7 “For a brief moment I forsook you, But with great compassion I will gather you. 8 “In an outburst of anger I hid My face from you for a moment, But with everlasting loving-kindness I will have compassion on you,” Says the Lord your Redeemer.*

 The eighth commandment against stealing, *Deuteronomy 5:* *19 ‘You shall not steal.* The complete opposite of stealing is of course giving. This is exactly what Ha Shem has done for those who know HIM. *Ephesians 2:* *2 And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, 2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. 3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. 4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; 9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.* Yeshua did this to pay the ransom and set us free. *Mark 10:* *45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”* If we expect to share the Good News of the Gospel with others, especially with the people of Israel, we need to have a heart of giving.

 The ninth Commandment is against bearing false witness. So we need to bring the truth and be true witnesses for the Gospel.

 The Tenth Commandment is *Deuteronomy 5:* *21 ‘You shall not covet.* He who really loves the LORD will have a desire to see others do well and succeed. There will be not covertness in their heart. *Psalm 37:34 “Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart.”* We are glad to see the LORD do great things in the lives of others. To reiterate the fact that as people who desire to share the Gospel, we need to understand the beauty and not just the rules of the Ten Commandments. People are looking for acceptance and love and this is exactly what the Commandments really demonstrate to us in the purest form. Now, to speak more on the trip with Roberta who understands the Commandments with the love of God attached.

 This mission trip with Roberta during Shavuot 2014 was so much about prayer. When we know the LORD is revealed in the 10 commandments we have a great access to speak to Jewish people. Roberta was on this mission trip primarily to be a prayer intercessor. I want to give just one day of her experience from her own words. What a privilege it was when in 2014 I was invited to go to Israel as an intercessor for our congregational leader as he witnessed to Israelis. I was walking in my calling as he and his wife walked in theirs. I prayed as much as I could as the Lord led. Sometimes I got directions or advice to share with them. Mostly, I prayed in my heavenly language on the sidelines as Benny conversed with the individuals. That way, if I was heard by anyone, I was just another person speaking in a "foreign" language. It was a very special 12 day adventure. In addition, I got to see the sites we were led to and meet some very special people as well.

 Three special people I remember are not related to each other as far as I know. They are all involved in the scenario as I wrote it in my Journal. It goes like this: "When we got back to the hotel, Sheral recognized a young lady at the desk from having met her on a previous trip. Her name is Shahar Cohen. She told Benny she thinks of him often. It is because of a letter he'd sent to the management that she received a promotion. She now works in the office, filling in at the desk on weekends. I could see the love between her, Benny and Sheral. Shahar recommended a new pasta place (restaurant) owned by the same people who own the pizza place Benny and Sheral love. We decided to go there for supper. Our server was Aviod. He's an Israeli who was born in Connecticut, USA while his father was being trained at Southport for his service in the IDF. (Note: This was so special for me because my husband and I pray protection over the IDF daily. Also, I was born and raised in New Jersey so I know Connecticut quite well.) His family moved back to Israel when Aviod was 4 years old so he has a dual citizenship. When I heard that, Ruach HaKodesh told me to give him the dual flag pin I was wearing. He seemed very grateful. The irony is that on our way to the restaurant I had asked Benny if the pin would offend anyone. He assured me that it would not; in fact it would please people. The restaurant manager is a sweet girl, Kayle, who was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Her Grandfather still lives there and follows all the Philly teams, especially the Flyers, which happens to be the team my nephews love. What an awesome and tearful time we all had. Aviod and Benny hit it off right from the start. (Nothing unusual as Benny never met a stranger.) Benny ordered Benjamina wine because of his name. Benny shared the gospel with Aviod and gave him a Brit HaDasha. Aviod gave Benny a notepad from the Benjamin Company. Oh what love. Both Aviod and the Manager, Kayle let me hug them on the way out of the restaurant. Reflecting on this day, it was full of God's love beyond what we could ask, think or imagine!!!...and this is only day #1 !!!"

 Roberta was a real asset on this mission trip to Israel. It is really impossible to measure all that happened in the Spiritual realm through the prayers Roberta sent up for us as we witnessed and shared the Gospel with so many hungry people. The power and need for prayer cannot be overemphasized. More can be done with a prayer warrior in 15 minutes than all day without prayer. It is important as you plan to go to share the Gospel wherever you go that you pray before, during, and after each mission. This work is all for the LORD but it is also done all through HIM as well. I will always remember Roberta on this trip speaking to our Father softly as the work of the Holy Spirit was being done. Remember to ask for the fullness of the Holy Spirit all though your day. *Luke 11:* *9 “So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 10 For everyone who asks, receives; and he who seeks, finds; and to him who knocks, it will be opened. 11 Now suppose one of you fathers is asked by his son for a fish; he will not give him a snake instead of a fish, will he? 12 Or if he is asked for an egg, he will not give him a scorpion, will he? 13 If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?”*

 Chapter 8

 Prophetic Acts

 Our call is to go to Israel as much as possible is to give the Gospel Message. Usually, before even embarking on the next mission trip a plan is being formulated for the trip after the one we are about to take. You could say it is always about thinking about our next move. About two months before the mission of Fall 2014 I was impressed by the Holy Spirit to read Ezekiel 36 on many of the mountains of Israel. I usually receive some basic mission to accomplish while in Israel which also lines up with taking the Gospel. I want to speak now about *Ezekiel 36:* *36 “And you, son of man, prophesy to the mountains of Israel and say, ‘O mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord. 2 Thus says the Lord God, “Because the enemy has spoken against you, ‘Aha!’ and, ‘The everlasting heights have become our possession,’ 3 therefore prophesy and say, ‘Thus says the Lord God, “For good reason they have made you desolate and crushed you from every side, that you would become a possession of the rest of the nations and you have been taken up in the talk and the whispering of the people.”’” 4 Therefore, O mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord God. Thus says the Lord God to the mountains and to the hills, to the ravines and to the valleys, to the desolate wastes and to the forsaken cities which have become a prey and a derision to the rest of the nations which are roundabout, 5 therefore thus says the Lord God, “Surely in the fire of My jealousy I have spoken against the rest of the nations, and against all Edom, who appropriated My land for themselves as a possession with wholehearted joy and with scorn of soul, to drive it out for a prey.” 6 Therefore prophesy concerning the land of Israel and say to the mountains and to the hills, to the ravines and to the valleys, “Thus says the Lord God, ‘Behold, I have spoken in My jealousy and in My wrath because you have endured the insults of the nations.’ 7 Therefore thus says the Lord God, ‘I have sworn that surely the nations which are around you will themselves endure their insults. 8 But you, O mountains of Israel, you will put forth your branches and bear your fruit for My people Israel; for they will soon come. 9 For, behold, I am for you, and I will turn to you, and you will be cultivated and sown. 10 I will multiply men on you, all the house of Israel, all of it; and the cities will be inhabited and the waste places will be rebuilt. 11 I will multiply on you man and beast; and they will increase and be fruitful; and I will cause you to be inhabited as you were formerly and will treat you better than at the first. Thus you will know that I am the Lord. 12 Yes, I will cause men—My people Israel—to walk on you and possess you, so that you will become their inheritance and never again bereave them of children.’ 13 “Thus says the Lord God, ‘because they say to you, “You are a devourer of men and have bereaved your nation of children,” 14 therefore you will no longer devour men and no longer bereave your nation of children,’ declares the Lord God. 15 “I will not let you hear insults from the nations anymore, nor will you bear disgrace from the peoples any longer, nor will you cause your nation to stumble any longer,” declares the Lord God.’” 16 Then the word of the Lord came to me saying, 17 “Son of man, when the house of Israel was living in their own land, they defiled it by their ways and their deeds; their way before Me was like the uncleanness of a woman in her impurity. 18 Therefore I poured out My wrath on them for the blood which they had shed on the land, because they had defiled it with their idols. 19 Also I scattered them among the nations and they were dispersed throughout the lands. According to their ways and their deeds I judged them. 20 When they came to the nations where they went, they profaned My holy name, because it was said of them, ‘These are the people of the Lord; yet they have come out of His land.’ 21 But I had concern for My holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the nations where they went. 22 “Therefore say to the house of Israel, ‘Thus says the Lord God, “It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for My holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you went. 23 I will vindicate the holiness of My great name which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst. Then the nations will know that I am the Lord,” declares the Lord God, “when I prove Myself holy among you in their sight. 24 For I will take you from the nations, gather you from all the lands and bring you into your own land. 25 Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. 26 Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances. 28 You will live in the land that I gave to your forefathers; so you will be My people, and I will be your God. 29 Moreover, I will save you from all your uncleanness; and I will call for the grain and multiply it, and I will not bring a famine on you. 30 I will multiply the fruit of the tree and the produce of the field, so that you will not receive again the disgrace of famine among the nations. 31 Then you will remember your evil ways and your deeds that were not good, and you will loathe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and your abominations. 32 I am not doing this for your sake,” declares the Lord God, “let it be known to you. Be ashamed and confounded for your ways, O house of Israel!” 33 ‘Thus says the Lord God, “On the day that I cleanse you from all your iniquities, I will cause the cities to be inhabited, and the waste places will be rebuilt. 34 The desolate land will be cultivated instead of being a desolation in the sight of everyone who passes by. 35 They will say, ‘This desolate land has become like the Garden of Eden; and the waste, desolate and ruined cities are fortified and inhabited.’ 36 Then the nations that are left round about you will know that I, the Lord, have rebuilt the ruined places and planted that which was desolate; I, the Lord, have spoken and will do it.” 37 ‘Thus says the Lord God, “This also I will let the house of Israel ask Me to do for them: I will increase their men like a flock. 38 Like the flock for sacrifices, like the flock at Jerusalem during her appointed feasts, so will the waste cities be filled with flocks of men. Then they will know that I am the Lord.”’”* As this chapter begins Ezekiel was told to go the mountain of Israel and speak the words which he pens next. The LORD knows that the nations of the earth have decided they will come and take the land away from God’s “Chosen people.” He next describes how this would not happen as He speaks comfort to His people. The Jewish people will come back and live in the land Ha Shem has given to them. It is their land and they will rebuild the ruins. This has been happening for a good while now and is even increasing. This is in and of itself something very exciting to see when you visit Israel. The Jewish people had turned away for a season but that season is over as He is placing them back in their land. As they are coming back many already are being sprinkled with clean water. This is the Born again experience Yeshua spoke about in John chapter 3. More and more Jewish people are realizing that Yeshua is their Jewish Messiah.

