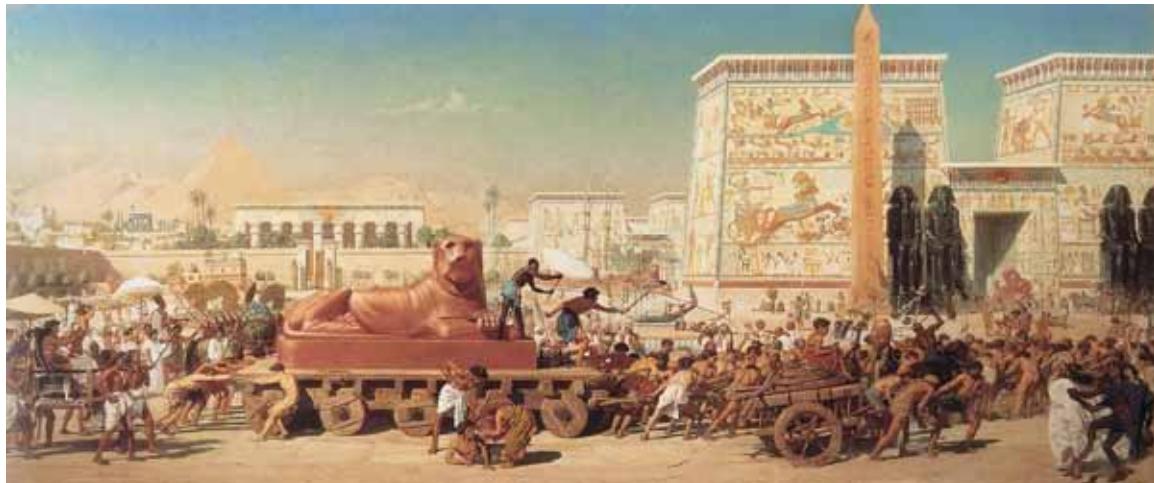


# SHMOT { שְׁמוֹת } (Names)

**Exodus 1:1-6:1, Isaiah 27:6 – 28:13, 29:22-23; Jeremiah 1:1-2:3,  
1 Corinthians 14:18-25**

Last week, we concluded our study of Beresheet (Genesis), the first of the five books of Moses, with the death of both Jacob and his son, Joseph. This week we begin to study the second book –*Shmot* (Names), called ‘*Exodus*’ in most English Bibles.



Israel in Egypt (1867) painting by [Edward Poynter](#), Wikipedia

Introduction to Sefer Shmot (The Book of Names):

This second book of Moses was originally called ‘*Sefer Yitziyat Mitzrayim*’ (The Book of the Going out of Egypt), which then came to be known simply as ‘*Shmot*’ from its opening phrase, ‘**Ve-eleh shmot...**’ (And these are the names...).

**“And these are the names (Ve’eleh Shmot) of the sons of Israel who went to Egypt with Jacob, each with his family.” (Exodus 1:1)**

In English, the book of Shmot is called ‘*Exodus*’ from the Greek term ‘*exodos*’ (‘The Departure’) and is derived from the Septuagint, the ancient Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures. This second important book of the Torah contains The Ten Commandments – which are not only the foundation of all Jewish life, but are also God’s universal standards of morality for all mankind. Shmot also describes the beginning of the formation of the people of Israel, their enslavement in Egypt and their deliverance from bondage with the first Passover.

## Avadim Hayinu - Once We Were Slaves.....

This account of Israel's redemption from slavery by a mighty deliverance of God foreshadows our own redemption from bondage to sin through the blood of the Passover Lamb.

**"Behold the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world."** (John 1:29)

One of the traditional songs we sing at our Passover Seder to this day is '*Avadim Hayinu*' – Once we were slaves – but now we are '*bnei horim*' (sons of freedom). God is a God of freedom who hates injustice, tyranny, oppression and bondage of all kinds. His desire is to deliver us so that we may live free in the Son – free of sin, guilt, shame and all forms of oppression.

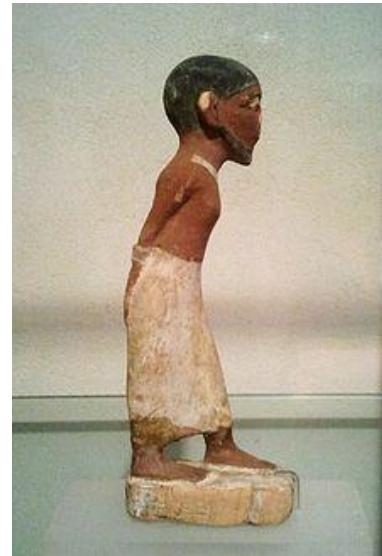


Photo: Hecht Museum A Semitic slave. Ancient Egyptian figurine.

"He whom the Son sets free is free indeed!"<sup>1</sup> Yeshua proclaimed His mission of healing, freedom and liberation in the synagogue one Shabbat while reading from Isaiah:

**"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me Because the Lord has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound."** (Isaiah 61:1, Luke 4:16-19)

Spiritually, if we have put our faith in the atoning sacrifice of Yeshua Hamashiach (the Messiah) we have been set free from the Kingdom of darkness and transferred into the Kingdom of Light. Practically, however, some (many?) of us continue to live, from sunup till sundown, as if we were still slaves.

We have been delivered from '*Egypt*' but some of Egypt remains within us. Our hearts long for liberty; but we have yet to get this slavery mentality out of our inner being. The truth is that Israel, at some level, allowed the Egyptians to enslave them – and so do we, at times, allow others to mistreat and take advantage of us. A change must begin deep within our hearts for us to be set free from this type of '*slave consciousness*'.

May we discover an even deeper inner healing and greater freedom through this study and application of God's Word.

Sefer Shmot begins with a genealogical introduction to the House of Jacob (Yaakov) and his twelve sons. Why such an emphasis upon genealogy and names in the Bible? It is because in a Hebraic context, names are highly significant and usually tell much about the person's character or destiny, such as Ephraim which means '*fruitful*'.

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<sup>1</sup> John 8:36

**“And all the souls that came out of the loins of Jacob were seventy souls; and Joseph was in Egypt already.”** (Exodus 1:5)

A small clan of a mere seventy souls increased exponentially in a population explosion that caused the new King of Egypt, who “*knew Joseph not*”, to become apprehensive. In reaction to his groundless fears, the new Pharaoh resorted to persecution, enslavement, oppression, and forced labor; however the more they were afflicted, the more the Israelites multiplied.

**“And the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them.”** (Exodus 1:7)



Pharaoh Notes the Importance of the Jewish People (watercolor circa 1896–1902 by James Tissot)

Therefore the Egyptians set the Israelites to bitter labor, building store-cities for Pharaoh.

We may notice that the children of Israel came to Egypt (Mitzrayim) as a temporary measure, to avoid the famine in the land of Canaan, but their settling permanently in the land of exile eventually led to their enslavement.

God temporarily exiled the Jewish people to all four corners of the earth in order to fulfill the time of their punishment; but in 1948, the door officially opened for Jewish people from all over the world (the Diaspora) to return home. Yet, many have settled permanently in the lands of their exile, and have no desire to return to the land of Israel, especially from western and European countries.

