

Haftarah & Brit Chadasha portions 27- 54.

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Second Kings 4: 42 – 5: 19 & Matthew 8: 1 – 4; Luke 17: 11 - 19.

This haftarah portion is read with Torah portion Tazria (Leviticus 12: 1 – 13: 59) and Renewed Covenant portions Matthew 8: 1 – 4 and Luke 17: 11 – 19. All four these portions deal with people who have leprosy and focus on the prerequisite to be clean when we approach YHVH our Elohim. We start reading from 2nd Kings 4: 42, in this way: ***'Now a man came from Baal-shalishah and brought the man of Elohim (Elisha) bread of the first fruits, twenty loaves of barley and fresh ears of grain in his sack. And he said, "Give them to the people that they may eat."*** We know that first fruits were usually reserved for Elohim and the Levitical priests. Even though the kingdom of Israel was apostate at that time, the man who brought the loaves and grain to Elisha was a believer.

We see in verse 43 that the attendant of the man of Elohim, did not believe that the small amount of food, would feed the 100 or so people that were present. However, notice how Elisha answers him in the second part of verse 43, as follows: ***"Give them to the people that they may eat, for thus says YHVH, 'They shall eat and have some left over.'"*** We see further from verse 44 that after the people ate, there remained some left over, according to the word of Elohim. Knowing that Yahshua multiplied loaves to feed the multitudes listening to His teachings twice during his three year ministry; the multiplication of the loaves in accordance with the word of Elohim, here, looked forward to the ministry of Yahshua our Messiah, the Word of Elohim made flesh.

Continuing in 2nd Kings 5: 1, we read: that Naaman, the captain of the king of Aram (also known as Syria) was a great man with his master, and that he was highly respected because YHVH had given victory to Aram. He was a valiant warrior, but he was also a leper. We also see here, that YHVH the Elohim of Israel was responsible for Naaman's military success. Even so, we read that subsequently the Aramean army lead by Naaman went across Israel's border and took a young Israelite girl captive during one of his raids. The girl waited on Naaman's wife and told her about the prophet of Elohim, who was in Samaria at the time, who would cure her husband of his leprosy. So Naaman went to his master the king of Aram, and told him what the Israeli girl told his wife. The king of Aram immediately sent a letter to the king of Israel, and Naaman took with him ten

talents of silver and six thousand shekels of gold, as well as ten changes of clothes. We read further in verse 6 of 2nd Kings 5, ***‘And he brought the letter to the king of Israel, saying, “And now as this letter comes to you behold, I have sent Naaman my servant to you, that you may cure him of his leprosy.”’*** But we see that when the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his clothes saying in verse 7, ***“Am I Elohim, to kill and to make alive, that this man sending word to me to cure a man of his leprosy? But consider now, and see how he is seeking a quarrel against me.”*** The king of Israel’s action was simply a sign of distress, as he thought the king of Aram was expecting him to heal Naaman. Since he knew that it was impossible to heal leprosy, he thought that he was doomed to enter into battle with the king of Aram. Fortunately Elisha got to hear of the king’s distress and he told the king to send Naaman to him for healing.

We read from verse 9 that Naaman went to Elisha with his horses and chariots and stood in the doorway of his house. But Elisha sent a messenger to Naaman and told him to go and wash seven times in the Jordan River, and he will be cured. However, because of Naaman’s personal greatness, he expected personal attention from Elisha. Instead Elisha sent his servant to Naaman with instructions for healing. Naaman was most unhappy as he was anticipating a personal cleansing ceremony of the prophet for himself. We read his words to Elisha’s servant in verse 12, as follows: ***“‘Are not Abanah and Pharpar the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them and be clean?’ So he turned and went away in rage.*** The water of these two rivers was clear and definitely superior to the muddy Jordan River. However, this was not at issue here; obedience to Elohim’s word through his prophet was important and not the quality of the water of the river in which Naaman had to wash. His servant therefore calmed him by asking in verse 13, ***“My father (a title employed by servants, when addressing their masters), had the prophet told you to do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much more then, when he says to you, ‘Wash, and be clean?’”*** This convinced Naaman and he went and did according to what Elisha told him, and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean. By changing his attitude and in obedience doing exactly as the prophet of Elohim instructed, he was healed. If Naaman a non-Israelite could

understand this, why do so many Israelites refuse to do exactly as the word of YHVH tells us?

Continuing in verse 15, we see that when Naaman returned to Elisha with all his company, he said: **“Behold now, I know that there is no Elohim in all the earth, but in Israel; so please take a present from your servant now.”** However, Elisha refused to take anything. We conclude the portion by reading verses 17 – 19, as follows: **‘And Naaman said, “If not, please let your servant at least be given two mules’ load of earth; for your servant will no more offer burnt offering nor will he sacrifice to other gods, but to YHVH** (It was thought by the people living in the middle east at that time, that a god could only be worshiped on the soil of the nation to which he was bound – so Naaman wanted a load of Israelite soil, in order to worship the Elohim of Israel, in his own country. This gives us an idea of how much his attitude had change; whereas, prior to his healing Naaman did not want anything to do with Israel, now he wants Israeli soil to worship YHVH, the Elohim of Israel on). (18) **In this matter may YHVH pardon your servant: when my master goes into the house of Rimmon to worship there, and he leans on my hand and I bow myself in the house of Rimmon, when I bow myself in the house of Rimmon, YHVH pardon your servant in this matter?** (It must have been Naaman’s duty to accompany his king to worship the pagan god that the Aramean nation worshiped, so he wanted to make sure that YHVH knows that he is now committed to serve only Him) (19) **And he (Elisha) said to him, “Go in peace.” So he departed from him some distance.’**

We start reading the 1st Renewed Covenant portion from Matthew 8 verses 1 & 2, in this way: **‘And when He (Yahshua) had came down from the mountain (after a teaching session), great multitudes followed Him. (2) And behold a leper came to Him, and bowed down to Him (or worshipped Him), saying, “Master, if You are willing, You can make me clean.”’** The leper believed that Yahshua had the power to heal him, but knew that it depended upon His will to do so. We read therefore from verse 3, **‘And He stretched out His hand and touched him, saying, “I am willing; be cleansed.” And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.’** Even so, we should realize that Elohim does heal, but that healing is always a miracle. We read further from verse 4, that despite the miraculous healing, Yahshua remained obedient to Torah and said to him, **“See**

that you tell no one; but go, show yourself to the priest, and present the offering that Moses commanded, for a testimony to them.”

We read the 2nd Renewed Covenant portion from Luke 17 verses 11 & 12, like this: ***‘And it came about while He was on the way to Jerusalem, that He was passing between Samaria and Galilee. (12) And as He entered a certain village, ten leprous men who stood at a distance met Him.’*** These ten men were considered unclean and had to live outside the village, as per the Torah command in Leviticus 13: 46, as follows: ***“He shall remain unclean all the days during which he has the infection; he is unclean. He shall live alone; his dwelling shall be outside the camp”*** In addition, people with leprosy were legally required to stand at a distance and had to communicate by shouting, as we read from verse 13 of Luke 17, like this: ***‘And they raised their voices, saying, “Yahshua, Master, have mercy on us!”’*** Their plea was common of those desiring healing. Continuing in verse 14, we read: ***‘And when He saw them, He said to them, “Go and show yourselves to the priests.” And it came about that as they were going, they were cleansed.’*** Here again Yahshua tells them to show themselves to the priest, in accordance with the Torah command found in Leviticus 14: 2 - 32. We see that the healing of the ten lepers was sudden, but only occurred after they had obeyed Yahshua’s instructions.

Continuing in verses 15 & 16 of Luke 17, we read: ***‘Now one of them, when he saw that he had been healed, turned back, glorifying Elohim with a loud voice, (16) and he fell on his face at His feet, giving thanks to Him. And he was a Samaritan.’*** The one, who turned back, is reminiscent of the way Naaman reacted. But, the other nine were so keen to be declared clean and to get back to normality that they forgot to thank Yahshua for healing them. When Yahshua send these men back to the priest to be declared clean, he must have assumed that they were all Jews. Whilst these men were ceremonially unclean, they were permitted to associate with the Samaritan, but in their healing, they did not share his gratitude. In verses 17 & 18, Yahshua answered and said, ***“Were there not ten cleansed? But the nine – where are they? (18) Was no one found who turned back to give glory to Elohim, except this foreigner?”*** Is that not odd? There are people who know that

they are Israelites, but refuse to follow all the Torah commands. In addition we who come from Churchianity have been taught that we do things differently. We were taught that we are spiritual and should not hang onto these *'physical'* reminders.

Yes it is true; we who have faith in Yahshua the Messiah should focus on spiritual matters, because His once for all sacrifice was sufficient to atone for our past sins. Even so, because we are human, we need constant reminders to keep us from sinning in the future. But, for those who believe that they are spiritual, I would like to challenge you to prove your spirituality, by taking the well known pin prick test. Simply take a sharp pin and prick yourself on your finger – if you feel pain and a little bit of blood drips from the small wound, then you are definitely not spiritual. Also realize that being 'spiritual' does not give us a license to continue to break our Father's Commandments, and unless He gives us a clear cut command, negating His spoken words in Torah or changing them in some way, we are taking an enormous risk, if we declare such laws done away with.

We conclude by reading from verse 19, as follows: ***'And He said to him, "Rise, and go your way; your faith has made you well."*** Now even though this seems to contradict what was explained earlier, the fact that we prove our faith by our works, remains, as may be read from James 2: 26, in this way: ***'For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.'***

Second Kings 7: 3 – 20 & Mark 5: 24b - 34.

This haftarah portion is read with Torah portion Metzora (Leviticus 14: 1 to 15: 33) and Renewed Covenant portions Mark 5: 24b - 34. Whereas, both the Torah and haftarah portions deal with leprosy, which was known to result from slanderous language or defamatory speech, the Renewed Covenant portion deals with another persistent health problem that could only be cured by faith. We start reading from verse 3 of 2nd Kings 7, like this: ***‘Now there were four leprous men at the entrance of the gate; and they said to one another, “Why do we sit here until we die?”*** In accordance with the Torah teachings in Leviticus 13: 46 and Numbers 5: 3, these lepers lived outside the city gates, because of their infectious disease. This is perhaps also what should be done with those who have aids – they should be put into a controlled environment, if we want to ultimately control this disease. Like the leprosy of ancient times, aids is a disease that is mainly caused by a Torah-less lifestyle, I believe therefore that like with the leprosy of ancient times, the priests of today should be involved in establishing the policies and procedures to contain it.

The account of the lepers in 2nd Kings 7 has to do with the siege of Samaria by the Aramean army, which came to an end, after causing a devastating food shortage, since nothing was allowed to enter the city's gates. The lepers understood that it did not matter whether they lived in- or outside the city gates, they were bound to die of starvation, since there was no more food available in the city, because of the siege. We read accordingly from verse 4 & 5, in this way: ***“If we say, ‘We will enter the city,’ then the famine is in the city and we shall die there; and if we sit here, we die also. Now therefore come, and let us go over to the camp of the Arameans. If they spare us, we shall live; and if they kill us, we shall but die.”*** With very few options open to them, the four lepers decided to take their chances and go to the Aramean camp, as we read from verse 5, like this: ***‘And they arose at twilight to go to the camp of the Arameans; when they came to the outskirts of the camp of the Arameans, behold, there was no one there.’*** We see from verses 6 & 7 that YHVH was the one who brought an end to the siege of the city, as follows: ***‘For YHVH had caused the army of the Arameans to hear a sound of chariots and a sound of horses, even the sound of a great army, so that they said to one***

another, “Behold, the king of Israel has hired against us the kings of the Hittites and the kings of the Egyptians, to come upon us.” (7) ‘Therefore they arose and fled in the twilight, and left their tents and their horses and their donkeys, even the camp just as it was, and fled for their life.’

When the lepers arrived at the Aramean camp, they noticed that the army left without taking any of their belongings, so they entered the first tent and ate and drank to their hearts content. They also picked up silver and gold as well as clothing and hid it away, for recovery later. Afterwards they entered a second tent and did exactly the same, but we read from verse 9 that they became afraid that punishment will overtake them, so they decided to go and tell the king of Israel about their discovery. But we see that king Jehoram did not believe the lepers report, and suspected that the Arameans were pulling back to lure the Israelites out of Samaria into a surprise attack. Perhaps, the king did not believe the lepers story, because he knew that their disease was due to slanderous speech. Nevertheless, reading from verses 13 -15, we see how the lepers report was in fact confirmed, as follows: **‘And one of the servants answered and said, “Please, let some men take five of the horses which remain, which are left in the city. Behold, they will be in any case like all the multitude of Israel who are left in it; behold, they will be in any case like all the multitude of Israel who have already perished, so let us send and see.” (14) They took therefore two chariots with horses, and the king sent after the army of the Arameans, saying, “Go and see.”(15) And they went after them to the Jordan, and behold, all the way was full of clothes and equipment, which the Arameans had thrown away in their haste. Then the messengers returned and told the king.** So we see that even though lepers are considered unclean and should dwell outside the city gates, Elohim allowed the four totally dejected lepers to play a very useful role in discovering how He caused the Aramean army to flee and as a result bring an end to the siege of the Israelite city.

Even though verses 1 & 2 of 2nd Kings 7 are not part of this haftarah portion, we need to refer to them, as the same phrases used in them are repeated in verses 16 – 20. The repetition of specifically the words ‘according to the word of YHVH’ in verse 16 and ‘just as the man of Elohim had said/spoken’ in verses 17 & 18, shows that the

prophecy by the prophet of Elohim actually came to pass, and that the word of Elohim is true, in this way: (16) ***So the people went out and plundered the camp of the Arameans. Then a measure of fine flour was sold for a shekel and two measures of barley for a shekel, according to the word of YHVH.*** (17) ***Now the king appointed the royal officer on whose hand he leaned to have charge of the gate; but the people trampled on him at the gate, and he died just as the man of Elohim had said, who spoke when the king came down to him.*** (18) ***And it came about just as the man of Elohim had spoken to the king, saying, “Two measures of barley for a shekel and a measure of fine flour for a shekel, shall be sold tomorrow about this time at the gate of Samaria.”*** (19) ***Then the royal officer answered the man of Elohim and said, “Now behold, if YHVH should make windows in heaven, could such a thing be?” And he said, “Behold, you shall see it with your own eyes, but you shall not eat of it.”*** (20) ***And so it happened to him, for the people trampled on him at the gate, and he died.*** In most ancient cities, the marketplace where people buy and sell goods and services was in the gate of the city. When the siege of the city came to an end, the people all wanted to get to the marketplace to procure provisions as soon as possible, since they were all famished. It was during this rush for food that the officer, upon which the king depended for advice, got trampled by the crowd at the gate and died. This section of the Scriptures is positive proof that the word of Elohim is true, like in Job 26: 7 where we read: ***“He stretches out the north over empty space, and hangs the earth on nothing”***, as we know that gravity holds the earth in the sky and that the North Pole is even today shrouded in ice and snow with nothing, but empty spaces all around.

We continue on to the Renewed Covenant portion where we read from the 2nd part of Mark 5: 24, ***‘and a great multitude was following Him (Yahshua) and pressing in on Him.’*** The crowd followed closely behind Yahshua and at times pushed against Him, a situation almost similar to the one described in the haftarah portion during which the king’s officer was trampled by the throng. Next we read from verses 25 & 26, about a woman who suffered from chronic internal bleeding for twelve years, as follows: ***‘And a woman who had had a hemorrhage for twelve years, (26) and had endured much at the hands of many physicians, and had spend all that she had and was not helped at all, but rather had grown worse.’***

In fact we read about the same account in the book of Luke who was also a physician, that this woman had an incurable disease (see Luke 8: 43). We see in verse 27 of Mark 5, that this woman came to hear about Yahshua, and came up in the crowd and touched His cloak. Luke 8: 44, clarifies that she actually touched the fringe of Yahshua's cloak. From this we understand that Yahshua being fully Torah observant and in accordance with Numbers 15: 37 – 40¹, wore fringes (tzitzit) on the four corners of His cloak². Continuing in verses 28 & 29 of Mark 5, we read: ***'For she though, "If I just touch His garments, I shall get well."*** (29) ***And immediately the flow of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her affliction.'*** We see from these two verses that this woman's faith in Yahshua's power to heal her was so great, that she believed that she will be healed, by only touching His garments.

However, since healing is always as a result of a miracle, which only Elohim is able to perform, Yahshua felt the power proceeding from Him and He turned around saying to the woman (in verse 30), ***"Who touched My garments?"*** His disciples could not understand how whilst, most of those following them, walked so closely behind and pressing against them, He could ask, ***'Who touched Me?'*** Yahshua turned around to see the woman, who had done this, and she feared and trembled, aware of what had happened to her, she fell down before Yahshua and told Him the whole truth. Nevertheless, we need to understand that it was not Yahshua's intention to embarrass this woman, but that He wanted her to praise YHVH for what has happened to her. Consequently He said to her in verse 34, ***"Daughter, your faith has made you well, go in peace, and be***

¹ Numbers 15: 37 – 40, *'YHVH also spoke to Moses, saying, (38) "Speak to the sons of Israel, and tell them that they shall make for themselves tassels on the corners of their garments throughout their generations, and that they shall put on the tassel of each corner a cord of blue. (39) And it shall be a tassel for you to look at and remember all the commandments of YHVH, so as to do them and not follow after your own heart and your own eyes, after which you played the harlot, (40) in order that you may remember to do all My commandments, and be Set-apart to your Elohim."* A second witness to this command may be read in Deuteronomy 22: 12, as follows: ***"You shall make yourself tassels on the four corners of your garment with which you cover yourself."***

² This is why we Nazarene Jews/Israelites, in following Yahshua, our perfect example of how to serve YHVH our Elohim, also wear tzitzit or fringes on the four corners of our garments (tallit katan), as a reminder to keep the commandments of Elohim.

healed of your affliction.” The words *‘has made you well’* also means *‘has made you whole’*, showing that she was completely healed – which could also be an indication that her faith in Yahshua will ultimately lead to her spiritual salvation, as may be understood from the same account in Matthew 9: 22, in this way: ***‘But Yahshua turning and seeing her said, “Daughter, take courage your faith has made you well.”***” The side note in the NASB reads: *‘saved you.’*

It will greatly benefit those of us alive during the final few generations before the close of this age, to understand that all healing comes from YHVH our Elohim; and that each and every healing performed by Him is a miracle. Despite the many advances made in Medical Science over the past century, our hospitals have deteriorated so much that some exit with worse conditions, than with what they entered. It is true that we need Medical Doctors to set broken bones; close-up wounds; remove cataracts; and to perform certain medical procedures, but even so, most Doctors will agree that all healing comes from YHVH.

Isaiah 53: 1 – 12 & Hebrews 7: 23 – 10: 25.

This haftarah portion is read with Torah portion Archarei Mot (Leviticus 16: 1 to 18: 30) and Renewed Covenant portion Hebrews 7: 23 - 10: 25. All three portions have to do with atonement or the reparation of the covenant that has been broken. Starting in Isaiah 53: 1 we read: **'Who has believed our message? And to whom has the arm of YHVH been revealed?'** Our Father YHVH knew that not many would believe the message of Isaiah 53; He also knew that not many would recognize who or what His right hand and set-apart arm is.

We read appropriately concerning this revelation from John 12: 37 - 40, as follows: **'But though He had performed so many signs before them, yet they were not believing in Him; (38) that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spoke, "YHVH, WHO HAS BELIEVED OUR REPORT? AND TO WHOM HAS THE ARM OF YHVH BEEN REVEALED?"(39) For this cause they could not believe, for Isaiah said again, (40) "HE HAS BLINDED THEIR EYES, AND HE HARDENED THEIR HEART; LEST THEY SEE WITH THEIR EYES, AND PERCEIVE WITH THEIR HEART, AND BE CONVERTED, AND I HEAL THEM."** Those of us, who have been called-out to become first fruits by YHVH at this time, understand that Isaiah 53 is about Yahshua our Messiah, but others³ do not understand this, yet. Most of our Jewish

³ YHVH is not calling everybody during this age as may be understood from Mark 4: 11 & 12 and Matthew 13: 11, 12 & 19. Elohim's plan of salvation for all mankind, as revealed by His annual Feast Days, shows that similar to the harvest periods in Israel there will be two harvests of human souls into His eternal Kingdom. First the first fruits during the 1st Resurrection (depicted by the Feast of First Fruits or Shavuot) and then the rest during the Second Resurrection, after Yahshua's millennium rule. We read in James 1: 18, that those of us called during this age, are going to be the first fruits, who will, if we make it, become kings and priests under Messiah during His millennium rule (see Revelation 5: 10 & 20: 6). We who are called during this age are being judged at this time (see 1st Peter 4: 17). Most of those who will be resurrected during the second resurrection never had a chance and will be given their 1st chance to repent, after the Scriptures will have been opened to their understanding. But we need to remember, that there is no such thing as a second chance - If you never heard the name of Yahshua in your life time, or never heard about (YHVH)'s plan of Salvation, how can you be considered to have had your chance?

brothers will only understand this at Messiah's return, as is confirmed in Zechariah 12: 10, like this: ***'so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son.'*** Sincere Jews who are alive at that time will understand that the servant spoken about here, is Yahshua our Messiah, but others not called by YHVH during this time or throughout the history of mankind, will only learn this truth after the second resurrection, when the Scriptures will be opened to their understanding, as we read from Revelation 20: 12, like this: ***'And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened (these books are the books of the Bible); and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds.'*** This will be much like when Yahshua opened the minds of His disciples after His resurrection, as may be read from Luke 24: 45, like this: ***'Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures.'***

Continuing in Isaiah 53: 2 & 3, we read: ***'For He grew up before Him like a tender shoot, And like a root out of parched ground; He has no stately form or majesty that we should look upon Him, Nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him. (3) He was despised and forsaken of men,'*** This prophecy was fulfilled in Mark 15: 17 – 20, in this way: ***'And they dressed Him up in purple, and after weaving a crown of thorns, they put it on Him; (18) and they began to acclaim Him, "Hail, King of the Jews!" (19) And they kept beating His head with a reed, and spitting at Him, and kneeling and bowing before Him. (20) And after they had mocked Him, they took the purple off Him, and put His garments on Him. And they led Him out to crucify Him.'*** Proceeding in the 2nd part of Isaiah 53: 3, we read: ***'A man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief;'*** a portion that came to fulfillment in Matthew 26: 37 – 39, like this: ***'And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and distressed. (38) Then He said to them, "My soul is deeply grieved, to the point of death; remain here and keep watch with Me." (39) And He went a little beyond them, and fell on His face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as Thou wilt.'"*** The final two lines of Isaiah 53: 3 testifies: ***'And like one from whom men hide their face, He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.'*** After Kepha and Yochannan (Peter

and John) healed a lame man at the entrance of the temple, Kepha explained to the Israelites present, at the time, that they healed the man by the power of Yahshua. He continued in Acts 3: 13 – 16, saying: ***“The Elohim of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, The Elohim of our fathers, has glorified His servant Yahshua, the one whom you delivered up, and disowned in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release Him. (14) But you disowned the Set-apart and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, (15) but put to death the Prince of life, the one whom Elohim raised from the dead, a fact to which we are witnesses.(16) And on the basis of faith in His name, it is the name of Yahshua which has strengthened this man whom you see and know; and the faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect health in the presence of you all.”***

We read further from Isaiah 53: 4, ***‘Surely our grief’s He Himself bore, And our sorrows He carried:’***, a prophesy that was fulfilled in Matthew 8: 16, in this way: ***‘And when evening had come, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed; and He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were ill.’*** The second part of Isaiah 53 verse 4, confirms: ***‘Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, Smitten of Elohim, and afflicted.’***, a section which was fulfilled in John 19: 7, as follows: ***‘The Jews answered him, “We have a law, and by that law He ought to die because He made Himself out to be the Son of Elohim.”’*** We continue in verse 5 of Isaiah 53, ***‘But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well being fell upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed.’*** Ensuring us that this section of the Scriptures is about Yahshua our Messiah, Rav Kepha wrote in 1 Peter 2: 21 – 24, ***‘For you have been called for this purpose, since Messiah also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, (22) WHO COMMITTED NO SIN, NOR WAS ANY DECEIT FOUND IN HIS MOUTH; (23) and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously; (24) and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.’***

We read from verse 6 of Isaiah 53, that: ***'All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; but YHVH has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him.'*** Even though everyone who ever wants to be saved will have to go through Yahshua who is the door to the kingdom of Elohim, He said in Matthew 18: 11 – 14, ***"For the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost*** (talking specifically about us, the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel). (12) ***What do you think? If any man has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go and search for the one that is straying?*** (13) ***And if it turns out that he finds it, truly I say to you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine which have not gone astray.*** (14) ***Thus it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones perish."*** Do we truly understand the love our Father YHVH has for His creation? To this end we read further in Isaiah 53: 7, ***'He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He did not open His mouth; Like a lamb that is led to slaughter, And like a sheep that is silent before its shearers. So He did not open His mouth.'*** A portion which was fulfilled by Messiah in Matthew 27: 12, as follows: ***'And while He was being accused by the chief priests and the elders, He made no answer.'***

He made atonement for us as witnessed in Isaiah 53: 8, as follows: ***'By oppression and judgment He was taken away; And as for His generation, who considered that He was cut off out of the land of the living, For the transgression of my people to whom the stroke was due?'***, a section fulfilled in Matthew 26: 65 & 66, in this way: ***'Then the high priest tore his robes, saying, "He has blasphemed! What further need do we have of witnesses? Behold, you have now heard the blasphemy; (66) what do you think?" They answered and said: "He is deserving of death!"'*** In addition we are told in Isaiah 53: 9 that ***'His grave was assigned with wicked men. Yet He was with the rich man in His death, Because He had done no violence, Nor was there any deceit in His mouth.'*** Again this was fulfilled by Messiah in the words of His disciple Matthew in Matthew 27: 57 – 60, in this way: ***'And when it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who himself had also become a disciple of Yahshua. (58) This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Yahshua. Then Pilate ordered it to be given over to him. (59) And Joseph***

took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, (60) and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock; and he rolled a large stone against the entrance of the tomb and went away.'