 The next mission trip was just after Sukkot 2014. It was only my dear friend Mark and myself. It was just as Yeshua sent out his disciples two by two. *Luke 10:* *10 Now after this the Lord appointed seventy others, and sent them in pairs ahead of Him to every city and place where He Himself was going to come. 2 And He was saying to them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest. 3 Go; behold, I send you out as lambs in the midst of wolves.* Before leaving on the trip I had been impressed by our heavenly Father to do several things while in Israel. The first I have spoken of already was to read Ezekiel 36 on every mountain we would go. So I made copies of this Scripture so it was always on hand. About a month before we left on this trip, I discovered a banner from a dear woman who makes banners for our congregational worship. It was a new banner she had just had be impressed by the Holy Spirit to make and it was named the “Ezekiel Banner.” The Ezekiel Banner had three layers of blue, light blue, medium blue, and dark blue. These layers of blue represented the different depths of water in the Temple in Ezekiel’s vision.  *Ezekiel 47:* *47 Then he brought me back to the door of the house; and behold, water was flowing from under the threshold of the house toward the east, for the house faced east. And the water was flowing down from under, from the right side of the house, from south of the altar. 2 He brought me out by way of the north gate and led me around on the outside to the outer gate by way of the gate that faces east. And behold, water was trickling from the south side. 3 When the man went out toward the east with a line in his hand, he measured a thousand cubits, and he led me through the water, water reaching the ankles. 4 Again he measured a thousand and led me through the water, water reaching the knees. Again he measured a thousand and led me through the water, water reaching the loins. 5 Again he measured a thousand; and it was a river that I could not ford, for the water had risen, enough water to swim in, a river that could not be forded. 6 He said to me, “Son of man, have you seen this?” Then he brought me back to the bank of the river. 7 Now when I had returned, behold, on the bank of the river there were very many trees on the one side and on the other. 8 Then he said to me, “These waters go out toward the eastern region and go down into the Arabah; then they go toward the sea, being made to flow into the sea, and the waters of the sea become fresh. 9 It will come about that every living creature which swarms in every place where the river goes, will live. And there will be very many fish, for these waters go there and the others become fresh; so everything will live where the river goes. 10 And it will come about that fishermen will stand beside it; from Engedi to Eneglaim there will be a place for the spreading of nets. Their fish will be according to their kinds, like the fish of the Great Sea, very many. 11 But its swamps and marshes will not become fresh; they will be left for salt. 12 By the river on its bank, on one side and on the other, will grow all kinds of trees for food. Their leaves will not wither and their fruit will not fail. They will bear every month because their water flows from the sanctuary, and their fruit will be for food and their leaves for healing.”*

Ezekiel’s water vision speaks about the spiritual rebirth of Israel. Water is the symbol of life and it is increasing in this vision. The fish indicate the multitudes who will have life (Born again life). The fruit is for the healing and this is also spoken about in *Revelations 22: 22 Then he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb, 2 in the middle of its street. On either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. 3 There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His bond-servants will serve Him; 4 they will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads. 5 And there will no longer be any night; and they will not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illumine them; and they will reign forever and ever.* You can easily see how John was given a very similar vision of water as was Ezekiel. Now, you see we were to read Ezekiel 36 wave a banner representing Ezekiel 47 and all it stands for.

 Finally, Ha Shem impressed me to take a Shofar and blow it on the mountains as we waved the Ezekiel Banner and read Ezekiel 36. Interestedly, this is spoken about in *Ezekiel*  33 *The word of Adonai came to me saying: 2 “Son of man, speak to the children of your people and say to them: ‘When I bring the sword upon a land, suppose the people of the land take a man from among them, and set him as their watchman. 3 If, when he sees the sword coming upon the land, he blows the shofar and warns the people, 4 then whoever hears the sound of the shofar but ignores the warning, if the sword comes and takes him away, his blood will be on his own head. 5 He heard the sound of the shofar and ignored the warning; his blood will be on himself. However, if he had taken warning, he would have saved his soul. (Tree of Life Version)*

In the very basic way of reviewing this we can see that the LORD desires for the Children of Israel (the Jewish people) to be warned by a coming attack. This warning comes in the form of the Shofar blasts. He tells the people in Ezekiel 36 the reason for this as well as the initial outcome. Then at last He speaks of a coming day of complete restoration and healing. This is why we had the mandate to carry out while in Israel. Now, we know that Israel was on multiple occasions taken from their land in many horrendous acts of barbarianism. But, as we have said before the Bible most often has multiple fulfillments as is the case with these Scriptures from Ezekiel.

 Mark and I had he wonderful privilege of taking these prophetic acts to the land of Israel. To be quite honest at the time of doing them we didn’t even completely understand what or why we were doing them. Now, a few years later I do understand so much more and yet I believe the greatest reasons for doing them will remain a mystery to us until the LORD decides to let us know.

