

PARASHAT VAYERA

(HE APPEARED)

GENESIS 18:1-22:24

ETZ CHAYEEM HOO (HE IS A TREE OF LIFE)

Yeshua is a tree of life to those who take hold of Him, and those who support Him are praiseworthy. His ways are ways of pleasantness and all of His paths are shalom. Bring us back YHVH to You, and we shall come, renew our days as of old.

As we begin to study the Torah let us never forget that YESHUA THE MESSIAH is the Living Torah, the Torah-Word of Elohim made flesh. He is the way, the truth and the life — the Living Manna sent from heaven. Without Him living in our lives through the indwelling Presence of his Set-Apart/Kadosh Spirit (Who leads us into all truth and revelation) the Written Torah can become the dead letter of the law!

Haftorah Reading:

2 Kings 4:1-37

B'rit Chadashah:

Paul on Isaac: **Romans 9:6-11**

Paul on Isaac versus Ishmael: **Galatians 4:21-31**

On YHVH making promises to Abraham: **Hebrews 6:13-20**

On the faith of Abraham: **Hebrews 11:13-19; James 2:14-24**

On the ungodiness of Sodom: **2 Peter 2:4-11**

Outline of This Week's Parashah (Torah Portion):

- 18:1 Three Visitors and Abraham's Hospitality
- 18:9 YHVH Promises a Son to Abraham and Sarah
- 18:16 Sodom's Destruction Foretold; YHVH's Love For Abraham
- 18:23 Abraham Pleads for Mercy on Sodom for the Righteous' Sake
- 19:1 Lot in Sodom; Lot's Visit From the Angels and His Encounter With the Sodomites
- 19:15 Lot Is Saved Out of Sodom and Flees to a Cave
- 19:31 Lot's Incest With His Daughters: Moab and Ammon Are Born
- 20:1 Abraham Journeys to Gerar Where Sarah Is Abducted
- 20:14 Abimelech Appeases Abraham and Sarah Because of His Mistake
- 21:1 Isaac Is Born
- 21:9 Hagar and Ishmael Are Expelled From Abraham's Household
- 21:15 YHVH Saves Ishmael and Hagar From Starvation
- 21:22 Abraham Makes an Alliance With Abimelech
- 22:1 The Near Sacrifice of Isaac on the Altar (the Akeidah) at Mount Moriah
- 22:5 Abraham Declares That They Are Ascending the Mountain to Worship (the first place *worship* is mentioned in Scripture)
- 22:20 The Birth of Rebecca

Study Questions For This Week's Midrash (Torah Discussion):

1 **18:1**, *And YHVH appeared unto him*. This is a difficult passage for Jewish rabbis to explain, for in their thinking YHVH cannot appear to men, even though this is what the passage clearly says. To admit so would open the door of possibly to the veracity of the Christian claim that “Jesus is God in the flesh”—something unthinkable for most rabbis. So how do the rabbis not only explain YHVH’s appearing to Abraham in his tent door, but also his eating meat and dairy together—something forbidden in orthodox Judaism (verse 8)? Additionally, we read that YHVH was talking to Abraham and Sarah (verses 9–33). Orthodox Jewish *ArtScroll Stone Edition Chumash* states, for example, that the three messengers were really angels and the Being Scripture calls YHVH was actually only an angel speaking for YHVH. Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch in his commentary on this verse says even less. He spiritualizes away the literal (*pa-shat*) meaning of this text by saying that the Presence of YHVH is everywhere and because of Abraham’s righteousness he had a heightened awareness of YHVH’s Presence so he was able to spiritually perceive YHVH’s Presence. He gives no credence to the Scriptural reality that Abraham literally *saw, ate with, and talked to* YHVH. Baal HaTurim, a medieval Jewish Torah commentator, says that the three guests were the archangels Michael, Gabriel and Raphael. Rashi, the preeminent Jewish Torah commentator of modern times, also dodges the issue in his commentary by saying that the three guests were three angels, and that Torah’s wording to imply that YHVH literally appeared to Abraham and Sarah is a scribal error.