In ancient Persia (now called Iran), it was fifty-four years from the time that King Cyrus gave the decree for Persian Jews to return to the land of Israel until the anti-Semite, Haman, rose to power and threatened the lives of all Persian Jews, as recorded in the scroll of Esther. Today, the leader of this same nation threatens the survival of the Jewish people once again.

Although the door had supernaturally opened for the Persian Jews to return home in the days of Esther, many chose not to leave. Why? Many reasons: they had become comfortable; they had probably established businesses. Perhaps the fear of the unknown held them back, or the enormous challenge of pulling up roots and the grief of separating from family and friends. It could be that they saw no logical reason to make such a radical change and embark on such an undertaking. After all, as the saying goes, “*If the cart ain’t broke, why fix it*”, right?

There were modern day prophets issuing warnings to the European Jews before Hitler's rise to power in WWII, pleading, "*Flee the Diaspora before the Diaspora devours you!*". Unfortunately, most of the Jewish people did not heed these prophetic warnings, for the same reasons the Persian Jews failed to listen, and therefore six million Jews perished in the Holocaust.

Likewise, even today, many Jewish people, especially in North America and the West, remain comfortable in their state of exile and do not take the call to aliyah<sup>2</sup> seriously. They, like the Israelites, have taken what was to be a temporary situation and made it permanent. May the Spirit of the living God convict and convince many Jewish people to heed the prophetic warnings, and to return to the land of Israel while there is yet time.



Jewish people making aliyah to Israel

The following is an update on the recent increase in aliyah to a ten year high in 2014:

"According to end-of-year figures released today (Wednesday, December 31, 2014) by The Jewish Agency for Israel and the Ministry of Aliyah and Immigrant Absorption, Aliyah (immigration to Israel) hit a ten-year high in 2014, with the arrival of some 26,500 new immigrants. This marks a significant 32% increase over last year's number of approximately 20,000 immigrants.

For the first time ever, France tops the list of countries of origin for immigrants to Israel, with nearly 7,000 new immigrants in 2014, double the 3,400 who came last year....<sup>3</sup>

Chairman of the Executive of The Jewish Agency Natan Sharansky said: "2014 was a year of record-breaking Aliyah. This year also saw a historic shift: for the first time in Israel's history, the number of immigrants who came to Israel from the free world is greater than that of immigrants fleeing countries in distress. This trend is evidence of Israel's attractiveness as a place where it's good to live..."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Aliyah – to immigrate to the Land of Israel

<sup>3</sup> Recently, Jihad terrorists have attacked France in several vicious attacks

<sup>4</sup> \* *This data is tentative and is based on preliminary estimates by The Jewish Agency, the Ministry of Aliyah and Immigrant Absorption* \* Posted by Zev Stub Wednesday, 31 December 2014 [www.janglo.net](http://www.janglo.net)

Ancient Hebrew prophets have warned of a time when, if the Jewish people did not come willingly, through the efforts of the fishermen, then the hunters will drive them out.

"Therefore behold, the days are coming," says the LORD, "that it shall no more be said, 'The LORD lives who brought up the children of Israel from the land of Egypt,' but, 'The LORD lives who brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north and from all the lands where He had driven them.' For I will bring them back into their land which I gave to their fathers."

"Behold, I will send for many fishermen," says the LORD, "and they shall fish them; and afterward I will send for many hunters, and they shall hunt them from every mountain and every hill, and out of the holes of the rocks." (Jeremiah 16:14-16)

May we all refuse to allow complacency or fear to keep us captive in a state of spiritual exile. Circumstances may have forced us to temporarily stray from the perfect will of God, but we need not stay there. With the help of the Holy Spirit (Ruach Hakodesh) along with the strength, courage, and resources He will give us if we ask, we can find our way back home again.

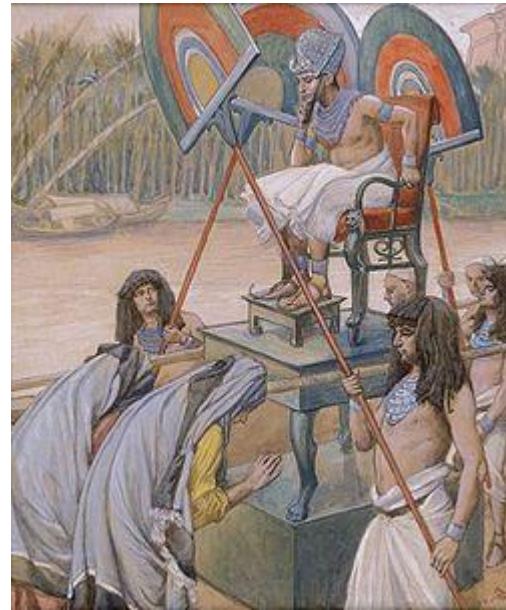
"Better is one day in His courts than thousands elsewhere!" (Psalm 84:10)

### Fear of God & Not Man

Acting upon his irrational fear of the Israelites, the Pharaoh ordered the Hebrew midwives, Shiphrah and Puah, to kill all the baby boys born to the Israelite women; but they did not do as the Pharaoh commanded.

**"But the midwives feared God, and did not as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the men-children alive."** (Exodus 1:17)

The king of Egypt had given a command in violation of God's higher commandment – 'Thou shalt not kill'. The Hebrew midwives disobeyed the Pharaoh's command because their fear of God was stronger than their fear of man, and God rewarded the midwives for their courage and faith.



Pharaoh and the Midwives (watercolor circa 1896–1902 by James Tissot)

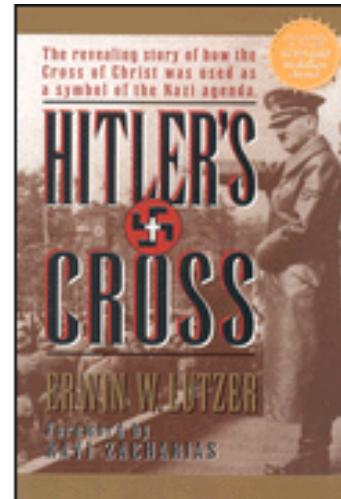
**"And it came to pass, because the midwives feared God, that He made them houses."** (Exodus 1:21)

Yes, we are to obey those in authority over us, but not when they command us to disobey God's Torah. Many Jewish and Christian martyrs have sacrificed their lives throughout the ages rather than give in to the command of ruling ungodly and evil governments. We must never allow our loyalty to the governing authorities to take primary place over our loyalty to the Ruler of the Universe.

We can learn a lesson from the recent past. The error that the majority of the Christian church in Germany made was by pledging their allegiance to Hitler rather than remaining faithful to God and His Jewish people.<sup>5</sup>

May we never make this same error again under the rule of the coming anti-Messiah. Our primary allegiance must always remain with God.

**"The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid."** (Psalms 27:1)



Yeshua asked what profit there is in gaining the whole world if we lose our very souls?<sup>6</sup> Hitler said he knew that some people, like Esau, would sell their birthright for a bowl of stew; they would forfeit their integrity for a job and food on the table.

The Scriptures warn of a time when we will not be able to buy or sell unless we take the mark of the beast and that this anti-Messiah ruler will oppress, fight against, and even defeat the people of God for a time.<sup>7</sup> But the Word of God exhorts us, "**Be faithful even to the point of death and I will give you the crown of life.**" (Revelation 2:10)

We have been witnessing young Christian children in Middle Eastern countries living – and dying – for this promise as they are beheaded by fanatical Muslims for refusing to renounce Yeshua. They surely will receive their crowns.