 Our first prophetic acts began with Oasis Team at the Eastern Gate. God is not bound to our audible language. The prophetic can be powerfully released through acts and movements as the mode of communication. This was a primary way of prophetic ministry for the Old Testament prophet Ezekiel. Many of Ezekiel’s messages were conveyed through prophetic messages. Here is an example using Ezekiel’s hair as part of a message from God. *Ezekiel 5:* *“Now you, son of man, take a sharp sword. Use it as a barber’s razor to shave your head and your beard. Then take balances to weigh and divide the hair. 2 A third you will burn in fire in the midst of the city, when the days of the siege are complete. Take a third and strike it with the sword all around the city. Scatter a third to the wind, and I will draw out a sword after them. 3 Take a few from there and tie them up in your garment. 4 Again take some of them, throw them into the midst of the fire and burn them in the fire. A fire will spread from it into all the house of Israel.” 5 Thus says Adonai Elohim: “This is Jerusalem! I have set her in the midst of the nations, with countries all around her. 6 She has rebelled against My ordinances by doing wickedness worse than the nations, and against My decrees worse than the surrounding countries. For they have rejected My ordinances and as for My decrees, they have not walked in them.” 7 Therefore thus says Adonai Elohim: “Because you are more turbulent than the surrounding nations, in that you have not walked in My decrees or followed my ordinances, nor have you observed the ordinances of the surrounding nations, 8 therefore thus says Adonai Elohim: Behold, I in turn am against you. I will execute judgments among you in the sight of the nations. 9 On account of your abominations I will do with you that which I have never done, and the like of which I would never do again. 10 Therefore the fathers will eat the sons in your midst, and sons will eat their fathers. I will execute judgments on you and I will scatter the remainder of you to all the winds. 11 “Therefore, as I live, says Adonai Elohim, surely, because you have defiled My Sanctuary with all your detestable things and with all your abominations, therefore I will shave you off. My eye will not spare, and I will have no pity. 12 A third of you will die with the plague and will be consumed with famine in your midst. A third will fall by the sword all around you. A third I will scatter to all the winds, and draw out a sword after them. 13 I will vent all My anger and satisfy My fury on them. Then I will rest. So they will know that I, Adonai, have spoken in My zeal, when I have satisfied My fury on them. (Tree of Life Version)*

 The need for Prophetic acts is because the very word prophecy means: to predict, to warn, to have a burden. So the idea is the Father has given many to tell the people what is coming. Then they have the chance to repent, to turn back to the Father as HE is not willing for any to perish. Yeshua came to give all people life eternal. *John 7:37 On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Yeshua stood up and cried out loudly, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. 38 Whoever believes in Me, as the Scripture says, ‘out of his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.’” 39 Now He said this about the Ruach, whom those who trusted in Him were going to receive; for the Ruach was not yet given, since Yeshua was not yet glorified. (Tree of Life Version)*  The LORD Yeshua has come and now those who trust Him and are Born again will receive the Ruach-the Holy Spirit.

 I have asked Mark to share what his perspective on the mission trip and this is what he shared. It all began with a simple “yes”. The affirmative response was, initially, to Dr. Benjamin Shadwick’s invitation to pray about going with him to Israel to assist with a special, prophetic assignment that he had received from the LORD. He had been praying and seeking for the Holy Spirit to show him who might have a heart for the Jewish people and Eretz Yisrael and would be the right co-laborer for this unique assignment. Turns out I was the one, so I agreed to pray and seek.

 I had been to Israel a few times before—including just a few months prior during Pesach-- with the traditional Christian pilgrimage-type tours and had always been phenomenally blessed and moved by the experience. But on this most recent trip I began to feel a deeper calling to move beyond simply going as a tourist to receive the blessings of the land and people and instead find out how I, as a non-Jewish Believer in Yeshua, might share His love and foster reconciliation with the people of Israel.

 In contrast to my previous visits to Israel, Benny did not have a formal “itinerary” for what we would be doing each day but just the dates we would be there and the divine instruction he received to proclaim Ezekiel 36 over the mountains of Israel, waving a special banner and blowing the shofar at each location. While doing so we would also share about Yeshua wherever we traveled as the Holy Spirit arranged. To me, this was a most peculiar yet intriguing opportunity, as I had never really done any formal missionary work before. I was just a car salesman, after all! But I could have never imagined what the LORD had in store for me…if I would only say “yes”. If I have learned anything from this process of seeking whether to accept this incredible invitation it was that the more significant the assignment the more intense the fears and doubts will be. “But I just returned from Israel. I can’t afford to go twice in one year!” “I’m not a missionary…what will I say, what will I do?” “I don’t even know what the plan is—how can I decide if it makes sense for me if I don’t have all the details?” “What about all the attacks that are taking place? Is it safe for two guys to be driving alone in a car all over Israel? And neither of us speak or read Hebrew!!” The barrage of questions and “what ifs” kept coming but the Holy Spirit was so gracious and patient with me that eventually, after confirmation from Scripture and that of other trusted Believers that I had asked to pray for me as well as continual encouragement by Benny, faith overcame fear and I committed to go. Once I said “yes”—not to Benny, but to the Father—everything fell into place and I received not only the resources, time and favor to make the trip but complete Shalom as well.

 As the time to make the journey to Israel drew close I still did not have many details about what I would be doing there for the next two weeks, an admission that perplexed my friends and family to no end. I remember being in prayer a day or two before my departure and asking the Father for assurance that He would be guiding Benny and me and show us what to do. He then gloriously led me to Psalm 139…7 Where can I go to escape your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? 8 If I climb up to heaven, you are there; if I lie down in Sh’ol, you are there. 9 If I fly away with the wings of the dawn and land beyond the sea, 10 even there your hand would lead me, your right hand would hold me fast. What He revealed to me through this passage was that all He expected from me was just to show up…the Holy Spirit would do the rest! Even all the way “beyond the sea” over in Jerusalem!!

 After arriving in the Glorious Land we departed in our rental car for Jerusalem where we were to meet up with the Oasis Prayer Team from Oklahoma early the next morning for our first assignment—declaring Ezekiel 36 while waving the banner and sounding the shofar at the Eastern Gate of the Old City. Excited yet exhausted from the journey, Benny and I checked into the Jerusalem YMCA for a great meal and some much needed rest. The next day’s events would require fresh legs and sharp senses. It is not possible to overstate how provocative and fraught with potential risk it was for us to do such a bold act in literally the most contentious location in the world. Frankly, to this day I am still amazed that I was allowed to be part of this and in awe of what the Holy Spirit did that day. Recognizing the gravity of what we were about to do we begin by spending time together in fervent prayer asking for protection, discernment, wisdom and favor.

 At that time tensions were very high in Jerusalem because of recent attacks on civilians at the Temple Mount and rioting in the City of David area, not far from where we would be. There would be Israeli police, on edge and looking to head off trouble, along with Arabs zealous to keep Jews and Christians from making any display of faith there, so ten people blowing a shofar and waving a huge banner in the shadow of the Dome of the Rock was sure to draw attention. We even discussed calling it off but agreed to proceed cautiously, trusting the Spirit to guide us. As we emerged from the Old City through the Dung Gate something miraculous happened. A line of tourist buses that had stopped on the street blocked the police and soldiers that were at the City of David from being able to see us. We were able to walk down the pathway and around to the gate completely unobserved. It was as though the LORD has made us “invisible” for this task. As we gathered at the gate, each of us had an assignment. We would take turns reading the passage from Ezekiel aloud, waving the giant blue banner, and blowing the shofar. I was responsible for taking photos and videos of everything that transpired. We began rather timidly at first but gradually became more and more emboldened as the Spirit moved in us and assured us that no harm would come upon His anointed that day.

 While we were there a few curious tourists stopped to watch and take photos of us. After we had finished a man walked up wearing a shirt emblazoned with one word…OBEY! I don’t know if he was an angelic messenger from the LORD, but we certainly took his appearance as confirmation that Abba was pleased with what we had done. Ordinarily, police patrols would come by on foot outside the gate every few minutes. But on this day we did not see a single patrol until after we had completed the mission. We all rejoiced at God’s goodness and were amazed at what we had just been a part of. A truly once-in-a-lifetime experience!

 After bidding farewell to the Oklahoma group upon completing the most significant assignment of the trip (or so we thought!) Benny and I made our way to the upper Galilee and our destination for the next several nights, Rosh Pinna. If our time in Jerusalem was to be the work portion of the trip the last part was to be for relaxation in the most beautiful region of Israel where we would stay with a friend of Benny’s in a historic bed and breakfast.