For those who still doubt that Isaiah 53 is about Yahshua our Messiah, we read the final three verses to reinforce our faith in Him, as follows: (10) **'But YHVH was pleased to crush Him, putting Him to grief; if He would render Himself as a guilt offering (atonement), He will see His offspring** (those of us who believe in Yahshua's name, become children of Elohim as per John 1: 12), **He will prolong His days, and the good pleasure of YHVH will prosper in His hand.** (11) **As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see it and be satisfied; By His knowledge and Righteous One, My servant will justify the many, as He will bear their iniquities.** (12) **Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great, and He will divide the booty with the strong; because He poured out Himself to death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet He Himself bore the sin of many, and interceded for the transgressors.'** From this, there is no doubt that the servant in Isaiah 53 is none other than Yahshua our Messiah, the right hand of YHVH.

The Renewed Covenant portion starts in Hebrews 7: 23 & 24, in this way: **'And the former priests, on the one hand, existed in greater numbers, because they were prevented by death from continuing, (24) but He, on the other hand, because He abides forever, holds His priesthood permanently.'** Yahshua being YHVH in the flesh abides forever and is therefore able to save us completely, as may be read from verses 25 – 27, as follows: **'Hence, also, He is able to save forever those who draw near to Elohim through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them. (26) For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, set-apart, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens; (27) who does not need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins, and then for the sins of the people, because this He did once for all when He offered up Himself.'** Even though Satan has deceived the whole world (as per Revelation 12: 9), Elohim's plan of salvation for all mankind, will ultimately prevent him from destroying

most of mankind in the lake of fire and brimstone. Do you believe that?

Despite many believing that only their group or church are going to make it into 'heaven', our Father's plan is to make salvation available to all who will follow His way of life willingly. At present most people are blinded to His truth⁴, as may be understood by reading Isaiah 25: 7 – 9, ***'And on this mountain He will swallow up the covering which is over all peoples, even the veil which is stretched over all nations. (8) He will swallow up death for all time, and YHVH Elohim will wipe tears away from all faces, and He will remove the reproach of His people from all the earth; for YHVH has spoken.*** (We know that death and the grave will only be thrown in the lake of fire, after the second resurrection and the Great White Throne Judgment spoken about in Revelation 20: 14; this is therefore talking about the majority of the people who ever lived, including those who never even heard about Yahshua the salvation of Yah.) (9) ***And it will be said in that day, "Behold, this is our Elohim for whom we have waited that He might save us. This is YHVH for whom we have waited; let us rejoice and be glad in His salvation (Yahshua)."*** After the Scriptures have been opened to the minds of the majority of those who lived from the beginning, most of them will accept Yahshua and will like us today, be immersed into His saving name. They will be given a portion of the Set-apart Spirit and will live out their lives, after which those who remained in the way of YHVH, will be changed into Spirit Beings (the second harvest of human souls into the kingdom of Elohim). Those who continue to rebel, after learning the truth, will simply be burned to become ashes under the feet of the righteous (as per Malachi 4: 3).

⁴ *Even telling these facts to unbelievers at this time, will not result in them becoming converted to the truth, since we read from Matthew 13: 11 & 12, as follows: 'And He answered and said to them, "To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted. (12) For whoever has, to him shall more be given, and he shall have an abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away."* A second witness to this come from 2 Corinthians 4: 3 & 4, like this: ***'And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing (at this time), (4) in whose case the god of this world (Satan) has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the esteem of Messiah, who is the image of Elohim.'***

At that time Yahshua will implement the renewed covenant that came into effect when He died as the Lamb of Elohim for the sins of the world; and YHVH will put His Laws into our minds and write them upon our hearts. So even though we failed as human beings, Yahshua our High Priests paid for our sins by dying in our stead, thus making the original covenant obsolete and ready to disappear at His return. We read in Hebrews 9: 1, ***'Now even the first covenant had regulations of divine worship and the earthly sanctuary.'*** However, when Yahshua's blood of the new covenant was shed, the curtain or veil in front of the Holy of Holies tore in two (as we read from Luke 23: 45), giving those who serve YHVH, direct access to the Father, through Yahshua our High Priest. We read from verse 28 of Hebrews 7, ***'For the Law appoints men as high priests who are weak*** (human nature is weak and cannot obey YHVH as we read in Jeremiah 17: 9), ***but the word of the oath, which came after the Law, appoints a Son, made perfect forever.'*** He did away with the Sacrificial laws introduced by the Levitical priesthood to teach Israel that sin can only be forgiven, by dying and shedding His own blood for us. He became the sacrifice and did away with the Levitical Priesthood, as we read in Hebrews 9: 13 – 15, as follows: ***'For if the blood of goats and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled, sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, (14) how much more will the blood of messiah, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to Elohim, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living Elohim? (15) And for this reason He is the mediator of a new covenant, in order that since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were committed under the first covenant, those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.'***

We are not required to slaughter a lamb for Passover any longer, like some Messianic/Nazarene Israelites still do today, since Messiah suffered for us once for all as we read in Hebrews 9: 24 – 26, in this way: ***'For Messiah did not enter a set-apart place made with hands, a mere copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of Elohim for us; (25) nor was it that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the set-apart place year by year with blood not his own. (26) Otherwise, He would have needed to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now once at the consummation of the ages He***

has been manifested to put sin by the sacrifice of Himself. It is very difficult for us to fully understand how much our Father YHVH has done for us. Even though we all have to die once, because of the sins of our original forebears, He already assured our salvation as we read in verses 27 & 28 of Hebrews 9, as follows: ***‘And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment, (28) so Messiah also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await Him.’*** This is obviously talking about those of us who have been called during this age. However, if we recall in Isaiah 25 quoted earlier, it is also about those who were blinded to Yahshua during the present age, and is still waiting for Him as we saw in the final part of verse 9, in this way: ***‘This is YHVH for whom we have waited; let us rejoice and be glad in His salvation.’***

Continuing in Hebrews 10, we see that whilst the Levitical priesthood was in office, sacrifices had to be offered yearly, since the people continued to sin and had to be reminded of their sin year by year. Even so, it was impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins, nevertheless, when Messiah became the sacrifice to take away the sins of the world, the sacrificial law for sin was done away with. YHVH especially prepared a body for the Word to become flesh in, as we read from Hebrews 10: 5 – 10, as follows: ***‘Therefore, when He comes into the world, He says, “SACRIFICE AND OFFERING THOU HAST NOT DESIRED, BUT A BODY THOU HAST PREPARED FOR ME’ (6) IN WHOLE BURNT OFFERINGS AND sacrifices FOR SIN THOU HAST TAKEN NO PLEASURE. (7) THEN I SAID, ‘BEHOLD, I HAVE COME (IN THE ROLL OF THE BOOK IT IS WRITTEN OF ME) TO DO THY WILL, O ELOHIM.’” (8) After saying above, “SACRIFICES AND OFFERINGS AND WHOLE BURNT OFFERINGS AND sacrifices FOR SIN THOU HAST NOT DESIRED, NOR HAST THOU TAKEN PLEASURE in them” (which are offered according to the (sacrificial) Law), (9) then He said, “BEHOLD, I HAVE COME TO DO THY WILL.” He takes away the first (priesthood or administration) in order to establish the second (priesthood according to the order of Melchizedek). (10) By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Yahshua Messiah once for all.’***

Instead of offering the same sacrifices every time the people sinned, Yahshua after having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, **'SAT DOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF ELOHIM.'**, as we are told in the last part of Hebrews 10: 12. We read further from verses 13 & 14, **'waiting from that time onward UNTIL HIS ENEMIES BE MADE A FOOTSTOOL FOR HIS FEET. (14) For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified** (the side note in the NASB read: 'being sanctified').' YHVH has done all this for us so that after we have been sanctified, He will establish the new covenant and write His Laws on our minds. We read from verse 17, **"AND THEIR SINS AND THEIR LAWLESS DEEDS I WILL REMEMBER NO MORE."** Since Yahshua died, we are able to enter the set-apart place by His blood, as we read in verse 19 – 22, as follows: **'Since therefore brethren, we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Yahshua, (20) by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, (21) and since we have a great priest over the house of Elohim, (22) let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.'** After our calling and immersion into Messiah's saving name, we should continue to grow in grace and knowledge, in order to strengthen our faith in the one and only Elohim and the salvation He provided for all who follow Him willingly.

We conclude by reading from verses 23 – 25 of Hebrews 10, like this: **'Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; (24) and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, (25) not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more, as you see the day drawing near.'** Even though not part of this portion, we should be ever mindful of the warning in verse 26, as follows: **'For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins.'**

Amos 9: 7 – 15 & Acts 15: 1 – 21.

This haftarah portion is read with Torah portion Kedoshim (Leviticus 19: 1 to 20: 27) and Renewed Covenant portion Acts 15: 1 - 21. The fact that YHVH will one day rebuild and restore the Tabernacle of David which has fallen, is mentioned in both the haftarah and Renewed Covenant portions. Scriptural history informs us that Jeroboam, the king who took over the kingdom of the house of Israel after King Solomon's death, erected two golden calves in Israel, one in Dan and one in Bethel, and instituted a feast in the eighth month on the fifteenth of the month, **'like the feast** (of Booths or Tabernacles) **which is in Judah'** (see 1st Kings 12: 28 – 33). This idol worship resulted in the fact that YHVH no longer cared for Israel as a nation, as we read in Amos 9: 7, in this way: **“Are you not as the sons of Ethiopia to Me, O sons of Israel?” declares YHVH. “Have I not brought up Israel from the land of Egypt, and the Philistines from Caphtor and the Arameans from Kir?”**

We know that the nation of Israel was taken captive by the Assyrians because of their idolatry, between the years 721 – 718 BCE. We also know that they remain in captivity, even to this day. Here in Amos YHVH is telling us, the modern day descendant of the house of Israel, that we have become like any other nation to Him and that we are no longer considered the nation which He wanted to be an example to the world. The question is: How long are we going to offend our Father? I notice from information sent me by some groups, that they are again this year going to keep the Feast of Tabernacles a month later than what the Hebrew calendar shows. However, we read from verses 8 & 9 of Amos 9, (YHVH saying through Amos): **“Behold, the eye of YHVH Elohim are on the sinful kingdom, and I will destroy it from the face of the earth; nevertheless, I will not totally destroy the house of Jacob,” Declares YHVH.** (9) **“For behold, I am commanding, and I will shake the house of Israel among all nations as grain is shaken in a sieve, but not a kernel will fall to the ground.”** After the captivity of the house of Israel, we were dispersed amongst all the nations of the world; so much so that not all of us speak the same language or are the same color any longer. We have lost our identity, language and culture and even now that YHVH is calling some of us out of the world, to become first fruits unto Him, several groups

disagree with the Sabbaths and Kosher laws that Judah has preserved for us.

Continuing in verse 10, we read the warning that YHVH gave us through Amos, like this: **“All the sinners of My people will die by the sword** (this is in fact talking about some of the called out ones), **those who say, ‘The calamity will not overtake or confront us.’** If we do not start keeping the commandments of YHVH our Elohim, exactly the way that He specifies through Moses and Yahshua, we will die by the sword in the final world war. But we read from verses 11 & 12, **“In that day I will raise up the fallen booth of David, and wall on its breaches; I will also raise up its ruins, and rebuild it as in the days of old;** (David ruled the United Israel of Elohim made up of both the houses of Judah and Israel! Some are trying to dispel the fact that the house of Israel will one day soon, have to combine with the house of Judah – whether they like it or not!) (12) **That they may possess the remnant of Edom and all the nations who are called by My name.” Declares YHVH who does this.’** Those who deny or contradict these facts, may do so as much as they like, as it will happen, despite of them!

We know that the fallen booth of David will only be raised when Yahshua returns to rule us from the throne of David in Jerusalem. It is during this time that the blessings that we read about in verses 13 to 15 of Amos 9, will occur, as follows: **“Behold, days are coming,” declares YHVH, “When the plowman will overtake the reaper and the treader of grapes him who sows seed; when the mountains will drip sweet wine, and all the hills will be dissolved.** (14) **Also I will restore the captivity of My people Israel, and they will rebuild the ruined cities and live in them** (the cities that will be destroyed during the coming world-wide war), **they will also plant vineyards and drink their wine, and make gardens and eat their fruit.** (15) **I will also plant them on their land, and they will not again be rooted out from their land which I have given them,” Says YHVH your Elohim.’** As the United Israel of Elohim, we will again be allocated portions of land in the Land of Israel one day.

The Renewed Covenant portion comes from Acts 15: 1 – 21. Commencing in verse 1 of Acts 15, we notice that there was a dispute between Rav Shaul and Barnabas, about physical

circumcision. However, in verse 2 we see that they determined that they together with certain others of them should go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and elders concerning this issue. We see that their decision to take the matter to the priests and Levites in Jerusalem is in accordance with the Torah command found in Deuteronomy 17: 8 – 12, like this: ***“If any case is too difficult for you to decide, between one kind of homicide or another, between one kind of lawsuit or another, and between one kind of assault or another, being cases of dispute in your courts, then you shall arise and go up to the place which YHVH your Elohim chooses. (9) So you shall come to the Levitical priest or the judge, who is in office in those days, and you shall inquire of them, and they will declare to you the verdict in the case. (10) And you shall do according to the terms of the verdict which they declare to you from that place which YHVH chooses; and you shall be careful to observe according to all that they teach you. (11) According to the terms of the law which they teach you, and according to the verdict which they tell you, you shall do; you shall not turn aside from the word which they declare to you, to the right or the left. (12) And the man who acts presumptuously by not listening to the priest who stands there to serve YHVH your Elohim, nor to the judge, that man shall die; thus you shall purge the evil from Israel.”***

We read from Acts 15: 5, ***‘But certain ones of the sect of the Pharisees who had believed, stood up, saying, “It is necessary to circumcise them, and to direct them to observe the Law of Moses.”’*** We know that Rav Shaul was also from the Sect of the Pharisees, as may be read in Philippians 3: 5 in this way: ***‘circumcised the eighth day of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law a Pharisee.’*** From verse 5 (of Acts 15) we understand that Rav Shaul, a Pharisee and believer in Yahshua, had a disagreement with other Pharisees who were also believers in Yahshua. Continuing in Acts 15: 6 we see that the elders and the apostles came together to consider whether circumcision was indeed required, when Gentile believers come to believe in Yahshua the Messiah. We read Rav Kepha’s reaction to the question at hand in Acts 15: 7 - 11, as follows: ***‘And after there had been much debate, Peter (Kepha) stood up and said to them, “Brethren, you know that in the early days Elohim made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear***

the word of the gospel and believe. (8) And Elohim, who knows the heart, bore witness to them, giving them the Set-apart Spirit, just as He also did to us (meaning Jewish believers); (9) and He made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith. (10) Now Therefore why do you put Elohim to the test by placing upon the neck of the disciples a yoke which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? (11) But we believe that we are saved through the grace of the Master Yahshua, in the same way as they also are.'

We read from verse 12 that the entire multitude present at the meeting kept silent and listened to Barnabas and Rav Shaul, as they relate to them about the signs and wonders Elohim had done through them among the Gentiles. In Acts 15: 13 – 21 we see that Rav Yaacov (James, Yahshua's half brother) confirms that the Gentiles came to believe in Messiah as prophesied by the Prophet Amos, and gives his judgment as follows: ***'And after they had stopped speaking, Yaacov answered, saying, "Brethren listen to me. (14) Simeon (Peter) has related how Elohim first concerned Himself about taking from among the Gentiles a people for His name. (15) And with this the words of the Prophets agree, just as it is written, (16) 'AFTER THESE THINGS I will return, AND I WILL REBUILD THE TABERNACLE OF DAVID WHICH HAS FALLEN, AND I WILL REBUILD ITS RUINS, AND I WILL RESTORE IT, (17) IN ORDER THAT THE REST OF MANKIND MAY SEEK YHVH, AND ALL THE GENTILES WHO ARE CALLED BY MY NAME,' (18) SAYS YHVH, WHO MAKES THESE THINGS KNOWN FROM OF OLD. (19) Therefore it is my judgment that we do not trouble those who are turning to Elohim from among the Gentiles, (20) but that we write to them that they abstain from things contaminated by idols and from fornication and from what is strangled and from blood. (21) For Moses from ancient generations has in every city those who preach him, since he is read in the synagogues every Sabbath.'"***

Why do so many of us assume that Acts 15 is talking about two different ways, in which Jewish and Ephraimite believers in Messiah are to show their faith in YHVH through Yahshua the Messiah? The reason for this is that most of us interpret that the so-called 'Old Testament' was written for 'them', and the so-called 'New Testament' was written for 'us'. Most reject what YHVH spoke through Moses

and therefore interpret the Scriptures as two separate books. In order then to have the correct understanding of Acts 15, we need to take a Hebraic view of the Scriptures and understand how the Torah and the Prophets relate to what is written in the Renewed Covenant. We read Yahshua's own words in this regard in John 5: 43 – 47, as follows: ***“I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; if another shall come in his own name, you will receive him⁵. (44) How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another, and you do not seek the esteem that is from the one and only Elohim? (here Yahshua who is Immanuel, meaning Elohim in the flesh confirms that there is only one Elohim) (45) Do not think that I will accuse you before the Father; the one who accuses you is Moses, in whom you have set your hope. (46) For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote of Me. (47) But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?”*** Reading this, most believe that it is aimed at our Jewish brothers; however, verse 47 makes it clear, that we cannot believe Yahshua's words, if we do not believe the writings of Moses.

The Torah and the prophets foretold the coming of Messiah, that there would be an end of our exile and that Yahshua the Messiah will re-gather both houses of Israel and return them back to the land of Israel. Yahshua tells his Jewish audience here that one reason for Him to die is to eventually re-gather both Judah and Ephraim. We read accordingly in John 10: 16 & 17, Yahshua saying: ***“And I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they shall hear My voice; and they shall become one flock with one shepherd. (17) For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it up again.”*** In addition we read the following in John 11: 49 – 52, ***‘But a certain one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, “You know nothing at all, (50) nor do you take into account that it is expedient for you that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation should not perish.” (51) Now this he did not say on his own initiative; but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Yahshua was going to die for the nation, (52) and not for the nation (Judah) only, but that***

⁵ Some accept traditions and teachings of men far more easily than believing what Yahshua the word of Elohim, has to say about things; an example being the authority that Judah has regarding the Feast Days of Elohim.

He might also gather together into one the children of Elohim who are scattered abroad (namely Ephraim).'

Immediately prior to Yahshua's ascension to heaven, forty days after His resurrection, the apostles asked Him in Acts 1: 6, as follows: ***'And so when they had come together, they were asking Him saying, "Master, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?"*** Yahshua said to them in verses 7 & 8 of Acts 1, ***"It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority; (8) but you shall receive power when the Set-apart Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all of Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth (including the USA, the UK, the Falkland Islands as well as South Africa)."*** Yahshua commanded His disciples in Matthew 28: 19 & 20, saying: ***"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, immersing them in the name (one name) of the Father and the Son and the Set-apart Spirit, (20) teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."*** The commission is very clear: All nations are to be taught the Torah that Yahshua taught His disciples. It is therefore clear that all nations are to be taught to obey the commandments of Elohim and everything taught by Yahshua, whilst He was on earth.

The decision by the elders and the apostles in Jerusalem regarding the dispute about circumcision in Acts 15, was that, because repentance is a process, new believers need to be taught to abstain from meats offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from fornication, before they are taught about the other requirements of Torah, such as the Sabbath, The Feast Days of Elohim, clean and unclean foods, the wearing of Tzit-tzit, and eventually circumcision. We read in Acts 15: 21 that they will learn these additional requirements as they attend synagogues near them, or through internet ministries such as ours. This is very similar to our father Abraham. It was only after he came to believe in YHVH (as is recorded in Genesis 15: 6) that he was circumcised, as we read in Genesis 17: 24, as follows: ***'Now Abraham was ninety-nine years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin.'*** In a previous sermon, I explained that a believer in Messiah becomes an heir of the promise that was made with Abraham. This is recorded in Galatians 3: 29, as follows: ***'And if you belong to Messiah, then***

you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise. Whilst new believers are not circumcised, they are not joined to the covenant made to Abraham, and are therefore not a member of the family of Abraham, or the Commonwealth of Israel. In other words once a Gentile or Israelite who thinks he is a Gentile is returning to faith in YHVH, by having his heart circumcised (himself immersed), forsaking idols, abstaining from fornication, blood and things strangled (meaning he is beginning to obey Torah), he will learn to follow the rest of the Torah commandments, as he attends services on the Sabbath, or study teachings like this via the internet.