### Israel is My Firstborn

When the Pharaoh could not gain the cooperation of the midwives with his evil plan, he commanded a genocide, ordering all Hebrew baby boys to be thrown into the Nile River!

**"And Pharaoh charged all his people, saying: 'Every son that is born you shall cast into the river, and every daughter you shall save alive.'**" (Exodus 1:22)

If we look at the end of the Egyptian regime that oppressed Israel, we see that God drowned the Egyptian males of Pharaoh's army in the Sea - just as the Egyptians

<sup>5</sup> See Hitler's Cross by Edwin Lutzer

<sup>6</sup> Matthew 16:26

<sup>7</sup> Revelation 13:7, 17

drowned the Jewish babies in the river. This proves the truth of God's word - whatever the nations do to Israel, God will return upon them likewise.

**"The day of the LORD is near for all nations. As you have done, it will be done to you; your deeds will return upon your own head."** (Obadiah 1:15)

May this serve as a warning but also an encouragement to people in all the nations to stand with Israel! God promises to bless those who bless Israel and to curse those who curse us<sup>8</sup> – a promise which still holds true today.

Why did God kill the Egyptian firstborn sons? He did this because Israel is God's firstborn – and the Egyptians refused to let them go free.

**"Israel is my firstborn. So I say to you, let My son go that he may serve Me. But if you refuse to let him go, indeed I will kill your son, your firstborn."** (Exodus 4:22:-23)

Many Hebrew baby boys were murdered by Pharaoh's soldiers during this reign of terror; and yet there was one child of destiny who was saved from such a terrible fate by the hand of one of his enemies – the daughter of Pharaoh himself.

The enemy is always after the seed. Even today, many babies are killed through abortion, the shedding of innocent blood. May God have mercy!

Moses was born and hidden by his mother for three months, after which time she put him in an ark constructed of bulrushes and laid him in the river while his sister watched from a distance. What great faith this mother must have had to take such a radical step!

This is the second of only two times that this Hebrew word for *ark* (*tevah*) is used in the Bible, the first being the ark that Noah built to save his family and himself from the flood.

Moses should have drowned; but the protective hand of God saved him when Pharaoh's daughter spotted the basket. When she saw the Hebrew baby inside, she had pity on him and took him as her own; therefore Moses was raised in the Pharaoh's palace as a prince of Egypt.



Moses rescued from the Nile, 1638, by Nicolas Poussin

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<sup>8</sup> Genesis 12:3

This account of the murder of the Jewish male babies and the sparing of Moses' life parallels the infancy of Yeshua the Messiah, whose life was threatened by the orders of King Herod, who decreed that all Jewish male infants be killed.

**"Then when Herod saw that he had been tricked by the magi, he became very enraged, and sent and slew all the male children who were in Bethlehem and all its vicinity, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the magi."** (Matthew 2:16)

Just as Moses was saved from death as an infant, so was Yeshua saved by the obedience and faith of his earthly father, Joseph, who was warned in a dream to flee to Egypt. It is ironic that the very place of danger and death for the Hebrew babies in the days of Moses became a place of refuge for Yeshua in his infancy.

**"Now when they had gone, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up! Take the Child and His mother and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is going to search for the Child to destroy Him. So Joseph got up and took the Child and His mother while it was still night, and left for Egypt."** (Matthew 2:13-14) (NASB)

### Moses' Calling as a Deliverer

The daughter of Pharaoh found the baby Moses and had compassion on him, even though she knew he was a Hebrew. He was called 'Moshe' **מֹשֶׁה** from the Hebrew word 'mashach' which means '*pull or draw out*'; because he was *pulled (mashach)* from the waters.<sup>9</sup> Just as Moshe was 'drawn' (rescued) out of the waters, so did he later come to draw the Israelites out of Egypt in a dramatic rescue operation.



The Finding of Moses (1904 painting by [Lawrence Alma-Tadema](#))

Moses' own mother was called to nurse him until he grew older. Can we imagine her joy? God honored her great faith in surrendering her son to Him in a tiny basket on the Nile River! May we each have such faith with our own children to surrender them into the mighty hands of God to guard them and watch over them at all times, even when our ability to protect them is limited.

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<sup>9</sup> Exodus 2:10

**“For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways;”** (Psalms 91:11)

Moses' mother also needed to surrender her son to Pharaoh's daughter to raise him as her own in their Egyptian palace. Perhaps God knew that the future redeemer (*go'el*) of the Israelites needed to be instilled in his early childhood with the knowledge of the one, true God from his Hebrew mother, but not grow up amongst them, lest he adopt their slave-victim type of mentality. Therefore he was nursed by his Hebrew mother, but raised in a royal palace. Although he grew up in an Egyptian palace, it seems that the burdens of his fellow Israelites troubled him; for when he went out and witnessed an Egyptian slave master beating a Hebrew, Moses stepped in to intervene.



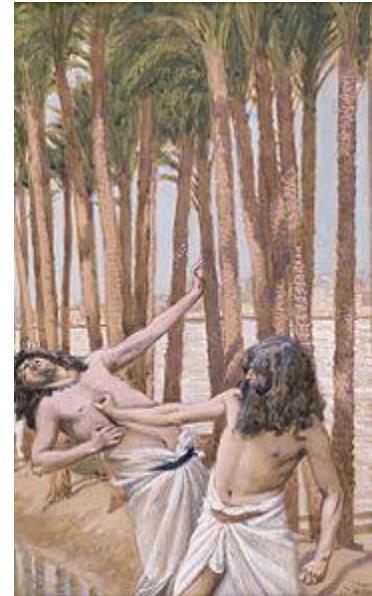
Moses and Jochebed (1884 painting by Pedro Américo)

Already sensing a call to help his brethren and administer justice against the Egyptian oppression of his people, Moses killed the Egyptian. Rather than thanking Moses for his help, the Hebrews accused him for the first (but not the last) time of trying to '*lord it over them*', saying "**Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us?...**" (Exodus 2:14)

This is the '*Datan –Aviram*' type of mindset described in the 16<sup>th</sup> chapter of the book of Numbers - a rebellious attitude towards a God-appointed leader. Moses' calling was not of himself, but from God.

Even at a young age, Moses felt the call of God on his life, but he was not ready as yet to fulfill that commission. In the process of defending the Israelite slave, Moses killed the Egyptian and was forced to flee when the deed was discovered by Pharaoh and he sought to kill him.

Moses Slays an Egyptian (watercolor circa 1896–1902 by James Tissot)



**“Now when Pharaoh heard this thing, he sought to slay Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh, and dwelt in the land of Midian; and he sat down by a well.”**  
(Exodus 2:15)

The timing of the Lord is perfect. Some people of destiny have felt the call of God on their lives from an early age as well, and have struggled to walk in His divine purpose for them, but it may not be the time yet. For everything there is a season.

As for Moses, he first needed to spend forty years in the wilderness, simply tending his father-in-law's flocks. Others may spend many years in a similar humble position before God calls them to service. God sometimes tests us in small things before exalting us to greater service. We must wait on God. He makes all things beautiful in His time,<sup>10</sup> but we may need to spend time in the desert wilderness before fulfilling our destinies.