 We chose to take Route 90 through Judea and Samaria aka the “west bank” and around the much less traveled east side of the Sea of Galilee. This road was quite desolate and had a distinct “wild west” vibe but the LORD protected us as we traveled northward to our first stop at the Kursi national park, the site where Yeshua cast the demons out of the man and into the herd of swine. *Matthew 8:* *28 When He came to the other side into the country of the Gadarenes, two men who were demon-possessed met Him as they were coming out of the tombs. They were so extremely violent that no one could pass by that way. 29 And they cried out, saying, “What business do we have with each other, Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?” 30 Now there was a herd of many swine feeding at a distance from them. 31 The demons began to entreat Him, saying, “If You are going to cast us out, send us into the herd of swine.” 32 And He said to them, “Go!” And they came out and went into the swine, and the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea and perished in the waters. 33 The herdsmen ran away, and went to the city and reported everything, including what had happened to the demoniacs. 34 And behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus; and when they saw Him, they implored Him to leave their region.*  We completed the assignment there and moved on, stopping for the first of what would be many unexpected, divine appointments.

 We were searching for a nice, high spot overlooking the Galilee from which to complete our tasks and take photos. We drove around a bit before coming upon a rocky dirt road leading to an abandoned field. It was a great vantage point directly overlooking the sea and quite deserted, so we went to work there. Suddenly a beat-up sedan came rattling up the road. Turns out we had entered a driveway leading to an unseen residence down the hill. As the car approached and we prepared to make our apologies and leave the window rolled down and the woman driver stopped. She spoke decent but heavily accented English and, quite understandably, asked why we were there. We explained what we were doing and, rather than being angry and annoyed, she was intrigued and asked us to stay until she could return from picking up her children from school. We agreed and off she went, halfway expecting that she would return with the police following.

 By now we had learned that the Holy Spirit was working mightily on this trip so we decided to trust that He had led us there for a purpose and continued what we were doing. Sure enough she returned a short time later with her two young daughters and infant son. Her name was Noa and she and her husband were sheep farmers and we were on their farm property. She asked many questions and eagerly accepted the Hebrew language B’rit Chadashah and other literature that we had been handing out on the trip. Noa and her daughters were fascinated by and drawn to the banner we waved. The little girls sweetly asked their mom in Hebrew if they could also wave the banner. They struggled to hold it aloft in the stiff wind but were beaming the whole time as their mom shot video of her daughters and the strange American men that visited her farm.

 As we said our goodbyes and prepared to leave Noa said she would share the books and the video she shot with her husband later. She even invited us to drive around her farm and see her house and sheep, which we did. As we left, Benny and I were absolutely convinced that this sweet, unexpected encounter would be the highlight of the entire trip and that we will see Noa and her entire family once again in the Kingdom of heaven. On the late afternoon drive to Rosh Pinna, during which we were blessed to witness a rain shower over the Galilee, Benny and I rejoiced and actually told one another that this encounter would be the highlight of the entire trip, that nothing would possibly top what we just experienced. How Abba must have chuckled!

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Our final day in the Upper Galilee before we made our way back to Tel Aviv and then back home would prove to be the most unexpected and awesome day of the trip…the real “cherry on top”. See, we thought that, between taunting the adversary in Jerusalem and then being able to witness to Noa and her daughters, we had scaled the heights spiritually and had completed our mission.

 On this day Benny and I were joined by Art and Leah, a couple from Oklahoma who wanted to be a part of our mission. We started out by having a delightful lunch and fellowship at the home of Richard and Carolyn Hyde, during which we discussed the great victories the Holy Spirit was achieving in their ministry and in Israel. Upon leaving the Hyde’s we made the drive to Tsefat—the highest city in Israel—thus making it a perfect spot to do our thing. Being the center for Kabbalah there is much spiritual darkness in Tsefat that was almost tangible, we all agreed to forgo doing any sightseeing and instead head back toward Tiberius, where we would drop off Art and Leah at their hotel.

 Now finding ourselves with a little extra time Benny suggested that, if we hurried, we could squeeze in a quick visit to Mt. Arbel before the park closed to wave the banner. It would be our “last hurrah” and final opportunity to ascend a mountain, but by this point we had become something of a well-oiled machine in going about our task. After parking we hurriedly made our way in, each of us responsible for carrying something from the car…the banner, the shofar, the Bible, the camera, the guitar etc. We made it to the entrance with less than 30 minutes to hike up to the summit, do our thing, and then return before the park closed. After we paid the entry fee and passed through the gate we encountered about a half-dozen young Israelis, male and female, talking, laughing and lounging at some picnic tables. One of the young men noticed that Benny was carrying a shofar and was immediately drawn to it, asking if he knew how to blow it. That was all the encouragement Benny needed and soon, after a few blasts, we were visiting and handing out the publications we carried, with each couple taking a copy and agreeing to read them.

 Now time was really getting short so we began the ascent up the mountain, encountering many people on the path who were making their way out, including three European-looking women. However, before we could reach the summit Leah began to feel fatigued and needed to rest, so we decided to just stop where we were next to the path and make due at that location. That would turn out to be a fateful decision that the LORD used to orchestrate what came next.

 As Art played the guitar and sang Benny and I took turns waving the banner while Leah read Ezekiel 36. It seemed as though we were the last visitors in the park as we did not see anyone else for a few moments. Just then the three women we had passed on the way up appeared. They were visiting from Germany and had also been called to Israel to dance and wave banners around the country. They had already been to the summit and when they saw that we were waving banners they asked if they could join together with us. Even more amazing was that the colors of their flags matched ours! Now our little team had grown to a “perfect seven” and the stage was set for the next miracle.

 As we worshiped, with a spectacular view overlooking the valley below, a large group of 20-30 young people, some in IDF uniforms and carrying rifles, came walking down from the summit of the mountain. To our amazement they stopped en masse and took in what must have truly been a strange sight. At that moment I was waving the banner and a young IDF soldier—Ram ben Nahum-- approached me and asked if he could also wave the banner. I agreed and began to take pictures of him as he grinned broadly. (He even invited me to be his “Facebook friend” so I could share the photos with him!)

 Soon another young Israeli man wanted his turn and also had a great time with our Ezekiel banner. At about that moment I looked over to where the others were and was treated to the incredible sight of Benny, standing at the center with all the Israeli young people surrounding him, sharing about Yeshua from the book of Isaiah! They listened intently and politely until he finished, with none leaving before he did. I am so very thankful to have taken an iconic photo of the scene, which captures, better than mere words possibly could, the essence of our trip.

As the crowd dispersed and exited the park we gathered together for the walk down the gently sloping mountain, marveling at all that the Holy Spirit had done in such a short amount of time. From arranging the ideal location to bringing our new German friends into our mission and then drawing a crowd to us that He had prepared to hear the message of Yeshua, we had no doubt that this was indeed a divine appointment and rejoiced that we could be a part of it.

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The account I have just given is by no means exhaustive. At every stop, with every Jewish person we encountered—cashiers, waiters and waitresses, innkeepers, housekeepers, clerks…even the members of the Orthodox Synagogue in Rosh Pinna—we witnessed a removal of religious barriers, a willingness to engage and unprecedented openness to what we were doing. The anointing on the Ezekiel banner was stunning, magnetically drawing people whenever it was waved.

 After personally witnessing what occurred on this (and subsequent) trips to Israel I am more convinced than ever that the ones who rejected their promised Messiah at His first coming are closer than ever to calling Him back. Maranatha!

 These are the exact words Mark wrote and I have added nothing. I have to say reading them causes great joy to well up I my spirit as I know the LORD desires all HIS children to hear HIS message of love. I believe they soon will indeed call for HIM to return and welcome HIM as LORD!

 At the time of this writing we are preparing for another Mission trip to Israel. This one will begin in the seaport city of Ashdod. We know this trip is going to impact many more souls. We are especially glad to be a part of the LORD taking Ashdod for His own and being allowed to partner in this great mission. I find it interesting as we have been invited to share in ministry with Beit Hallel by Pastor Israel. This means there will be Jew and Gentile, One in Messiah (Ephesian 2:15) sharing the power of the Gospel together. We have intercessor prayer warriors who have been praying for this event for months. Others are joining in for support. We will have praise and worship including waving of banners and dance. This mission will be based on Isaiah 62:11 which says: “Behold, Adonai has proclaimed to the end of the earth: Say to the Daughter of Zion, “Behold, your salvation comes! See, His reward is with Him, and His recompense before Him.”