The ruling of James (Rav Yaacov) in Acts 15 is in agreement with the rulings of the Pharisaic Rabbis followed by Orthodox Jews of today. New believers should eventually follow all the requirements of the Torah, but is only required to follow the essential four listed in Acts 15: 20 at the beginning of their walk with Elohim. If we understand the ruling of Acts 15 from a Hebraic viewpoint, we will know that it does not contradict what Yahshua taught in Matthew 5: 19, saying: ***'Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and so teaches others, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.'*** We are aware that circumcision is not a requirement for salvation. However, if we as heirs of Abraham through Yahshua our Messiah want to inherit the Land of Israel, we will have to comply by doing our part in the covenant which YHVH made with Abraham, our father in the faith.

Ezekiel 44:15 – 31 & Colossians 2: 11 – 23.

This haftarah portion is read with Torah portion Emor (Leviticus 21: 1 to 24: 23) and Renewed Covenant portion Colossians 2: 11 – 23. Both the Torah and haftarah portions have to do with the dress code, appearance and conduct of the priests in Israel and all three portions deal with the Feast days of Elohim. We commence reading from verses 15 & 16 of Ezekiel 44, as follows: **“*But the Levitical priests, the sons of Zadok, who kept charge of My sanctuary when the sons of Israel went astray from Me, shall come near to Me to minister to Me; and they shall stand before Me to offer Me the fat and the blood,*” Declares YHVH Elohim.**’ (16) **“*They shall enter My sanctuary; they shall come near to My table to minister to Me and keep My charge.*”**

Elohim makes a distinction between the Levites in the line of those who were unfaithful in the days before the judgments; they may minister in temple services, but may not make offerings or enter the Most Set-apart Place. Only the priests of the Zadok line may perform these functions, because Elohim attaches great value to the faithfulness of these priests in the past⁶. We read about the clothing and appearance of the priests, when they enter the millennial Temple from verses 17 – 18 of Ezekiel 44, as follows: **“*And it shall be that when they enter at the gates of the inner court, they shall be clothed with linen garments; and wool shall not be on them while they are ministering in the gates of the inner court and in the house.* (18) *Linen turbans shall be on their heads, and linen undergarments shall be on their loins; they shall not gird themselves with anything that makes them sweat.*”** Even though this is patterned after the dress code of the priesthood in ancient Israel in the wilderness, there are those who say that Ezekiel 44 cannot be a prophecy about the millennium, since those who will become priests during that time will be spirit beings, and will therefore not perspire. I agree that it does seem unusual, but then so are the words of Yahshua in Luke 24: 38 & 39 unusual, like this: **“*Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I***

⁶ *The faithfulness of the priests of the Zadok line to David and Solomon in 1 Kings 1: 32 – 40.*

have.” However, this could simply talk about physical priests who will serve under the spiritual royal priests, during the millennium rule of Messiah. Even so, do we fully understand what lies ahead for us? There are a number of things that do not add up yet, such as the reason to have leaves for the healing of the nations, spoken about in Revelation 22: 2, which is a prophecy about the New Jerusalem, beyond the millennium, after everything physical have been burned up. In addition we should not forget that the tabernacle in the wilderness and its trimmings, were also made according to the pattern of the heavenly tabernacle.

Continuing in verses 19 & 20 of Ezekiel 44, we read: **“And when they go out into the outer court, into the outer court to the people, they shall put off their garments in which they have been ministering and lay them in the set-apart chambers; then they shall put on other garments that they may not transmit set-apartness to the people with their garments. (20) Also they shall not shave their heads, yet they shall not let their locks grow long; they shall only trim the hair of their heads.”** This tells us that the picture as portrait in some Christian Bibles of Yahshua having long hair is false. He is our High Priest and has already made us to be a royal priesthood as per Revelation 1: 6 and 1st Peter 2: 9⁷. That is also the reason why Nazarene Israelites/Jews do not shave their heads or wear long hair; and also why we wear head coverings during worship services.

We read about the conduct of these priests from verses 21 to 26, in this way: **“Nor shall any of the priests drink wine when they enter the inner court. (22) And they shall not marry a widow or a divorced woman but shall take virgins from the offspring of the house of Israel, or a widow who is the widow of a priest. (23) Moreover, they shall teach My people the difference between the set-apart and the profane, and cause them to discern between the clean and the unclean.** (this tells us that kosher laws will still be in effect during the millennium – another reason why we

⁷ We read from Revelation 1: 6, ‘and He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His Elohim and Father; to Him be the esteem and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.’, and from 1st Peter 2: 9, ‘But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A SET-APART NATION, A PEOPLE FOR Elohim’s OWN POSSESSION, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.’

should keep them today.) (24) ***And in a dispute they shall take their stand to judge, they shall judge it according to My ordinances. They shall also keep My laws and My statutes in all My appointed feasts, and sanctify My Sabbaths.*** (25) ***And they shall not go to a dead person to defile themselves; however, for father, for mother, for son, for daughter, for brother, or for a sister who has not had a husband, they may defile themselves.*** (26) ***And after he is cleansed, seven days shall elapse for him.***”

All the laws that applied in ancient Israel will be applicable during the millennium rule of Yahshua – so why do some think that they were abolished and should not be kept any longer? In fact by reading from Ezekiel 44: 6 – 9 (which is not part of this haftarah portion), we see that circumcision will also still apply, as follows: ***“And you shall say to the rebellious ones, to the house of Israel, ‘Thus says YHVH Elohim, “Enough of all your abominations, O house of Israel, (7) when you brought in foreigners, uncircumcised in heart and uncircumcised in flesh, to be in My sanctuary to profane it, even my house, when you offered My food, the fat and the blood; for they made My covenant void- this in addition to all your abominations. (8) And you have not kept charge of My set-apart things yourselves, but you have set foreigners to keep charge of My sanctuary.” (9) Thus says YHVH Elohim, “No foreigner, uncircumcised in heart and uncircumcised in flesh, of all the foreigners who are among the sons of Israel, shall enter My sanctuary.”***”

However, in addition to the laws that are applicable today, we see that the sacrificial laws will again apply during the millennium. But, as I said in an earlier haftarah, it will simply have a memorial value, pointing back to Messiah, for those people who will have to learn about Him and the purpose that He performed for mankind, during that time. We read consequently from verse 27 – 31 of Ezekiel 44, like this: ***“And on the day that he (the priest) goes into the sanctuary, into the inner court to minister in the sanctuary, he shall offer his sin offering”, declares YHVH. (28) And it shall be with regard to an inheritance for them, that I am their inheritance; and you shall give them no possession in Israel- I am their possession. (29) They shall eat the grain offerings, the sin offering, and the guilt offering; and every devoted thing in Israel shall be theirs. (30) And the first of all the first fruits of every kind and every contribution of every kind, from all your***

contributions, shall be for the priests; you shall also give to the priest the first of your dough to cause a blessing to rest on your house. (31) The priests shall not eat any bird or beast that has died a natural death or has been torn to pieces.”

We start reading the Renewed Covenant portion from verse 11 & 12 of Colossians 2, as follows: **“and in Him (Yahshua) you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Messiah; (12) having been buried with Him in immersion, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of Elohim, who raised Him from the dead.”** When we come to believe in Yahshua and are immersed in His saving name, we essentially stop serving ourselves in selfish arrogance and start serving YHVH, as we read in Deuteronomy 10: 16, in this way: **“Circumcise then your heart, and stiffen your neck no more.”** Once we have repented and were immersed in Yahshua’s name (circumcised in the heart) He has forgiven our past sins, as is confirmed in verses 13 & 14 of Colossians 2, like this: **‘And when you were dead in your transgressions (we died to our transgressions when we were immersed) and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions (we are definitely not saved by being circumcised in the flesh, but are given a portion of the Set-apart Spirit at immersion, giving us a deposit of our inheritance with a view to redemption), (14) having cancelled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us and which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.’**

Many in Christianity believe that according to verse 14, the commandments (or Torah), has been nailed to Yahshua’s impalement cross, and we are not obliged to keep it any longer. But is this really what verse 14 is saying? Reading it carefully again, underlining what was nailed to the cross, we notice the following: **‘having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us and which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.’** So we see that the certificate of debt – the document of our indebtedness was nailed to the cross. An example of this is when someone paid a traffic fine that we received for breaking a traffic law, on our behalf.

The person paying the traffic fine for us, redeemed us from having to pay the fine. However, this good deed did not abolish the traffic law which we transgressed. We are even now required to obey to the traffic regulations and by-laws applicable in the country where we live. The same applies to the Laws of YHVH our Elohim. Yahshua redeemed us from having to die according to the Torah, by paying for our past sins with His very life, but we are still required to obey the commandments. The Torah teachings of Elohim are as applicable today as it was yesterday and will be forever. These same laws will be applicable during the millennial Kingdom and on into eternity. We read appropriately from James 2: 24, as follows: ***“You see that a man is justified by works, and not by faith alone.”*** A second witness to this is found in Romans 2: 13: ***“for not the hearers of the Law are just before Elohim, but the DOERS of the Law will be justified.”*** The decree of us having to die because of transgressing the Law was taken out of the way by Yahshua, and by so doing he disarmed the rulers and authorities as we read in verse 15 of Colossians 2, in this way: ***‘When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him.’***

We continue by reading from verses 16 & 17 of Colossians 2, ***‘Therefore let no one act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect of a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day- (17) things which are a mere shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Messiah.’*** This is not saying: that we are now allowed to eat whatever we want; and that we are not required to keep the Set-apart Days, new moons or Sabbath any longer. But it is saying: now that we follow Messiah, we are obliged to obey the Torah command that He taught His called-out ecclesia (His disciples and by implication us His modern day disciples) whilst He was on earth. We know from The Scriptures that it was His custom to keep the Sabbath (see Luke 4: 16) and other Feast Days of Elohim. As shadows of things to come, the Feast Days of Elohim relate His plan of salvation for all humankind. We rehearse these feast days annually, as shadows of event still to happen in the near future. We know that the first three annual feast days have already been fulfilled and that the final four will be fulfilled when Yahshua returns on the Feast of Trumpets. After His return, Satan will be bound for a thousand years on the Day of Atonement. The Feast of Tabernacles represent the thousand year rule of Yahshua from Jerusalem,

followed by The Last Great Day, during which those not called during this age, will have their first opportunity to come to the knowledge of Elohim. Their minds will be opened to understand The Scriptures and most of them will repent and accept Yahshua as their Master and Savior. After being immersed they will be given the Set-apart Spirit and (eventually) be changed into spiritual sons and daughters of Elohim. The wicked who sinned willfully, after receiving the knowledge of the truth, during this age; the millennium; and beyond, will be burned to become ashes under the feet of the righteous (as per Malachi 4: 1 – 3).

Reading from verse 18, we are told: ***'Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize (in the coming Kingdom of Elohim) by delighting in self-abasement and the worship of the angels, taking his stand on visions he has seen, inflated without cause by his fleshly mind,'*** YHVH only talks to us through His Scriptures today. He does not send angels or visions to us any longer, and those who come up with ideas like that are not talking the truth. We read accordingly in Hebrews 1: 1 & 2, like this: ***'Elohim, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, (2) in these last days has spoken to us in His Son (The Word or embodiment of Torah), whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom He also made the world.'*** Continuing in verse 19 of Colossians 2, we read: ***'and not holding fast to the head, from whom the entire body, being supplied and held together by the joints and ligaments, grows with a growth which is from Elohim.'*** We the called-out ecclesia of Elohim, are the body of Messiah, with Him being our head. We should now be totally controlled by Yahshua the head of the body and not be concerned with what the world has to say about our doctrines and beliefs, which should all come from the Word of Elohim (Messiah). We read fittingly from verses 20 – 23, as follows: ***'If you have died with Messiah (in immersion) to the elementary principles of the world, why, as if you were living in the world, do you submit yourself to decrees, such as, (21) "Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch!" (22) (which all refer to things destined to perish with using)- in accordance with commandments and teachings of men? (23) These are matters which have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body, but are of no value against fleshly indulgence.'***

This is not talking about the teachings of Elohim, since the Torah is not simply the teachings of men, but in fact Spiritual and therefore everlasting, as Rav Shaul points out in Romans 7: 14, like this: ***'For we know that the Law is spiritual; but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin.'*** So this is talking about man made religious rules, such as the eating of fish on Fridays; forbidding a Priest to marry; and fasting for more than a day at a time, as we also read about in 1 Timothy 4: 1 – 3, in this way: ***'But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, (2) by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron, (3) men who forbid marriage and advocate abstaining from foods, which Elohim created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth.'*** To avoid any misunderstanding, we know that the food that Elohim created and sanctified for human consumption are given in Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14. We only obey the way of Elohim, and fast only as and when required by Him, on the Day of Atonement. In addition, we only refrain from eating leavened products during the seven Days of Unleavened Bread, in the Passover season, as commanded by Elohim.

Jeremiah 32: 6 – 27 & Luke 4: 16 – 21; Galatians 5:1-13.

This haftarah portion is read with Torah portion Behar (Leviticus 25: 1 to 26: 2) and Renewed Covenant portions Luke 4: 16 – 21 and Galatians 5: 1 – 13. All four the portions have to do with release and the freedom we have when we serve Yahshua. The Torah portion deals with the year of release or Seventh- year land Sabbath, transliterated in Hebrew as the '*shmitta*'; the haftarah portion deals with redemption of a property by a kinsman redeemer, as well as the fact that YHVH redeemed Israel from Egypt by His '*strong hand and outstretched arm*'; and the Renewed Covenant portions deal with Yahshua who was sent '*to proclaim release to the captives*'; and the fact that He set us free from slavery. We commence reading from Jeremiah 32: 6 & 7, ***'And Jeremiah said, "The word of YHVH came to me, saying, (7) 'Behold, Hanamel the son of Shallum your uncle is coming to you, saying, "Buy for yourself my field which is at Anathoth, for you have the right of redemption to buy it"'***

In verse 8 of Jeremiah 32, we see the event unfold exactly the way YHVH said to Jeremiah, as follows: ***'Then Hanamel my uncle's son came to me in the court of the guard according to the word of YHVH, and said to me, 'Buy my field, please, that is at Anathoth, which is in the land of Benjamin; for you have the right of possession and the redemption is yours; buy it for yourself. Then I knew that this was the word of YHVH.'*** We see in verses 9 & 10 that Jeremiah bought the land, signed and sealed the deed, called in witnesses to the transaction and weighed out the silver on the scales. According to verses 11 & 12, he took the deeds of purchase, the sealed copy containing the terms and conditions, and an open copy and gave the deed of purchase to Baruch the son of Neriah, the son of Mahseiah, in the sight of Hanamel his uncle's son, and in the sight of the witnesses who signed the deed of purchase, before all the Jews who were sitting in the court of the guard⁸. Next Jeremiah commanded Baruch to come before them, saying (in verses 14 & 15), ***'Thus says YHVH of hosts, the Elohim of Israel, "Take these deeds, this sealed deed of purchase, and this open deed, and put them in an earthenware jar, that they may last a***

⁸ *The Jews who were sitting in the court of the guard are the ones mention in Deuteronomy 17: 8 – 12, representing the Sanhedrin, who were responsible to judge religious and civil matters in all Israel.*

long time.” (15) ‘For thus says YHVH of hosts, the Elohim of Israel, “Houses and fields and vineyards shall again be bought in this land.” This is a prophecy that came true when the Jews returned from captivity in Babylon; but it also came true when the modern nation of Israel, consisting mainly of Jews was resettled in the land of Israel in 1948. In addition it also refers to a time when we the remnant of latter day descendants of the lost ten tribes, will return to the land of Israel, one day soon.

The statement by Jeremiah in verse 17, informs us that YHVH made the heavens and the earth by His great power and His outstretched arm, as follows: ***‘Ah YHVH Elohim! Behold, Thou hast made the heavens and the earth by Thy great power and by Thine outstretched arm! Nothing is too difficult for Thee.’*** We know that YHVH, created the heavens and the earth by the Word who later became Yahshua or Elohim in the flesh. Yahshua is the outstretched arm of YHVH as we have seen from Isaiah 53 and John 12: 37 – 40. Yahshua is the power (and wisdom) of Elohim, as we read from 1 Corinthians 1: 24, in this way: ***‘but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Messiah the power of Elohim and the wisdom of Elohim.*** In the next few verses Jeremiah reminds us that YHVH showed our forebears loving-kindness, and brought them out of the land of Egypt, by signs and great wonders, and with a strong hand and with an out stretched arm, and with great terror, and gave them the land of Israel, a land flowing with milk and honey. He continues with the history of Israel; that they took possession of the land, but did not obey YHVH and as a result He caused a calamity to overcome them. The Chaldeans laid siege of the land and the city of Jerusalem was given in their hands. The resultant hostilities caused a famine and pestilence and what YHVH has warned about before, came to pass.

We see in verse 25, that YHVH allowed Jeremiah to buy the land of his uncle’s son, although the city was given into the hands of the Chaldeans. However, we read from verse 26 & 27, ***‘Then the word of YHVH came to Jeremiah, saying, (27) “Behold, I am YHVH, the Elohim of all flesh; is anything too difficult for Me?”*** Here we are assured by YHVH that He will bring back the descendants of Judah (and Israel) to the land which He promised Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, even though, at that time (as today) it looked impossible.

The 1st Renewed Covenant portion is from Luke 4. We read from verse 16, talking about Yahshua, as follows: ***'And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up; and as was His custom, He entered the synagogue on the Sabbath, and stood up to read.*** As Yahshua said, he came to show us how to obey Torah, not to abolish it – as it was His custom, meaning a practice of His to attend Sabbath services in a Jewish synagogue. The only reason why we as Nazarene Jews/Israelites do not attend a Rabbinical Jewish synagogue is that they will not allow believers in Yahshua to attend regularly. However, like Yahshua, we attend services every Sabbath, be it in our own homes or communities. Continuing in verse 17 - 19, we read: ***'And the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him. And He opened the book, and found the place where it was written, (18) "THE SPIRIT OF YHVH IS UPON ME, BECAUSE HE ANOINTED ME TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THE POOR. HE HAS SENT ME TO PROCLAIM RELEASE TO THE CAPTIVES, AND RECOVERY TO THE SIGHT TO THE BLIND, TO SET FREE THOSE WHO ARE DOWNTRODDEN, (19) TO PLOCLAIM THE FAVORABLE YEAR OF YHVH."*** Yahshua came only for the lost sheep of the house of Israel, as we read in Matthew 15: 24, as follows: ***'But He answered and said, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.'*** We are the ones who are still in captivity; we are the ones who are too blind to understand that the truth, i.e. The Scriptures, from Genesis to Revelation will set us free; those of us called out of the world know that Yahshua the embodiment of Torah (from Genesis to Revelation) came to set us free, from our enslavement of sin or the breaking of the Law. Continuing in verses 20 & 21 of Luke 4, we read: ***'And He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed upon Him. (21) And He began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."*** However, we see from Isaiah 61: 1 & 2 that He only read to the middle of the second verse; the reason being, that the rest of the second verse will only be fulfilled when He returns one day, as follows: ***'And the day of vengeance of our Elohim; to comfort all who mourn.'*** The day of vengeance of Elohim, will be ushered in just prior to Yahshua's return, and He will only at His second coming fulfill this part of the prophesy.

Before continuing with our final portion from Galatians, I would like to clear up a major misconception about the teachings of Rav Shaul. Many have viewed His teachings as speaking against the Torah portions which they do not wish to accept. However, Rav Shaul was really teaching about the importance of all the commandments including those viewed as least, or the ones that people believe they need not to keep any longer; stressed that the Set-apart Spirit is the necessary agent for enabling righteousness. We need to follow the steps set-out in The Scriptures exactly if we want to receive the Set-apart Spirit, to enable us to start obeying Torah, which leads to righteousness. It is like we read from James 2: 26, as follows: ***'For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.'*** However, we should never compel new believers to do things, for which they are not ready, yet. People should do things because they came to understand and believe the same. Repentance is a process and as people learn more by self-study and from teachers, who themselves went through the discipleship program like the one we provide on the internet; they will begin to understand better and start obeying from the heart. YHVH wants us to serve Him willingly from the heart and not because someone else forced us to serve Him. In addition Yahshua said that we should not lord it over people, since that is what the Gentiles do. We read accordingly from Mark 10: 42 – 45, like this: ***'And calling them to Himself, Yahshua said to them, "You know that those who are recognized as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them; and their great men exercise authority over them. (43) But it is not so among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant; (44) and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave of all. (45) For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."***

This should be a warning to those who want to prescribe to others and judge what they wear in and outside worship services. I agree that our bodies should be properly covered, so as not to give offence, or to lead people of the opposite gender into temptation. The fact that when we come to services we appear before the King of the Universe, should not only motivate us to wear our best, but also to be dressed modestly. We are not a cult prescribing a certain dress code to our members, as long as they are mindful of the aforementioned principles. The point is that we should judge

ourselves, by comparing ourselves to Messiah and not amongst fellow believers. It is as we read in James 4: 10 – 12, in this way: ***'Humble yourselves in the presence of YHVH, and He will exalt you. (11) Do not speak against one another, brethren. He who speaks against a brother, or judges his brother, speaks against the law, and judges the law; but if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law, but a judge of it. (12) There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the One who is able to save and to destroy; but who are you who judge your neighbor?'*** Yes, men should not wear female clothing and similarly should ladies not wear male clothing. However, in a city like Port Elizabeth, ladies are far better protected, when wearing female slacks than dresses, because the wind blows at almost gale force for at least 30% of the time. Even though we do not get lots of rain in Port Elizabeth, it is as it says in the 1st part of Job 37: 9, like this: ***"Out of the south comes the storm."*** Our reasons for teaching against certain practices, should come from Torah, and should not be based on teachings of men, as we read from Colossians 2: 20 – 23, as follows: ***'If you have died with Messiah to the elementary principles of the world, why, as if you were living in the world, do you submit yourself to decrees, such as, (21) "Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch!" (22) (Which all refer to things destined to perish with using) - in accordance with commandments and teachings of men? (23) These are matters which have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body, but are of no value against fleshly indulgence.'***

With that out of the way, let's commence in verse 1 of Galatians 5, like this: ***'It was for freedom that Messiah set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to the yoke of slavery.'*** Yahshua has set us free from the slavery of sin. He provided us with freedom from sin – not freedom of Torah as some believe. Sin is in fact the transgression of the Law (or Torah) as we read in 1st John 3: 4, like this: ***'Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness.'*** Since any attempt to obey Torah by ourselves is futile, without Yahshua, we cannot trust in anything but Him to give us the power to overcome sin. Continuing from verse 2 of Galatians 5, we read: ***'Behold I, Shaul, say to you that if you receive circumcision, Messiah will be of no benefit to you.'*** Circumcision does not ensure our

salvation. Yahshua the salvation of YHVH is the only way for us to attain Salvation. He is the door and if we do not go through Him, we remain lost, circumcised or not. We read accordingly from verse 3, **'And I testify again to every man who receives circumcision, that he is under obligation to keep the whole law.'** Like Abraham, we should not be circumcised before we are sure that we want to follow Yahshua all the way. The first step in our walk with Elohim is as Rav Kepha explained to those who came to believe in Yahshua, in Acts 2: 38, like this: **"Repent, and let each of you be immersed in the name of Yahshua Messiah for the forgiveness of your sins** (transgressions of Torah); **and you shall receive the gift of the Set-apart Spirit.'** Without having taken this step, it is impossible for us to obey Torah. Circumcision is the final step that we should take, because without the Set-apart Spirit indwelling us, we cannot obey Torah. By the time we are ready to ask for circumcision, we will want to obey Elohim fully, and will therefore want to be circumcised out of our own free will.

