

PARASHAT B'REISHEET

(IN THE BEGINNING)

GENESIS 1:1–6:8

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

Isaiah 42:5–43:10

B'rit Chadashah

On the Creation of the World: **John 1:1–16; Colossians 1:14–17; Hebrews 1:1–3; 11:1–6**

On the Tree of Life: **Revelation 2:7**

On the Restored Eden of the New Jerusalem: **Revelation 21:1–6, 22:1–5, 14**

On Yeshua Being the Light of the New Jerusalem: **Revelation 21:23; 22:5**

On Yeshua, the Second Adam: **Romans 5:12–21**

On Yeshua Restoring Redeemed Men to Glory He Once Had: **1 Corinthians 15:35–58**

On the Creation of Marriage: **Matthew 19:4–6; Ephesians 5:21–33; 1 Timothy 2:11–15**

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

- 1:1 In the Beginning and the Six Days of Creation
- 2:1 The Seventh Day Sabbath (Shabbat)
- 2:8 A Description of the Garden of Eden
- 2:15 YHVH Places Man in the Garden
- 2:21 The Creation of Woman
- 3:1 The Serpent Deceives Man to Sin
- 3:14 Man Is Punished for His Sin (Rebellion) Against YHVH
- 3:23 Man Is Banished From the Garden
- 4:1 Cain and Abel, Cain Murders Abel
- 4:17 Cain's Descendants, Eve Gives Birth to Seth
- 5:1 The Genealogies of Man; the Ten Generations From Adam to Noah
- 6:1 The Pre-Flood World

Introduction to the Book of Genesis/B'reisheet

The name *Genesis* comes from the Greek and means “beginning.” The Hebrew name for the same book is *B'reisheet* meaning “in the beginning” and is taken from the first three Hebrew words at the beginning of the book. It reveals truth pertaining to the beginning of YHVH's creation including the universe, light and darkness, the earth, man and good and evil.

Genesis is the first of the five books of the law or Torah. Genesis, along with the next four books of the Bible, are called the *Torah* (meaning “YHVH's instructions” in righteousness), the *Chumash* and the *Pentateuch*. Under the divine inspiration of the Spirit of Elohim, Moses wrote the Torah, which is a compilation of the history of historical facts about early man and the nation of Israel, as well as recorded instructions from YHVH to his people, Israel.

The Book of Genesis forms not only the introduction to the Bible, but the foundation for it. It is foundational to understanding the rest of Scripture, for it answers the universal questions as to the origin of man (and the rest of the creation), his purpose on earth, and introduces the Creator of man and begins to explain man's relationship to his Creator. We learn about marriage and family. The concepts of good and evil and obedience and rebellion to YHVH are introduced. The concept of truth is introduced and sin is defined as is YHVH's plan of redemption for sinful man. Genesis reveals that the redemption of sinful man involves a Redeemer and a relationship with Elohim, the Creator, through a covenantal relationship with the nation of Israel comprised of people who are the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

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

1 **1:1**, *In the beginning/B'reisheet*. The first letter (which is also a word) in this phrase is **ב**/*bet* that pictographically means *tent* or *house*. The last word in the Torah is *Israel* (Deut 34:12). Additionally, Rabbi Baal HaTurim, a prominent Jewish rabbi of the middle ages, notes in his Torah commentary that the Hebrew letters of this word can be rearranged to spell the Hebrew word *ba-yeet rosh* meaning “first, chief or head of the house,” which he says is an allusion to the Temple or House of Elohim. What is the underlying message Torah is trying to tell us here? Who is the (whole) House of Israel and who or what is the Temple of Elohim spiritually? (1 Cor 3:16; 6:19; Eph 2:19–21; Rev. 3:12 and Rom 4:16; 9:8,11; Gal 3:7,9,14,28–29; 1 Pet 2:5). What is the relationship between the Israel of Deuteronomy 34:12 (the last word in the Torah) and the nation of Israel Paul says all redeemed believers must be grafted into and the nation of which a redeemed believer must become a citizen? (Rom 11:13–24; Eph 2:11–19)

2 **1:1**, John 1:1–3 states that Yeshua was with Elohim before the creation of the world and that he was that same Word which created all things. Elsewhere in the Apostolic Scriptures we find stated that Yeshua, who was the Word of Elohim in flesh form, created all things (John 1:10; 1 Cor 8:6; Eph 3:9; Col 1:16–17; Heb 1:2,10). We also find the apostolic writers referred to Yeshua as the Alpha and the Omega (or *Aleph* and *Tav*, to use the names of the Hebrew letters) (Rev 1:8,11; 21:6; 22:13). Can we confirm from the Hebrew Scriptures the claims made in the Apostolic Scriptures about Yeshua? Non-believer, Jewish Rabbi Michael Munk from his book, *The Wisdom In the Hebrew Alphabet*, teaches us that,