Moses' calling as a deliverer was again demonstrated when he witnessed several young shepherdesses being harassed by shepherds at a well. Moses rescued the girls and helped water their flocks of sheep.<sup>11</sup>

What a hero! ☺



Moses and the Daughters of Jethro (painting circa 1660–1689 by Ciro Ferri)

Moses ended up marrying one of the daughters of Yitro, a Midian Priest. Tziporah and Moses had a son named Ger-Shom, because he was a stranger there in the Land of Midian. 'Ger' means stranger in Hebrew and 'Sham' means 'there'.

Moses always felt like a stranger in the wilderness; he knew it was not his home. Often we also feel like a stranger in exile while spending our time in the wilderness. We know this world is not our true home – but God has a purpose and plan for our lives here.

### God Hears the Cries of His People

When the Israelites cried out to God, He heard the cries of His people,

**"Their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage. And God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant..."**  
(Exodus 2: 23-25)

God is neither deaf nor aloof to our suffering. He hears us when we cry out to Him, even though the deliverance may not come immediately. **"He does not forget the cry of the humble."** (Psalms 9:12)



The Egyptians Afflicted the Israelites (illustration from the 1897 *Bible Pictures and What They Teach Us* by Charles Foster)

<sup>10</sup> Ecclesiastes 3:11

<sup>11</sup> Exodus 2:21-22

Nor is God blind to our troubles. “**But You have seen, for You observe trouble and grief, to repay it by Your hand. The helpless commits himself to You;**” (Psalms 10:14)

It may seem at times that God stands afar off and hides Himself in times of trouble, but this is only our faulty perception. The truth is that God is faithful to keep His promises to His covenant children in His perfect way and time.

**"And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God knew them."** (Exodus 2:25)

The Hebrew word for 'knew' (*yadah*) is the same one used in the context of intimacy between a man and a woman: "*And Adam 'knew' his wife, and she conceived, and bore Cain...*" (Genesis 4:1)

God 'knows' us intimately - He knew us before we were even born; He knit us together in our mother's womb. He knows our rising up and our lying down; He even knows our thoughts and the intentions of our heart.<sup>12</sup>

Therefore, we can trust that the God who knows us so intimately and cares for us so faithfully, will send us the help we need in His perfect time - just as He sent Moses to deliver the children of Israel.

**"And the Angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush. So he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, but the bush was not consumed."** (Exodus 3:2)

### Moses at the Burning Bush

Finally, after forty years in the wilderness simply tending sheep, Moses heard the call of God from the midst of a burning bush which was not consumed. An angel appeared within the burning bush; and God instructed Moses to go back to Egypt in order to deliver the Israelites from their cruel bondage.

The Lord identified who He is, not a new or foreign God whom the people do not know, but the God of Moshe and Israel's Forefathers, Avraham, Yitchak, and Yaakov (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob).



*God Appears to Moses in Burning Bush. Painting from Saint Isaac's Cathedral, Saint Petersburg*

<sup>12</sup> Jeremiah 1:5, Psalms 139:2,13

God called the Israelites MY people, just as we would identify our children as belonging to us.<sup>13</sup> My middle son is half Japanese, so people would sometimes ask, ‘*Whose beautiful child is this?*’ To which I would proudly reply, ‘*He is MINE*’. The very name of my youngest daughter, Liat, means ‘*You are mine*’. Every time someone calls her by name she is reminded that she belongs to God – as does each one of us.

In the same way, we belong to the Almighty God, who once again confirms to the Israelites that ‘*He knows their pain*’ and will deliver them from the oppression of the Egyptians. God knows our pain and has sent Yeshua as a Deliverer to set the captives free.<sup>14</sup>

Moses’ reaction, however, after spending so many years in the wilderness is, ‘*Who am I?*’ Many people also look at themselves and their own inadequacies, doubting that God could possibly want to use them for anything of significance!

What is the only thing we need to fulfill God’s calling on our lives? It is God’s assurance that He will be with us: ‘**Certainly, I will be with thee.**’ (Exodus 2:12) To be used of God, we don’t need supernatural abilities, only a willing response to respond to His call, ‘**Hineini**’ (Here am I).

There is only one difference between Moses’ attempt to deliver the people of Israel forty years before and his second attempt. The second time, it was a ‘God thing’. It was God who was initiating the action, God who chose the time, and God who was with Moses, rather than Moses trying to carry out a noble deed on his own.

Yeshua warned us that by ourselves we can do nothing! But with Him, all things are possible.<sup>15</sup> Is God directing us to do something? Is God ‘*with us*’ in this action? Is it His timing? Or is it some good thing we are trying to do in our own strength (works of the flesh)? These are good questions to ask ourselves; and sometimes we only find out that God is not in it when we fall on our faces. God is love; and love never fails.<sup>16</sup>

## What is His name?

Moses then asked for the actual name of God.<sup>17</sup> For this, we need to look into the Hebrew. It seems to me that this name has been mistranslated and mispronounced for centuries. The Hebrew words the Lord gives for His name is ***Eh'ye Asher Eh'ye אהיה אשר אהיה***. This does *not* seem to be a present tense, “*I am that I am*”, as most people believe; but due to the prefix of the letter aleph, א, this name indicates a future tense: ‘***I will be what I will be.***’

<sup>13</sup> While living in Neve Oved, I wrote an article called, You are Mine, which is one of my favorites. You can read it on my website: [www.voiceforisrael.net/articles](http://www.voiceforisrael.net/articles)

<sup>14</sup> See article, He Came to Set the Captives Free

<sup>15</sup> John 15:5, Matthew 19:26

<sup>16</sup> 1 John 4:8, 1 Corinthians 13:8a

<sup>17</sup> Exodus 2:13-15

This is why I love studying the original Hebrew.<sup>18</sup> We can determine for ourselves if we know the truth or if we only believe a falsehood that someone has passed down to us. In calling Himself ‘I will be what I will be’, God is saying, “I will be \_\_\_\_\_ to you. Whatever it is we need God to be (whether Deliverer, Redeemer, Savior, Healer, Provider, Counselor, Father, or even just plain Friend) God says, “*I will be this for you.*” God steps beyond time into our future to become whatever it is He knows we need at that very moment.

**”Thus shall thou say unto the children of Israel: EH’YE אֶחָד has sent me unto you.”** (Exodus 3:14)

Moses knew that he could not go to the Israelites under his own authority. He had learned this painful lesson from the past. This time, he knew he must be sent by divine authority, and so God was careful to give Moses His true name - Eh’ye (*I will be*).

He also instructed Moses to assure the children of Israel that YHVH יְהוָה (from the four Hebrew letters, יְהֹוָה which make up God’s sacred name) was sending him. This is a name derived from the root word ‘to be’ { הַיְהּ }.

In this, God was proclaiming His eternal nature: He is the God who was, who is, and who forever will be! Halleluyah!

This is the song the angels sing around His throne: “**Kadosh, kadosh, kadosh, יְהוָה T’sva’ot – Holy Holy, Holy is the Lord God of Hosts. Who was and is and is to come....**” (Revelation 4:8)

He is the God of our past, the God of our present and best of all, the God of our future. And He promises us that the future He has planned for us is a good one. Halleluyah!