Torah applies to all who follow the way of Elohim, as we read in Exodus 12: 49, as follows: **"The same law shall apply to the native as to the stranger who sojourns among you."** We know that this was in fact talking about the fact that those who partake of the Passover should be circumcised. However, it also implies that all the commandments apply to those who follow the way of Elohim, as is confirmed in Numbers 15: 15, as follows: **'As for the assembly, there shall be one statute for you and for the alien who sojourns with you, a perpetual statute throughout your generations; as you are, so shall the alien be before YHVH.'** Despite those who deceive believers to believe that Yahshua came to do away with Torah, He said just the opposite in Matthew 5: 17 – 19. As explained in a previous haftarah portion, when Yahshua became the sacrifice (for the sins of the world), the only portion of the Law that was abolished, was the Sacrificial Law in respect of sin. The covenant of circumcision made with Abraham, was at least 430 years before the introduction of the Sacrificial Law, and was definitely not part thereof. In addition we know that Yahshua was both immersed (as per Mark 1: 9) and circumcised (as per Luke 2: 21); we the called out ones, who follow His perfect example should therefore do likewise. But, before we continue, we need to understand that neither the keeping of the Law nor circumcision ensures our salvation. We are saved by the grace of YHVH through faith. However, it is as we read in James

2: 24, **'You see that a man is justified by works, and not by faith alone.'** We prove our faith by what we do. If we say that we believe in the Sabbath and Feast Days of Elohim, but refuse to attend services during these days, our faith is of no use.

It is therefore easier to understand what Rav Shaul is saying to Gentiles and those who were not circumcised eight days after birth, in verses 4 & 5 of Galatians 5, in this way: **'You have been severed from Messiah, you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace. (5) For we through the Spirit, by faith, are waiting for the hope of righteousness.'** As sinners we need to repent first, then be immersed and only then will we want to obey Elohim from the heart. After immersing a new believer, the teacher who immersed him/her is according to the commission given us by Messiah (in Matthew 28: 18 – 20); responsible to teach the believer everything that Yahshua taught His disciples. That is why Yahshua introduced a discipleship program, to ensure that there will always be teachers available, who were themselves taught by someone who has gone through the same discipleship program before them. It is during this discipleship program that new believers are taught about the additional requirements of Torah, such as the Sabbath, The Feast Days of Elohim, clean and unclean foods, the wearing of Tzitzit, and eventually circumcision. As mentioned in an earlier haftarah portion, Acts 15: 21 informs us that new believers will learn these additional requirements as they attend synagogues near them, or through internet ministries such as ours.

Continuing in verse 6 of Galatians 5, we read: **'For in Messiah Yahshua neither circumcision nor un-circumcision means anything, but faith working through love.'** It does not matter whether you were circumcised or not, before coming to believe in the way of Elohim, as He is only interested in those who obey and serve him from the heart (through faith). If you were circumcised thinking that it will assure your salvation, you are wrong. However, if your motivation for circumcision was out of love, because you know that those who belong to Messiah are Abraham's offspring; heirs (of the Promised Land) according to the promise (or everlasting covenant) that He made with YHVH (as we read in Galatians 3: 29), you are on the right track. Proceeding with the idea of faith working through love, we read from verses 7 & 8, **'You were running well; who hindered you from obeying the truth? (8) This persuasion did**

not come from Him who calls you. Our Father does not want us to do things against our will and will never persuade us to do so. He is only interested in obedience from the heart – He gave us free will because He is not interested in robots, all made to follow Him because they are made (or forced) to do so. With this in mind, let's continue reading the remaining verses as follows: (9) ***'A little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough.*** (10) ***I have confidence in you in the Master, that you will adopt no other view; but the one who is disturbing you shall bear his judgment, whoever he is.*** (11) ***But I, brethren, if I still preach circumcision (for salvation), why am I still persecuted? Then the stumbling block of the cross has been abolished.*** (Those who demand that new believers be circumcised immediately, sometimes scare such people away – the point is that such believers will eventually in their walk with Elohim, learn the true reason for circumcision and decide to obey from the heart, when they are ready.) (12) ***Would that those who are troubling you would even mutilate themselves.*** (13) ***For you were called to freedom (from slavery of sin), brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.'***

Jeremiah 16: 19 – 17: 14 & Ephesians 2: 11 – 19.

This haftarah portion is read with Torah portion Bu Chukotai (Leviticus 26: 3 to 27: 34) and Renewed Covenant portion Ephesians 2: 11 – 19. Whereas the Torah portion informs the ancient Israelites that they will be punished seven times for their sins (in Leviticus 26: 28) and that they will be scattered among the nations so that their homeland (Israel) will become a wasteland because of their sins (Leviticus 26:33), the haftarah portion tells us that those of us scattered amongst the nations will return to YHVH in a repentant attitude, as we read from Jeremiah 16: 19: as follows: ***‘O YHVH, my strength and my stronghold, and my refuge in the day of distress, to Thee the nations (or ten lost tribes) will come from the ends of the earth and say, “Our fathers have inherited nothing but falsehood, futility and things of no profit.”***

Most of the lost ten tribes became Christians, after they went into captivity and were dispersed amongst the nations. They believed a false gospel about a Messiah (or C*h*r*i*s*t as they know him) who came to do away with his strict old father’s laws. Even though the religions of the world have a slight limiting effect on the excessive life styles of their members, it resulted in major confusion regarding the truth⁹. It is therefore incumbent upon each one of us, the called out believers, to come before Elohim in repentance for the falsehood that we have learnt from our forefathers, and return to walking in the way of Elohim. We continue reading from verses 20 & 21, in this way: ***‘Can man make gods for himself? Yet they are not gods!’ (21) “Therefore behold, I am going to make them know- this time I***

⁹ *An interesting side light: When YHVH wanted the nations of the world to scatter in disagreement, He confused their language, and everyone started speaking in a different tongue (Genesis 11). Think about it - other than in Namibia (an African neighbor of South Africa), who made English their lingua franca (the language serving as medium between different nations); here in South Africa, we have 11 different official languages? But, I believe this arrangement is Elohim’s doing and will assist in the preservation of the Israelites. The opposite was also true when the Set-apart Spirit was given to the Jews who attended the first Pentecost after Yahshua’s resurrection and ascension; despite coming together from the known nations around Israel and speaking the different languages of these nations, everyone could hear who ever spoke in the language of the nation where he is from, in his own language to which He was born. In addition, we know that YHVH will eventually give us all a pure language (probably Scriptural Hebrew) so that we will all understand one another perfectly.*

will make them know My power¹⁰ and My might; and they shall know that My name is YHVH¹¹.” It is clear from these two verses, that the deception which our parents inherited includes lies about the Name of YHVH and His Oneness. Continuing in verse 1 of Jeremiah 17, we read: ***‘The sin of Judah is written down with an iron stylus; with a diamond point it is engraved upon the tablet of their heart, and on the horns of their altars.’*** What does this mean? Because of the severe treatment that the Jewish nation suffered throughout the ages, their sins are written in their hearts and they are fearful of YHVH. In an effort not to suffer punishment, they keep Torah because of this fear: It is (in my opinion) due to this fear that during the Babylonian captivity, the Priests of Judah decided to change the vowel-pointing(s) of the name of the Almighty, so that it is now pronounced as ‘Adonai’. This was done primarily to prevent the gentile nations to blaspheme the name of the Elohim of Israel. Prior to the captivity, His Name was freely used in worship services, but the religious leaders in Judah have in addition to the above reason, adopted the Babylonian tradition, whereby the names of their deities were said to be in-effable (un-pronounceable): The name of the Almighty could only be used by the High Priest during Atonement and the rest of the people were not permitted to use the name at all. This was initially done, to put an end to the pagan nations blaspheming the name of YHVH, but because of the Babylonian influence the religious leaders went too far, and have misguided the nation of Judah regarding the name.

As a result of their fearfulness, the religious Jews keep the laws of YHVH to what outsiders might call a *‘pharisaical extent’*, nevertheless, they are even now keeping it, and have not like the lost ten tribes, forgotten the Torah of Elohim. That is also why we can know with certainty, that they have the oracles of Elohim, as is confirmed in Romans 3: 1 - 4. That is also why we read in Zechariah

¹⁰ We learnt by comparing Jeremiah 32: 17 with 1 Corinthians 1: 24 and Matthew 28: 18, that Yahshua; Elohim in the flesh is the power of Elohim. Also refer to Isaiah 53, Psalm 33: 6 & John 1: 1- 3.

¹¹ YHVH is derived from the verb HAYAH, meaning to be – or the I AM, which entails that He will be whatever we need Him to be: i.e. YHVH-Yireh meaning YHVH will provide; YHVH-Nissi meaning YHVH our banner; YHVH-Rapha meaning YHVH our healer; YHVH-Sabbaoth meaning YHVH of Hosts; YHVH-Tsidkenu meaning YHVH our Righteousness; YHVH-Rohi meaning YHVH my shepherd; as well as Yahshua meaning the Salvation of YHVH or YHVH saves.

8: 23, ***“Thus says YHVH of hosts, ‘In those days ten men (the latter day ten lost tribes) from all the nations will grasp the garment of a Jew saying, “Let us go with you, for we have heard that Elohim is with you.””***” At this point in time YHVH has blinded our Jewish brothers to the identity of Messiah (as per Romans 11: 32), but at His return on Yom Teruah (also known as Rosh Hashanah), He will open their eyes, and they will see Him whom we (including them) have pierced (as per Zechariah 12: 10). They will repent and recognize Yahshua as their Master and Savior; then all Israel, including the remnant of the lost ten tribes who are being called at this time, will be saved (as per Romans 11: 25 & 26). However, the engraving of their sins on their heart had the opposite effect to the New Covenant, where the Law will be written on the hearts of believers, so that they will want to keep it, out of love for YHVH. Our motive, as well as those who keep Torah, because of fear, will change, and we will all obey, because we love YHVH and His ways, from our hearts.

Jeremiah was warning the Jews about the Babylonian captivity, in verses 2 – 4 of Jeremiah 17, ***‘As they remember their children, so they remember their altars and their Asherim by green trees on the high hills. (3) O mountain of Mine in the countryside, I will give over your wealth and all your treasures for booty, your high places for sin throughout your borders. (4) And you will, even of yourself, let go of your inheritance that I gave you; and I will make you serve your enemies in the land which you do not know (Babylon); for you have kindled a fire in My anger which will burn forever.’*** Judah was taken into captivity during 586 BCE, but returned to their homeland 70 years later. Even so we know that Judah suffered severe chastisement throughout the ages, and even though there are some, who like many non-Jewish Europeans, became nonreligious since the second world war, most of the religious Jews, became even more Torah observant.

Verses 5 – 9 tell us what man is like without the Set-apart Spirit and without trusting in Elohim, as follows: ***‘Thus says YHVH, “Cursed is the man who trusts in mankind and makes flesh his strength, and whose heart turns away from YHVH. (6) For he will be like a bush in the desert and will not see when prosperity comes, but will live in stony wastes in the wilderness, a land of salt without inhabitant. (7) Blessed is the man who trusts in YHVH and***

whose trust is like YHVH. (8) For he will like a tree planted by the water, that extends its roots by the stream and will not fear when the heat comes; but its leaves will be green, and it will not be anxious in a year of drought nor cease to yield fruit. (9) The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick (the KJV reads: wicked); who can understand it?'" No man wants to serve YHVH willingly from the heart. For that reason, YHVH prepared a body for the Word of Elohim to become the sacrificial lamb that died for the sins of the world. As Yahshua the Son of YHVH, He had to die for the set-apart Spirit to come, as is confirmed in John 16: 7 & 8, like this: **"But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper (the Set-apart Spirit) shall not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you. (8) And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin, and righteousness, and judgment."** Once we have been immersed into Yahshua's name, we receive the Set-apart Spirit; to guide us into all truth, convict us to stop sinning and to obey Elohim from the heart.

We are further reminded to stop sinning, as we are being judged according to our deeds, in verses 10 & 11 of Jeremiah 17, as follows: **"I, YHVH, search the heart, I test the mind, even to give to each man according to his ways, according to the results of his deeds.** (YHVH wants to know what our motive is – do we want to serve Him from the heart, or do we view religion as a means of gain, and to make us look good.) (11) **As a partridge that hatches eggs which has not laid, so is he who makes a fortune, but unjustly; in the midst of his days it will forsake him, and in the end he will be a fool."** However, those who follow the way of Elohim will not be put to shame, as we read from verses 12 – 14, in this way: **'A glorious throne on high from the beginning is the place of our sanctuary. (13) O YHVH, the hope of Israel, all who forsake Thee will be put to shame. Those who turn away on the earth will be written down, because they have forsaken the fountain of living water, even YHVH.** (The scribes and the Pharisees in the days of Yahshua brought a woman who was caught in adultery to Him, to test Him in order to have grounds to accuse Him, as per John 8: 6 – 9. They definitely recalled this particular prophesy, when Yahshua stooped down and with His finger wrote on the ground. Consequently they began to leave the scene, one by one, starting with the older ones.) (14) **Heal me, O YHVH, and I will be healed; Save me and I**

will be saved, for Thou are My praise.” If we do not forsake Yahshua and the work that the Set-apart Spirit is doing in us, we may confidently ask YHVH for healing and to save us from our iniquity, knowing that He will provide according to our needs.

The Renewed Covenant portion from Ephesians 2 is considered a major two house teaching in the Scriptures. We start reading from verses 11 & 12 of Ephesians 2, as follows: ***‘Therefore remember, that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called “Uncircumcision” by the so-called “Circumcision,” which is performed in the flesh by human hands- (12) remember that you were at that time separate from Messiah, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise*** (given to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob), ***having no hope and without Elohim in the world.***’ Before we were called out of the religions of the world, we were without Elohim in the world. The Scriptures inform us that YHVH is the One and Only Elohim, meaning that whatever most believed in before, were non-existent gods. In addition, we thought that we were Gentiles, and lived accordingly; we worshipped on Sunday and without even realizing it, we were worshipped the non existing sun god. We did not know that most of us are Israelites who lost our identity, religion and language. We read from verses 13 - 16, that whereas we were lost in the past, we have now been brought back by Yahshua, as follows: ***‘But now in Messiah Yahshua you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Messiah. (14) For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups*** (the house of Judah and the house of Israel) ***into one, and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, (15) by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the law of commandments contained in ordinances*** (the so-called Noahite laws, which are essentially Un-Scriptural), ***that in Himself He might make the two into one new man*** (the Israel of Elohim), ***thus establishing peace, (16) and might reconcile them both in one body to Elohim through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity.***’ Yahshua was sent to save those of us who have lost the way of Elohim, after we were dispersed among the nations. We adopted the false religious practices of the nations through which we traveled, as well of those amongst whom we live.

We continue to read from verse 17 of Ephesians 2, ***‘AND HE CAME AND PREACHED PEACE TO YOU WHO WERE FAR AWAY(us),***

AND PEACE TO THOSE WHO WERE NEAR (the Jews); (18) **for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father.**(19) **So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of Elohim's household,** (20) **having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Messiah Yahshua Himself being the corner stone,** (21) **in whom the whole building, being fitted together is growing into a holy temple in the Master;** (22) **in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of Elohim in the Spirit.'**

Rav Shaul is telling us here, that we from the lost ten tribes have by faith in the Jewish Messiah, become part of the community of Israel once again. It is our duty at this time to make our Jewish brothers jealous, by keeping the same Torah command that they are keeping, as we read from Romans 11: 11, as follows: **'I say then, they did not stumble so as to fall, did they? May it never be! But by their transgressions salvation has come to the Gentiles** (rather those Israelites from the lost ten tribes, who think that they are Gentiles, including some genuine Gentiles), **to make them jealous.'** It is as we read from the parable of the prodigal son in Luke 15: 11 – 32; we are the prodigal son who left our Father, whilst Judah remained with Him. But like we are told in the parable, as they see us returning they are becoming jealous. Think about it!

Hosea 2: 1 – 22 & Revelation 7: 1 – 17.

This haftarah portion is read with Torah portion Bamidbar (Numbers 1: 1 to 4: 20) and Renewed Covenant portion Revelation 7: 1 – 17. Whereas the Torah portion has to do with numbering the nation of Israel in that at the time, every head was important; it also tells us that YHVH temporarily elected the Levites to be the first-born in the nation, instead of the first born Israelites from every family. The haftarah portion tells us that even though YHVH has rejected us, the descendents of the house of Israel, He will again in the latter days, become our husband.

The name Hosea, like Joshua and Yahshua, simply means salvation in Hebrew. The message of Hosea is that even though YHVH has scattered us, the lost ten tribes of the house of Israel amongst the nations of the world, in the end He will have compassion on both us and Judah, as we read in Hosea 1: 11, in this way: ***‘And the sons of Judah and the sons of Israel will be gathered together, and they will appoint for themselves one leader (Messiah, also known as the son of David), and they will go from the land, for great will be the day of Jezreel.’*** YHVH will save those of us from the Lost Ten Tribes, whom He calls out of the world, and who answers His call and returns to Him in obedience, together with the Torah observant Jews. If we make it, we will with Judah, become kings and priests under Yahshua. This is what He is telling brother Judah in Isaiah 66: 20 & 21, as follows: ***“Then they shall bring all your brethren from all the nations as a grain offering to YHVH, on horses, in chariots, in litters, on mules, and on camels, to My set-apart mountain Jerusalem,” says YHVH, “just as the sons of Israel bring their grain offering in a clean vessel to the house of YHVH. (21) I will also take some of them for priests and for Levites,” says YHVH.*** The valley of Jezreel mentioned in verse 11 of Hosea, is about 10 miles from the Jordan and extends north-west toward Mount Carmel near the Mediterranean Sea. The name ‘Jezreel’ means scattering, as in the sowing of seeds; YHVH has scattered us the lost ten tribes into all the nations of the world, but here in verse 11, we are told that He will again gather the sons of Judah and the sons of Israel together. This is one of many Scriptural witnesses for those Assemblies and Nazarenes who are too anti-Semitic to believe that we will be joined together with Judah. Despite, those who say otherwise, the Jews of today are the descendants of

the ancient kingdom of Judah. They are not Edom, like some of these Assemblies assert: Even though there are Italians with Israelite and even Jewish blood, most of them, like most Germans are descendants from Edom. Yes there were also Israelite settlers in different parts of Germany, but most of them left for North America and elsewhere, during the 1800's. The ones who remained in Germany are like the Italians, descended from Esau, the twin brother of Jacob¹².

We commence reading from Hosea 2: 1, like this: ***'Say to your brothers, "Ammi"¹³, and to your sisters, "Ruhamah"¹⁴.*** This is exactly the opposite of what we read in chapter 1, where YHVH told Hosea to take Gomer the harlot daughter of Diblaim as his wife, and to have children with her. Their first child was a son called Jezreel, the second a daughter called Lo-ruchamah (meaning she has not obtained compassion) and the third another son called Lo-ammi (meaning not my people). We read further from verse 2 to the 1st part of verse 5, ***"Contend with your mother, contend, for she is not my wife, and I am not her husband; and let her put away her harlotry from her face, and her adultery from between her breasts, (3) Lest I strip her naked and expose her as on the day when she was born. I will also make her like a wilderness, make her like desert land, and slay her with thirst. (4) Also I will have no compassion on her children, because they are children of harlotry. (5) For their mother has played the harlot; she who conceived them has acted shamefully."*** Although the accusations made here are against Gomer, it is played out like a courtroom in which YHVH is the plaintive, bringing charges against the nation of Israel, where the physical acts of Gomer's immorality is likened to the spiritual idolatry of Israel. Continuing in the 2nd part of verse 5, we read: ***"For she said, 'I will go after my lovers. Who give me my bread and my water, my wool and my flax, my oil and my drink.'"*** The words 'I will go' indicates Israel's intense desire; she ascribes her affluence to the idol gods of her pagan neighbors,

¹² Information obtained from a book entitled "The Tribes" by Yair Davidy. The book and other material about the Lost Ten Tribes may be ordered from Yair Davidy at Brit-Am Israel, P O Box 595, Jerusalem 91004, Israel. E-mail: britam@netvision.net.il

¹³ Ammi – meaning my people.

¹⁴ Ruhamah – she has obtained compassion.

forgetting that YHVH is our provider, and shows that nothing would deter her from pursuing her lovers.

We read from verses 6 – 8, about the action that YHVH will take to make Israel return to Him, in this way: ***“Therefore, behold, I will hedge up her way with thorns, and I will build a wall against her so that she cannot find her paths. (7) And she will pursue her lovers, but she will not overtake them; and she will seek them, but will not find them. Then she will say, ‘I will go back to my first husband, for it was better for me then than now!’ (8) For she does not know that it was I who gave her the grain, the new wine, and the oil. And lavished on her silver and gold, which they used for Baal.”*** Baal worship started in Israel during the time of the judges and became established in Israel when King Ahab married Jezebel. She did everything in her power to stop Israel from worshiping YHVH. We understand from verse 8 that the offerings that Israel used in worshiping Baal, actually came from YHVH. We read from verses 9 & 10, YHVH saying through Hosea, ***“Therefore, I will take back My grain at harvest time and my new wine in its season. I will also take away My wool and My flax given to cover her nakedness. (10) And then I will uncover her lewdness in the sight of her lovers, and no one will rescue her out of My hand.”*** YHVH promised to expose the house of Israel’s wickedness, by letting her be taken into captivity, adding that not one of her idols would be able to save her. Continuing in similar mode in verse 11, we read: ***“I will also put and end to all her gaiety, her feasts, her new moons, and her sabbaths, and all her festal assemblies.”*** Soon after leaving Egypt, Israel started intermingled the worship of YHVH with the worship of false gods. This continued even after their captivity, as we read from 2nd Kings 17: 33, ***‘They feared YHVH and served their own gods according to the custom of the nations from among whom they had been carried away into exile.’***

Notice in verse 11 of Hosea 2 that it talks about her feast, new moons and Sabbath, not those ordained by YHVH through Moses. This could mean a different Sabbath, like Sunday, as well as different feast days like Easter and Xmas, but could also mean the feast days and even the Sabbath, that some keep at different times to when Judah keeps them. YHVH is not pleased with these feast days and informs us, the latter day descendants of Israel, how He will punish us in order to get us to return to Him, as we read from

verses 12 – 15, as follows: **“And I will destroy her vines and fig trees, of which she said, ‘These are my wages which my lovers have given me.’ And I will make them a forest, and the beasts of the field will devour them. (13) And I will punish her for the days of the Baals when she used to offer sacrifices to them and adorn herself with her earrings and jewelry, and follow her lovers, so that she forgot Me’ declares YHVH. (14) Therefore, behold, I will allure her, bring her into the wilderness, and speak kindly to her. (15) Then I will give her vineyards from there, and the valley of Achor (valley of trouble) as a door of hope. And she will sing there as in the days of her youth, as in the day when she came up from the land of Egypt.”** We see here that YHVH will again speak kindly to Israel, and restore her to himself. The reference to the valley of Achor refers to the valley where Achan and his family were judged (in Joshua 7: 24 - 26), essentially giving Israel hope that her judgment and punishment would not last forever, and that there is still hope for them.