We can learn much about the Jewish rabbis’ blindness to their Messiah from their treatment of this subject. We can also learn much from the all-too-human trait of conforming the Word of Elohim to fit our preconceived biases. Do the Jews have a monopoly on this activity, or can we cite examples of Christian theologians doing the same things to justify their departure from the Hebrew roots of their faith?

Define the words exegesis (objectivity) and eisegesis (subjectivity) when it comes to interpreting the Word of YHVH. If we are to draw closer to YHVH in spirit and in truth—as we are encouraged to do so in John 4:23–24—it is imperative that we allow his Word to conform us, not the other way around!

2 **18:1ff**, *He sat in the tent door*. Let’s discuss Abraham’s hospitality. Abraham had just been circumcised. Jewish tradition says he was in the third day of his circumcision when the three guests appeared to Abraham. Painkillers, as we know them, did not exist then. The men of Shechem were still incapacitated after three days and unable to defend themselves thus succumbing to the sword of Simeon and Levi (Gen 34:25), yet Abraham was entertaining guests and throwing a dinner party—at age 90, no less! What does this say about Abraham’s selfless and generous character? Why did YHVH and his two angelic comrades choose to visit Abraham just after his being circumcised? Had he attained a higher level or state of righteousness after having been physically circumcised? He was physically circumcised, but would they have visited him had he not been circumcised in heart as well? How important is physical circumcision to YHVH? (Read Jer 9:25–26 and Ezek 44:9, which is a prophecy that seems to refer to the “royal priesthood” of the redeemed believers mentioned in 1 Pet 2:9.) Joshua 5:5 says that all the Israelites were circumcised before coming out of Egypt. The Israelites and those with them were required to be circumcised before they could partake of Passover (Exod 12:43–38).

3 **18:8**, *And he took butter and milk and the calf ... and set it before them ... and they did eat*. Torah prohibits the practice of cooking, boiling, baking or roasting a calf or kid in its mother’s milk (Exod 23:19; 34:26; Deut 14:21). Most rabbinic Jews have taken this to mean that the biblical dietary laws prohibit eating dairy and meat together at the same meal. So no cheese burgers! Yet when Genesis 18:8 is pointed out to them, they insist that Abraham served the milk and the calf at two separate meals in order to not violate the Torah, though this is not what the passage says. So if Abraham kept the Torah, which Genesis 26:5 says he did, then how are we to interpret this passage? There are two other possible explanations for the Torah prohibitions against “cooking a kid in its mother’s milk.” This law could be a prohibition against eating meat from an unweaned animal such as veal, or against using the milk of a cow, goat or sheep in which to cook its offspring. Can you think of some other ways to explain this possible contradiction in Scripture?

4 **18:18; 22:18**, *All the nations of the earth*. How were all the nations of the earth to be blessed in Abraham?

5 **18:19**, *The way of YHVH, to do justice and judgment.* To what is YHVH referring here? Is he referring to the Torah, something some Christian Bible teachers say did not exist before Moses and Mount Sinai? (See also Gen 26:5.) How does Scripture define these terms and how do they relate to the Torah? Genesis 18:19 says,

“For I [YHVH] know him [Abraham], that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep **the way** of YHVH, to do **justice** and **judgment**; that YHVH may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken.” (emphasis added)

Let’s examine the three highlighted words above:

- ☞ “The way” is the Hebrew word *derech* (*Strong’s* H1870) and is used in the following places:
 - Blessed are the undefiled in the way [derech], who walk in the law [Torah] of YHVH. (Ps 119:1)
 - I will run the way [derech] of the commandments ... (Ps 119:32)
 - Teach me, O YHVH, the way [derech] of thy statutes ... (Ps 119:33)
- ☞ “Justice” is the Hebrew word *tsedaqah* (*Strong’s* H6666) meaning “righteousness.” Here is an example of its usage:
 - ... for all thy commandments are righteousness ... (Ps 119:172)
- ☞ “Judgments” is the Hebrew word *mishpatim* (*Strong’s* H4941) meaning “ordinances” referring to YHVH’s moral and ethical laws as embodied in the last six of the ten commandments, which teach righteousness in one’s business and personal relationships.
 - ...[YHVH’s] righteous judgments [mishpat]. (Ps 119:7)
 - I have chosen the way [derech] of truth: thy judgments [mishpat] have I laid before me. (Ps 119:30)
 - Thy word is true from the beginning; and every one of thy righteous judgments [mishpat] endures forever. (Ps 119:160)

6 **18:20**, *Their sin [Sodom and Gomorrah’s] is very grievous.* What was the sin of Sodom? Genesis 19:5 gives us the answer. The men of Sodom were so morally perverted that Paul says of such a human condition in Romans 1:24–29,

Wherefore Elohim also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves: who changed the truth of Elohim into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. For this cause Elohim gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature, and likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet. And even as they did not like to retain Elohim in their knowledge, Elohim gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness ...