The definite article is expressed in Hebrew by prefixing the letter **ה** [*bey*] to a word. Often, for extra emphasis, the word **אֵת** (or **אֶת**) [*aleph-tav*] is employed in addition to the prefix. Comprising the first and last letter of the Aleph Be[t], **אֵת/aleph tav** alludes to completion and perfection. Thus the Torah uses the emphatic article in describing the beginning of Creation:

בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ

B'reisheet bara Elohim et [aleph-tav] ha-shamayim v'et [aleph-tav] ha-eretz [transliteration added]

In the beginning of [Elohim's] creating the heavens and the earth (Genesis 1:1).

This alludes to the fact that the universe was created in complete perfection, “from *aleph* to *tav*.” (p. 34)

Who was the complete and perfect One who redeemed believers know as the Beginning and the End, the *Aleph* and the *Tav* (Alpha and Omega)?

Hebrew is a pictographic language; that is, the individual letters of the Hebrew *alphabet* are pictorial in nature and represent picture-concepts. This concept is demonstrated by author Frank Seekins in his book,

Hebrew Word Pictures – How Does the Hebrew Alphabet Reveal Prophetic Truths? In his book, Seekins uses the Paleo Hebrew alphabet, which is more pictographic in nature than the commonly used (modern) square script. The information contained in the book is verified and promoted by the Hebrew linguistic scholar, Dr. Danny Ben-Gigi (www.hebrewworld.com).

For example, Seekins shows that the Hebrew word for *father* is *av* which is comprised of the Hebrew letters *aleph* א and *bet/vet* ב where *aleph* means *leader* or *first* and *bet/vet* means *household* or *family*. Therefore, the word אב *av/father* in Hebrew means *head of the household/family*. Using this method of prophetic interpretation of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet, what does the word אבט *aleph-tav* mean? *Aleph* א means *head* or *chief* while *tav* ט means *sign, seal* or *covenant*. So *aleph* and *tav* as the first and last letters of the Hebrew alphabet together literally means *head/chief of the covenant* [between man and Elohim]. How does this relate to Yeshua who the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews calls “the Author and Finisher of our faith” (12:2)? Relate this to Yeshua’s statement in Matthew 5:17,

Think not that I am come to destroy the Torah, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, **but to fulfill** [or **to fill to the full**].

Or to what Paul says in Romans 10:4,

For Messiah is the **aim** [or **final goal, end result**] of the Torah for righteousness to every one that believes.

3 1:3, We see that at the beginning of Elohim’s creative activities the earth was in a state of darkness and chaos (verse 2). His first creative act was to introduce light into that system of darkness and confusion (verse 3). What can we learn spiritually about the nature of light and darkness from these few, terse statements? Figuratively and spiritually what does light and darkness represent? Relate this to John’s statement in John 1:5 and 3:19–20.

Here is a brief list of Scriptures relating to the subject and nature of spiritual light: The prophet Malachi refers to the Messiah as “the Sun of Righteousness” who will “arise with healing in his wings” (Mal 4:2; see also Ezek 43:2 where the radiance of the sun upon the earth and the glory of Elohim are poetically juxtaposed). The Son of Man (another name for Messiah Yeshua) is described as having a countenance as bright as the sun in its strength (Rev 1:16). Scripture tells that YHVH Elohim is clothed in a garment of light (Ps 104:2) and his face radiates light (Pss 89:15; 90:8). Yeshua not only is called, but also refers to himself as, the Light of the world, shining in the darkness (John 1:1–14; 8:12; 9:5). Spiritual light is the antithesis of spiritual darkness (Prov 4:18; Isa 5:20). Spiritual light reveals spiritual truth; light and truth are synonymous and originate from YHVH, the source of light (Ps 43:3). YHVH’s spiritual light illuminates man’s spiritual path (Ps 119:105), and leads one to YHVH’s exalted and spiritual hill or dwelling place (Ps 43:3). Yeshua, the Light of the world, is the way to the Father (John 14:6). The way of spiritual light and truth is straight (Isa 42:16; 45:2; Matt 3:3; Mark 1:3; Luke 3:4–5; John 1:23; Matt 7:13–14). Redeemed believers are to reflect the spiritual Light of Yeshua in their lives to the dark world around them (Acts 13:47; 1 Pet 2:9; Eph 5:8; 1 Thess 5:5; 1 John 1:7). People are attracted to spiritual light (Isa 49:6; 60:3). There is first spiritual darkness, which is pierced when the spiritual light shines through (Gen 1:2–3; 2 Cor 4:6; 2 Pet 1:19). Spiritual light produces a beautiful and full spectrum of spiritual fruitfulness in the redeemed believer’s life (Eph 5:8–14; Gal 5:22–23). Redeemed believers are to be lights shining the light of truth on their dark surroundings (Matt. 5:14-16).