We read appropriately from verse 16, **“And it will come about in that day,” declares YHVH, “That you will call Me Ishi (meaning my husband) and no longer call Me Baali (meaning my master).** Ishi denotes a form of affection, whereas Baali denotes rulership. In verse 17 we are told that YHVH is going to remove the names of the Baals (pagan gods) from our mouths, so that we do not mention them any longer. This tells us that He is not pleased with some of the names that we use in prayers and worship services, supposed to be directed to Him. Continuing from verse 18, we read: **‘In that day I will also make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, the birds of the sky, and the creeping things of the ground. And I will abolish the bow, the sword, and war from the land, and will make them lie down in safety.’** This verse gives us a glimpse into the Millennial rule of Messiah, during which time He will restore everything to what it was like in paradise and when all people will become subject to Him. In verses 19 & 20 YHVH promises three times that He will again betroth Israel to Himself, showing the intensity of His love for the nation of Israel who will no longer be a harlot and YHVH will remarry her and will provide the entire dowry. The words of verses 19 & 20 are also recited by observant Jews when they bind tefillin (phylacteries) on their right hands and foreheads as per Deuteronomy 11: 18. We conclude this portion by reading from verses 22 & 23, as follows: **‘And the earth will**

respond to the grain, to the new wine, and to the oil, and they will respond to Jezreel. (23) And I will sow her for Myself in the land. I will also have compassion on her who had not obtained compassion, and I will say to those who were not My people, 'You are My people!' and they will say, 'Thou art my Elohim!' This is a complete reversal of what we see in the first chapter of Hosea. We pray that this will happen in our day!

We start reading from the Renewed Covenant portion in Revelation 7: 1 - 3, as follows: **'After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth, so that no wind should blow on the earth or on the sea or on any tree. (2) And I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, having the seal of the living Elohim, and cried out with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea, (3) saying, "Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees, until we have sealed the bond-servants of our Elohim on their foreheads.'** This sealing will be for physical protection, during the Great Tribulation, and will be similar to the protection that the Israelites had from the 10th plague. However, in this case the seal will be protection against all the coming plagues. We are given the composition of the group that will be sealed by the angels for their protection in verses 4 – 8 of Revelation, in this way: **'And I heard the number of those who were sealed, one hundred and forty-four thousand sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel: (5) from the tribe of Judah, twelve thousand were sealed, from the tribe of Reuben twelve thousand, from the tribe of Gad twelve thousand, (6) from the tribe of Asher twelve thousand, from the tribe of Naphtali twelve thousand, from the tribe of Manasseh twelve thousand, (7) from the tribe of Simeon twelve thousand, from the tribe of Levi twelve thousand, from the tribe of Issachar twelve thousand, (8) from the tribe of Zebulun twelve thousand, from the tribe of Joseph twelve thousand, from the tribe of Benjamin, twelve thousand were sealed.'** The ones who are sealed are the 144 000 first-fruits, purchased as first fruits to Elohim and the Lamb. Even though the tribe of Dan is not mentioned, it is believed that they will be with the tribe of Joseph, mentioned separate from the tribe of Manasseh here.

Nevertheless, we notice from verse 9, that in addition to the 144 000 first-fruits, there will also be a great multitude, which could not be

counted, from every nation and tribes and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. We see that they will be clothed in white robes and have palm branches in their hands. We read from verse 10 – 12 how they and the angels will be praising Elohim, saying: **“Salvation to our Elohim who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.”** (11) **‘And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures; and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped Elohim,** (12) **saying, “Amein, blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might, be to our Elohim forever and ever. Amein.”** We are given the identity of the great multitude in verse 13 - 16, as follows: **‘And one of the elders answered, saying to me, “These who are clothed in the white robes, who are they, and from where they come?”** (14) **‘And I said to him, “My master you know.” And he said to me, “These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. (15) For this reason, they are before the throne of Elohim; and they serve Him day and night in His temple; and He who sits on the throne shall spread His tabernacle over them. (16) They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; neither shall the sun beat down on them any heat; (17) for the Lamb in the center of the throne shall be their shepherd and shall guide them to springs of the water of life; and Elohim shall wipe every tear from their eyes.”’** The Lamb has always been the Shepherd as Yahshua said in John 10: 11 & 14. Also read Hebrews 13: 20 and Psalm 23:1 & 2.

These are people who knew Elohim, but were never fully committed to His Torah and way. They did not keep the commandments, despite knowing that it should be kept. The great tribulation stirs them to action and they finally accept that Yahshua also died for them and are immersed into His saving Name. These could be some of our children and friends, who believed that they were Israel, but never had enough faith to do anything about it. They will make it into the kingdom of Elohim, but will not like the 144 000 first fruits, be kings and priests, ruling under Yahshua during the millennium and on into eternity. At this time we the called-out ones, should focus most of our energy on the coming kingdom of Elohim. We should not lose faith, since we are assured that YHVH wants everyone of us to succeed, as we read in 2 Peter 3: 9, **‘YHVH is not slow about His**

promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.'

It is important that we continue to practice righteousness by keeping the Sabbath and Feast Days of Elohim as given in Leviticus 23; eating only kosher foods; praying and studying regularly to stay in contact with YHVH our Elohim; and return to full Torah observance.

Judges 13: 2 – 25 & Acts 21: 17 – 32.

This Hafatarah portion is read with Torah portion Naso (Numbers 4 verse 21 to 7 verse 89) and Renewed Covenant portion Acts 21: 17 – 32. The commonality between the three portions is that all three deal with the Nazirite vow; Numbers 6, explains the reason and etiquette of taking a Nazirite vow; In Judges 13, we read the account where Samson's barren mother was told by an angel that she will conceive and have a son, but that he will be a Nazirite to Elohim, from the womb; and in Acts 21, Rav Shaul purifies himself along with four men who took a Nazirite vow to Elohim for a period of time, to prove to his Jewish brothers that despite believing in Yahshua he was still embracing His Jewish-ness.

We commence reading from verses 2 - 5 of Judges 13, in this way: ***'And there was a certain man of Zorah, of the family of the Danites, whose name was Manoah; and his wife was barren and had borne no children. (3) Then the angel of YHVH appeared to the woman, and said to her, "Behold now, you are barren and have borne no children, but you shall conceive and give birth to a son. (4) Now therefore, be careful not to drink wine or strong drink, nor eat any unclean thing. (5) For behold you shall conceive and give birth to a son, and no razor shall come upon his head, for the boy shall be a Nazirite to Elohim from the womb; and he shall begin to deliver Israel from the hands of the Philistines.'***" Samson's mother immediately went to tell Manoah her husband what happened to her, as we read in verses 6 & 7, as follows: ***'Then the woman came and told her husband saying, "A man of Elohim came to me and his appearance was like the appearance of the angel of Elohim, very awesome. And I did not ask him where he came from, nor did he tell me his name. (7) But he said to me, 'Behold, you shall conceive and give birth to a son, and now you shall not drink wine or strong drink nor eat any unclean thing, for the boy shall be a Nazirite to Elohim from the womb to the day of his death.'***" Samson was born specifically to deliver Israel from the Philistines and his entire life was vowed in service to Elohim as a Nazirite.

According to this week's Torah portion Elohim gave Israel complete instructions how to conduct themselves in accordance to His teachings, some of which included what should be done if a person

decides to dedicate him-/herself in a special service to Elohim for a chosen period, which could range from one month to a life time like in the case of Samson. This is known as a Nazirite vow where the person making the vow had to comply with three rules, namely: He/she could not imbibe any alcohol, nor eat grapes or any product of grapes such as vinegar or raisins; should not touch or come near a dead body; refrain from cutting the hair of his/her head. Samson had to do this all his life and his mother was to observe these rules, until her son was weaned. As mentioned in the Torah portion, Messiah was from Nazareth and was known as the Nazarene, but never took a Nazirite vow. As Elohim in the flesh He led a perfect life whilst He was on earth in human form, and there was no need for Him to make a special vow to be of special service. He therefore had no reason to observe any of the three rules mentioned here and we have several examples where He consumed wine in the four gospels, some of which are mentioned in Matthew 11: 18 & 19 and Luke 5: 29 & 30. In addition, we know that he 'healed' people who were dead, like Lazarus, and had to come near them in order to do so.

After Manoah's wife told him about the angel that visited her, we read in verse 8 how he prayed to Elohim, saying: ***'O YHVH, please let the man of Elohim whom thou hast sent come to us again that he may teach us what to do for the boy who is to be born.'*** We see from verses 9 & 10, that Elohim listened to Manoah, and the angel of Elohim again came to Manoah's wife, whilst she was sitting in the field. Because her husband was not with her she quickly ran to tell him that the angel appeared to her again. Manoah went with his wife and said to the angel as we read from verse 11, ***"Are you the man who spoke to the woman? And he said, "I am."*** Continuing in verse 12 Manoah said: ***"Now when your words come to pass, what shall be the boy's mode of life and his vocation?"*** Then the angel repeats his words to the woman as we read from verses 13 & 14, as follows: ***"Let the woman pay attention to all that I said. (14) She should not eat anything that comes from the vine nor drink wine or strong drink, nor eat any unclean thing; let her observe all that I commanded."***

Manoah believed the man and ask him to spend some time with them, whilst they prepare some food including meat for him to eat. However, the angel of Elohim said to him in verse 16, ***"Though you***

detain me, I will not eat your food, but if you prepare a burnt offering, then offer it to YHVH.” For Manoah did not know that he was the angel of YHVH.’ We read Manoah’s next question to the angel of YHVH from verse 17, in this way: ***“What is your name so that when your words come to pass, we may honor you?”*** The angel of YHVH replied (in verse 18) as follows: ***“Why do you ask my name, seeing it is wonderful?”*** Manoah still did not realize who the man was, but he did as the man suggested and offered the kid with the grain offering on the rock to YHVH, and He performed wonders while Manoah and his wife looked on. We read accordingly from verses 20 - 22, like this: ***‘For it came about when the flame went up from the altar toward heaven, that the angel of YHVH ascended in the flame of the altar. When Manoah and his wife saw this, they fell on their faces to the ground. (21) Now the angel of YHVH appeared no more to Manoah or his wife. Then Manoah knew that he was the angel of YHVH. (22) So Manoah said to his wife, “We shall surely die, for we have seen Elohim.”’*** This tells us that both Manoah and his wife knew from the Scriptures, that no man can see YHVH and live. However, they knew that this was definitely not an angel that appeared and spoke to them. But, we know that they actually saw the word or image of Elohim; the one who later came in the flesh as Yahshua. This is confirmed by the name by which this supernatural being identified Himself to them, as may be read from Isaiah 9: 6 & 7, in this way; ***‘For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest on His shoulders; and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty Elohim, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. (7) There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and forever-more, the zeal of YHVH of hosts will accomplish this.’***

Yes, this man who was the angel of Elohim, was the Eternal Himself who appeared as His visible manifestation, who as part of Elohim existed eternally, as may be read in a prophecy about Yahshua from Micah 5: 2, in this way: ***“But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you One will go forth for Me to be a ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity.”*** Here again we have confirmation of Elohim’s promise to David, that his descendants will occupy his

throne for all eternity. We conclude by reading verses 24 & 25, as follows: ***'Then the woman gave birth to a son and named him Samson; and the child grew up and YHVH blessed him. (25) And the Spirit of YHVH began to stir him in Mahanehdan between Zorah and Eshtaol.'***

We commence reading the Renewed Covenant portion from Acts 21: 17, like this: ***'And when we had come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly.'*** This is talking about Rav Shaul and his entourage, returning to Jerusalem after an extensive missionary journey. The next day he reported to James and all the elders who were present, telling them about his journey and about the things that Elohim has done among the Gentiles through his ministry. After relating the happenings to the elders, they glorified Elohim and said to Rav Shaul in verses 20 & 21, ***"You see, brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews of those who have believed, and they are all zealous for the Law; (21) and they have been told about you, that you are teaching all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs."*** Because many misunderstood the teachings of Rav Shaul at that time, they like today, twisted his words to make as if he was preaching against Torah. However, as explained in a recent haftarah portion, Rav Shaul was really teaching about the importance of all the commandments including those viewed as least; stressing that people are only able to keep Torah, if they have been given a portion of the Set-apart Spirit to enable them to perform the righteous deeds, specified in the Torah, from the heart. However, the elders warned Rav Shaul, because they realized that these Law abiding, believing Jews will soon hear that he is back in Jerusalem to be prepared to address their concerns, even if these were based on hear say.

So in order to prove to these Jewish brothers that Rav Shaul, is not preaching against circumcision or any other Torah command for that matter, they suggested that he purifies himself along with four other men who were under a Nazirite vow. As explained earlier, persons who took such a vow are forbidden to shave their hair for the duration of the vow. But, at the end of the vow, they are required to shave off all their dedicated hair and hand it to the priest, who will wave it before YHVH, as an offering, together with the breast of a

ram offered by waving and a thigh offered by lifting up; and afterward the Nazirites may drink wine. The elders suggested that Rav Shaul join the four men and pay the expenses to have their heads shaved; and all will know that there is no truth in the things that have been said about Him, and that he is still walking orderly keeping the Law. We read the additional instructions given Rav Shaul by the elders (from verse 25) in this way: ***'But concerning the Gentiles who have believed, we wrote, having decided that they should abstain from meat sacrificed to idols and from blood and from what is strangled and from fornication.'*** These were the exact same requirements specified in Acts 15. However, as we see in Acts 15, these were the requirements for new believers, who were also required to attend synagogues, where they would eventually learn about keeping the remainder of Torah, such as the Sabbath, the Feast Days of Elohim, Kosher food, wearing of tzitzit and eventually about circumcision. However, we need to remember that because repentance is a process, new believers are never forced to do these things, until they come to believe in it, and start obeying from the heart.

We see from verse 26 that Rav Shaul obeyed the elders and took the men, and purified himself along with them, and went into the temple, giving notice of the completion of days of purification, until the sacrifice was offered for each one of them. But we read in verses 27 & 28, ***'And when the seven days (of their purification) were almost over, the Jews from Asia, upon seeing him in the temple, began to stir up all the multitude and laid hands on him, (28) crying out, "Men of Israel, come to our aid! This is the man who preaches to all men everywhere against our people, and the Law, and this place; and besides he has even brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place.'*** Nevertheless, we see that even in this assumption, the Jewish brethren were wrong as we read from verse 29, in this way: ***'For they had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian in the city with him, and they supposed that Shaul had brought him into the temple.'*** This enraged the crowd and all the city and the people took hold of Rav Shaul and dragged him out of the temple. But, whilst they were trying to kill him, a report about what was happening reached the commander of the Roman court, and he immediately took along some soldiers and centurions and ran down to where they held Shaul, so the people stopped beating him. We see here that like

today, misunderstandings and stories about the teachings of Rav Shaul, caused a great deal of confusion.

It is therefore important for us who are following the way of Elohim, to understand what Shaul taught, as even Rav Kepha (the apostle Peter) confirmed that Rav Shaul's teachings are part and parcel of The Scriptures, as we read from 2 Peter 3: 14 - 16, as follows: ***'Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless, (15) and regard the patience of YHVH to be salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul (Rav Shaul), according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, (16) as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction.'***

Zechariah 2: 14 – 4: 7 & Hebrews 4: 1 – 16.

This Hafatarah portion is read with Torah portion B'eha'lotcha (Numbers 8: 1 to 12: 16) and Renewed Covenant portion Hebrews 4: 1 - 16. Whereas the lampstand or seven branch Menorah is mentioned in both the Torah and haftarah portions, the importance of keeping the Set-apart Days including the weekly Sabbath, are emphasized in the Torah and Renewed Covenant portions. We commence reading from verse 13 (which is in fact verse 14 in the Hebrew Scriptures) of Zechariah 2, as follows: ***“Be silent, all flesh, before YHVH; for He is aroused from His set-apart habitation.”*** This is talking about Elohim's dwelling in the third heaven and from reading this verse, we understand that the revealer of the vision to Zechariah is most probably YHVH Himself.

In Zechariah 3: 1, we read about the vision in which the prophet sees Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of YHVH, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him. Verse 2 confirms that the Angel of YHVH is in fact YHVH Himself, in this way: ***‘And YHVH said to Satan, “YHVH rebuke you, Satan! Indeed, YHVH who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is this not a brand plucked from a fire?”’*** We know from Revelation 12: 10 that Satan is the accuser of the brethren, and here in Zechariah 3, he is accusing the remnant of Israel¹⁵ who returned to rebuild the temple from Babylon. But because of the duality principle that runs throughout the Scriptures, he is also accusing us the remnant of the modern day descendants of Israel. Elohim had not cast away the Jews, but was true to His covenants with them in Abraham and David and He takes their side against Satan's accusations and assured their return from potential disappearance in their captivity. He snatched them like a stick out of the fire, before they were torched. This is in fact what YHVH also doing at this time, for us the modern day remnant of Israel. In verse 3, Zechariah sees that Joshua the High Priest was clothed with filthy garments and standing before the Angel. This is really a reference to Yahshua, who according to Galatians 3: 13 has redeemed us from

¹⁵ *We read in Ezra 9: 15 a section of the Scriptures, which could at this time, because of the duality which runs throughout the Scriptures be applied to us the remnant of Israel called out at this time, as follows: “O YHVH Elohim of Israel, Thou art righteous, for we have been left an escaped remnant, as it is this day; behold, we are before Thee in our guilt, for no one can stand before Thee because of this.”*

the curse of the law: having become a curse for us – for it is written, **“Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree.”** Yahshua became dirty with our sin and was cursed on our behalf. The fact that Joshua was representative of the nation of Israel here is evident from the fact that the rebuke in verse 2 is based on Elohim’s choice of Jerusalem; and the identification of Joshua and his friends in verse 8, are symbolic of the united nation of Israel. Satan stands in Judgment of the nation to proclaim their sins and their unworthiness of Elohim’s favor. The situation is crucial if Joshua (or Yahshua) is rejected, Israel will be rejected, but if he is accepted, Israel will be accepted. The entire plan of Elohim for the nation was revealed in the outcome. The hope of Israel would be destroyed or confirmed.

We read appropriately in verse 4 & 5 of Zechariah 3, **‘And he spoke and said to those who were standing before him saying, “Remove the filthy garments from him.” Again he said to him, “See, I have taken your iniquity away from you and will clothe you with festal robes.” (5) Then I said, “Let them put a clean turban on his head.” So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him with garments, while the angel of YHVH was standing by.’** The turban was part of the High Priest’s dress code and inscribed with the words *‘Holy to YHVH’*, indicating that Yahshua was accepted as payment for Israel’s sins. This turban therefore reminds us of the Helmet of Salvation protecting us from Satan’s accusations – Yahshua being our Helmet of Salvation. Continuing in verses 6 & 7 we read: **‘And the angel of YHVH admonished Joshua saying, (7) “Thus says YHVH of hosts, ‘If you will walk in My ways, and if you will perform My service, then you will also govern My house and also have charge of My courts, and I will grant you free access among these who are standing here.** Although YHVH will keep His promise to justify Israel, and reinstate the nation as His priestly people to serve in His house, keep His courts and have access to His presence, all based on His electing love and not by the merits of the works of man, it will only be fulfilled during the coming kingdom of Elohim. We read further from verse 8, like this: **‘Now listen, Joshua the high priest, you and your friends who are sitting in front of you – indeed they are men who are a symbol** (the companions sitting before Joshua were symbols of future priests of Israel, foreshadowing the coming of Messiah.), **for behold, I am going to bring in My servant the Branch.’** Two messianic phrases (*‘My servant and the branch’*) are

combined here to show that this is indeed talking about Messiah, speaking of His obedience and humility. We read from verses 9 & 10 about Yahshua the 'stone' with seven eyes, as follows: ***'For behold, the stone that I have set before Joshua; on one stone are seven eyes. Behold, I will engrave an inscription on it.' Declares YHVH of hosts, 'and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day.'*** (10) ***'In that day,' declares YHVH of hosts, 'every one of you will invite his neighbor to sit under his vine and under his fig tree,'"*** We see the identification of the stone with seven eyes in verse 10, of Zechariah 4, as follows: ***"For who has despised the day of small things? But these seven will be glad when they see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel – these are the eyes of YHVH which range to and fro throughout the earth."*** The stone is the rejected stone of stumbling, a stone of refuge, a destroying stone and a foundation stone. He is the precious foundation stone of the temple building. The phrase 'I will remove the iniquity of the land in one day' looks towards a day in the future when there will be cleansing and forgiveness for the whole nation, made possible through Messiah's redemptive work.

The vision in Zechariah 4 focuses on Joshua the High Priest, and by extension Yahshua and the remnant of the nation who will be cleansed for service as priests under Him. In verse 1, we read that the previous vision caused the prophet spiritual exhaustion. We continue reading from verse 2, like this: ***'And he said to me, "What do you see? And I said, "I see and behold, a lampstand all of gold with its bowl on the top of it, and seven lamps on it with seven spouts belonging to each of the lamps which are on the top of it;"*** The lampstand is a seven branch Menorah, used in the tabernacle, with an additional bowl on the top to ensure an abundant supply of oil. We read further in verse 3, ***"also two olive trees by it, one on the right side of the bowl and the other on the left side."*** We see that Zechariah did not understand what or who the two olive trees represent, as we read from verse 4, as follows: ***'Then I answered and said to the angel who was speaking with me saying, "What are these my master?"'*** But we see from verses 5 - 7 that Zechariah's question remains unanswered, in this way: ***'So the angel who was speaking with me answered and said to me, "Do you not know what these are? And I said, "No, my Master."*** (6) ***Then he answered and said to me, "This is the word of YHVH to Zerubbabel saying, 'Not by might nor by power, but by My***

Spirit,' says YHVH of hosts.” (7) ‘What are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you will become a plain; and he will bring forth the top stone with shouts of ‘Grace, grace to it!’” The two olive trees as we know are the two witnesses, one from each of the two houses of Israel, as we see from verse 14 (not part of this portion), like this: ***‘Then he said, “These are the two anointed ones who are standing by YHVH of the whole earth.’*** The mountain spoken about in verse 7, represent mountain-like opposition which will be leveled by Messiah at his return. As foretold by Daniel, this stone, Yahshua will put an end to all governments on earth, before He will come and rule with His ecclesia of called-out believers.