Ezekiel 16:49 speaks of the symptoms of a society that has given itself over to a spirit of sodomy (homosexuality) because it has become abundantly wealthy, proud and obsessed with idleness (entertainment and pleasure). As a result it has become inwardly focused and self-absorbed, which leads to an obsession with self-gratification instead of helping the poor and needy. Discuss the parallels between Sodom’s society before it was judged and Western decadence and the moral and spiritual decline we see occurring in America. Have we become obsessed with the concept of pride—especially since September 11, 2001? How many bumper stickers have you seen expressing the idea of “pride” since 9/11? And are we, as a culture, obsessed with “gay” (homosexual or sodomite) rights and agendas?

7 **18:23–33**, This is the first lengthy exchange between Elohim and man recorded in Scripture. It is a prayer of intercession on behalf of the righteous in Sodom. Could this exchange have occurred had Abraham not already been walking in faith, been circumcised in flesh and in heart and been following Torah (18:19)? Is

this a pattern for us to follow to have intimate relations with our Heavenly Father? What does this teach us about the role of righteous human prayer-warrior intercessors and how YHVH “consults” with humans before pouring out his judgments upon the wicked? Is the Elohim of the “Old” Testament an Elohim of wrath and judgment or an Elohim of mercy, grace and compassion, as Scripture teaches?

8 19:1ff, *Lot sat in the gate of Sodom*. In the end times, YHVH tells his saints to flee spiritual Babylon (Rev 18:4) in order to escape the plagues that will come upon her because of her sin. Lot was secure in wicked Sodom to the point he was a city leader (he sat in the gate) and tried to appease the Sodomites by giving them his virgin daughters for sexual exploitation. There is peril in complacent security. Lot barely escaped Sodom with his life from the fires of Elohim’s judgment. His wife did not make it. What can we learn from Sodom and could there ever come a time when we will have to flee the spiritual Sodom in which we find ourselves? Is it possible to flee our “Sodom” without physically leaving it?

9 21:1ff, *YHVH visited Sarah*. YHVH had promised Abraham a son years before. Suddenly at age 90 did YHVH just drop a son into Sarah’s womb, or during the intervening years, year after year, decade after decade did Abraham and Sarah have to walk out their faith by attempting repeatedly to become pregnant, each time failing, until finally, at the appointed time it happened? What does this tell us about the faith-walk? About overcoming doubt and unbelief? About trusting the Word and promises of YHVH? About patience? Often we don’t get our prayers answered immediately and we give up. Compare your faith with that of Abraham’s.

10 22:1, *Elohim did tempt Abraham*. Trials and temptations show the disposition of our character and metal of the human heart, whether it is righteous or unrighteous, pure or impure. When tested do you whine, grumble, accuse others, defend yourself, backbite and resort to slander? Or do you submit to the purifying fires of YHVH’s spiritual forge? Abraham was tested ten times. Sacrificing Isaac was the last and most severe test. His faith and obedience was steady. When was the last time you faced such a test? What was your response? Did you pass or fail the test?

This chapter recounting the near sacrifice of Isaac—called the *Akeidah* or *binding of Isaac*—is full of prophetic allusions pointing to the ministry of Yeshua the Messiah, the Seed of Abraham, whose first coming was still 2000 years in the future. Read this chapter and explain how the following things prophetically point to Yeshua:

- verse 2: Of which famous verse in the Gospels does this remind you?
- verse 2: *Moriah*
- verse 2: *burnt offering*
- verse 4: *on the third day*
- verse 4: *saw the place afar off*
- verse 6: *laid [the wood] upon Isaac, his son*
- verse 8: *Elohim will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering*
- verse 9: *and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood*
- verse 11: *the angel of YHVH*
- verse 13: *a ram*
- verse 13: *caught in the thicket*
- verse 13: *horns*
- verse 18: *in your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed* (hint: see Gal 3:16).