4 1:3, *Let there be light.* The word for *light* is the Hebrew word אור (*ohr*, *Strong’s* H216; *TWOT* 52a), which is the generic term that the Tanakh (Old Testament or OT) uses for *light*. It can refer to light in a general sense as in opposition to darkness (Gen 1:3), it can refer to figurative light as in opposition to figurative darkness (Isa 5:20), to daylight (Gen 1:3), to the light given by the heavenly bodies (Isa. 30:26), to man-made lights such as the menorah in the Tabernacle (Num 4:9,16; 8:2), to literal eyesight (Ps 38:10), to the power of life over death (Ps 56:13), to the light of Elohim’s face indicating his approval (Ps 89:15; Num 6:25), to truth (Ps 43:3), to the Word of Elohim (Ps 119:105; Isa 8:20), and to YHVH’s Torah-law (Prov. 6:23).

What was the nature of that first light that YHVH created in Genesis one? Consider this: The sun, moon

and stars were not made until the fourth day (verse 14). So if the earth was not bathed in the light of the sun for the first three days, what was the source and nature of the light that covered the earth from day one to day three? Relate this to John's statements in John 1:1–14. What is the light that will shine in the New Jerusalem (Rev 21:23). How does this relate to Malachi 4:2 and Revelation 1:16? To whom are these referring to?

5 1:3, As we have already noted, the Hebrew word for *light* as used in Genesis 1:3–5 is spelled אור/*aleph-vav-resb*. Yet the first time this same Hebrew word is used in verses 14 referring to the physical light of the sun, the word is spelled without the letter ו/*vav* (i.e. אר/*aleph-resb*). This anomaly does not come through in our English texts, yet its abbreviated spelling is full of spiritual significance, according to the Jewish sages who have been studying these passages for thousands of years. What is the hidden meaning here? What we see here is a case of the *complete* or *full spelling* of a Hebrew word versus *the incomplete* or *defective spelling*. The Hebrew meaning of this is that the light that shone for the first three days of creation was a perfect and full light, while that which shone when the sun and moon were created was a less perfect or defective light. If the Word of YHVH (the pre-incarnate Yeshua) was that perfect and complete light (as we have discovered above) then what happened to that light that we await? But why was the original supernal light of Genesis chapter one hidden away and replaced by the sun, moon and stars? Rashi, the preeminent Jewish Torah commentator of the last one thousand years states,

The Holy One, blessed be He, perceived that it was improper for [the wicked] to make use of the [primeval] light, so He hid it for the benefit of the righteous **in the time to come** [See Rashi's commentary on Gen. 1:4, emphasis added].

Where did he hide the light? asked Rabbi Dov Ber. He answered: The great light of creation was the light of Torah. At first, the light was available to all, but God saw that few people are worthy of enjoying it, so **He clothed it in the Torah**, and there it remains hidden. (emphasis added)

We bemoan the lack of that primeval light that made the sun pale by its spiritual brilliance, and long for the promised day when it will glow for us again. But now it is gone. The light is there. It is available. It awaits the diligent, indefatigable efforts of the righteous to unearth it from between the lines and letters and wisdom of the Torah. The righteous of the future—all ages of man—**can find the light in Torah**, for the Torah is its embodiment” (*ArtScroll Bereishis/Genesis Torah Commentary*, pp. xxxi–xxxii). (emphasis added)

The Baal HaTurim states in his commentary on Genesis 1:4 that,

The gematria [the numerical values of the Hebrew letters] of this phrase [*the light*/ אֵת הָאֹר /*aleph-tav ha-ohr*] is equal to that of בתורה *b'Torah* (*bet-tav-vav-resb-hey, in the Torah*), and comes to a total of 613 (the number of *mitzvot* [commandments] in the Torah).” [On the phrase,] “That the light was good”, he writes, “The final letters of these words בִּרְתָּ (bet-yud-resb-tav), [can be rearranged to spell] covenant ... (p. 11).

We ask the reader the question again, what happened to the original supernatural Light of creation? What did YHVH do with it? Please note that between verses 3 and 5 of Genesis 1 the word *light* is used 5 times in its complete spelling. Why is five significant and what does it represent? In Hebraic thought, five is the number of the books of the Torah (Genesis through Deuteronomy).