We start reading the Renewed Covenant portion from Hebrews 4: 1 & 2, as follows: ***‘Therefore, let us fear lest, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you should seem to have come short of it. (2) For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they also; but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard.’*** We know that the rest spoken about here was the Promised Land. We know that the Israelites who came out of Egypt failed to enter the Promised Land, which in our case represent the coming kingdom of Elohim, which they were unable to enter because of disobedience (as we are told in Hebrews 3: 19). But this is a warning to us, the modern day descendants of ancient Israel to be obedient to Elohim’s ways; else we will not enter the millennial rest represented by the weekly Sabbath. We read accordingly from verse 3 of Hebrews 4, ***‘For we who have believed enter that rest, just as He said, “AS I SWORE IN MY WRATH, THEY SHALL NOT ENTER MY REST,” although His works were finished from the foundation of the world.’*** YHVH calls us out of the world to follow His perfect example of How to serve Him, namely Yahshua. However, it is our responsibility to ensure that we study the life and words of Yahshua to make sure that we follow His example in serving YHVH our Elohim. We read FURTHER from verses 4 & 5, ***‘For He has thus said somewhere concerning the seventh day, “AND ELOHIM RESTED ON THE SEVENTH DAY FROM ALL HIS WORKS”; (5) and again in this passage, “THEY SHALL NOT ENTER MY REST.”*** YHVH is presently calling us out of the world, to become kings and priests under Yahshua’s rule during the

millennium, which is pictured by the weekly Sabbath, but He requires that we as future first fruits are obedient to all His teachings.

YHVH is dealing with humanity over a 7000-year period; during the first 6000 years, He allowed us to experiment with different forms of government, culture, education and religion, thus allowing us to see that by living a life free of His leadership only leads to failure. We are presently very close to the end of the six thousand years of the government of man by himself. As a result of 6 000 years of mismanagement, we are on the verge to self-destruct, as is evident in South Africa and most countries today. We are being warned here in Hebrews to start serving YHVH our Elohim from the heart, by willingly obey all His Torah teachings (given from Genesis to Revelation), if we want to be part of the first fruits to be resurrected at Yahshua's return. Yes, YHVH wants a number of first fruits who are keeping His commandments at this time, to enter the kingdom of Elohim, as kings and priests in order to teach the survivors of the great tribulation during the millennium, about His way. We read accordingly in verse 6, ***'Since therefore it remains for some to enter it (the millennium kingdom), and those who formerly had good news preached to them failed because of disobedience.'*** Without obeying the commandments which are applicable today and will also be applicable during the millennium and onto eternity, we cannot enter the kingdom of Elohim as His future kings and priests under Messiah!

We continue reading from verse 7, as follows: ***'He again fixes a certain day, "Today," saying through David after so long a time just as has been said before, "TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE, DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS."*** This is telling those of us whom YHVH has called at this time to come out of the world, to listen to Him; implying that we should study His word to get to know Him and His ways, and then to follow Him! We read further in verses 8 - 10, ***'For if Joshua had given them rest, He would not have spoken of another day after that.*** (This tells us that Elohim's rest did not come through Joshua or even Moses, but through Yahshua our Messiah, who is greater than both of them. Since Joshua merely led them into the Promised Land, a shadow of what will be involved during this rest promised during the coming kingdom of Elohim.) (9) ***There remains therefore a Sabbath rest for the people of Elohim.*** (10) ***For the one who has entered His rest has himself***

also rested from his works, as Elohim did from His. Even though Christianity teaches that we may rest on any day of the week, this confirms that the people of Elohim should, even now rest on the weekly Sabbath – or Saturday, from sunset on Friday to sunset on Saturday. We know that Elohim rested on the seventh day as is recorded in Genesis 2: 2. In addition we know that Yahshua kept the Sabbath on a regular basis, by attending services in the synagogue, as we read from Luke 4: 16, in this way: ***'And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up; and as was His custom, He entered the synagogue on the Sabbath and stood up to read.'***

Nevertheless, we should understand from verses 11 & 12 of Hebrews 4 that we should obey all the commandments that YHVH gave throughout the Scriptures, as follows: ***'Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall through following the same example of disobedience.(12) For the word of Elohim is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.'*** If we use the word of Elohim as our guide throughout life, we will be convinced to do the right thing. Firstly it will convince us to be immersed into Yahshua's saving Name, after which we shall be given a portion of the Set-apart Spirit. We are further promised that by being obedient, the Set-apart Spirit will eventually lead us into all truth as we are told in John 16: 13. Like in the haftarah portion, the eyes of YHVH is mentioned here in verse 13 of Hebrews 4, as follows: ***'And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to His eyes of whom we have to do.'*** We cannot hide from YHVH and once He has called us to salvation, all we need to do is to trust and obey Him, and we will make it into His everlasting Kingdom. If and when we sin, we need to repent and return to obeying Him.

We conclude by reading about the wonderful work which Yahshua has already done for us, from verse 14 – 16, like this: ***'Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Yahshua the Son of Elohim, let us hold fast our confession. (15) For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. (16) Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that***

we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need.'

Joshua 2: 1 – 24 & Hebrews 3: 7 – 19.

This Haftarah portion is read with Torah portion Sh'lach Le'Cha (Numbers 13: 1 to 15: 41) and Renewed Covenant portion Hebrews 3: 7 - 19. Whereas both the Torah and haftarah portions deal with sending men to spy out the Promised Land, the Renewed Covenant portion deals specifically with the result of the false report that the ten spies brought back to Moses regarding the Promised Land. We commence reading from verse 1 of Joshua 2, as follows: ***'Then Joshua the son of Nun sent two men as spies secretly from Shittim, saying, "Go, view the land, especially Jericho." So they went and came into the house of a harlot whose name was Rahab, and lodged there.'*** Like in the case where Moses sent out 12 spies, these two spies would inform Joshua of the landscape, drinking water and military defenses of Jericho. Even though these spies visited the house of a harlot, their purpose was not impure, but they were looking for a place which provided good cover. In addition Rahab's house which was on the city wall would allow for a quick get-away.

However, Elohim in His providence also wanted these spies to lodge with Rahab, as He planned the salvation of this harlot, since she would provide an example of His saving by faith, and by His favor as she is mentioned in the genealogy of Yahshua the Messiah in Matthew 1: 5. We see that in spite of the precautions taken by the spies, their presence became known, as we read from verses 2 & 3 of Joshua 2, like this: ***'And it was told the king of Jericho, saying, "Behold, men from the sons of Israel have come here tonight to search out the land." (3) And the king of Jericho sent word to Rahab, saying, "Bring out the men who have come to you, who have entered your house, for they have come to search out all the land.'*** However, we see that Rahab had hidden the men and confirmed that they lodged with her, but said that she did not know where they came from, or where they went when they left. She further encouraged the king to pursue the men, who she said went out at dark when the city gates were shut. We see in verse 7, that the king's men pursued the two men on the road to the Jordan River.

Before the two spies went to hide in the stalks of flax on the roof of Rahab's house she spoke to them as we read from verses 9 – 12, saying: ***"I know that YHVH has given you the land, and that the***

terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land have melted away before you. (10) For we have heard how YHVH dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed. (11) And when we heard it, our hearts melted and no courage remained in any man any longer because of you; for YHVH your Elohim, He is Elohim in heaven above and on earth beneath. (12) Now therefore, please swear to me by YHVH, since I have dealt kindly with you, that you also will deal kindly with my father's household, and give me a pledge of truth, (13) and spare my father and my mother and my brothers and my sisters, with all who belong to them, and deliver our lives from death.” Wow, here this gentile woman told the two Israeli spies about the oneness of Elohim, a fact that many in Israel deny today; she also confessed that YHVH is the creator and sustainer of everything that exists.

We read the men's response to Rahab in verse 14, in this way: **“Our life for yours if you do not tell this business of ours; and it shall come about when YHVH gives us the land that we will deal kindly and faithfully with you.”** She let the men down by a rope through the window, her house being on the city wall, and she told them to go and hide in the hills for three days, until their pursuers returned to the city. We read the men's answer to her from verses 17 – 20, like this: **“We shall be free from this oath to you which you have made us swear, (18) unless, when we come into the land, you tie this cord of scarlet thread in the window through which you let us down, and gather to yourself into the house your father and your mother and your brothers and all your father's household. (19) And it shall come about that anyone who goes out of the doors of your house into the street, his blood shall be on his own head, and we shall be free; but anyone who is with you in the house, his blood shall be on our head, if a hand is laid on him. (20) But if you tell this business of ours, then we shall be free from the oath which you have made us swear.”** Rahab sent the two men away and tied a scarlet cord in her window, as agreed with them. They hid away in the hill country for three days as Rahab suggested, whilst their pursuers sought them all along the way. After three days they went down from the hill country and crossed the Jordan, where they came to Joshua and told him what

had happened. We see from reading verse 24 that the two spies, other than the ten spies who brought back a false report to Moses, brought back a good report about the land, as follows: ***‘And they said to Joshua, “Surely YHVH has given all the land into our hands, and all the inhabitants of the land, moreover, have melted away before us.”*** Is it not ironic that these two spies brought a good report to one of the two of the twelve spies who previously brought a good report about the Promised Land to Moses, namely Joshua himself?

We start reading the Renewed Covenant portion from verses 7 – 11 of Hebrews 3, in this way: ***‘Therefore, just as the Set-apart Spirit says: “TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE, (8) DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS AS WHEN THEY PROVOKED ME, AS IN THE DAY OF TRIAL IN THE WILDERNESS, (9) WHERE YOUR FATHERS TRIED ME BY TESTING ME, AND SAW MY WORKS FOR FORTY YEARS. (10) THEREFORE I WAS ANGRY WITH THIS GENERATION, AND SAID, ‘THEY ALWAYS GO ASTRAY IN THEIR HEART; AND THEY DID NOT KNOW MY WAYS’; (11) AS I SWORE IN MY WRATH, ‘THEY SHALL NOT ENTER MY REST.’”***

The author of Hebrews quotes from Psalm 95: 7 – 11, saying that these are the words of the Set-apart Spirit. He describes the wandering of the Israelites in the wilderness, after YHVH delivered them from Egypt as punishment for provoking Him. We know that ultimately, all those Israelites who came out of Egypt except for Joshua and Caleb, who brought a good report about the Promised Land, died in the wilderness. But their children who were born in the wilderness entered the Promised Land, according to Elohim’s word. We, who are called out of the world at this time, are admonished not to fall short like our forefathers did, because of fear and unbelief. We need to stop grumbling and diligently seek to enter the kingdom of Elohim, by persevering obediently in faith. There is a sense of urgency to immediately listen to the voice of Elohim, calling us to come out of the world and to get to know and follow His ways. The earthly rest which YHVH promised our forefathers was in the land of Canaan. The entire generation of Israelites was denied entry because of their rebellious nature and lack of faith. But we as believers are promised entry into the coming kingdom of Elohim, provided we learn from their mistakes and start obeying the voice of Elohim.

We read fittingly from verses 12 - 15, as follows: ***‘Take care, brethren, lest there should be in one of you an evil, unbelieving heart, in falling away from the living Elohim. (13) But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called “Today,” lest any one of you be hardened by deceitfulness of sin. (14) For we have become partakers of Messiah, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end; (15) while it is said, “TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE, DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEART, AS WHEN THEY PROVOKED ME.”’*** As long as we live in this world, we will be tempted to break the commandments of Elohim. We are therefore asked to encourage one another to faithfully follow the way that Yahshua came to show us. Because all men are born with an unbelieving heart, as we are told in Jeremiah 17: 9¹⁶, such as in the case of the ancient Israelites, and we need therefore ask for more of the Set-apart Spirit to help us obeying YHVH to the end of this age, when His kingdom will be established on earth. We need to be careful that we are not hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. Satan and his agents are always trying to deceive us, as we read in 1 Peter 5: 8, in this way: ***‘Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.’*** Even so, we are given hope in verses 9 & 10 of 1 Peter 5, like this: ***‘But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world. (10) And after you have suffered for a little while, the Elohim of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory (or esteem) in Messiah, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you.’***

Time is of the essence and the end of this age approaching faster than what we realize – those of us who are called at this time, need to repent and return to obeying the Torah teachings of Elohim immediately, else it will be too late for us to enter His eternal Kingdom. It will be like the foolish bridesmaids in Matthew 25. We are being judged at this time and should study and pray whilst there is still time, so that when Yahshua returns, we will be ready with our lamps full of oil, as we read from verses 6 – 10 of Matthew 25, as follows: ***“But at midnight there was a shout, ‘Behold, the***

¹⁶ Jeremiah 17: 9, *‘The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick (or wicked); who can understand it.’*

bridegroom! Come out to meet him.'* (7) *Then all those virgins rose, and trimmed their lamps.* (8) *And the foolish said to the prudent, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.'* (9) *But the prudent answered, saying, 'No, there will not be enough for us and you too; go instead to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.'* (10) *And while they were going away to make the purchase, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast; and the door was shut."

The author of Hebrews, reminds us of the ones who did not make it into the Promised Land, as a warning not to make the same mistakes in verses 16 – 19 of Hebrews 3, in this way: ***'For who provoked Him when they had heard? Indeed, did not all those who came out of Egypt led by Moses?' (The very people called out of Egypt by Elohim provoked Him. This should be a warning to us, the ones being called out of sin at this time, not to do likewise)*** (17) ***And with whom was He angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness?*** (18) ***And to whom did He swear that they should not enter His rest, but to those who were disobedient?*** (19) ***And so we see that they were not able to enter because of unbelief.'***

Our forefathers, the ancient Israelites did not enter the Promised Land because of unbelief; they left us an example to see what not to do. What are we doing with the many examples that we are shown in the Scriptures? Do we take note in order not to make the same mistakes? Or are we totally oblivious of the facts before us, also going the same way? Let us ask ABBA YHVH to help us not to disappoint Him! Let us determine to be obedient to Yahshua our Messiah, for then we will make it into His eternal kingdom, as we read in John 3: 36, ***"He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of Elohim abides on him."***

1 Samuel 11: 14 – 12: 22 & Jude 1 – 25.

This Haftarah portion is read with Torah portion Korah (Numbers 16: 1 to 18: 32) and Renewed Covenant portion Jude 1 – 25. Whereas the Torah portion has to do with the rebellion of Korah against the leaders in Israel, the Haftarah portion has to do with Samuel appointing king Saul over all Israel, after they rejected YHVH from being king over them, as we read in 1st Samuel 8: 7, in this way: ***'And YHVH said to Samuel, "Listen to the voice of the people in regard to all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me from being king over them."*** The Renewed Covenant portion is similarly about those who reject, or in rebellion depart from the true faith, by even contradicting the teachings of our Master Yahshua the Messiah. All three portions have to do with rebellion which eventually leads to a falling away from the true faith. Two full books or chapters of the Renewed Covenant are dedicated to combat this apostasy, where people depart from the truth and go after the deceiving spirits that is in the world; one of which is the book of Jude.

We commence reading the haftarah portion from 1st Samuel 11: 14 & 15, as follows: ***'Then Samuel said to the people, "Come and let us go to Gilgal and renew the kingdom there."*** (15) ***So all the people went to Gilgal, and there they made Saul king before YHVH in Gilgal. There they also offered sacrifices of peace offerings before YHVH; and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly.'*** Samuel obeyed the will of YHVH and of the people and set the king of Elohim's choice over them, even though he had reservations concerning the monarchy. We read accordingly in 1st Samuel 12: 1 - 3, ***'Then Samuel said to all Israel, "Behold, I have listened to your voice in all that you said to me, and I have appointed a king over you. (2) And now, here is the king walking before you, but I am old and gray, and behold my sons are with you. And I have walked before you from my youth even to this day. (3) Here I am; bear witness against me before YHVH and His anointed. Whose ox have I taken, or whose donkey have I taken, or whom have I defrauded? Whom have I oppressed, or from whose hand have I taken a bribe to blind the eyes with it? I will restore it to you."*** By saying 'here I am' Samuel shows his availability to intercede for the people to Elohim when required. He asked the people of Israel to witness against him, if he had violated

any covenant stipulations, during his time in service to them. But we see from verse 4 how the people answered Samuel, as follows: ***“You have not defrauded us, or oppressed us, or taken anything from any man’s hand.”***

In the rest of the Haftarah portion Samuel warns the people of Israel, now that they have a king, not to rebel against the commandments of YHVH, else His hand will be against them. We read accordingly from verse 5 - 11, ***‘And he said to them, “YHVH is witness against you, and His anointed is witness this day that you have found nothing in my hand.” And they said, “He is witness.” (6) Then Samuel said to the people, “It is YHVH who appointed Moses and Aaron and who brought your fathers up from the land of Egypt. (7) So now, take your stand, that I may plead with you before YHVH concerning all the righteous acts of YHVH which He did for you and your fathers (Even though the nation was united under king Saul, Samuel felt it necessary to rebuke them for rejecting Elohim and what He had done without the king.). (8) When Jacob went into Egypt and your fathers cried out to YHVH, then YHVH sent Moses and Aaron who brought your fathers out of Egypt and settled them in this place. (9) But they forgot YHVH their Elohim, so He sold them into the hand of Sisera, captain of the army of Hazor, and into the hand of the Philistines and into the hand of the king of Moab, and they fought against them. (10) And they cried out to YHVH and said, ‘We have sinned because we have forsaken YHVH and have served the Baals and the Ashtaroth; but now deliver us from the hands of our enemies, and we will serve Thee. (11) Then YHVH sent Jerubbabel and Bedan and Jephtah and Samuel, and delivered you from the hands of the enemies all around, so that you lived in security.’*** Samuel wanted the people to know that it was YHVH who delivered them through the hands of the judges, and not themselves.’

When Israel entered the land of Canaan they encountered city-states that were led by kings, like for example Jericho. In addition during the period of the judges, Israel was enslaved by nations who were led by kings. At the time the people of Israel lived in the land surrounded by nations who were ruled by kings, and they started yearning for a king in Israel. Elohim knew that Israel will eventually want a king to rule them, but we see in 1st Samuel 8: 19 & 20, that their motive was definitely against His will, as follows:

'Nevertheless, the people refused to listen to the voice of Samuel, and they said, "No, but there shall be a king over us,* (20) *that we also may be like all the nations, that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles." Until that time YHVH Himself judged the nation; went before them and fought their battles for them, provided they showed faith in Him. But now they are rejecting Him to be their judge and warrior, replacing Him with a human king. The problem was not that they wanted a king, but to be more precise, they wanted to be like the nations around them. In addition they foolishly assumed that a king would provide them with greater protection in times of war. Samuel repeats the nations words to him quoted above, in verse 12 of 1st Kings 12, like this: ***"When you saw that Nahash the king of the sons of Ammon came against you, you said to me, "No, but a king shall reign over us,*' although YHVH your Elohim was your king."** This was a clear condemnation of Israel for choosing a mere man, instead of YHVH, to fight their battles for them.

We see in verse 13 that YHVH gave them their king according to their request, as follows: ***"Now therefore, here is the king whom you have chosen, whom you have asked for and behold YHVH has set a king over you."*** However, Samuel tells the nation, that despite them now having a king ruling over them, they are even now required to obey YHVH, saying in verses 14 – 17, ***"If you will fear YHVH and serve Him, and listen to His voice and not rebel against the command of YHVH, then both you and also the king who reigns over you will follow YHVH your Elohim. (15) And if you will not listen to the voice of YHVH, but rebel against the command of YHVH, then the hand of YHVH will be against you, as if it was against your fathers. (16) Even now, take your stand and see this great thing which YHVH will do before your eyes. (17) Is it not the wheat harvest today?*** (This occurred during the time of Pentecost or the Feast of Weeks, during which wheat is harvested in Israel.) ***I will call to YHVH, that He may send thunder and rain. Then you will know and see that your wickedness is great which you have done in the sight of YHVH by asking for yourselves a king."*** Israel was to stand in awe of YHVH and submit to Him only - both they and their new king were measured by the same standard and were given the same commands. Samuel repeats the blessings and curses given in Deuteronomy 28, for obedience and for disobedience. We see in verse 18 that Samuel

called to YHVH and He sent thunder and rain all that day; and all the people greatly feared YHVH and Samuel.

Even though rain during the wheat harvest was unseasonal, YHVH provided the rain requested by Samuel, to endorse his words to Israel. Upon seeing the thunder and rain, which Samuel asked YHVH to send, the people said to Samuel (in verse 19): ***“Pray for your servants to YHVH your Elohim, so that we may not die, for we have added to all our sins this evil by asking for ourselves a king.”*** We conclude the haftarah portion by reading Samuel’s answer to the people in verses 20 – 22, as follows: ***“Do not fear. You have committed all this evil, yet do not turn aside from following YHVH, but serve YHVH with all your heart. (21) And you must not turn aside, for then you would go after futile things which can not profit or deliver, because they are futile. (22) For YHVH will not abandon His people on account of His great name, because YHVH has been pleased to make you a people for Himself.”***

We begin reading the Renewed Covenant portion from Jude verses 1 – 3, in this way: ***‘Jude, a bond-servant of Yahshua Messiah, and brother of James, to those who are called, beloved in Elohim the Father, and kept for Yahshua Messiah: (2) May mercy and peace and love be multiplied to you. (3) Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints*** (those of us called-out of the world, to follow the way of Elohim).’ We see according to Ephesians 4: 5, that there is only one true faith, which was according to Jude verse 3 above, ***‘once and for all delivered to the saints.’*** However, this one faith was the faith of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, as is confirmed in Hebrews 4 and not Christianity as some assume. We notice in Genesis 26: 5 that Abraham obeyed YHVH and kept His charge, His commandments, His statutes and His laws – so the Torah can not be separated from the faith that Abraham had. In addition Yahshua said in Matthew 5: 17 – 20, ***“Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill.*** (By reading from verse 21 to the end of the chapter we see that Yahshua actually came to make the law more binding) (18) ***For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or***

stroke shall pass away from the Law, until all is accomplished. (19) **Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and so teaches others, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.** (20) **For I say to you, that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.**” For us who are called, to remain in the one true faith of our fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, we need to obey Torah to a much higher degree to what the scribes and the Pharisees were keeping it. We need to show YHVH that we love Him, by obeying Torah from the heart; i.e. because we want to, without being forced to do so.

Jude therefore warns us about the great falling away that started even during the time of the apostles and will continue right up to the time when Yahshua our Messiah returns to rule us from Jerusalem. We read therefore from verse 4, **‘For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation** (this is talking about people who, even though they were also called-out by YHVH, like Yahshua’s disciple Judas, their purpose is to lead the weak amongst us astray), **ungodly persons who turn the grace of our Elohim into licentiousness and deny** (or more correctly contradict) **our only Rabbi and Master, Yahshua Messiah.**’ How, do they contradict Yahshua, might you ask? Yahshua Himself answered this question in John 5: 43 – 47, saying: **“I have come in My Father’s name, and you do not receive Me; if another shall come in his own name, you will receive him”**¹⁷. (44) **How can you believe, when you receive glory** (or honor) **from**

¹⁷ An example of such a contradiction is where Yahshua said that He will be in the grave for three days and three nights, like Jonah was in the belly of the fish for three full days and three full nights, yet very few believe Him today, evidenced by their belief that He was buried on a Friday afternoon at sunset and raised from the grave on Sunday morning – only one and a half days later. A second example is where Yahshua said that the scribes and the Pharisees have seated themselves in Moses’ seat, and that we should listen to them, but not necessarily do as they do. We know that some contradict this statement of Yahshua by teaching their own calendars, saying that most versions of the Scriptures are in fact mistranslations and that Yahshua said something else. As mentioned in a previous haftarah portion, some are even keeping their Feast Days a month later than the Feast days kept by Judah, similar to what we read about Jeroboam in 1st Kings 12: 32.

one another, and you do not seek the glory that is from the one and only Elohim? (45) ***Do not think that I will accuse you before the Father; the one who accuses you is Moses, in whom you have set your hope.*** (Yes, Yahshua was talking to the Jews of His day here, but is also talking to us, His modern day ecclesia of called-out believers.) (46) ***For if you believe Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote of Me.*** (47) ***But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?***” Yahshua confirmed that if we do not believe the Torah that Moses wrote and in Moses personally (as YHVH said to him in Exodus 19: 9), we will not believe what Yahshua taught.