For a full explanation of the prophetic meaning of these terms, please read the two articles following this section.

11 22:4, *On the third day*. See the study below on the prophetic implications of *the third day*.

12 **22:13**, *A ram caught in a thicket by his horns.* See the study below on the prophetic implications of the two horns of the ram and on how the binding of Isaac (called in Hebrew, the *Akeidah*) pointed prophetically to Yeshua.

A STUDY OF GENESIS 22 & THE THREE TRUMPETS (SHOFAROT)

by Ya'acov Natan Lawrence

In Jewish thought, Scripture speaks of three trumpets blasts (or shofar blasts): the first, last and the final or great trumpet (or shofar). The first shofar sounded on Shavuot (Pentecost) at Mount Sinai (Exod 19:19), the last Shofar blast would occur on Yom Teruah (the Day of Shofar Blasting) and the final or great shofar blast announcing the Jubilee Year would occur on Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement, Lev 25:9).

The first and last shofar blasts relate to the two horns of the ram caught in the thicket on Mount Moriah (Gen 22:13). The ram is a prophetic shadow-picture of Yeshua who would become the Lamb whose sacrifice would pay to redeem sinful man. The thicket represents the human sinfulness (Matt 13:22). Humanity is entangled in the thicket of sin and unable to get free. Yeshua the Messiah, is the Lamb (Ram) slain from the foundation of the world (Rev 13:8), who, while hanging on the cross, wore a crown of thorns.

The “ram caught in the thicket” in Genesis 22 is a prophetic picture of Yeshua carrying the sins of humanity while dying on the cross. Scripture says that the sins of man were to be laid upon the Messiah (Isa 53:6). Furthermore, in Matthew 13, in Yeshua’s Parable of the Sower, we see that some of the seed was cast into the thorns, which Yeshua explained represents the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches that choke out the Word of YHVH. These references to thorns and thicket are a picture of sin. The crown of thorns Yeshua wore while on the cross is a picture men’s sins.

Scripture says that the wages of sin is death (Rom 6:23). In Genesis 22, Isaac was about to die, but the ram caught in the thicket that YHVH provided was substituted for Isaac. The ram that “saved” Isaac was a picture of Yeshua whose name means “salvation.”

The horns of the ram are prophetically symbolic, as well. In Hebraic thought, the left horn, corresponding to the right hand of YHVH, signifies mercy and grace. Furthermore, the left horn of the redemptive ram signifies the purpose of the first coming of Messiah Yeshua as the Suffering Savior (or Messiah Son of Yoseph). At his first coming, Yeshua brought mercy and grace—not quenching a smoking flax or breaking a bruised reed—and like a meek and quiet lamb he was led to the slaughter (Isa 53:7; 42:3; Matt 12:20). The right horn of the ram represents judgment. In Hebraic thought, Elohim’s right hand is the hand of power, might and judgment. Thus, this horn represents the second coming of Messiah, who currently is seated at the right hand of the Father (Acts 2:32–33). At his second coming, Yeshua will come to the earth in power as King of kings to judge the living and the dead, and to rule the earth with a rod of iron for a thousand years.

That is why the first shofar blast (representing the left horn of the ram) is sounded on Shavuot (Pentecost), for it represents YHVH’s grace and mercy upon his people from Abraham until the second coming of the Messiah. This period represents the time YHVH has given people to repent of their sin and return to him.

The summer months from Shavuot (Pentecost) in the spring to Yom Teruah (the Day of Shofar Blowing) in the fall speaks prophetically of the time period between Yeshua’s first and second coming.

The ten-day period between the fall festivals of Yom Teruah and Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement) prophetically pictures a time of judgment to come upon the earth prior to Yeshua’s return to earth. Between Yom Teruah and Yom Kippur (in Jewish tradition called the Ten Days of Awe) occurs the great tribulation, which is the final time for YHVH’s people to “get their act together” spiritually and repent of their sins so they may be counted worthy to escape the final judgment. This day of Elohim’s wrath occurs on or near Yom Kippur during which time the blast of the great or final shofar will sound and Messiah will return to this earth to judge the living and the dead.