From John 1:1–14, redeemed believers in Yeshua the Messiah recognize that he is the Word of Elohim in the flesh (incarnate) or personified. It is interesting to note that on the fourth day of creation the sun, moon and the lesser lights were created. It was also in approximately the year four thousand, after the creation of the earth, that Messiah Yeshua, the Sun of Righteousness (Mal 4:2) left his position of glory and of full and undiminished light and power in heaven and came to this earth, diminished himself (Phil 2:5–8) to be born into frail human form to become the Torah-Word of Elohim in the flesh after which he would return to his full and undiminished form to the Father of lights in heaven (Jas 1:17). There Yeshua is adorned in garments of pure light (Ps 104:2) where he resides as an Everlasting Light (Isa 60:19–20), where he dwells in the light and glory of heaven (1Tim 6:16), as the pure Light of truth (1John 1:5), where his face radiates as the sun in its full strength (Rev 1:16).

Now if Yeshua is a type of the sun which is the source of physical light to the world and was created in the fourth day even as Yeshua came to this earth in the fourth millennia after creation and was the spiritual Light to the world, then what does the moon represent spiritually? The moon generates none of its own light, but as the lesser light simply reflects the light of the greater light into the darkness of this world (Read and ponder on Matt 5:14–16; John 12:36; Rom 2:19; 13:12; 2 Cor 4:4,6; Eph 5:8; 1 Thess 5:5; 1 Pet 2:9; 1 John 1:7; 2:10).

Dear student of the Word of Elohim: does this strengthen your faith in the inspired Word of Elohim and your faith in Yeshua the Messiah, the Light of the world shining in the darkness—the Living Torah-Word of Elohim made flesh?

6 1:3, Baal HaTurim states in his Torah commentary regarding Genesis 1:3,

And [Elohim] said, “Let there be light” (1:3), [וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהִי אֹרֶךְ וַיְהִי אֹרֶךְ] contains the letter א *aleph* four times, corresponding to four thousand years, (two thousand years) of Torah and (two thousand) years of M[essiah], for they are the years of light” (*ArtScroll Baal HaTurim Chumash*, vol. 1, p. 9).

According to rabbinical thought, the seven days of creation correspond to the seven thousand years that man will be upon this earth. They break this seven thousand years into four subsections, the first of which they call *The Age of Desolation* (from Adam to before Abraham) on account of the fall of man, the flood and the tower of Babel incidents. The second two-thousand-year period is called *The Age of Torah* on account of the fact of Abraham’s calling, the establishment of the nation of Israel and the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai. The third period is called the *Age of Messiah* roughly corresponding to the two thousand years lasting from the birth of Yeshua to the year A.D. 2000. After this comes the last or seventh day, which corresponds to the Messianic Era/Age (i.e. Millennium) (See *ArtScroll Bereishit/Genesis Torah Commentary*, vol. 1a, p. 359 and the above quote and *Soncino Talmud—Avodah Zarah 9a* and *Sanhedrin 97a,b*).

If this rabbinic understanding is correct, then how close are we to the coming of Messiah and the Messianic Era (Millennium)? Are you ready? What are you doing in your life to help advance the kingdom of Elohim, to spread the gospel? Spiritually speaking, is your life comprised of wood, hay and stubble or gold, silver and precious stones? Do you spend more of your energy devotedly pursuing YHVH and Yeshua or the lusts of the flesh, lust of the eyes and the pride of life?

7 1:26, *And Elohim said, Let us make man in our image* [emphasis added]. Why does Scripture use the first person plural pronouns? The rabbis are quick to state that either Elohim was using the “majestic plural” here or was referring to himself and his counsel of angels. But the word *Elohim* (*Strong’s H430*) itself is a plural noun with the singular form of this being *Elohab* (*Strong’s H433*). Even in the *Shema*, the Jewish declaration of faith, where YHVH is stated as being *one YHVH*, the word *one* is the Hebrew word *echad* meaning “one or a unity or a diversity within unity” (as in man and woman are to become *one flesh*, Gen 2:24; or the two houses of Israel would be joined in the future are to become one united nation, Ezek 37:17). It is beyond any question that Scripture teaches monotheism, yet within pre-Christian Jewish thought and within modern mystical Judaism the concept of one Elohim in no way precludes diversity within that unity. In this light, read and discuss Isaiah 53:1, which is an obvious reference to the Messiah. What is his relationship to YHVH (*the LORD*)?