 Chapter 9

 The Greater Plan of

 Ha Shem

 The Gospel Plan of the LORD is surly much greater than any human could ever attempt to place into words. But, Ha Shem did give us many words on HIS divine plan to bring people to HIS saving power. I have spent much of the first of this work speaking of the greatness of the LORD. I have the hope that many would begin to understand as I have that GOD is truly much greater than we can even begin to comprehend. Yet, in the end I believe The LORD made us to meet HIM. We were made to meet our maker. *I Corinthians 15:* *20 But now Messiah has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. 21 For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.* We all have the simple understanding that Adam was the first man which GOD made. His plan of redemption began there. God placed man in the Garden of Eden to redeem the earth. We see from God’s Word, the earth had become corrupted due to Satan being cast to earth due to his fall in heaven. *Isaiah 14:“* *12 “How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth, You who have weakened the nations! 13 “But you said in your heart, ‘I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, And I will sit on the mount of assembly In the recesses of the north. 14 ‘I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.’ 15 “Nevertheless you will be thrust down to Sheol,* *To the recesses of the pit. 16 “Those who see you will gaze at you, They will ponder over you, saying, ‘Is this the man who made the earth tremble, Who shook kingdoms, 17 Who made the world like a wilderness And overthrew its cities, Who did not allow his prisoners to go home?’* Also, the following verses are perhaps even more telling of just how wonderful Lucifer was until his sin was discovered. This discovery made a very rottenness in the earth. We know our Ha Shem is perfect in all HIS ways and will not be able to tolerate imperfection anywhere in the universe. One day the universe will be brought into corrected perfection. In fact it is happening now. *Ezekiel 28:* *12 “Son of man, take up a lamentation over the king of Tyre and say to him, ‘Thus says the Lord God, “You had the seal of perfection, Full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. 13 “You were in Eden, the garden of God; Every precious stone was your covering: The ruby, the topaz and the diamond; The beryl, the onyx and the jasper; The lapis lazuli, the turquoise and the emerald; And the gold, the workmanship of your settings and sockets, Was in you. On the day that you were created They were prepared. 14 “You were the anointed cherub who covers, And I placed you there. You were on the holy mountain of God; You walked in the midst of the stones of fire. 15 “You were blameless in your ways From the day you were created Until unrighteousness was found in you. 16 “By the abundance of your trade You were internally filled with violence, And you sinned; Therefore I have cast you as profane From the mountain of God. And I have destroyed you, O covering cherub, From the midst of the stones of fire. 17 “Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; You corrupted your wisdom by reason of your splendor. I cast you to the ground; I put you before kings, That they may see you. 18 “By the multitude of your iniquities, In the unrighteousness of your trade You profaned your sanctuaries. Therefore I have brought fire from the midst of you; It has consumed you, And I have turned you to ashes on the earth In the eyes of all who see you. 19 “All who know you among the peoples Are appalled at you; You have become terrified And you will cease to be forever.”’”* As we know that the Scriptures often have multiple fulfillments such is the case here. Tyre was a pagan king well known for his greed and desire to become known as god. It seems to be very obvious also and more importantly an allusion to Satan himself.

We can readily discover in the book of Genesis how God placed Man in the Garden to keep it and to restore the earth. *Genesis 1:* *26 Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” 27 God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. 28 God blessed them; and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”* These verses speak about how Ha Shem planned for man to be fruitful (Hebrew-Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance 6509-paw-raw’=multiple, increase) and Multiple (Hebrew-Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance 7235 raw-baw’=be in authority, to prosper, to increase in number and abundance, to be mighty). Then it is very clear that Ha Shem desired that man would rule and reign over the earth. We have read and should understand how Satan was cast out of heaven and fell to the earth along with a host of fallen angels. It should be clear that GOD’s plan here was for man to redeem the fallen earth. Now, Ha Shem knows the beginning to the end and so knew this would not happen yet man needs to know this is the great mission HE had planned for us. Sadly, we know man fell and was disqualified from God’s original purpose for him. In the early stages of man it became clear a redeemer would be necessary. It was first foreshadowed when man attempted to cover his mistake with leaves. God demonstrated a blood sacrifice would be necessary to cover this mistake (sin). It is wonderful that Ha Shem made a way for all mankind and we will fulfill this destiny HE had for us in the original.

 Many seasons and times and years would pass by on the earth before a man of faith would appear. His name would be Abram. It would be very helpful to read the complete story of Abraham in the Bible to better understand how GOD was using this man’s faith to bring redemption to the earth. This is so aptly stated in *Genesis 12:* *1 Now the Lord said to Abram, “Go forth from your country, And from your relatives And from your father’s house, To the land which I will show you; 2 And I will make you a great nation, And I will bless you, And make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing; 3 And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.”*  *Genesis 13:* *16 I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth, so that if anyone can number the dust of the earth, then your descendants can also be numbered.*

 Abraham then became the first Hebrew which has amazing significance. *Genesis 14:13 ¶ And there came one that had escaped, and told Abram the Hebrew.* This verse is used just to show you Abraham was named a Hebrew. This is from Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance 5680 and says: Ibrity ib-ree’ patronymic from 5677 an Eberite (i.e. Hebrew of descendant of Eber:--woman.) Not much exciting here but when you reference this number to the Gesenius something very exciting happens. “As to the origin of this name, it is derived in the Old Testament itself from the name and is from the land beyond the Euphrates. So it is when a stranger comes from the other side of the Euphrates. It means literally to cross over. So now you see Abraham had crossed over. He was no longer in the place he began. By faith he crossed over and began to follow GOD. *Hebrews 11:* *8 By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going. 9 By faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise; 10 for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God. 11 By faith even Sarah herself received ability to conceive, even beyond the proper time of life, since she considered Him faithful who had promised. 12 Therefore there was born even of one man, and him as good as dead at that, as many descendants as the stars of heaven in number, and innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore.* It was because Abraham believed God and this is why he obeyed GOD. Because Abraham believed GOD, trusted GOD, and had faith in GOD that GOD accounted it to him as righteousness. *Galatians 3:* *6 Even so Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness. 7 Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham. 8 The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “All the nations will be blessed in you.” 9 So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer.*

 Now that we see Abraham was awarded righteousness because of his faith and there is something more GOD is going to show Abraham. He is going to show him some of the future that occurs because of his faith. *Genesis 15:* *And He took him outside and said, “Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them.” And He said to him, “So shall your descendants be.” 6 Then he believed in the Lord; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness. 7 And He said to him, “I am the Lord who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to possess it.” 8 He said, “O Lord God, how may I know that I will possess it?” 9 So He said to him, “Bring Me a three year old heifer, and a three year old female goat, and a three year old ram, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon.” 10 Then he brought all these to Him and cut them in two, and laid each half opposite the other; but he did not cut the birds. 11 The birds of prey came down upon the carcasses, and Abram drove them away. 12 Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, terror and great darkness fell upon him. 13 God said to Abram, “Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years. 14 But I will also judge the nation whom they will serve, and afterward they will come out with many possessions. 15 As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you will be buried at a good old age. 16 Then in the fourth generation they will return here, for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet complete.” 17 It came about when the sun had set, that it was very dark, and behold, there appeared a smoking oven and a flaming torch which passed between these pieces. 18 On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, “To your descendants I have given this land, From the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates: 19 the Kenite and the Kenizzite and the Kadmonite 20 and the Hittite and the Perizzite and the Rephaim 21 and the Amorite and the Canaanite and the Girgashite and the Jebusite.”* This is the place Ha Shem makes the covenant with Abraham. He discovers that his offspring would be slaves for four hundred years which did happen in Egypt. While they were in Egypt GOD was forming them into the nation of Israel. They were a people group without a country but they would inherit the land of Canaan.