Moses could proclaim to the children of Israel that their God and the God of their Fathers (Avraham, Yitzchak, Yaakov) had sent him. This was the God to which they had been crying out for so many years, “*How long, O Lord?*”

It is by this name, יְהֹוָה, that our God shall He be remembered forever throughout all generations. If we look at the Hebrew, we can see that this name, Yehovah is spelled with four letters, yood, hey, vav, and hey. The pronunciation of the letter is according to the first letter of its name, therefore yood is a ‘y’ sound, hey, an ‘h’ sound, and vav, a ‘v’ sound. The dots and dashes underneath and on top of the letters add the vowels.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> You can learn basic Hebrew by ordering a beginner’s Hebrew course on DVD called Shalom Morah (Greetings Teacher) by mail or through my website: [www.voiceforisrael.net/hebrew](http://www.voiceforisrael.net/hebrew)

<sup>19</sup> The vowels do not appear in the original Scriptures

In Hebrew today, we would pronounce this name Yehovah. Most Jewish people do not pronounce this name at all, out of reverence, and out of fear of taking His name in vain, and therefore say ‘Adonai’, ‘Lord’, or even ‘Hashem’ (The Name). Instead of saying, ‘Praise God’, many Jewish people say, ‘Baruch Hashem’.

In the Hebrew language today, there exist no sounds for a ‘w’ or ‘j’. These two sounds in any Hebrew word indicate a foreign intrusion to the language. I am sure that God loves hearing from His children, even when they don’t quite know how to pronounce His name. However, it is my opinion that the pronunciation of both Yaweh and Jehovah sounds utterly foreign to the ears of most Jewish people today.



Moses and the Burning Bush (painting circa 1450–1475 attributed to [Dirk Bouts](#))

If we want to reach the Jewish people with the gospel, we need to come to them with the good news of redemption in the authentic name of God – the God of their fathers, the one they know, not some foreign god.

Scriptures say that in the last days, God’s people will know His name. Why is this significant? In order to go to the Jewish people with news of a mighty Deliverer, one cannot come in the name of a foreign God.

Most Jewish people will not respond if you come to them in the name of Jehovah or Yaweh, or even in the name of Jesus Christ. Why? These names, in the minds of most Jewish people, are the names of foreign, unknown gods. They will not recognize them.

‘Christ’ is not Jesus’ last name; He is not the son of Mr. & Mrs. Christ. It is a Greek translation of the Hebrew title, *Mashiach* (Messiah, or Anointed One). His first name is Yeshua, which means salvation, and is a word most Jewish people would recognize which is used throughout the Hebrew Scriptures.

So why do we need to use the Greek when our Messiah was not a Greek, but a Hebrew? The gospel is for the Jew first and also for the Gentile.<sup>20</sup> Should we not then prefer to use the Hebrew terms? This is especially important when trying to reach the Messiah’s own brethren, the Israelites, with the good news that God has sent a deliverer to free them from their oppression and bondage. It seems to me that we can learn a lesson here from Moshe.

**“What is His name?” and the name of His son?” (Proverbs 30:4)**

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<sup>20</sup> Romans 1:16

His name is **יהוָה** God of our fathers, Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaacov, and Yeshua **ישׁוּעָה** is the name of His Son - His right arm, sent to bring salvation to all of mankind. This does not need to become a point of division or legalism. Many non-Jewish followers of Yeshua commonly use the name Jesus, and we need not be offended by this.

## Signs and Wonders

Moses still didn't think that the Israelites would believe him, so God gave him signs and wonders. As many Israeli believers will confess, it often takes a supernatural experience to convince a Jewish person that Yeshua is our deliverer. We can pray that the Lord will reveal Himself to many people with supernatural signs and wonders.

Moses confessed his doubt in his speaking abilities, but God assured him, "**Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt speak.**" (Exodus 4:12) We do not need to be overly concerned ahead of time with what we will say to those God sends us to; He will give us the words to speak by the Holy Spirit.

Moses went so far as to ask God to send someone else, and this time God got mad! Humility is one thing, but when God asks us to do something, and reassures us over and over again that He will be with us to help us, then to protest and hesitate is dangerously close to rebellion. Let us not provoke the Lord to anger with such doubt in ourselves or such fear in the mission. "*God has not given us a spirit of fear, but a spirit of love and of power and a sound mind.*" "*Perfect love casts out all fear.*"<sup>21</sup>

## The Lord Sought to Kill Moses

Finally, the two came to a compromise – Aaron (Aharon), Moses' brother, would go along and speak for Moses. Fine. Moses set off on his mission and ran into a major problem – God was trying to kill him! "**And it came to pass on the way at the lodging-place that the Lord met him, and sought to kill him.**" (Exodus 4:24)

Isn't this a strange reaction? After all this battling and arguing back and forth, Moses finally agreed to go, and then the Lord tried to kill him! What's up with this? As we read further, we see that Moses had neglected an important duty – the circumcision of his son.

This is incredible, and has significant application to the people of God today (although not often preached from the pulpit<sup>22</sup>). The Lord would rather completely destroy Moses than allow him to deliverer God's people without first fulfilling the sign of the covenant.

Circumcision of every male child was the sign of the covenant between God and His people.<sup>22</sup> "**And ye shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of a covenant (l'ot brit) between Me and you...And the uncircumcised male**

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<sup>21</sup> 2 Timothy 1:7, 1 John 4:18

<sup>22</sup> See article, Brit Millah (Circumcision) [www.voiceforisrael.net/articles](http://www.voiceforisrael.net/articles)

**who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin , that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken My covenant.”** (Genesis 17:11,14)

The sign of the New Covenant between God and His people from every tongue, tribe, and nation, through the blood of the Messiah, Yeshua, is that of a circumcised heart. Gentiles are therefore not required to be circumcised to belong to the Lord, but their hearts must be circumcised by the Messiah.

**“In him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Messiah...”**  
(Colossians 2:11)

What is the sign or outward expression of the circumcised heart? A repulsion towards sin, and a new desire to walk in obedience to the Torah (law) of God.

**“Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a NEW COVENANT with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah...I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.** (Jer. 31:31,33)

In this instance, we may look at the reaction of Zipporah, Moses' gentile wife, as an analogy of the mainstream Christian church which, for the most part, has adopted a deep revulsion towards what they call '*The Law*'.

**“Then Zipporah took a flint and cut off the foreskin of her son, and cast it at this feet; and she said; ‘Surely a bridegroom of blood are you to me.’**  
(Exodus 4:25)



*Zipporah (left) from Botticelli's Trial of Moses*

More and more non-Jewish disciples of Yeshua are being compelled by the Holy Spirit to walk in obedience to the Torah: keeping Shabbat (the seventh day Sabbath) as holy, obeying biblical dietary laws, celebrating the Feasts of the Lord, etc.

Many Jewish Believers have, in the past, compromised for the sake of the Gentile church, just as Moses must have compromised for the sake of the sensitivities of his non-Israelite wife; but if these believers continue to compromise and resist the Holy Spirit, many could become sick, both physically and spiritually.

God would rather kill some of us, than see us walk in disobedience to His Torah while continuing to share the gospel with the Jewish people in Israel and the nations. They need

to see that following a Jewish Messiah is a very ‘*kosher*’ thing to do and is not a betrayal, but rather a fulfillment of our ancient Biblical heritage.

As long as Moses was simply tending sheep in the wilderness, it didn’t seem to matter that he had not kept the Covenant; but once God had called Moses on a holy mission, his obedience became crucial. As long as we are not doing much for the Kingdom, God may let a lot of things slide; but if God has called us from out of a ‘burning bush’ and sent us on a mission, then whether or not we heed the Holy Spirit’s voice exhorting us to walk in obedience to God’s commandments could mean the difference between life or death.