8 After the creation work of each day, Elohim proclaimed “and the evening and the morning were day...” Elohim did not make this pronouncement with regard to the seventh day. Instead, he left the Shabbat open-ended. Why? Read Hebrews 4:1–11 and discuss this passage in light of the Shabbat being left open-ended when it was created. Some will use this passage in Hebrews to spiritualize away the need for keeping a literal seventh-day Sabbath of rest, while others will strongly aver that this passage teaches that indeed the Sabbath is valid for today. Can we rest from our works, have faith in the finished work of Yeshua at the cross and be assured that we are saved by his grace and through faith in him and still adhere to the letter-of-the-law seventh-day Sabbath observance? If not, and the spirit is all that matters with the

letter being fulfilled by Yeshua, then by the same token is it permissible to murder our brother as long as we do not hate him, or to commit adultery as long as we do not lust? Or did Yeshua teach in his Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5–7) that both the letter and the spirit obedience are necessary when it comes to the commandments of YHVH?

9 2:18, Elohim made Chavah (Eve) to be Adam's missing helpmate or partner in life. The modern feminist movement has done much in our society to destroy this Biblical view of marriage and a woman's place of blessing in that union. This is by satanic plot and design to undermine the biblical view of marriage and family. Many woman have bought into the spirit of rebellion, independence and pride that the feminist movement has engendered. When Eve took the upper hand spiritually in listening to the serpent's lies and convinced her husband to partake of the forbidden fruit what was the result? What are modern-day manifestations of that same spirit of rebellion in the Christian church-world today where some women have usurped authority over their husbands and even taken control of the reigns of spiritual leadership in some churches while timid men weakly acquiesce?

10 3:4–5, The serpent, the father of lies, said two things which have formed the basis of all the false (humanistic) religions of the world from then until now. What were these lies? Discuss their theological ramifications. Those lies were based on twisting the word of Elohim to make Elohim say something he did not say. What are the two things that men want more than anything? To possess immortality and to have all enlightenment of both good and evil and then to be able to choose for themselves what parts of good and evil they want to do. This is the spirit of rebellion and pride; man doing things *his* way, not YHVH's way. (For more information on the lies of the devil and how they have influenced end-time religious systems, see our teaching article on our at ministry web site entitled, "Secular Humanism: The Devil's Original Lie and the Religion of the New World Order." It can be found at <http://www.hoshanarabbah.org/pdfs/human.pdf>.)

11 3:14, The word *seed* is the Hebrew word *zera* (*Strong's* H2233) which mean *seed*, and figuratively means "posterity (offspring), fruit, plant, sowing time." In the KJV, it is translated as *seed* 221 times of its 229 usages. The word *zera* is used to denote planting seed, the product of a plant, an entire harvest, semen or a man's seed (Lev 15:16) or an animal's seed (Jer 31:27), a specific offspring (Gen 4:25), or one's entire family of descendants (Gen 46:6), or YHVH's spiritual offspring (Isa 65:23; 53:10; Prov 11:21; Jer 2:21). Though certain major rabbinical commentaries (e.g. *ArtScroll Stone Edition Chumash*, *ArtScroll Beresheis/Genesis Torah Commentary*, Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch's Torah commentary and others) fail to link this passage with a prophetic Messianic theme, Santala says the Jewish Aramaic *Targumim* find a central Messianic prophecy in this verse (*Messiah In the Old Testament In Light of Rabbinical Writings*, by Risto Santala, pp. 37–38). As proof, he quotes the *Targum of Jonathan Ben Uzziel*:

"[I]f the woman's offspring observes the Law they will be in a position to crush the serpent's head: 'And they will finally make peace in the days of the Messiah-King'. The *Targum* plays on the words *aquev*, or *heel*, and *iqvah*, *end*."

We see then that the term *seed* can refer to *offspring* and that certain rabbinical scholars of the past did see a Messianic theme in Genesis 3:15. Now what about the virgin birth? In our verse, YHVH makes reference to "her (Eve's) seed" or offspring. The first point to observe about this short phrase is that the seed specifically belongs to the woman, and not to the man (Adam) who was standing next to her at that very moment. In other words, YHVH specified that this seed or offspring would come from her and would not originate from a physical male.

Secondly, some virgin birth proponents will note that our text says, *her seed*, as opposed to *a man's seed* (i.e., semen). We know that women do not possess seed or semen, only men do. Therefore, it is reasoned, if her offspring had no earthly father, then who was the father, or the source of the seed? Could this not be referring to an offspring of Eve whose mother was a woman and whose father was Elohim? A miracle to be sure, but no less hard to believe than any one of a number of other miracles we find recorded in the Hebrew Scriptures which defy human understanding. We agree that this text is a prophetic reference to the virgin birth of Yeshua, but only because the text refers to the offspring as uniquely *hers* and

not Adam's, and not because of the fact that women do not possess seed or semen. Indeed, they can not generate semen, however, the word *zera*, as noted above, is not limited in its meaning to just "semen," but can mean "offspring," as well. So our verse could just as easily read, *her offspring*, which is exactly how the *Stone Edition Tanach* renders this passage. Likewise, *The Complete Jewish Bible* by David Stern reads, "her descendant."