 The LORD would also allow for those who were outside the covenant to enter in by faith with the One true GOD of Israel. *Isaiah 14:* *1 When the Lord will have compassion on Jacob and again choose Israel, and settle them in their own land, then strangers will join them and attach themselves to the house of Jacob.* This word for join in Hebrew for this case is Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance number:H3867-To join oneself by anyone. With this idea in place think about *Romans 11:* *17 But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive, were grafted in among them and became partaker with them of the rich root of the olive tree, 18 do not be arrogant toward the branches; but if you are arrogant, remember that it is not you who supports the root, but the root supports you. 19 You will say then, “Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in.* In actually the gentiles were joined to the nation of Israel by faith. There is great blessings to those who choose to be joined to Israel by faith.

 For anyone who has found salvation in Yeshua these verses in Isaiah 56 will open huge doors to you: *56:1 Thus says the Lord, “Preserve justice and do righteousness, For My salvation is about to come And My righteousness to be revealed. 2 “How blessed is the man who does this, And the son of man who takes hold of it; Who keeps from profaning the Sabbath, And keeps his hand from doing any evil.” 3 Let not the foreigner who has joined himself to the Lord say, “The Lord will surely separate me from His people.” Nor let the eunuch say, “Behold, I am a dry tree.” 4 For thus says the Lord, “To the eunuchs who keep My Sabbaths, And choose what pleases Me, And hold fast My covenant, 5 To them I will give in My house and within My walls a memorial, And a name better than that of sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name which will not be cut off. 6 “Also the foreigners who join themselves to the Lord, To minister to Him, and to love the name of the Lord, To be His servants, everyone who keeps from profaning the Sabbath And holds fast My covenant; 7 Even those I will bring to My holy mountain And make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be acceptable on My altar; For My house will be called a house of prayer for all the peoples.” 8 The Lord God, who gathers the dispersed of Israel, declares, “Yet others I will gather to them, to those already gathered.”* Real followers of Ha Shem have real faith in action. They have the Torah which speaks about a Messiah that would come. The Jews who seek after Ha Shem know a Messiah is coming as do the people who join themselves to the Jewish people. Many understand that the Messiah has indeed already come and now we expect HIS return.

 The first followers of the LORD would keep HIS word. But, even in the beginning Ha Shem warned that the Children of Israel would turn away from the HIM. Moses gives them this warning here in *Deuteronomy 4:23* *23 So watch yourselves, that you do not forget the covenant of the Lord your God which He made with you, and make for yourselves a graven image in the form of anything against which the Lord your God has commanded you. 24 For the Lord your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God. 25 “When you become the father of children and children’s children and have remained long in the land, and act corruptly, and make an idol in the form of anything, and do that which is evil in the sight of the Lord your God so as to provoke Him to anger, 26 I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that you will surely perish quickly from the land where you are going over the Jordan to possess it. You shall not live long on it, but will be utterly destroyed. 27 The Lord will scatter you among the peoples, and you will be left few in number among the nations where the Lord drives you. 28 There you will serve gods, the work of man’s hands, wood and stone, which neither see nor hear nor eat nor smell. 29 But from there you will seek the Lord your God, and you will find Him if you search for Him with all your heart and all your soul. 30 When you are in distress and all these things have come upon you, in the latter days you will return to the Lord your God and listen to His voice. 31 For the Lord your God is a compassionate God; He will not fail you nor destroy you nor forget the covenant with your fathers which He swore to them. 32 “Indeed, ask now concerning the former days which were before you, since the day that God created man on the earth, and inquire from one end of the heavens to the other. Has anything been done like this great thing, or has anything been heard like it?* As we read these verses we must remember they were told to the Children of Israel before they had even crossed the Jordan to enter the Promised Land. These words could only be given to them due to the fore knowledge of the LORD. It is not that the LORD caused or planned these events but HE knew them as we have spoken earlier. HE knows all things past, present, and future. He tells them they would be dispersed into the nations and serve their pagan gods. But, in the end days they would be returned to their land. The land they were just about to cross over into.

 I know you have read much Scripture in the course of this book. I believe the Scriptures applied in the correct context are by far the best explanation. I only bring this up as the next Scripture reference is a pivoting point for the whole of all this information given in the contents of this book. Before I give it also keep in mind it will be from the Torah which carries the greatest weight of all the Scriptures. The text is *Deuteronomy 32:* *“But Jeshurun grew fat and kicked—You are grown fat, thick, and sleek—Then he forsook God who made him, And scorned the Rock of his salvation. 16 “They made Him jealous with strange gods; With abominations they provoked Him to anger. 17 “They sacrificed to demons who were not God, To gods whom they have not known, New gods who came lately, Whom your fathers did not dread. 18 “You neglected the Rock who begot you, And forgot the God who gave you birth. 19 “The Lord saw this, and spurned them Because of the provocation of His sons and daughters. 20 “Then He said, ‘I will hide My face from them, I will see what their end shall be; For they are a perverse generation, Sons in whom is no faithfulness. 21 ‘They have made Me jealous with what is not God; They have provoked Me to anger with their idols. So I will make them jealous with those who are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation.* This turning away would cause massive destruction for many years. In fact Jerusalem fell in the year 70AD and by 135 AD all Israel was dispersed into the nations just as foretold in this Scripture. It has only been since the 1800’s that the Jewish people have been coming back to their land and especially the last few years. There has been a small population of Jewish people in Israel over the nearly two thousand years since their diaspora but only very recently have Jewish people been coming in mass numbers back to the land of Israel.

 This diaspora has been nearly two thousand years and is foretold in many parts of the Holy Bible. Those of us living today have the privilege and excitement of seeing it take place in our lives. “I tell congregations wherever I speak that the Aliyah is so important to GOD that HE chose to speak of it over two hundred fifty times in HIS Word then it seems natural that it should be important to us as well. If it is that important to Abba then it should be important to us as well.”[[8]](#footnote-8) This speaking of the Aliyah is of major importance but much greater than the scope of this book. The Jews hearing and accepting the Gospel goes hand in hand with the fact they are returning to the land. I have spoken to many young Jewish people over the years asking them the same question. Why did you leave your home from another country to come to Israel? The answer is always basically the same. “I feel that Israel is my home.” *Ezekiel 36:* *24 For I will take you from the nations, gather you from all the lands and bring you into your own land. 25 Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. 26 Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances. 28 You will live in the land that I gave to your forefathers; so you will be My people, and I will be your God.*  Many times the Jewish people I have spoken with are not religious and sometimes they are, but still the same answer. This moving in the hearts of Jewish people could only occur due to a prompting of the LORD. The church has a major responsibility in this end time move. “Dear Body of Christ, please, if you have missed everything else I have shared with you up to this point, I beg of you please don’t miss this. God used the following Scripture to change my entire life and my lifelong ministry forever. It is so very important for the Body of Messiah to understand what God is saying to us through the prophet Isaiah. Hear the Word of the LORD: “Behold, I will lift up My hand to the nations And set up My standard to the peoples; And they will bring your sons in their bosom, And your daughters will be carried on their shoulders.”[[9]](#footnote-9) In ever increasing numbers gentile people are assisting the Jewish people to get back to their land. There are many organizations of people diligently working to this end. One such group is Operation Exodus. Gustav Scheller of this organization says, “In the mid 1990’s, our teams started to help the Jewish people return home from five Muslim dominated Central Asian republics. Fishing teams who make the initial links range far and wide from the main base in Almaty, often traveling 20 hours and more by train to find Jewish people and urge them to go home. Increasingly, the message is backed up by distribution of humanitarian aid –food, clothing, medicines and even special items such as hearing aids. Christian love in action has made a deep impact among God’s ancient people.”[[10]](#footnote-10) We can see that helping the Jewish people return to Israel is a major undertaking and is still very much in progress throughout the world. But there is more than just getting the Jewish people back in their land.