Those of us who teach God’s word need to make especially sure that we are using the Word correctly and making sure we ‘*walk the talk*’, lest we be judged for our hypocrisy.

**“Not many of you should become teachers, my fellow believers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly.”** (James 3:1)

Most of the Church is appalled when fellow believers, whether Jewish or not, begin to walk in obedience to the Torah. Throwing the symbolic foreskin to the ground in distaste, as if ‘the law’ (Torah) is something filthy or unclean, the church cries out, ‘*We are not under the law, but under grace...*’ “**For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.**” (Rom 6:14)

This is true - we are not under ‘the law’ - since according to the New Covenant, the law (Torah) should be in our minds and written on our hearts.<sup>23</sup>

The whole purpose of grace is to give free us from slavery to *sin*, which means walking in disobedience to God’s commandments! Obedience requires a spiritual circumcision that, even if done with a quick, clean stroke, is still painful to the flesh. It is only God’s grace that enables us to walk in obedience to His Torah.

We could never obey Torah in the flesh and we never will be able to. “**Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law (Torah) of God, nor indeed can be.**” (Romans 8:7)

A portion of the Christian church is still operating in the carnal mind that is hostile to the law (Torah, instruction or teaching) of God. Let us stand firm, then, in the power and truth of the Word through the Ruach Hakodesh (Holy Spirit), and proceed upon our God-given mission.

**“Go, therefore, and make disciples (talmidim) of all nations, immersing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you;”** (Matthew 28:19-20)

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<sup>23</sup> Jeremiah 31:31-34

## Let My People Go!

**'Let My people Go!'** This was the message Moses was to take to the great Pharaoh of Egypt; but the king of Egypt did not know this God of the Hebrews and would not let them go. In fact, he made it worse for them, saying: "**Let heavier work be laid upon the men, that they may labor in it.**"

(Exodus 5:9) The Egyptians would no longer provide the straw needed; now the Israelites would have to gather their own – and still produce the same quota of bricks! Oye!

The people met Moses and Aaron and said, '*Thanks a lot, 'O great deliverers', for all your help. Before our lives were miserable; but now they're twice as miserable.*'

(paraphrase – sarcasm added)



Moses and Aaron Speak to the People (watercolor circa 1896–1902 by James Tissot)

This must have been distressing (to say the least) for Moses, but he went right to the source and held God accountable to His promises: "**My Lord, why have you done such a bad thing to this people, and why have you even sent me? For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in your name, evil has come upon this nation and you have not delivered Your people at all!**" (Exodus 5: 22-23)

Moses considered his mission a failure, as did the people he came to rescue. The whole situation looked very dark and hopeless. Sometimes it looks darkest before the dawn – it may get worse before it gets better as the enemy applies additional pressure, hoping we will give up and give in. We may think, "*What gives here? I was told to trust God to fulfill His covenant promises in my life and look at it! It's still a mess!*" Maybe it's even worse than before for a season!

We may doubt God in our hearts, thinking – "*God hasn't delivered me at all!*" I just want to encourage you if your situation looks very dark and hopeless, hold God to the covenant promises He has made in His Word. He will never leave us nor forsake us.<sup>24</sup> He will bless us and give us peace. He has a plan for our future, and a hope - for good and not for evil.<sup>25</sup> God doesn't mind when we come to Him in stark honestly with our doubts, fears and frustrations. He knows them all anyways.

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<sup>24</sup> Deuteronomy 31:6

<sup>25</sup> Jeremiah 29:11

Don't give up on God, just because it seems to have gotten worse instead of better! Remember – ‘it’s not over till it’s over’ (or as a motivational speaker, Les Brown, has said, “It’s not over till we win!”)

## Now I will Arise!

How did God respond to the accusation that He had not kept His word to the people of Israel ? **“And the Lord said unto Moshe: “Now shall you see what I will do to Pharaoh...”** (Exodus 6:1) I love this line!

Some of us may have been suffering for a long time – a very long time. Perhaps we have been crying out to God and not seeing any improvement in our situations. It could be health issues, relationship, marriage and family problems, a financial crisis, emotional distress – or all of the above! We can come to a point where our faith is shaken and we wonder if God even hears us – or if He does – does He even care?

May this be the word of the Lord to anyone in that desperate place: **“Now I will arise...”** **“Because the poor are plundered and the needy groan, I will now arise,” says the LORD. I will protect them from those who malign them.”** (Psalm 12:5)

Egypt in Hebrew is **Mitzrayim**, which can also mean ‘*boundaries or limitations*’. If we have been confined against God’s will in a constricted place, God can set us free by the power of His strong hand. If we have felt ‘limited’ by financial lack, sickness, or just overwhelmed by the ‘*cares of this world*’, God can deliver us and set us in a wide open, broad, spacious place where we are free.

When we have tried everything and our strength has failed, we can know that God can and will rescue us from those who are ‘*too strong for us*’ when we cry out to Him in our distress: **“In my distress I called to the LORD; I cried to my God for help. From his temple he heard my voice; my cry came before him, into his ears.**

**He reached down from on high and took hold of me; he drew me out of deep waters. He rescued me from my powerful enemy, from my foes, who were too strong for me. He brought me out into a spacious place; he rescued me because he delighted in me.”** (Psalm 18:6,16-19)

Pharaoh can also be a picture of the enemy of our souls who holds people in spiritual bondage. Yes, he is powerful, but God’s power is so much greater, therefore we can say with confidence, “*Greater is He who is in me than he who is in the world.*” (1 John 4:4) We can call upon the Lord’s right hand, the Mashiach, Yeshua, to deliver us from the hand of Pharaoh. People of God, let us together in unity cry out today, in the name of YHVH, יהוה, Ehye Asher Eheye, אֶחָד אֲשֶׁר אַחֲרֵה, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, for release from bondage and say to the principalities and powers of the kingdom of darkness: **‘Let my people Go!’**

**“Let God arise (Kuma Adonai) and may all His enemies be scattered.”** (Psalm 68:1)

## Haftarat Shmot: Yaacov Taking Root and Blossoming

The Haftarah this week brings this ancient account of freedom and liberation from the oppression of the enemy to the prophetic Word about the modern state of Israel.

**“In days to come shall Yaacov (Jacob) take root, Yisrael (Israel) shall blossom and bud; and the face of the world shall be filled with fruitage.”** (Isaiah 27:6)

Israel has, indeed, become a nation which produces vast quantities of flowers for export. Flower exports in the year 2000 exceeded USD \$50 million in revenue!

One needs only to spend a day in this land of Israel to wonder at the marvelous fulfillment of this scripture in our generation, before our very eyes. The land is once again fertile and the children of Jacob (Israel) are coming home from all the north, south, east and west. God is gathering the exiles of Israel to dwell in the Land and feed on His faithfulness.



*Flowers grown in Israel for export*

The trees bow down with the weight of their blossoms all year round. The markets are packed full with luscious fruits and fresh vegetables.