12 3:7, When man recognized he had sinned, what was his first response after playing the blame-shifting game and then in guilt and shame hiding himself from YHVH? In Jewish thought, the fig tree represents Torah (i.e., YHVH's instructions or teachings in righteousness as given to Moses and the Children of Israel and as recorded in the first five books of the Bible). When Adam and Eve sewed fig leaves together to cover their naked bodies, what were they really doing? Adam and Eve were trying to conform YHVH's Torah or Word to fit them, not the other way around. Is this acceptable to YHVH? Man cannot atone for his sin by cloaking himself in humanistic religiosity of his own making. There is only one way for man to atone for his sins. What is it? (Lev 17:11) What did YHVH cover Adam and Eve's nakedness with? (verse 21) How is this a picture of the work of Yeshua and the cross?

13 How was Cain's sacrifice and subsequent actions a literal outgrowth of Adam's sin? What do Cain's fruit of the ground (bloodless) offering represent compared to Abel's sacrifice? Do not these two men represent the two major religious thrusts in the world today; that is, works-based versus grace-based religious systems? Discuss YHVH's biblical plan of redemption versus the false imitators where man tries to reconcile to himself to YHVH through his own efforts and in *his* own way. How did Adam and Cain's sinful ways get passed on to the pre-flood world and what were the results? (Gen 6:5)

14 6:7, *Noah found grace in YHVH's eyes*. Is grace a "New Testament" concept only? Discuss the concept of grace as found elsewhere in the Tanakh (Torah, Prophets & Writings).

(For further study on understanding the origin and nature of the Torah as relating to the first chapter of Genesis we encourage you to read our online teaching entitled "YHVH's Instructions in Righteousness, A Messianic Believer's Introduction to Torah" at <http://www.hoshanarabbah.org/pdfs/torahprimer.pdf>. For a full study on the subject of the Sabbath, we invite you to read our online teaching entitled "The Sabbath: Spirit and Truth" at <http://www.hoshanarabbah.org/pdfs/shbt.pdf>.)

HAFTORAH — ISAIAH 42:5–43:10

YHVH to Redeem the Israelite Captives From Spiritual Blindness (Torahlessness)

What is the *Haftorah* (*Haftorot*, plural)? It is that portion of the writings of the biblical prophets that in Jewish synagogues is traditionally read after the reading of the weekly Torah portion (*Parashah*). The subject of the Haftorah portion usually directly relates to the subject of the corresponding Torah portion, "and usually contains an explicit reference to some event described in the section previously read from the Torah" (*Jewish Encyclopedia*, article entitled *Haftorah*, p. 135). No one knows when the custom of reading a portion of the writings of the Prophets on the Sabbath along with the weekly Torah portion originated, but it seems to be of pre-Christian era derivation (Ibid. p. 136). Jewish tradition traces the origination of coupling the Torah with the Prophets back to the intertestamental period of Antiochus IV Epihanes (168–165 B.C.) who forbade the Jewish people from reading the Torah thus forcing them to read a corresponding section from the prophets instead that would remind them of that particular Torah portion (Ibid.). Whatever the case, the studying of the Haftorah portions teaches Bible students the divinely inspired co-relationship between the YHVH's Torah and the rest of his Word, and encourages us to study the whole counsel of that Word for our spiritual edification.

Study Questions and Comments on This Week's Haftorah Portion:

1 Let's determine the context of the Isaiah passage under consideration. Although this Haftorah portion commences in verse five, we cannot fully understand it without considering the fuller context of the preceding passages in Isaiah. For example, to whom is Isaiah 42:1–4 referring? (See Matt 12:17–21.) Please note that Matthew says that Yeshua is quoting Isaiah (verse 17), yet verse 21 ("And in his name shall the