Genesis 22:4 says that Abraham saw the “place” (i.e. Mount Moriah) “afar off” and “on the third day.” According to rabbinic biblical interpretation, this is scriptural prophetic code for something significant. Mount Moriah the place where the future Jewish Temple and Altar of Sacrifice were to be built. This is the same area where

in the future Yeshua's crucifixion would occur. So Abraham saw "afar off" (timewise) by faith the place and work of the death of Messiah the Lamb of Elohim and Redeemer.

"On the third day" signifies two things. First, a day in Scripture, in this instance, symbolizes 1000 years, and so it represents the third one-thousand-year period from the time of Abraham (approximately 1872 B.C., according to the first-century Jewish historian Josephus and Archbishop Ussher's chronology). Messiah would come as the Sacrificial Lamb in three days or in the third millennia from Abraham's time. Yeshua was born and died in the first millennia B.C., or the third millennia from Abraham.

Second, the phrase, "third day," can represent the time or millennia of Messiah's second coming, as well, as we shall see in our study below.

THE THIRD DAY—A PROPHETIC PICTURE

by Ya'acov Natan Lawrence

In Genesis 22:4, we read that, "Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off"; that is, the place where he was to sacrifice his son Isaac as YHVH had commanded him. Jewish Bible commentators recognize this place to have been Mount Moriah, known today as the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. But let us focus on the phrase, "the third day," which we shall see is significant prophetically in how it is used throughout Scripture.

In Exodus 19:11, YHVH tells the Israelites to consecrate themselves and wash their clothes for two days, then "be ready against the third day, for the third day YHVH will come down in the sight of all the people upon Mount Sinai." Every "jot and tittle" of YHVH's Word is significant for our learning and edification. Let's not read over the details too quickly lest we miss some wonderful nuggets of truth hidden therein! Exodus 19:1 says that the Israelites arrived at Sinai in the third month. With the help of rabbinic tradition and a little deductive reasoning, we can determine that YHVH most likely gave this order to the Israelites on the third day of the third month. Rabbinic tradition also teaches that this third day—the day YHVH gave the Ten Commandments—was on Shavuot (the Feast of Weeks/Pentecost).

Now let's connect the dots. Shavuot and the giving of the Ten Commandments was a day when YHVH, for the first time in recorded biblical history, sounded the heavenly shofar—known in rabbinic circles as the first shofar. This relates back to the ram caught in the thicket by his horns on Mount Moriah where Abraham went to offer up Isaac. Abraham "on the third day" could see "the place" (i.e., Mount Moriah) afar off (Gen 22:4).

But the prophetic implications of the "third day" in Exodus 19:1 is analogous to Abraham's "third day." What is the connection? Abraham saw in prophetic type the death of the Redeemer on Mount Moriah when he sacrificed the substitutionary lamb in place of Isaac. Likewise, the Israelites were living out a prophecy that pointed to the same time when Messiah would come as the Living Torah or the Word of YHVH in flesh form (John 1:1–14), which culminated on the Feast of Shavuot (Pentecost). The "third day" reference for both Abraham and the Israelites has the same relevance, for both were living in the second century B.C. (i.e. before the birth of Yeshua, the Messiah) who was born near the beginning of the first century B.C.—or the third millennia, or third day prophetically from both the time of Abraham and the Israelites.

We find another "third day" reference in the Book of Hosea. As Yeshua, the Living Torah, came on the third day, so he will return on the third day—or, in the third millennia—after his first coming. That is, he came in the first millennium of our common era, and we have just passed into the third millennia of our common era and are now in the twenty-first century. According to prophecy, Messiah will return in this third millennia, or third day. In Hosea 6:1–3 we read,

Come, and let us return unto YHVH: for he has torn, and he will heal us; he has smitten, and he will bind us up. After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight. Then shall we know, if we follow on to know YHVH: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth.