Fruit and flowers from Israel are being exported all over the world. How I hope you may all come one day to witness this modern day miracle with your very own eyes. Taste the fruit and see that God is good. (Psalm 34:8)

*Photo: fruit sold at Jerusalem market*



That fact that Isaiah’s prophecy has been fulfilled in our generation is one of the key signs that we are living very close to the coming of the Lord and the end of the age. He is not just at the gates of the city, but right at the door. Behold, He stands at the door to your heart and knocks, will you let Him in? (Revelation 3:20) “For God so loved the world that He sent his only begotten son that whosoever believes on Him, shall not perish, but shall have everlasting life.” (John 3:16)

## From Jacob to Israel

Notice that two different names are used in this prophetic word: **Yaacov (Jacob)** and **Yisrael (Israel)**. It is Jacob that takes root, but Israel that actually begins to blossom and bear fruit for the consumption of the world. There is so much more beneath the surface of this Scripture than its literal fulfillment in the physical regeneration of the Land of Israel today.

It is true that in our generation, God has fulfilled much of His word regarding Israel: the exiles of Judah are returning home and re-building the ruined cities (Ezekiel 36:8-10). Elderly people sit on benches with their canes and children play in the streets of Jerusalem – just as God promised they one day would! (Zechariah 8:4-5)

*Elderly Jewish woman sitting on a Jerusalem bench with her cane in park where children play*



Just as the land of Israel lay dormant, dry and barren – apparently lifeless - for thousands of years before it began to show signs of new life, so do our lives sometimes seem to sit dormant for long periods of time – same old same old – little if any buds or blossoms. And fruit? That would surely be too much to hope for!

And yet we know God's word – we have read and even memorized His promises that we will one day bear fruit as long as we abide in the vine. Yeshua said, “**I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing...By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit, so you will be My disciples.**” (John 15:5,8)

Why is it, then, that rather than living as a fruitful tree, planted by the rivers of water, we may at times feel more like a dry, withered branch, worth nothing more than being thrown into a fire to be burned? (John 15:6) ‘*Is the fault with me? Is it that I am not ‘abiding in the vine’ enough?*’ It is the old, “*What’s wrong with me?*” refrain that we ask ourselves repeatedly.

There comes a day, it seems, when we grow tired of hearing about God's promises and reading about God's promises and seeing other people walk God's promises, bearing an abundance of fruit; but we want to see it with our very own eyes and experience the abundant life.

We don't want to just *tell* our kids about the Promised Land; we want to *show* them that it is possible to cross over the Jordan and actually live there! We can become weary of waiting, of believing, of doing the right thing and not seeing results.

Yes, we know the cross; yes, we have been endeavoring to pick it up each day and follow Yeshua, even in self-denial and sacrifice – but where is the resurrection? Where is the joy on the other side of the pain? Many of us may find that our once cherished aspirations and dreams have been sidelined as we've struggled to fit into the roles that have been placed upon us by others.

We strive to accommodate the needs, demands, and expectations of those who depend on us for so long that our own desires simmer on the back burner indefinitely. We may come to a point in our lives where we begin to question who we are and what we want to do with our lives before our time on this earth is over. We want some fruit to show for the time we have spent here.

We sense a lack of purpose and direction; a kind of holy dissatisfaction, knowing on some level that the life we are living is a shallow sketch of the deep, full, colorful life we had once dreamed of. What did we at one time want to do? be? have? Can we even remember? Or has it been too long since we even considered these questions? Is it even possible for this dull, dry, dreary, broken, life-less existence to be transformed into something beautiful, joyful, and fruitful?

I am sure that the Jewish people also grew weary of waiting for the fulfillment of God's promises to restore Israel. They waited and hoped, for two thousand years, as is written in the Israeli National Anthem, *Hatikvah*. "For two thousand years, we have not lost hope, to be a free nation in our land, Zion and Jerusalem."<sup>26</sup>

They waited and suffered under tyranny and torture. They waited and wept, giving in to despair and depression, as is written in Psalm 137: "**By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea we wept when we remembered Zion. We hung our harps upon the willows in the midst of it...How shall we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land?"**

And yet, even in the darkness, the glimmer of hope refused to die: "**If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget its skill! If I do not remember you, let my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth – if I do not exalt Jerusalem above my chief joy.**"<sup>27</sup>

And one day, we stopped hoping for that which we did not yet see; but we began to live the Promise. We are back in our Land, rebuilding the ruined cities, seeing the desert bloom like a rose,



<sup>26</sup> Translation of a line in *Hatikvah* (The Hope), Israel's national anthem

<sup>27</sup> Psalm 137:5

seeing places long dead come back to life with such beauty it looks like the Garden of Eden!

We are growing gardens and eating their fruit, raising children to run and play in the streets of Jerusalem for the glory of God! Israeli orchards are exporting their fruit all over the world! Halleluyah!

Restoration, regeneration and resurrection is possible; but we've got to get to this same point where we say, "*I'm going to keep my eyes, my focus, my hope, the entirety of my being on God's promise to have mercy and restore all that has been lost.*" We have to sing with determination, "*I have decided....no turning back, no turning back.*" We absolutely cannot be half-hearted, double-minded or lukewarm about this. We must become what the prophets called '*prisoners of hope*'.

Jacob's name, Yaakov, comes from the root, *ekev*, which means the heel, since he was born grasping the heel of his brother Esau.<sup>28</sup> However, this name can also mean supplanter, or deceiver. Jacob spent his time grasping after the blessing and birthright of his brother, even taking them through trickery and deception.

He then spent years reaping the seeds of deception he had sown. Laban deceived him in the matter of his wife, giving him Leah instead of Rachel. Laban deceived him several times in his wages. It was only after wrestling all night with an angel of God that his name was changed to Israel because he struggled with God and had prevailed.

As Jacob, he was a man on the run, a man who had not found his place in life; but as Israel, he had the courage to face the hard things (his relationship with his brother Esau) and to settle in the Land.

Jacob in Scripture represents an unrepentant, unregenerate Israel; it also symbolizes the spiritual state of a person before their deep conversion and transformation. Jacob shows us the frustration of grasping for the blessings and yet finding the results always seem to fall short.

Israel, however, represents a person at peace with himself and with God. Yisrael = yashar (straight/honest) + El (God). Israel's destiny is secure and his place in the Land settled. As Jacob, we may begin to see some buds and even blossoms, but as Israel, we are going to bear so much fruit that it will overflow to the world – even God's salvation to the ends of the earth!

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<sup>28</sup> Genesis 25:26

## The Hope -Hatikvah

The question is, “How does a person leave behind a lifetime of unfulfilled potential – of wrong choices and dead ends – of ‘Jacobness’ – and become an ‘Israel’? The path to redemption always begins with *hope*.

Scripture promises that God has a good plan for our life, plans to give us a hope and a future (Jeremiah 29:11) But the question is, “*Will we believe this?*” To whose voice will we listen? Will we allow the loud, brassy voices of accusation, condemnation, fear, doubt, and despair to overwhelm us? Or will we take the time to listen for the still, small voice of the Spirit which gives hope, courage and renewed faith?

Will we choose to believe that a Redemptive Light exists which will emerge from out of the darkness to bring forth life? Or do we, deep in our hearts, believe that if we see a light at the end of the tunnel, it’s probably a train coming to run over us!

We’ve absolutely got to get out of this kind of mindset. It will be done to us as we believe...and as we think...and as we speak. The word says that we shall be transformed by the renewing of our minds.<sup>29</sup> We need to set our minds and keep them set on that which we hope for, even if we don’t yet see the evidence in reality.