Gentiles trust.”) is not found in the Masoretic text of Isaiah 42:1–4 from which our English Bibles are translated, although the Greek Septuagint (LXX) contains this phrase in its Isaiah 42 passage. Can we explain why the LXX contains this phrase, yet the Masoretic text does not? Perhaps the Masoretic Text, which was accepted by Rabbinic Judaism in the first millennia of the common era as the official Hebrew text from which translations of the Hebrew Scriptures would be made, purposely omitted it in order to diminish the Christian notion that Yeshua was the Suffering Servant on whose name the people of the nations would place faith in order to be redeemed. (In our studies, we have discovered other instances where the rabbis have tampered with the original Hebrew to slant meanings in their favor and away from any concept of Yeshua being the Messiah.) After all, elsewhere in Isaiah we find similar statements (Read Isa 50:10; 51:5 cp. Zeph 3:12). Therefore, Matthew is indeed correct when he states that Yeshua was quoting from Isaiah. Another possibility is that the LXX translation is inaccurate having been glossed (biased) by Christian translators. A third possibility comes into view when one realizes that the Masoretic Text was but one of several text families of Hebrew “Old Testaments” in circulation at the time of Yeshua. There existed the *Targumim* (the Aramaic translation of the Hebrew Scriptures) along with the Hebrew text from which the Dead Sea scrolls “Old Testament” derives, along with competing Hebrew “Old Testaments” from other scribal families besides the Masoretes. The Hebrew in many of these will vary slightly. Whatever the case, the Word of YHVH is not broken in Matthew 12:21, for indeed there are other passages in Isaiah which clearly point to Yeshua (e.g. Isa 50:10) being a light to the nations and redeeming them if they will but put their trust in his name.

2 Having established that our Haftorah passage is definitely a reference to Yeshua the Messiah, let us ask the next question. Who is the target group to which Isaiah is prophetically referring as being the recipient of Messiah’s spiritual “light” (verses 6–7)? Who is Isaiah addressing in his prophecy? In verses 16–20 YHVH refers, to his blind and deaf servants who have turned to idolatry and turned their backs on YHVH, but who will turn back to YHVH (verse 17). He says of this people-group that there are many things that they have *not* “observed” (the Hebrew word for *observe* is *shamar*, *Strong’s* H8104, meaning “kept, guarded or heeded”), and then in the next verse he begins to talk about his Torah. Would this passage in Isaiah make sense if it were referring to Gentiles who had never in their past known the Elohim of Israel or his Torah-laws? (Read verse 24.) Now who is the target group identified in 43:1? Is he talking to the Gentiles or to the descendants of Jacob who have lost their way spiritually and become *mixed* with the Gentiles (Hos 7:8; 8:8)? What does YHVH promise to do with his wayward children who have become lost and scattered among the Gentiles? (Read Isa 43:5–10.) How would he redeem them? This is a major issue with which Isaiah deals. (Read Isa 49:1–7; 50:1; 52:13–15; 53:1–12.) In all of these passages, who is the people-group to whom the prophet is continually urging them to return to YHVH offering them a message of redemption and hope? (See Isa 44:1,2,5,21; 45:4,19; 46:3,13; 48:1,12; 49:3,5,6,7,26; 51:1,4,17; 52:2; 54:5; 56:8.)

Now that we know what the subject of this Haftorah portion is and who the target group is, what can we learn from this passage?

3 **42:5**, What are the similarities between this passage and the Genesis chapter one creation account (especially verses 1–6). Both accounts speak of light. In Genesis chapter one, we understand that the light alluded to here is both physical and spiritual in nature. Isaiah speaks of this light in a prophetic and spiritual context. If 42:1–6 are referring to Yeshua, then how is he “light to the Gentiles” and what is that light? (See John 1:1–14; 8:12 and 9:5.)

4 **42:6**, YHVH called his people to walk in righteousness. How does Scripture define righteousness? (See Pss 119:7,62,106,123,138,172.) The Hebrew word for *righteousness* is *tzedek* (*Strong’s* H6664/*TWOT* 1879a) meaning “justice and rightness.” How do we know what YHVH’s standard of righteousness is? Where do we find it defined? *The Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament (TWOT)* suggests that the original meaning of the word *tzedek* is “to be straight” or that which stands for a “norm” and in a spiritual sense could have come to represent “a canon, rod, measuring rule.” Scripture defines YHVH himself, along with his character, as being *tzedek* (*righteous*), and YHVH has called his people to be righteous as he is righteous (Isa 42:6). In biblical Hebraic thought, there is only one thing that defines *what* specifically are

YHVH's righteous standards. What is that? (See Ps 119:172.) Who walked out that righteousness perfectly and became a Light to the people of the nations to show them the way of righteousness? (Mal 4:2)