 Next, will be and now is the prompting of the LORD to show the Jewish people that Yeshua is the true Messiah and the way to salvation. Mostly, the Jewish people in the days of Yeshua and up to this very day believe that they were and are spiritually right with GOD because they are of the seed of Abraham. But that in and of itself didn’t make them the Children of GOD. We spoke earlier of this from John chapter 8. The book of John actually gives much more detail of the entire end time plan of Ha Shem. John chapter one tells us that Yeshua is the LORD. Chapter 2 tells us of the beginning of His public ministry. Chapter 3 is very amazing as a man by the name Nicodemus comes to Him at night. The very name Nicodemus is very insightful as from Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance number 3530 means victorious among his people; Nicodemus, an Israelite; also . 3534. nikos nee'-kos from 3529; a conquest (concretely), i.e. (by implication) triumph:--victory. And finally number 1218. demos day'-mos from 1210; the public (as bound together socially):--people. Just from the name of Nicodemus we can begin to see something very interesting forming. Nicodemus is a scholar, a Pharisee, and one with connections in Israel as even his name implies. He comes to Jesus at night obviously to not be noticed and also to find out what his spirit is leading him to know. At this point Nicodemus is a type and shadow of the Jewish people which have been blinded by HIS light. Many Jewish people have not understood the Gospel because their spiritual eyes have been blinded by the incredible light of God and not by the darkness of Satan. *Romans 11:* *11 I say then, they did not stumble so as to fall, did they? May it never be! But by their transgression (blindness) salvation has come to the Gentiles, to make them jealous.* Also in *Isaiah 6:* *9 He said, “Go, and tell this people (Jewish People): ‘Keep on listening, but do not perceive; Keep on looking, but do not understand.’ 10 “Render the hearts of this people insensitive, Their ears dull, And their eyes dim, Otherwise they might see with their eyes, Hear with their ears, Understand with their hearts, And return and be healed.”* Finally in *Isaiah 53:* *Who has believed our message? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?* Isaiah asks the question who would believe the message. The message HE is speaking about is the Messiah. At the first appearance of Yeshua the Jewish people on the whole would not believe he was their Messiah. But, the purpose was so salvation could come to the rest of the world. Isaiah tells us who these people are in *Isaiah 65:* *“I permitted Myself to be sought by those who did not ask for Me; I permitted Myself to be found by those who did not seek Me. I said, ‘Here am I, here am I,’ To a nation which did not call on My name.*

Now, back to Nicodemus. As we have just said, Nicodemus came to know more truth. Jesus told him unless a person is born again they cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. Nicodemus didn’t understand what this meant and Jesus told him as a teacher of the law he should have understood what it meant to be born again. As a teacher Yeshua believed Nicodemus should have been familiar with *Ezekiel 36:* *25 Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. 26 Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.* This whole idea is also expressed in many others Scriptures as well. The bottom line is Jesus indicated that Nicodemus should have understood this concept. But, it is more than a religious concept as it is an event that happens in a person’s life. Jesus explained it in verse 8 *The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit.”* This wind speaks of the Ruach or Spirit of GOD. So a born again person has experienced the breath of GOD in their life, transforming them into a new creation. *2 Corinthians 5:* *17 Therefore if anyone is in Messiah, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.* Nicodemus had heard the truth of the Gospel form the LORD himself and I believe HE was born again. He had come to Yeshua to find more truth and left with the ultimate truth of eternal life. His eyes had been opened.

 Still most of the Jewish leaders had not believed and they weren’t going to believe because the Gospel would need to travel to all parts of the world. This process is still taking place today but now the Jewish people are being born again in amazing numbers which no one can actually calculate. *Jeremiah 33:* 22 *As the host of heaven cannot be counted and the sand of the sea cannot be measured, so I will multiply the descendants of David My servant and the Levites who minister to Me.’”* Even though many Jewish people are coming to faith in Yeshua, still there are many who have their eyes blinded by HIS light. Look at the account of *John chapter 7:* *37 Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. 38 He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, ‘From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.’” 39 But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. 40 Some of the people therefore, when they heard these words, were saying, “This certainly is the Prophet.” 41 Others were saying, “This is the Christ.” Still others were saying, “Surely the Christ is not going to come from Galilee, is He? 42 Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the descendants of David, and from Bethlehem, the village where David was?” 43 So a division occurred in the crowd because of Him. 44 Some of them wanted to seize Him, but no one laid hands on Him. 45 The officers then came to the chief priests and Pharisees, and they said to them, “Why did you not bring Him?” 46 The officers answered, “Never has a man spoken the way this man speaks.” 47 The Pharisees then answered them, “You have not also been led astray, have you? 48 No one of the rulers or Pharisees has believed in Him, has he? 49 But this crowd which does not know the Law is accursed.” 50 Nicodemus (he who came to Him before, being one of them) said to them, 51 “Our Law does not judge a man unless it first hears from him and knows what he is doing, does it?” 52 They answered him, “You are not also from Galilee, are you? Search, and see that no prophet arises out of Galilee.” 53 Everyone went to his home.*

In *John*  *Chapter 9:* *24 So a second time they called the man who had been blind, and said to him, “Give glory to God; we know that this man is a sinner.” 25 He then answered, “Whether He is a sinner, I do not know; one thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.” 26 So they said to him, “What did He do to you? How did He open your eyes?” 27 He answered them, “I told you already and you did not listen; why do you want to hear it again? You do not want to become His disciples too, do you?” 28 They reviled him and said, “You are His disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. 29 We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where He is from.” 30 The man answered and said to them, “Well, here is an amazing thing, that you do not know where He is from, and yet He opened my eyes. 31 We know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is God-fearing and does His will, He hears him. 32 Since the beginning of time it has never been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. 33 If this man were not from God, He could do nothing.” 34 They answered him, “You were born entirely in sins, and are you teaching us?” So they put him out.* The blind man represents someone blind from birth and a sinner. He is healed physically of blindness but of spiritual blindness as well because he believed Yeshua was the Messiah and he worshiped HIM. The Jewish leaders make a very prophetic statement when they say *“You were born entirely in sins and you are you teaching us?”* The way this is stated as though could it be possible to learn from a sinner? This is exactly what is happening now in Israel. Sinful but redeemed people are sharing the Gospel with Jewish people, even very religious Jews. This Jewish blind man was blind from birth yet was made to see both physically and spiritually. Many are finding the Messiah Yeshua in Israel in these last days. Yet, Jewish religiously continues as well but just for the time being.

 When we read the 12th chapter of John we discover the most clear and obvious Scriptures pointing to Jewish spiritual blindness which is actually quoted form the Tanakh. *John 12:* *35 So Jesus said to them, “For a little while longer the Light is among you. Walk while you have the Light, so that darkness will not overtake you; he who walks in the darkness does not know where he goes. 36 While you have the Light, believe in the Light, so that you may become sons of Light.” These things Jesus spoke, and He went away and hid Himself from them. 37 But though He had performed so many signs before them, yet they were not believing in Him. 38 This was to fulfill the word of Isaiah the prophet which he spoke: “Lord, who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?” 39 For this reason they could not believe, for Isaiah said again, 40 “He has blinded their eyes and He hardened their heart, so that they would not see with their eyes and perceive with their heart, and be converted and I heal them.” 41 These things Isaiah said because he saw His glory, and he spoke of Him. 42 Nevertheless many even of the rulers believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they were not confessing Him, for fear that they would be put out of the synagogue; 43 for they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God. 44 And Jesus cried out and said, “He who believes in Me, does not believe in Me but in Him who sent Me. 45 He who sees Me sees the One who sent Me. 46 I have come as Light into the world, so that everyone who believes in Me will not remain in darkness.* You can righty ask the question, “Why would Ha Shem blind the eyes of many of the Jewish people.” Remember the first chapters of this book and recall Ha Shem is GOD and HE can do what HE desires. Ha Shem is not obligated to give us a reason for this blinding. Yet, I believe HE does tell us why. The Bible tells us that salvation is from the Jews. *John 4:22* *You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews.* If this is so then it stands to reason the Jews bring salvation to the world. This is so very wonderful as Salvation is Yeshua in Hebrew. So in the first place Yeshua is Jewish and so Yeshua does come forth from the Jews because the Jewish people produced the Jewish man to be the Messiah. But, the deeper part is the Jewish people had to disbelieve at the beginning so they would have Him crucified. *Acts 2:* *36 Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ—this Jesus whom you crucified.”* It was Ha Shem’s plan to have Yeshua crucified so that our sin debt would be paid. This plan was carried out by the Jewish people. Then because of this transgression (blindness) the Gospel would go throughout the world. *Romans 11:* *11 I say then, they did not stumble so as to fall, did they? May it never be! But by their transgression salvation has come to the Gentiles, to make them jealous. 12 Now if their transgression is riches for the world and their failure is riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their fulfillment be!* Now the Gospel came to the gentiles or nations and this Gospel would draw the Jewish people to a godly jealously and the nations would take the Gospel back to the Jewish people.