We continue reading from verses 5 - 8 of Jude, like this: ***‘Now I desire to remind you, though you know all things once for all, that YHVH, after saving a people out of the land of Egypt, subsequently destroyed those who did not believe. (6) And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode (see Isaiah 14: 12), He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day (see Revelation 20: 10). (7) Just as Sodom and Gomorah and the cities around them, since they in the same way as these indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh, are exhibited as an example, in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire. (the results of the fire is permanent – but because flesh and blood is physical it will only burn until it is reduced to ash) (8) Yet in the same manner these men, also by dreaming, defile the flesh, and reject authority, and revile majesties.’*** Even though these people who sow discontent among us, do not actually commit divination, or idolatry, YHVH said to Saul, through Samuel, in 1st Samuel 15: 23, ***“For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry.”*** They are therefore guilty of such sins. We understand from verse 9 of Jude that only YHVH is able to rebuke Satan, as follows: ***‘But Michael the archangel, when he disputed with the devil and argued about the body of Moses, did not dare pronounce against him a railing judgment, but said, “YHVH rebuke you.”’***

Still talking about those who crept in unnoticed to turn us away from the truth, Jude writes in verse 10, ***‘But these men revile the things which they do not understand; and the things which they know by instinct, like unreasoning animals, by these things they are***

destroyed.’ This is talking about such things as the mystery of our faith, which we read about in 1st Timothy 3: 9 & 16: that is, that Elohim was revealed in the flesh as Yahshua; or the fact that only Moses, or the ones who sit in his seat may proclaim the appointed times of Elohim, as is recorded in Leviticus 23: 2 & 4. Continuing from verse 11, we read: **‘Woe to them! For they have gone the way of Cain (full of hatred), and for pay they have rushed headlong into the error of Balaam (determined to curse Elohim’s people because of greed), and perished in the rebellion of Korah.’** The rebellion spoken about here has something to do with our Feast Days, as we read in verse 12, in this way: **‘These men are those who are hidden reefs in your love feasts (the Feast days of Elohim, which we keep because we obey Him from the heart) when they feast with you without fear, caring for themselves; clouds without water, carried along by winds; autumn trees without fruit, doubly dead, uprooted.’** The people spoken about here are double-minded and will keep the Feast days of Elohim with you one year, but will follow different Feast days the next year – blown around by every wind of doctrine as we read in Ephesians 4: 14. Even though verse 13 of Jude is a continuation of the theme in verse 12, it is now talking about the destiny of Satan and his demons, as follows: **‘wild waves of the sea, casting up their own shame like foam; wandering stars, for whom the black darkness has been reserved forever.’** We see according to Revelation 1: 20 that when the Scriptures talks about stars, it is talking about angels. In this case Jude is talking about the wondering angels or demons also mentioned in verse 6. We see that ultimately, after the great white throne judgment, when everything has been burnt up, and the New Jerusalem comes down to earth, Elohim will come and tabernacle among us, and Satan and his demons will be relegated to dwell in the black darkness forever.

We close by reading the warning from verses 14 – 25 not to follow those who mislead the people whom Elohim has called, as follows: **‘And about these also Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied, saying, “Behold, YHVH came with many thousands of His holy ones, (15) to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their ungodly deeds which they have done in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.” (16) These are grumblers** (a word used to describe the murmurings of Israel

against Elohim in Numbers 14: 27), ***finding fault, following after their own lusts*** (apostates are driven by a desire for sinful self-satisfaction); ***they speak arrogantly*** (their message has external attractiveness, but is devoid of truth) , ***flattering people for the sake of gaining an advantage*** (they tell people what they want to hear for their own profit). (17) ***But you, beloved, ought to remember the words that were spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Messiah Yahshua*** (the apostles warned about the great apostasy), (18) ***that they were saying to you, "In the last time there shall be mockers, following after their own ungodly lusts."*** (19) ***These are the ones who cause divisions, worldly-minded, devoid of the Spirit.*** (20) ***But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith; praying in the Holy Spirit;*** (21) ***keep yourselves in the love of Elohim, waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Master Yahshua to eternal life.*** (22) ***And have mercy on some, who are doubting;*** (23) ***save others, snatching them out of the fire; and on some have mercy with fear, hating even the garment polluted by the flesh.*** (24) ***Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy,*** (25) ***to the only Elohim our Savior, through Yahshua Messiah our Master, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.'***

**Judges 11: 1 – 33 & John 3: 9 – 21. Haftarah portion Judges 11:
1 – 33.**

This Haftarah portion is read with Torah portion Chu'kat (Numbers 19: 1 to 22: 1) and Renewed Covenant portion John 3: 9 - 21. The commonality between the portions is the fact that in the Torah portion, Israel made a vow with Elohim to help them in war against the Canaanite king, and in the haftarah portion Jephthah made a vow with Elohim to help him defeat the Ammonite king. We commence reading from verses 1 & 2 of Judges 11, like this: ***'Now Jephthah the Gileadite was a valiant warrior, but he was the son of a harlot. And Gilead was the father of Jephthah. (2) And Gilead's wife bore him sons; and when his wife's sons grew up they drove Jephthah out and said to him, "You shall not have an inheritance in our father's house, for you are the son of another woman."*** In a military sense the words 'valiant warrior' shows that Jephthah was a strong skillful warrior similar to what Gideon was according to Judges 6: 12. However, because Jephthah's brothers did not want him to share their inheritance, they chased him away. As a very young man he left his fathers house to seek a living elsewhere.

We see from verse 3 that Jephthah fled from his brothers and settled to live in the land of Tob, in the desert country to the north east. We also notice that whilst living in the land of Tob, some worthless fellows gathered themselves about Jephthah and they went out with him. From this we understand that they formed what we would call a gang in today's parlance. We are told in verse 4 that after Jephthah left his father's house, the sons of Ammon started fighting with Israel. Jephthah and his gang must have become quite famous in the part of the country, where they operated, as we read from verses 5 & 6 that the elders of Gilead, which must have included his brothers, came to them for help against the sons of Ammon, as follows: ***'And it happened when the sons of Ammon fought against Israel that the elders of Gilead went to get Jephthah from the land of Tob; (6) and they said to Jephthah, "Come and be our chief that we may fight against the sons of Ammon."*** The elders in Gilead were concerned as they did not have a leader to lead them in warfare and they must have heard about Jephthah successfully leading his bunch of gangsters in the desert. So here these people, who previously

wanted Jephthah to disappear from their presence, came to ask him to lead them in a war against the Ammonites.

However, Jephthah remembered how his own family spurned him and how he had to leave them to live on his own, so he said to the elders of Gilead (in verse 7): ***“Did you not hate me and drive me from my father’s house? So why have you come to me now when you are in trouble?”*** We read how the elders of Gilead answered Jephthah in verse 8, saying: ***“For this reason we have now returned to you, that you may go with us and fight with the sons of Ammon and become head over all the inhabitants of Gilead.”*** So because they were the ones in need of help, Jephthah said to the elders of Gilead in verse 9, ***“If you take me back to fight against the sons of Ammon and YHVH gives them up to me, will I become your head?”*** The elders answered Jephthah in verse 10, as follows: ***“YHVH is witness between us; surely we will do as you have said.”*** Then Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead and the people made him head over them. So we see that in response to their repentant attitude, Elohim raised up Jephthah to lead the Israelites to freedom from 18 years of repression by the son of Ammon. We see that even though Jephthah was skilled at warfare, he was also a very good diplomat. We read accordingly in verse 12, ***‘Now Jephthah sent messengers to the king of the sons of Ammon, saying, “What is between you and me, that you have come to me to fight against my land?”*** We also read the king of the sons of Ammon’s response to the messengers of Jephthah, in verse 13, as follows: ***“Because Israel took away my land when they came up from Egypt, from the Arnon as far as the Jabok and the Jordan; therefore, return them peaceably now.”***

The Ammonite king was making claims to the land now occupied by Israel. But, because Jephthah was fully aware of the recent history of his people, he sent messengers back to the Ammonite king with the message recorded in verses 15 – 27, in this way: ***“Thus says Jephthah, ‘Israel did not take away the land of Moab nor the land of the sons of Ammon. (16) For when they came up from Egypt, and Israel went through the wilderness to the Red Sea and came to Kadesh, (17) then Israel sent messengers to the king of Edom, saying, “Please let us pass through your land,” but the king of Edom would not listen. And they also sent to the king of Moab, but he would not consent. So Israel remained at***

Kadesh. (18) Then they went through the wilderness and around the land of Edom and the land of Moab, and came to the east side of the land of Moab, and they camped beyond the Arnon; but they did not enter the territory of Moab, for the Arnon was the border of Moab. (19) And Israel sent messengers to Sihon king of the Amorites, the king of Heshbon, and Israel said to him, "Please let us pass through your land to our place." (20) But Sihon did not trust Israel to pass through his territory; so Sihon gathered all his people and camped in Jahaz, and fought with Israel. (21) And YHVH, the Elohim of Israel, gave Sihon and all his people into the hand of Israel, and they defeated them; so Israel possessed all the land of the Amorites, the inhabitants of that country. (22) So they possessed all the territory of the Amorites, from the Arnon as far as Jabbok, and from the wilderness as far as the Jordan. (23) Since now YHVH, the Elohim of Israel, drove out the Amorites from before His people Israel, are you then to possess it? (24) Do you not possess what Chemosh your god gives you to possess? So whatever YHVH our Elohim has driven out before us, we will possess it. (25) And now are you any better than Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab? Did he ever strive with Israel, or did he ever fight against them? (26) While Israel lived in Heshbon and its villages, and in Aroer and its villages and in all the cities that are on the banks of the Arnon, three hundred years, why did you not recover them within that time? Israel had been in the land for more than three hundred years in undisputed possession. Elohim had chosen to give them the land, and they were therefore entitled to it¹⁸ (27) I therefore have not sinned against you, but you are doing me wrong by making war against me; may YHVH, the Judge, judge today between the sons of Israel and the sons of Ammon."

But, we notice according to verse 28, that these people did not even listen to Jephthah's messengers. They instigated the aggression,

¹⁸ This sounds very similar to South Africa. Our forefathers who were also Israelites, even though they have forgotten the fact, came here more than 300 years ago. At that time the only people in what was then known as the Cape Province were a few people known as Bushman. Yet in recent years, our people handed the land over to its current rulers. Nevertheless, we understand that this is in fact part of the curses to befall us, part of the latter day descendants of Israel, because of our idolatrous ways.

and by their action invited the Israelites to attack them. We read from verse 29 that YHVH graciously empowered Jephthah for war on behalf of his people, as follows: ***'Now the Spirit of YHVH came upon Jephthah, so that he passed through Gilead and Manasseh; then he passed through Mizpah of Gilead, and from Mizpah of Gilead he went on to the sons of Ammon.'*** However, the fact that YHVH gave Jephthah power to lead His people into war with the Ammonite people does not mean that all of the decisions made by Jephthah were of Elohim's wisdom and that He was in support of it. A case in point is the irrational vow that Jephthah made to Elohim in verses 30 & 31, saying: ***"If Thou wilt indeed give the sons of Ammon into my hand, (31) then it shall be that whatever comes out of the doors of my house to meet me when I return in peace from the sons of Ammon, it shall be (YHVH)'s, and I will offer it up as a burnt offering."***

Even though it was customary among generals to promise Elohim something of value as a reward for Him giving them victory, this vow later caused Jephthah a lot of heartache. Reading beyond the end of this haftarah portion, we get to see that Jephthah's daughter was the first to meet him after the war. We read therefore in verses 39 & 40 of Judges 11, ***'And it came about at the end of two months that she returned to her father, who did to her according to the vow which he had made; and she had no relations with a man, Thus it became a custom in Israel, (40) that the daughters of Israel went yearly to commemorate the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite four days in the year,'*** The moral of the story is: not to make vows without knowing that you will be able to see it through. However, the account of Jephthah shows that it does not matter where you come from, or who your parents were, if YHVH calls you and you answer the call and follow Him, you have the assurance that He who began the good work in you will perfect it, until the day of Yahshua Messiah, as we read in Philippians 1: 6. Jephthah became a fine example of faith and we see that he is referred to in the faith chapter in Hebrews 11: 32, as one of our fathers in the faith who will make it into the kingdom of Elohim.

We read in conclusion from verses 32 & 33 of Judges 11, as follows: ***'So Jephthah crossed over to the sons of Ammon to fight against them; and YHVH gave them into his hand. (33) And he struck them with a very great slaughter from Aroer to the***

entrance of Minnith, twenty cities, and as far as Abel-keramim. So the sons of Ammon were subdued before the sons of Israel.”

We start reading the Renewed Covenant portion from verses 9 & 10 of John 3, in this way: ***‘Nicodemus answered and said to Him, “How can these things be?”’***⁽¹⁰⁾ ***Yahshua answered and said to him, “Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not understand these things?”*** Yahshua was explaining the fact that we will one day have to be born again if we want to enter the kingdom of Elohim, yet, Nichodemus who is supposed to be teaching the people in Israel did not understand the concept. We need to be sure that those who teach us know such truths as:

- What does it mean to be born again;
- Elohim’s plan of salvation for mankind, as depicted by His annual Feast Days;
- The truth about the two houses of Israel;
- The Oneness of Elohim;
- The Name of YHVH our Elohim; and even
- Kosher foods.

To understand what it means to be born again, you have to understand the good news about the kingdom of Elohim. As much as Nicodemus did not understand when Yahshua said to him in John 3: 3, ***“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of Elohim.”***, people do not understand these words today. How many know that the Gospel that Yahshua proclaimed was not a message about His person, but about the coming kingdom of Elohim (see Mark 1: 14 & 15). Similarly has the term ‘born again’ been misunderstood by many. Elohim’s Government will be a Spiritual Government, by converted believers who will have been changed into spirit beings, born of Elohim. As those born of human parents are mortal human beings, so those born of Elohim will be immortal spirit beings.

Yahshua explained to Nicodemus that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of Elohim and that only those who are born again as spirit beings will be able to enter. At birth, one is delivered from his mother’s womb into this world. When born of the Spirit, one will be resurrected to be delivered into the Kingdom of Elohim. Rav Shaul made it clear in 1 Corinthians 15: 50, saying: ***“Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of***

Elohim; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.” At Yahshua’s return, those of us called by YHVH to become first fruits will be resurrected (or changed) to become spiritual sons and daughters of Elohim. We read accordingly in 1 Corinthians 15: 51 - 53, ***“Behold, I tell you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, (52) in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. (53) “For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality.”***

We read in Philippians 3: 20 & 21 what it will be like when we are born again, in this way: ***‘For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Master Yahshua Messiah; (21) who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.’*** Being born again of Elohim, involves a process that is depended on a time element, just as being born of human flesh involves a process that is time depended. When our heavenly Father begets a person with His Set-apart Spirit, he becomes a child of Elohim, even though he remains human composed of flesh and blood. When a human father begets a child, the unborn child is already his father’s child. Similarly we are already children of Elohim, once we have been immersed and are given a portion of the Set-apart Spirit. However, from then on we have to undergo a period of spiritual development and growth. In the state of gestation, we need to grow in grace and knowledge as an unborn child grows in its mother’s womb, but we are not yet born of the Spirit. As the human embryo must grow till it becomes a fetus, and then to the point of being born into the human family, so the new believer, in whom divine life has been started by the gift of Elohim’s Spirit, must grow toward perfection, to be born again as a child of Elohim. Only then will such a child be perfect; unable to sin.

We proceed by reading from verses 11 - 13 of John 3, as follows: ***“Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak that which we know, and bear witness of that which we have seen; and you do not receive our witness. (12) If I told you earthly things and you do not believe, how shall you believe if I tell you heavenly things? (13) “And no one has ascended into heaven, but He who descended from heaven, even the Son of Man.”*** Here Yahshua

himself put an end to the myth, which most believe today: i.e. that good people go to heaven and evil people go to an eternal hell fire, at death. We see according to 1st Thessalonians 5: 23 that a human being consists of body, soul and spirit. When we repent and are immersed into Yahshua's saving name, essentially accepting that His death removed the record of our transgressions, YHVH gives us a portion of His Set-apart Spirit. The Set-apart Spirit combines with the spirit in man and we are begotten anew, giving us the opportunity to like Yahshua be resurrected at His return. When we die our bodies and souls are buried and our spirits goes back to the Father who gave it, during which time our Father perfects it in Heaven, as is recorded in Hebrews 12 verse 23 as follows: ***"to the general assembly and the ecclesia of the first-born who are enrolled in heaven, and to Elohim, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of righteous men made perfect."*** When Yahshua returns He will bring back our perfected spirits and will resurrect our bodies and souls. Our imperishable bodies and souls will merge with our perfected spirits from heaven, and we will become kings and priests under Yahshua during His Millennial rule. We understand from Revelation 5: 10 and 20: 6 that we will spend the millennium ruling under Yahshua right here on earth.

Nevertheless, some hold that Yahshua was teaching that up to the time that He was resurrected and ascended to heaven, no one ascended to heaven. Afterwards all those who were kept in Abraham's bosom went up to heaven (something they imagine Yahshua to have taught in the parable of Lazarus and the rich man). However, what did Elohim promise Abraham? He did not promise Abraham and his children an abode in heaven, did He? We read about the promise in Genesis 17: 7 - 8 as follows: ***"And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be Elohim to you and to your descendants after you. (8) And I will give to you and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their Elohim."*** The land of Canaan is on earth and not in heaven. Abraham's seed through faith in Messiah is therefore promised to inherit the land of Canaan and not everlasting life in heaven. In addition, we know that a son, who is an heir to his father's property, cannot possess the promise before his father inherits it.

We understand from verses 39 & 40 of Hebrews 11, that our fathers in the faith have not received their promised inheritance yet, in this way: **“And all these, having gained approval through their faith, did not receive what was promised, (40) because Elohim had provided something better for us, so that apart from us they should not be made perfect.”** Like Yahshua, our fathers in the faith will only receive eternal life through their resurrection at His return. This will be at the same time when we (the first fruits) will be resurrected or changed, if we make it. A second witness to them still being in the grave is taught by Rav Kepha (Peter) in Acts 2: 29 - 35 as follows: **“Brethren, I may confidently say to you regarding the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. (30) And so, because he was a prophet, and knew that Elohim had sworn to him with an oath to seat one of his descendants upon His throne, (31) he looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of Messiah, that He was neither abandoned to Hades, nor did His flesh suffer decay. (32) This Yahshua Messiah raised up again, to which we are all witnesses. (33) Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of Elohim, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear. (34) For it was not David who ascended into heaven, but he himself says: ‘YHVH said to my Master, “SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND, (35) UNTIL I MAKE THINE ENEMIES A FOOTSTOOL FOR THY FEET.”’** King David’s hope, and ours, is to live again through the sacrificial death of Yahshua Messiah and the resurrection available through Him.

Yahshua continued in verse 14 of John 3, saying: **“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; (15) that whoever believes may in Him have eternal life.”** Yahshua our Messiah laid down His life for us, and if we accept that His death paid the penalty of our sins, we may have eternal life. The reason for Yahshua doing so is given in verse 16, as follows: **“For Elohim so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.”** But what does it mean to believe in Yahshua? Firstly it means that we should believe in His name, i.e. that He is the salvation of YHVH. Secondly, it means that we should believe in what He taught whilst He was on earth. We read further in

verses 17 & 18, ***“For Elohim did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through Him. (18) He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of Elohim.”*** However, Yahshua also said in Matthew 7: 21, ***“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Master, Master,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven.”***

What is the will of the Father? Our Father wants us to show our faith by obeying Him and practicing righteousness. This is confirmed in the last few verses of this portion (verses 19 – 21 of John 3), in this way: ***“And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world (we know from 1 John 1: 5 that Elohim is light), and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their deeds are evil. (20) For everyone who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. (21) But he who practices the truth (Yahshua said in John 17: 17, Thy word is truth) comes to the light, that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought (shaped or bent) in Elohim.”*** We are shaped to conform to the image of Elohim, namely Yahshua, if we study and practice what we learn from the word of Elohim.

Micah 5: 6 – 6: 8 & 2 Peter 2: 1 – 22.

This Haftarah portion is read with Torah portion Balak (Numbers 22: 2 to 25: 9) and Renewed Covenant portion 2nd Peter 2: 1 – 22. The Torah portion tells us about Balaam, who was unsuccessful in trying to curse Israel, but blindsided the sons of Israel when they were overcome by their lustful passions. Fortunately at the time Phinehas took action and saved the nation of Israel from total annihilation. Both the haftarah and Renewed Covenant portions remind us about the incident with Balaam the son of Beor: the haftarah portion informs us what YHVH requires of each one of us; and the Renewed Covenant portion warns us about those among us who lead us astray. As mentioned in a previous Haftarah there are two full books of the Renewed Covenant dedicated to combat apostasy, where people depart from the truth and go after deceiving spirits; these are 2nd Peter 2 and the book of Jude.

Micah recorded his prophecies as it was revealed to him. It did not follow in chronological order as we see in Micah 4: 1 where he is talking about what will happen after the devastation mentioned in Micah 7, as follows: ***'And it will come about in the last days that the mountain (government) of the house of YHVH will be established as the chief of the mountains. It will be raised above the hills, and the peoples will stream to it.'*** Elohim's government will be established over all nations on the face of the earth and people will look to Him to teach them to live a way of life that brings happiness and peace as we read in verses 3 to 4 of Micah 4: ***'And He will judge between many peoples And render decisions for mighty, distant nations. Then they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; Nation will not lift up sword against nation, and never again will they train for war. (4) And each of them will sit under his vine and under his fig tree, with no one to make them afraid, for the mouth of YHVH of hosts has spoken.'***

Micah's prophecies were directed at the capitols of both Israel and Judah. He called all the people, including the rulers of the house of Israel to hear his prophesy. Micah foretells that YHVH will come forth from heaven and will stand upon the mountains, and the mountains will melt under Him; the valleys will be split like wax before a fire; we understand that these things will occur when Yahshua returns from

heaven. Micah prophesied in verse 2 of chapter 5, that Yahshua will be born in Bethlehem, but also tells us that He existed eternally. He further tells us that Yahshua will return to shepherd His flock, when He comes in the strength of YHVH and in the majesty of the name of YHVH. We read in verse 5, that He will be our peace when the Assyrians invade our land, and tramples our citadels, then He will raise against them seven shepherds and eight leaders of men. Seven...eight is an idiom for more than enough leaders for the task. This takes us to the beginning of the Haftarah portion in verse 6 of Micah 5, where we read: ***'And they will shepherd the land of Assyria with the sword, the land of Nimrod at its entrances; and He will deliver us from the Assyrian when he attacks our land and when he tramples our territory.'*** Continuing in verses 7 – 9, we understand that Micah's prophecies are for the remnant of the modern day descendants of Israel; in which he describes the many blessing that they have experienced in especially the western world, up to now.