The Prophet Isaiah, in speaking prophetically over Israel, dares each one of us to dream – and to believe. If, out of the ashes of the Holocaust, such a vibrant and life-giving nation can emerge, may we not believe that God can also exchange our ashes for beauty?<sup>30</sup> Will we believe that He can remove our grave clothes and set us free to a new life?

Can we lift up our eyes to the mountains and look to our God, creator of the Heavens and the Earth, believing that He can - and will - help us?<sup>31</sup> And that in some future time, our lives can look vastly different than they do today? God is looking for a people of faith. “For without faith it is impossible to please God.” “The just shall live, not by sight, but by faith.” (2 Corinthians 5:7)

The truth is that, with God, all things are possible. He can make the desert to bloom and blossom like a Garden of Eden. I have seen it with my own eyes. If God can do this with this Land and this nation of Israel, can we not believe that He can also do it with us? For He is faithful to complete the good work He has started in us.<sup>32</sup>

God is in the process of transforming us from Jacob to Israel – from someone who grasps and sweats for the blessing, to someone who just receives it. From someone who only produces a little bud or a couple blossoms once in a while, to someone who is so rooted and grounded in Him that we bear abundant fruit – for our Father’s glory.

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<sup>29</sup> Romans 12:2

<sup>30</sup> Isaiah 61:3

<sup>31</sup> Psalm 121

<sup>32</sup> Philippians 1:6

It may not happen overnight – but we can watch for signs of progress. When Israel experienced a drought and Elijah said it would rain, he kept sending his servant out to look for even the tiniest rain cloud in the sky. We need to keep looking up – keep searching the sky for even the tiniest cloud that indicates rain is on its way. If we're not watching for it, we might miss it. God will give us signs along the way that He is with us, for us, and at work in our lives.

This week's Torah portion, Shmot, is aptly named; for names matter. It matters if we are Jacob or Israel. Parashat Shmot describes the very beginning of Israel's liberation from Egypt. We may only be starting our journey towards freedom and wholeness but may we not despise the day of small beginnings. May each day bring us ever closer to living the abundant, fruitful life that Yeshua came to give us: a life of joy, peace, love, righteousness, provision and purpose.

May we always keep in mind and heart that weeping may last for a night; but joy cometh in the morning. May we lift up those hands that hand down and exchange the heaviness for a garment of praise – praise to the Living God who has given us all things to enjoy! May we see the cup as half full and not half empty.

When we begin to praise God and give thanks in all circumstances; when we begin to give out love to everyone we can, whenever and wherever we can as much as we are able, then we break free of the self-constructed bars that are imprisoning us in bitterness and negativity. We are free to soar on wings as an eagle! “**Then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free.**” (John 8:32)

If we want to be like Israel and fill the world with fruit then we must do this one thing – remain attached to the root – God's unconditional love – and to give it out continually to others. “**Love is the fulfillment of the Torah.**” (Romans 13:10)

**“And we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and the one who remains in love remains in God and God remains in him.** (1 John 4:16)

Flowers cut off from their root will die. It is as simple as that. For the Christian Church, Paul has warned about this, “**Remember you do not support the root; the root supports you.**” (Romans 11:18) Just as the beautiful Shabbat cut flowers my children bring me on Friday afternoon to beautify my table, will inevitably look withered and



lifeless by the end of the week, so will we wither and die if we do not stay attached to the root. But if we will abide in Him, we will bear much fruit – even the fruit of the Spirit - and will have a beautiful life.

The only way to know God is to learn to love as He loves. “**The one who does not love does not know God, because God is love.**” (1 John 4:8) If we want to remain in God and Him in us, then we must love. “**No one has seen God. If we love one another God remains in us and his love is perfected in us.**” (1 John 4:12)

A true child of God must rise up from every place of degradation and slavery and find The Way to freedom. It is our life’s work to leave the place of ‘our Egypt’, to be liberated from our own personal state of exile, and then to go on to bring freedom to others.

**“I, YHVH {יהוה} have called you in righteousness, and will strengthen your hand; I will keep you and give you as a covenant to the people, as a light to the Gentiles, to open blind eyes, to bring out prisoners from the prison, those who sit in darkness from the prison house.”** (Isaiah 42:6-7)

We can arise out of the ashes, draw upon our nourishing root of El Shaddai, begin to bud and blossom, and finally to fill the world with fruit.

When the rebels of the children of Israel questioned Moses and Aaron’s authority, God caused Aaron’s rod to blossom.

If we will give our lives over to the Lord, He will also cause the dead sticks to bring forth buds and blossoms as a sign that He has chosen and appointed us. And these buds and blossoms will go on to become ripe, juicy fruit, not only for our own lives but for many others.



Almond blossom in Israel (Photo by Liat Nesher)

Israel's ultimate mission is to be a light unto the nations. (Isaiah 49:6) Our personal transformation from Jacob to Israel is intended to fulfill our mandate to be a Light to the World – to proclaim healing to the broken hearted and freedom to the captives.<sup>33</sup>

Prayer: Abba Father, thank you that in You I have hope, for You are the God of Hope. And You fill me with hope in believing. Help me to truly believe and have faith that with Your help, I can change and be transformed from a Jacob to Israel; that my life will take root downward and bear fruit upward. May I become more and more grounded in Your love, and may this unlimited love of Yours overflow into the lives of others. Cause the dead and dry, unfruitful areas of my life to bud and blossom, and eventually produce abundant fruit to nourish the world and to bring You glory. In Yeshua's name. Amen.

### Shmot Study Questions

1. Do you think that it was God's will for the children of Jacob to remain in Egypt? How does this relate to the call for aliyah today?
2. How do you think the Israelites, who were numerous, became enslaved by the Egyptians? Do you recognize any areas of your life where you have adopted a 'slave mentality' and allowed others to control or manipulate you to do their will?
3. Do you think that the mid-wives were justified in lying? When do you think it may be right to tell a lie or to disobey the authorities?
4. Why did God say He would kill the firstborn of Egypt? How is this a warning to the nations today about their position regarding Israel and the Jewish people?
5. Both Moses' mother and Yeshua's 'father' took radical steps to save their children's lives. Have you ever been in a position where you needed to let your child go and trust God to save them?
6. How do we see that Moses had a calling on his life from an early age to be a deliverer? Do you recognize a calling on your life or on your children? How do you feel as you wait to walk in the fullness of your destiny?
7. Have you been suffering with some kind of physical or emotional pain and crying out to God for a long time? Do you still believe that God hears your cries and cares about your pain? What difference does it make to our relationship with God that we are under the New Covenant?
8. When God finally calls Moses, he feels inadequate for the task. Do you ever feel incapable of doing what God has called you to do? What can you do about this sense of being inadequate?
9. What is God's true name? What does it mean and why is it important to know?
10. Why did God try to kill Moses on his way back to Egypt to deliver his people Israel? What is the significance of this to our own lives and calling?
11. How did the situation change for the Israelites after Moses came to deliver God's message to Pharaoh? Have you seen this happen in your own life as well? Share.

## About the Author:

Hannah Nesher grew up in an Orthodox Jewish home and received her education in a religious Hebrew school in Canada. During a crisis pregnancy, she came to know Jesus (Yeshua) as her Messiah and Savior. She now lives in Israel with her children and grandchildren, teaching the Jewish roots of the Christian faith.

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