- 5** **42:6**, *I have called you in righteousness ... and [will] give you a covenant ... for a light of the Gentiles.* If YHVH is speaking here to backslid Israel, then what is this covenant that promises to give them to be a light to the people of the nations? (Read Jer 31:31–33 and compare to Heb 8:8 along with Matt 10:5–8; 15:24.)
- 6** **42:16–17**, What is YHVH talking about here? Remember, he is still addressing the same people-group and desires them to turn back to him and turn away from their idolatrous ways. He says that the spiritual darkness and moral crookedness in which they have become engrossed will turn to light and to straightness. What is he really saying here about the religious systems they have embraced that they have exchanged for YHVH's ways of righteousness as defined by his Torah? How does this apply to us today? Has the heart of the Father ever changed toward his people? (Read Rev 18:4 where we see that those caught up in religious Babylon—a religious system characterized by an admixture of biblical truth and unbiblical pagan traditions—are still his people, but they **must** come out of false and Torahless religious systems.) How does the Book of Revelation further define YHVH's end-time Saints? Not only must they come out of spiritual Babylon, but also what two qualifications characterize their walk before YHVH? (Read Rev 12:17 and 14:15.) To the Hebraic mind-set of John the Revelator, what is the only thing the term “commandments” could mean?
- 7** **42:19–20**, YHVH calls his servant Israel blind and deaf? Is this a description of their physical or spiritual condition? In light of everything else this Haftorah portion is talking about and the issues we have already discussed, who in our days are the blind and deaf ones? What must we do to come out of our spiritual blindness? Yeshua was commissioned to go to the lost sheep of the House of Israel, and he commissioned his disciples to do the same, and much of his ministry not only involved healing the lost sheep of Israel physically, but also spiritually. As they came to him physically and spiritually blind and deaf what did he do? As his disciples, are we commissioned to do the same?

In Hebraic thought, blindness is a metaphor for spiritual blindness, lack of spiritual enlightenment, namely Torahlessness; that is, a reference to those who are blinded to the light of YHVH's truth (Isa 29:18; 42:7,16,18–19; 43:8; Jer 31:8 and Rom 11:25; Isa 56:10). If that spiritual blindness is to be healed, what does this mean?

- 8** **42:21**, *[YHVH Yeshua] will magnify [Strong's H1431; TWOT 315 meaning “to make it grow, grow up, make it important, promote, make it great, make it important] the Torah-law, and make it honorable.”* This was a prophecy for the future. Why did YHVH make this prediction regarding Israel? As Israel turned away from their covenants with YHVH, turned from his righteous standards, turned to idolatry and pagan customs, became mixed with the Gentile nations, became spiritually blind and deaf, what became of the Torah-law in their eyes? Who in our day teaches that the Torah-law has been abolished, nullified, fulfilled, nailed to the cross or done away with? Does Isaiah's prophecy state that YHVH's Torah will once again attain a place of honor, greatness and importance among the people of Israel? Is that happening in our day as many come out of the Christian religious system and discover the Hebrew roots of their faith and discover that they are Israel as Paul the apostle taught (Rom 4:16; 9:8–11; Gal. 3:7,9,14; 28–29; Eph 2:11–19)? How does the “magnification” of YHVH's Torah-instructions in righteousness relate to the Spirit of Elijah that Malachi prophesied would come to this earth just prior to that great and terrible Day of YHVH's Wrath before and at Messiah's return? (Read Mal 4:1–6.)
- 9** **42:24**, *They would not walk in his ways, neither were they obedient to his Torah-law.* Isaiah refuses to let go of the concept that YHVH's people had sinned by walking away from his Torah-law. Again, to whom is Isaiah referring? The Hindus, Moslems, or Buddhists who never had his Torah, or to his people, both the Jews and Christians, who both claim to worship the Elohim of the Bible, the El (God) of Israel?
- 10** **43:2**, *O Israel ... For I have redeemed you, I have called you by name; you are mine.* Who did YHVH send to redeem his people Israel? (Read Isa 49:1–7; 52:13–15 and 53:1–13.) As we saw above, Paul says that all

those who are redeemed through the blood of Messiah Yeshua *are* Israel.

- 11** **43:2–10**, Read and ponder these passages that speak of YHVH's everlasting love and grace toward his people despite their rebelliousness and their exchanging his loving instructions in righteousness (his Torah) for heathen Gentile ways.
- 12** **43:10**, *You are my witnesses* [those who give testimony or evidence of something], *says YHVH, and my servants whom I have chosen*. If we understand the truth of what YHVH through Isaiah is saying here then how can we be witnesses of this good news of redemption through Yeshua the Messiah that we are Israel and therefore must embrace the covenants, promises, laws, blessings and identity of Israel as the apostle Paul clearly states in passages we have already referenced above?
- 13** Now that your understanding of these prophetic passages in Isaiah has hopefully been expanded, go back and review our Torah study in Genesis 1:1 through 6:8 to find as many thematic parallels as possible. For example, how does each one point to Yeshua the Messiah, treat the subject of sin and redemption, discuss YHVH's Torah-law and his standards of righteousness, discuss the subject of light and the list goes on. Can we see the consistency of YHVH's Word, and that there is no contradiction between Genesis and Isaiah? Can we see how the revelation of the Messiah and the concept of redemption from sin progressively grow and expand as we move forward in time?