This is a prophecy about the restoration of his people Israel in marriage covenant to him. But it is also refer-

ring to the resurrection of the saints, or the bride of Messiah, who will participate in the marriage supper of the Lamb of YHVH. The saints are Israelites (Rom 4:16; 9:9,11; Gal 3:7,9,14,28,29; Eph 2:11–19).” Then we read in Luke 13:32,

Yeshua said, “... Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I shall be perfected.”

Yeshua was speaking of his ministry on earth at his first coming as well as his being resurrected on the third day. But, the “third day” is also a reference to his second coming in the third millennia or third day after his first coming. As he was “perfected” on the third day and raised from the dead, the saints will be “perfected” or resurrected at his second coming in the third millennia.

The Jewish sages teach that the Ten Commandments were given at Mount Sinai on the sixth day of the third month on Shabbat after two days of preparation. That is, the Children of Israel had two days to prepare and on the third day YHVH would give them his law from Mount Sinai. Similarly, Yeshua has had his people preparing themselves for 2000 years and in the third thousand-year period (or the seventh thousand year since creation—i.e. the Shabbat millennium) Messiah, will return to resurrect his people after which the 1000-year Sabbatical Millennium will commence.

We find another “third day” passage in John 2:1 where we read, “And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee ...” This is a prophetic statement referring to the marriage supper of the Yeshua the Lamb to occur after the second coming of Yeshua on “the third day” or the third 1000-year period after his first coming.

Now let’s connect the concept of the third day with ancient Israel and the early Christian church.

The Book of Exodus reveals that even after two days of preparation, ancient Israel was still not ready (spiritually) to receive the Torah from YHVH. On Shavuot, at Mount Sinai, though YHVH entered into a marriage covenant with the Children of Israel (Jer 31:32), they were not ready to live up to the terms of that covenant.

Those terms, simply stated, involved being faithful and obedient only to YHVH, Israel’s spiritual marriage partner, and to his instruction in righteousness, the Torah. This Israel quickly demonstrated they were not willing to do, for they had hardly said “I do” in their marriage vows (see Exod 19:8; 24:3,7) when they turned their hearts from YHVH and began worshipping the golden calf where they took the pagan worship practices of Egypt and applied them to the worship of YHVH (Exod 31:1–8).

Between the time of the Feasts of Shavuot (Pentecost) and Yom Teruah (Day of Shofar Blowing) when Moses received the second tablets of stone from YHVH containing the Ten Commandments, the Israelites, the bride of YHVH, prepared herself not only to receive YHVH’s instructions again, but this time to be faithful to her marriage vows. This Israel did. She remained faithful to YHVH for approximately 38 years in the wilderness after which she entered the Promised Land and “stayed the course” until after the death of Joshua.

Similarly, Messianic Israel of the first century A.D. received the Torah on the fleshly tablets of their hearts written by the finger of the Spirit of Elohim on the day of Pentecost. But starting about A.D. 70 with the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem and continuing up through the Second Jewish Revolt of A.D. 135 until the time of Roman Emperor Constantine (in the fourth century), the first century bride of Messiah had for the most part abandoned YHVH’s Torah-commandments. During this time, she divorced herself from her Hebrew Torah-based roots and turned to a form of golden calf worship when she abandoned the Sabbath, and borrowed from the pagans the notion of Sunday worship; when she substituted for YHVH’s divinely appointed festivals her own holidays she borrowed from the heathens (e.g., Christmas, Easter, etc.); and when she replaced YHVH’s Torah with many other pagan practices and traditions.

In our day, is not YHVH calling out a remnant from Christianity who are leaving behind the pagan traditions of golden calf worship and returning to the ancient blessed paths of YHVH’s Torah-instructions in righteousness? Does not the Book of Revelation speak of a group of the end-time saints who will say “I do” to YHVH, and whose identifying mark is their faith in Yeshua the Messiah (i.e., the gospel message), and yet who faithfully keep YHVH’s Torah-commandments (Rev 12:17 and 14:12)?

Are these remnant redeemed believers not preparing themselves for the second coming of Messiah at the Day of the Shofar Blowing (Yom Teruah) when Yeshua, the Living Torah, will return for his bride—the saints, or sanctified ones, of YHVH? As the Children of Israel entered into the Promised Land under the leadership of Joshua, so

YHVH's spiritual bride will enter into the spiritual Promised Land of the Millennium and the Kingdom of YHVH under the leadership of Yeshua the Messiah.