 Finally, at the appointed time the Jewish people would cry out to Yeshua and HE will return! *Matthew 23:* *37 “Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling. 38 Behold, your house is being left to you desolate! 39 For I say to you, from now on you will not see Me until you say, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!’”* All through the history of the Jewish people while they lived in their land, they so often ignored, persecuted, and killed their own prophets. This is just what Jesus says here. Then HE tells them their house (country ) will be left desolate which it was for nearly 2000 years. At the end they will call out to HIM as LORD and HE will return.

 We can go back and meditate on *John 1: 11 He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. 12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, 13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.* So you see Yeshua came to HIS own people (the Jewish People) and they did not believe HE was their Messiah. But, to those who did believe became the children of GOD. Yeshua’s plan was to reach the Jewish People with the Gospel of the Kingdom. “*Matthew 15:24 Yeshua said , ““I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”* He chose HIS followers when in actuality the followers in Judaism usually choose their Rabbi. In this case Yeshua chose them and they were men not looking for a Rabbi. HE would change their lives and they in turn would change the world. I find it very powerful to know that GOD gave us the power to change the world for HIM. In *Matthew 10:5 These twelve Jesus sent out after instructing them: “Do not go in the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter any city of the Samaritans; 6 but rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. 7 And as you go, preach, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ 8 Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. Freely you received, freely give.*  So Jesus would and did die for the sins of the whole world. *John 3:16 “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.* But HIS immediate plan was to go only to the people of Israel who had been abused by their religious leaders. He chose twelve to pour HIS own life into and they would take the Gospel to the world. It would begin on the Galilee. Many little towns and villages surrounded the Galilee and this would be the incubator for the Gospel message. The first believers in Yeshua were Jewish people who lived on the pleasant Galilee. “The first followers of Yeshua began in many of the towns around the Galilee. “ A team of archaeologists from Israel's Antiquities Authority have unearthed an ancient synagogue with some very unique characteristics in a small Galilee village frequented by Jesus and his disciples. The synagogue was found in Migdal (known in the New Testament as Magdala), which sits just north of Tiberias on the shores of the Sea of Galilee. During Jesus' time, Magdala was a thriving fishing village, and home to many of his followers, most notably Mary Magdalene (literally: Mary of Magdala). Jesus is recorded as having spent a considerable amount of time in the village. The unearthed synagogue is amazing well-preserved, and substantially more ornate than many of the other synagogues from the first century found in the area.”[[11]](#footnote-11) In less than 100 years all these little messianic synagogues would disappear as would the Jewish people from the Galilee. The Romans would come and disseminate the whole of Israel by the years 134-135 AD. This agrees with the words of Yeshua. *Matthew 24:* *24 Jesus came out from the temple and was going away when His disciples came up to point out the temple buildings to Him. 2 And He said to them, “Do you not see all these things? Truly I say to you, not one stone here will be left upon another, which will not be torn down.”* History tells us that the Temple in Jerusalem was destroyed just as Jesus said without one stone on the top of another in the year 70AD and the entirety of Israel would be ruined by 134-135. The exciting thing is now there are many Messianic Synagogues thriving on the Galilee all within the past few years. In fact there are many Messianic Synagogues throughout the land of Israel.

 There were also Gentiles on the Galilee and as this incubator became full and ripe the message would spill out from the Galilee and would be Galilee to the nations. Now, for two thousand years this beautiful Good News of the Gospel has spread throughout the world and it now only needs to return to the place it all began, Israel. It must come back to the Jewish people by way of the Gentiles and it is happening now. *Deuteronomy 32:* *“But Jeshurun grew fat and kicked—You are grown fat, thick, and sleek—Then he forsook God who made him, And scorned the Rock of his salvation. 16 “They made Him jealous with strange gods; With abominations they provoked Him to anger. 17 “They sacrificed to demons who were not God, To gods whom they have not known, New gods who came lately, Whom your fathers did not dread. 18 “You neglected the Rock who begot you, And forgot the God who gave you birth. 19 “The Lord saw this, and spurned them Because of the provocation of His sons and daughters. 20 “Then He said, ‘I will hide My face from them, I will see what their end shall be; For they are a perverse generation, Sons in whom is no faithfulness. 21 ‘They have made Me jealous with what is not God; They have provoked Me to anger with their idols. So I will make them jealous with those who are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation.*

These people who cause the Jewish people to desire Yeshua again are the Nations of the world; but a select group in these nations. This group of course is the ones from all around the world who have been Born Again. These lovers of GOD and believers in Yeshua will take the Gospel to the Jewish People. *Isaiah 49:* *22 Thus says the Lord God, “Behold, I will lift up My hand to the nations And set up My standard to the peoples; And they will bring your sons in their bosom, And your daughters will be carried on their shoulders. 23 “Kings will be your guardians, And their princesses your nurses. They will bow down to you with their faces to the earth And lick the dust of your feet; And you will know that I am the Lord; Those who hopefully wait for Me will not be put to shame. Also, in* Isaiah 61 it says the wealth of the gentiles or nations shall be given to you. *Isaiah 61:* *Then they will rebuild the ancient ruins, They will raise up the former devastations; And they will repair the ruined cities, The desolations of many generations. 5 Strangers will stand and pasture your flocks, And foreigners will be your farmers and your vinedressers. 6 But you will be called the priests of the Lord; You will be spoken of as ministers of our God. You will eat the wealth of nations, and in their riches you will boast. 7 Instead of your shame you will have a double portion, and instead of humiliation they will shout for joy over their portion. Therefore they will possess a double portion in their land, Everlasting joy will be theirs.*  This wealth is their riches. Not riches as physical riches although this is true but their real wealth is the understanding of their eternal home because of their salvation. This is what they will share with you, their love of the Jewish Messiah, Yeshua. *Isaiah 62:11 Behold, the Lord has proclaimed to the end of the earth, Say to the daughter of Zion, “Lo, your salvation comes; Behold His reward is with Him, and His recompense before Him.”* What are you waiting for? Come let us go up and prepare the way of the LORD.

1. ArtScroll Transliterated Linear Siddur, copyright 1998 by Mesorah Publications. Ltd. Pg 24 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Grant Jeffery’s Ministries, Prophecy Online, “Extraordinary Evidence About Jesus in the Dead Sea Scrolls” [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Descriptive Geography and Brief Historical Sketch of Palestine, By Rabbi Joseph Schwarz, 1850 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The Ruth-less Church, Matthew T. Wilson, copyright 2013 by Yeshua’s Harvest Ministries [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. The Treasury of David, Charles H. Spurgeon, (1869-1885) at sacred-texts.comen(1869-1885( [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. The Treasury of David, Charles H. Spurgeon, (1869-1885) at sacred-texts.com [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
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8. And Still They Come, Barry Wagner, Copyright 2008 by Barry Wagner [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. And Still They Come, Barry Wagner, Copyright 2008 by Barry Wagner [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Operation Exodus, Gustav Scheller, Copyright 1998, Ebenezer Emergency Fund International [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Tuesday, January 15, 2013 | Israel Today Staff [↑](#footnote-ref-11)