HAFTORAH READING—2 KINGS 4:1-37

Service to YHVH, Faith In YHVH Result in Miracles From YHVH

- 1 According to Jewish tradition, this Haftorah portion is coupled with Parashat Vayera because of the similar qualities of character shared between Abraham and Elisha and the providential occurrences that accompanied their charitable acts. Discuss the acts of loving kindness exhibited by both of these great men of Elohim, how they brought relief and life to others in time of need, and how YHVH honored their acts of service and obedience through miraculous provision.
- 2 **4:1**, *A certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets*. Jewish tradition says that this woman was the widow of Obadiah the prophet, the same one who hid the prophets of YHVH from Jezebel's murderous wrath in the time of Ahab, king of Israel (1 Kgs 18:4-16). The *Targum* (Aramaic translation and commentary on the Tanakh) states that the woman's burden of debt was a result of her husband risking his life and spending his fortune to feed the 100 prophets in attempts to save them (*ArtScroll Stone Edition Chumash*, p. 1134; *Soncino Pentateuch*, p. 76). Scripture considers debt as something to be avoided and a curse (Deut 28:44) that brings one into servitude and bondage (Prov 22:7, "The borrower is servant to the lender."). Yet, there are times that for righteous reasons or in emergency situations we may find ourselves in debt. Debts are to be repaid. What hope does this scriptural account give for those who are in this situation? (Read Pss 34:19 and 37:24.)
- 3 Compare the story of the widow woman with what Yeshua taught on forgiveness in Matthew 18:21-35. Because of sin we are all indebted spiritually to YHVH and unable to pay the debts we owe, except we pay with our lives. When we are at the end and there is nothing left to pay, who have we to turn to? Who will redeem us from our spiritual debtors? What is his name and the meaning of it? In a *Strong's Concordance*, look up Hebrew word number 4899 and 4886. What is the meaning of the word and how does it relate to oil, and to the Redeemer? How does this story in 2 Kings point to Yeshua?
- 4 **4:2**, *Creditor is come to take unto him my two sons to be slaves*. The widow women lived in the region of the Northern Kingdom of the House of Israel. What could "two sons" be a prophetic allegory speaking about? By this time the Northern Kingdom was like a widow who had lost her husband (YHVH) because of her spiritual harlotry. Who were the two principal tribes of the Northern Kingdom? How many Scriptures speak of Ephraim and Manasseh being sold into slavery because of their sin debt? How many passages in Isaiah alone (culminating in chapter 53) speak about YHVH Messiah, the Anointed One, redeeming them out of slavery? We discuss this issue in the previous several Haftorah discussions. (Go back and review.)
- 5 **4:8-37**, Shunem was a city in the territory of Issachar in the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Both the Parashah for this week and the Haftorah speak about the near death/death of two sons and the near resurrection/resurrection of these two sons. From the discussion in the above Parashah about the binding of Isaac on Mount Moriah we see how this is a picture of Yeshua, the sacrificial Lamb. Can we see a similar picture in the resurrection of the Shumammite woman's son? Or perhaps we can look at it from another angle: Could the dead son represent us in our spiritually unregenerated state being saved by the life-giving power of Yeshua our Redeemer and Savior? (Discuss these implications.)
- 6 **4:33-35**, Depending on one's take on the allegorical implications of this passage, the resurrected son could either represent Yeshua being resurrected from the grave, or the saints being given spiritual life by Yeshua, the Set-Apart (*kadosh*) Man of Elohim of which Elisha could be a type (verse 9). Which scenario seems more probable? Either or both? (Discuss.) Either way, look at the intimate contact the Man of Elohim had with the dead son in being an instrument in YHVH's hands to bring him back to life. Look at the Father's love for both Yeshua, his Son, in resurrecting him from the dead and us, his children, in raising

us from our state of spiritual deadness and giving us new life in the Yeshua the Messiah, the Savior and Anointed One. (Read, again, John 3:16–17; 5:24–26; Rom 5:8; 1 John 3:16; 4:9–10. Now compare this with 2 Cor 5:17 and Gal 2:20.)