We read further in verses 7 - 9 that the remnant of Jacob are presently dispersed among many peoples, as follows: ***'Then the remnant of Jacob will be among many peoples like dew from YHVH, like showers on vegetation which do not wait for man, or delay for the sons of men. (8) And the remnant of Jacob will be among the nations, among many peoples like a lion among the beasts of the forest, like a young lion among flocks of sheep, which, if he passes through, tramples down and tears, and there is none to rescue. (9) Your hand will be lifted up against your adversaries, and all your enemies will be cut off.'*** Israel's presence in the midst of many people would be a source of blessing to those people, but she would also be controlling the nations that she colonized. Even so, Romans 9: 24 – 27 confirms that only a remnant will be saved at Messiah's return, in this way: ***'even us, whom He also called, not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles. (25) As He says also in Hosea, "I WILL CALL THOSE WHO WERE NOT MY PEOPLE, 'MY PEOPLE,' AND HER WHO WAS NOT BELOVED, 'BELOVED.'" (26) "AND IT SHALL BE THAT IN THE PLACE WHERE IT WAS SAID TO THEM, 'YOU ARE NOT MY PEOPLE,' THERE THEY SHALL BE CALLED SONS OF THE LIVING ELOHIM." (27) And Isaiah cries out concerning Israel, "THOUGH THE NUMBER OF THE SONS OF ISRAEL BE***

AS THE SAND OF THE SEA, IT IS THE REMNANT THAT WILL BE SAVED.”

Because Ephraim was given a double portion, they were extremely blessed and as a result, were also a blessing to those among whom they lived. But, also prophesied in this chapter we see that at this very time, Elohim will cut off these blessings and will execute judgment on those who will not obey, as we read from Micah 5: 10 – 15, as follows: **“And it will be in that day,” declares YHVH, “That I will cut off your horses from among you and destroy your chariots** (the transportation upon which we have come to rely so much, will be destroyed). (11) **I will also cut off the cities of your land and tear down all your fortifications.** (12) **I will cut of sorceries from your hand, and you will have fortunetellers no more.** (13) **I will cut off your carved images and your sacred pillars from among you, so that you will no longer bow down to the work of your hands.** (14) **I will root out your Asherim from among you and destroy your cities.** (15) **And I will execute vengeance in anger and wrath on the nations which have not obeyed.”** We see from these verses that Elohim will allow this destruction because of pagan idol worship. We are told in Micah 7 verses 12 & 13 (not part of this Haftarah portion) that YHVH will use the Assyrians and Egyptians to punish the modern day descendants of Israel, as follows: **‘It will be a day when they will come to you from Assyria and the cities of Egypt, from Egypt even to the Euphrates, even from sea to sea and mountain to mountain.** (13) **And the earth will become desolate because of her inhabitants, on account of the fruit of their deeds.’**

YHVH speaks specifically to us the latter day descendants of Israel, whom He is calling out of the world at this time, saying in Micah 6: 1 - 3, **‘Hear now what YHVH is saying, “Arise, plead your case before the mountains, and let the hills hear your voice.** (2) **Listen, you mountains, to the indictment of YHVH, and you enduring fountains of the earth, because YHVH has a case against His people; Even with Israel He will dispute.** (3) **My people, what have I done to you, and how have I wearied you? Answer Me.”** We see here, that YHVH is addressing the hills and the valleys, before addressing His people. It reminds me of a classical song of yesteryear that went like this: *‘I talk to the trees, but they don’t listen to me.’* Every time we see the word *‘Hear’* in the

Scriptures, as used in verse 1 above, YHVH has something very important to tell us. But how many of us are prepared to listen and do what He tells us, today? YHVH informs us that He brought our forefathers out of Egypt and ransomed them from slavery, using Moses, Aaron and Miriam to lead them. In verse 5 of Micah 6, He asks us to recall how Balak the king of Moab counseled against Israel and how Balaam the son of Beor answered Him; and that we recall His righteous acts when Israel traveled from Shittim to Gilgal into the Promised Land, faithfully keeping all His promises to them.

Micah continues the questioning in verses 6 & 7, saying: ***‘With what shall I come to YHVH and bow myself before the Elohim on high? Shall I come to Him with burnt offerings, with yearling calves? YHVH (through Micah) is asking us a few rhetorical questions in order to tell us how to thank Him for His many blessings. (7) Does YHVH take delight in thousands of rams, in ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I present my first-born for my rebellious acts, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? What is the answer to these questions? What does YHVH want from us? YHVH gives us the answer in verse 8, as follows: ‘He has told you, O man, what is good; And what does YHVH require of you but to do justice, to love kindness (loyalty); and to walk humbly (circumspectly) with your Elohim? In fact, this is exactly what He told us through Moses in Deuteronomy 10: 12 , in this way: “And now, Israel, what does YHVH your Elohim require from you, but to fear YHVH your Elohim, to walk in all His ways and love Him, and to serve YHVH your Elohim with all your heart and with all your soul.” There is nothing new; in fact if we study Torah we will know exactly what YHVH requires of us.***

We start reading the Renewed Covenant portion from 2 Peter 2: 1 – 3, as follows: ***‘But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves.*** (The word ‘denying’ as used here is translated from the Greek word ‘arneomai’, which also means ‘contradicting’ – this tells us how to identify false teachers; they are contradicting the things that Yahshua taught.) ***(2) And many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned; (3) and in their greed they will exploit you with false words; their***

judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep. We are told in verses 4 – 11 that YHVH knows how to rescue us from temptation and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment, in this way: **'For if Elohim did not spare angels when they sinned (see Isaiah 14), but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment (as per Jude 13); (5) and did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, with seven others, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly; (6) and if He condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction by reducing them to ashes, having made them an example to those who would live ungodly thereafter; (7) and if He rescued righteous Lot, oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men (8) (for by what he saw and heard that righteous man, while living among them, felt his righteous soul tormented day after day with their lawless deeds), (9) then YHVH knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment, (10) and especially those who indulge the flesh in its corrupt desires and despise authority. Daring, self-willed, they do not tremble when they revile angelic majesties, (11) whereas angels who are greater in might and power do not bring a reviling judgment against them before YHVH.'** There are many Nazarene Israelite and like-minded believers, who believe the doctrines of men, much easier than what they believe what Yahshua taught whilst He was on earth. They identify with Messiah outwardly, but would not obey His teachings or live under His authority, which they also despise. This could be as a result of not truly accepting Him as YHVH in the flesh. The two major characteristics of false teachers are emphasized in verse 10 as lust and arrogance – daring and self-willed; i.e. to be obstinate and determined in one's own way.

Even though these false teachers were called by YHVH, they discarded the teachings of Yahshua for the teachings of men, as He said in John 5: 43 – 44: **"I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; if another shall come in his own name you will receive him. (44) How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another, and you do not seek the glory that is from the one and only Elohim?** Continuing in verses 12 – 16 of 2 Peter 2, we read: **'But these, like unreasoning animals, born as creatures of instinct to be captured and killed, reviling**

where they have no knowledge, will in the destruction of those creatures also be destroyed, (False teachers cannot get beyond their own instincts and will be destroyed by the folly of their passions.) (13) **suffering wrong as the wages of doing wrong. They count it a pleasure to revel in the daytime. They are stains and blemishes, reveling in their deceptions, as they carouse with you,** (14) **having eyes full of adultery and that never cease from sin, enticing unstable souls, having a heart trained in greed, accursed children;** (15) **forsaking the right way they have gone astray, having followed the way of Balaam, he son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness,** (16) **but he received a rebuke for his own transgression; for a dumb donkey, speaking with a voice of a man, restrained the madness of the prophet.'**

False teachers have been deceived by Satan and his agents and then go on to deceive others to believe the same, so as to feel secure in having a large following of people who believe like they do. We read from verses 17 – 20 of 2 Peter 2, that these teachers promise spiritual refreshment, but is all show without substance, as follows: **'These are springs without water, and mists driven by a storm, for whom the black darkness has been reserved.** (talking about the punishment reserved for Satan and his demons) (18) **For speaking out arrogant words of vanity they entice by fleshly desires, by sensuality, those who barely escape from the ones who live in error,** (19) **promising them freedom they themselves are slaves of corruption** (Satan's); **for by what a man is overcome, by this he is enslaved.** (20) **For if after they have escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of the Master and Savior Yahshua Messiah, they are again entangled in them and are overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first.'** False teachers promise those trying to escape the struggles of life, the very freedom that they seek and leading them to become even more enslaved.

They seek religion as a way to save their own skin and were never truly converted to Messiah. They heard the gospel of the kingdom of Elohim, but by their actions rejected Yahshua as the head of the ecclesia, who will also rule during the coming millennium. That is the apostasy that we are warned about; and it would have been better for such false teachers not to have known the truth at all, as we read from verses 21 & 22, as follows: **'For it would be better for them**

not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the set-apart commandment delivered to them. (22) It has happened to them according to the true proverb, "A DOG RETURNS TO ITS OWN VOMIT," and, "A sow, after washing, returns to wallowing in the mire." When we come to understand the significance of true worship, it becomes supremely relevant to our lives and to our ultimate destiny. Elohim's way is a lonely narrow road and we cannot compromise, as Yahshua said in Matthew 7: 14, ***"For the gate is small, and the way is narrow that leads to life, and few are those who find it."*** Typical examples are Elohim's weekly and annual Sabbaths; These remain in force and were never abolished or changed for anybody. Sunday worship does not have Elohim's authority; neither has a Sabbath or annual Feast Day which starts at a different time to which He ordained.

1 Kings 18: 46 – 19: 21 & Acts 2: 1 – 21.

This Haftarah portion is read with Torah portion Pinchas (Numbers 25: 10 to 29: 40) and Renewed Covenant portion Acts 2: 1 – 21. A common factor in both the Torah and haftarah portions is the great zeal that both Phinehas and Elijah showed for YHVH. After YHVH intervened for Elijah when he challenged the people of Israel and their false prophets through a contest of burnt offerings, to prove that YHVH is Elohim, it started raining after more than three years. There was a heavy down pour and king Ahab rode to Jezreel in his chariot. We commence reading the haftarah portion from verse 46 of 1st Kings 18, as follows: ***‘Then the hand of YHVH was on Elijah, and he girded up his loins and outran Ahab to Jezreel.’*** Even though Elijah was getting on in years, he was a natural athlete and with the help of YHVH, he outran Ahab’s chariot on the way to Jezreel.

We continue reading from 1st Kings 19: 1 - 3, in this way: ***‘Now Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and how he had killed all the prophets (of Baal) with the sword. (2) Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, “So may the gods do to me and even more, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time.” (3) And he was afraid and arose and ran for his life and came to Beersheba, which belongs to Judah, and left his servant there.’*** Jezebel was very angry when she heard that Elijah had her 450 prophets of Baal killed, and that he convinced the children of Israel that YHVH is Elohim. Jezebel sends a threatening message to Elijah, discouraging him greatly and he immediately decided to flee for his life with his servant. Upon reaching Beersheba, Elijah convinced his servant that they should split up. We read how Elijah continued on his journey from verse 4, as follows: ***‘But he himself went a day’s journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree; and he requested for himself that he might die, and said, “It is enough; now, O YHVH, take my life, for I am not better than my fathers.”’*** Elijah felt so despondent that he asked YHVH to take his life and fell asleep under the Juniper tree. We see from verses 5 & 6 that whilst sleeping an angel came and woke him up, as follows: ***‘And he lay down and slept under a juniper tree; and behold, there was an angel touching him, and he said to him, “Arise, eat.” (6) Then he looked and behold, there was at his head a bread cake baked on***

hot stones, and a jar of water. So he ate and drank and lay down again.'

Elijah fell asleep again and was woken up a second time, as we see from verses 7 & 8, in this way: **'And the angel of YHVH came again a second time and touched him and said, "Arise, eat, because the journey is too great for you." (8) So he arose and ate and drank, and went in the strength of that food, forty days and forty nights to Horeb, the mountain of Elohim.'** The bread and water strengthened him sufficiently to last him during a forty day and night journey to Mount Horeb. Next we read about a title used for the Creator of the universe, which those of us who came from Christianity, learnt about for the first time in John 1: 1 – 3, namely the 'word of YHVH'. This is the Aleph-Tav or manifestation of YHVH, who later became flesh as the salvation of YHVH, namely Yahshua. We read accordingly in verses 9, **'Then he came there to a cave, and lodged there; and behold, the word of YHVH came to him, and He said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"** In verse 10 Elijah answered saying: **"I have been very zealous for YHVH, the Elohim of hosts; for the sons of Israel have forsaken Thy covenant, torn down Thine altars and killed Thy prophets with the sword. And I alone am left; and they seek my life to take it away."** To assure Elijah that YHVH is with him, the word of YHVH instructed Elijah, as we read from verse 11 & 12, **"Go forth, and stand on the mountain before YHVH."** **And behold, YHVH was passing by! And a great and strong wind was rending the mountains and breaking in pieces the rocks before YHVH; but YHVH was not in the wind. And after the wind an earthquake, but YHVH was not in the earthquake. (12) And after the earthquake a fire, but YHVH was not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of gentle blowing.'**

The last four words in the KJV reads: **'a still small voice'**. Yes YHVH comes to us in a still small voice; He is not in the great strong wind or in the earth quake or in the fire, if only we are prepared to listen (hear and obey), He is always there. He guides us by His Set-apart Spirit to do the right thing, but we must be prepared to 'hear'. If we attend Sabbath services with no other motivation¹⁹, but

¹⁹ Motivation such as thinking that godliness (or religion) is a means of gain (as mentioned in 1 Timothy 6: 3 – 5) – be it financial or to find a spouse, is not from the Set-apart Spirit .

obedience from the heart, we may be sure that it is the Set-apart Spirit indwelling us that motivates us to be there. We read Elijah reacted to the voice in verse 13, like this: ***‘And it came about when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out and stood in the entrance of the cave. And behold, a voice came to him and said, “What are you doing here, Elijah?”*** Elijah answered in verse 14, saying: ***“I have been very zealous for YHVH, the Elohim of hosts; for the sons of Israel have forsaken Thy covenant, torn down Thine altars and killed Thy prophets with the sword. And I alone am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.”*** In verse 15 of 1st Kings 19, the word of YHVH that came to Elijah in verse 9 is similar to what we read in John 1: 1 identified as YHVH Himself. We read accordingly from verses 15 - 18, ***‘And YHVH said to him, “Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus, and when you have arrived, you shall anoint Hazael king over Aram; (16) and Jehu the son of Nimshi you shall anoint king over Israel; and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah you shall anoint as prophet in your place. (17) And it shall come about, that one who escapes from the sword of Hazel, Jehu shall put to death, and the one who escapes from the sword of Jehu, Elisha shall put to death. (18) Yet I will leave 7,000 in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal and every mouth that has not kissed him.’***

Like Elijah, we often get so despondent, when nobody believes the same as we do. In a Christian country like ours, thousands of sincere believers go to church on Sunday and to Easter sun-rise services, without knowing that they are sincerely wrong. The reason is as we read in Jeremiah 3: 14, in this way: ***‘Return, O faithless sons,’ declares YHVH; ‘For I am a master to you, and I will take you one from a city and two from a family, and will bring you to Zion.’*** YHVH is only calling a few at this time, to become first fruit believers, to learn His will and way, so that they may become kings and priests ruling under Yahshua during the millennium and on into eternity. The second harvest of human souls will be a much larger harvest, but will only take place after the millennium and second resurrection (as may be read in Revelation 20: 4 – 6). Yes, the road that we follow is a very lonely narrow road, and there are not many true believers to encourage us, but as YHVH said to Elijah in verse 18, there are others like us, throughout this world, who have not bowed the knee to the false gods of this world. I personally am in

touch with many such true believers in South Africa, the USA, the UK, Germany, Australia, New Zealand, Israel, India and even Russia. We need to take courage from knowing that there are many like-minded believers throughout the world, who obeyed Elohim's call and are worshipping Him in spirit and in truth.

We conclude the haftarah portion, by reading from verses 19 to 21, like this: ***'So he (Elijah) departed from there and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, while he was plowing with twelve pairs of oxen before him, and he with the twelfth. And Elijah passed over to him and threw his mantle on him. (20) And he left the oxen and ran after Elijah and said, "Please let me kiss my father and my mother, then I will follow you." And he said to him, "Go back again, for what have I done to you?" (21) So he returned from following him, and took the pair of oxen and sacrificed them and boiled their flesh with the implements of the oxen, and gave it to the people and they ate. Then he arose and followed Elijah and ministered to him.'***

We commence reading the Renewed Covenant portion from Acts 2: 1, as follows: ***"And when the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place."*** Verse 1 in the KJV states: ***'And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they all with one accord in one place.'*** Please note that there were no arguments between the believers whom, we will see later, were mostly Jews from throughout the then known world. They came together in agreement over the timing of the day of Pentecost. Some did not insist that they keep it two days later based on the crescent moon calendar in use by some today. Yes, the moon is renewed immediately after the shadow of the earth, between the sun and the moon, covers the moon and it commences its move towards renewal. The renewed moon cannot be seen by the 'naked' eye and only becomes visible as a crescent moon one and a half to two days after the concealment. By then counting fifteen days towards the full moon, on which both the 1st day of Unleavened Bread and the Feast of Tabernacles is supposed to start, the moon will already be waning and will definitely not be full any longer! Why is the crescent moon more important to these folks, than the full moon, during which two major Feast Days start? I'll tell you why – it is because of false teachers who continue to contradict the Master who died for us. The result is a calendar that is always one or two days different to the

one kept by Judah, let alone those who insist on keeping it a full month later in some years! Who are these people fooling? Nobody, but themselves. However, the reason is much deeper than that; from previous experience with like-minded groups, I can tell you that it is all underpinned by anti-Semitism! For example, I firmly believe that the Church of G-d, who started obeying Elohim's Sabbaths and food laws, was destroyed by anti-Semitism. There are also presently moves afoot to destroy the Seventh Day Adventist Church, simply because they keep the seventh day Sabbath.

Having dealt with this deception, let's continue to deal with the different interpretations of Leviticus 23, which is a further source of disagreement amongst believers. One thing is certain; the believing Jews of that time did not change the day from which they counted the Omer to the first day of the week, after Yahshua's resurrection on Sabbath evening, three days and three nights after His burial late in the afternoon of the 4th Day of the week. Rav. Shaul did not make mention of any such 'changes' or corrections, as he did regarding the timing of the Passover in 1 Corinthians 11: 23 – 26. The fact that Yahshua was the first of the first fruits to be resurrected did also not validate a change to the date of the commencement of counting towards Pentecost – else it would have been clearly spelt out for us, since Elohim is not an Elohim of confusion, as we read in 1 Corinthians 14: 33 as follows: '**(for) Elohim is not an Elohim of confusion but of peace, as in all the ecclesia of the saints** (believers).' The question is: Why are there two different opinions as to when we keep Pentecost, by people who use the same Scriptures? Let's determine to resolve this issue once for all: The problem starts in Leviticus 23 where we are told in verse 11, '**And he shall wave the sheaf before YHVH for you to be accepted; on the day after the sabbath²⁰ the priest shall wave it.**' Which Sabbath are we talking about? To understand this problem, we need to understand that according to the 'Gesenius Hebrew Lexicon' the word Sabbath in Hebrew, does not literally mean '*the seventh day of*

²⁰ *In the Septuagint LXX version of the Scriptures, this underlined section quoted from Leviticus 23:11, simply reads: 'THE DAY AFTER THE FIRST DAY' [of Unleavened Bread on Aviv 15th] and tells us to count 7 full weeks. The term 'morrow after the Shabbat' is replaced with "AFTER THE FIRST DAY", which differs from the Masoretic text, from which most modern translations are sourced.*

the week’, but simply to ‘rest’ or to ‘stop working’ and ‘yom shabbat’ transliterated in Hebrew simply means ‘day of rest’.

Even though it is also the name of the seventh day of the week, it is not the principal meaning of the word. In addition, we cannot obtain the correct meaning of a verse without comparing two or three scriptural witnesses in this regard. We are also told in 2 Peter 1; 20, ***‘But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scriptures is a matter of one’s own interpretation.’*** It is therefore important to find other instances in the Scriptures where we are told how to count to Pentecost, to allow the Scriptures to interpret the Scriptures. We read in Deuteronomy 16: 9 & 10: ***‘You shall count seven weeks for yourself; you shall begin to count seven weeks from the time you begin to put the sickle to the standing grain.*** (10) ***Then you shall celebrate the Feast of Weeks to YHVH your Elohim with a tribute of a freewill offering of your hand, which you shall give just as YHVH your Elohim blesses you.’*** Yes, the transliterated Hebrew word ‘Shavuot’, another name for Pentecost simply means the Feast of Weeks, and not the Feast of Sabbaths. A second witness of this is found in 2 Chronicles 8: 13 and a third in Numbers 28: 26, where we read: ***‘Also on the day of the first fruits, when you present a new grain offering to YHVH in your Feast of Weeks, you shall have a holy convocation; you shall do no laborious work.*** There is a common element of time present in both the sections of Scriptures quoted here, as follows: ‘from the time you begin to put the sickle to the standing grain’ and ‘when you present a new grain offering to YHVH’. To fully understand the commonality between these lines of scripture, we need to go back to Leviticus 23: 10, where YHVH says to Moses: ***“Speak to the sons of Israel, and say to them, When you enter the land, which I am going to give to you and reap its harvest, then you shall bring the sheaf of the first fruits of your harvest to the priest.*** Before going further, we need to understand when this is supposed to take place: Verse 10 clearly specifies it in this way: *‘When you enter the land which I am going to give you.’*

Let’s hold that thought for a moment and read further from verse 11 (quoted again) to 14, as follows: ***‘And he shall wave the sheaf before YHVH for you to be accepted; on the day after the sabbath the priest shall wave it.*** (12) ***Now on the day when you wave the sheaf, you shall offer a male lamb one year old without defect for a burnt offering to YHVH.*** (13) ***Its grain offering shall***

then be two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil, an offering by fire to YHVH for a soothing aroma, with its libation, a fourth of a hin of wine. (14) Until this same day, until you have brought in the offering of your Elohim (when the Priest waved the wave sheaf), you shall eat neither bread nor roasted grain nor new growth. It is a perpetual statute throughout your generations in all your dwelling places. (Verses 10 and 14 holds the key to understanding this mystery). We need to turn to the book of Joshua, to see what happened, when the Israelites entered the promised land. We read from Joshua 5: 3 that Joshua circumcised the sons of Israel because even though all the males who came out of Egypt were circumcised, they all died in the wilderness, and their children born in the wilderness were not circumcised. Continuing in Joshua 5: 10 – 12 we read: ***'While the sons of Israel camped at Gilgal, they observed the Passover on the evening of the fourteenth day of the month on the desert plains of Jericho. (11) And on the day after the Passover, on the very day, they ate some of the produce of the land, unleavened cakes and parched grain. (12) And the manna ceased on the day after they had eaten some of the produce of the land, so that the sons of Israel no longer had manna, but they ate some of the yield of the land of Canaan during that year.'*** We see here that grain was eaten on the night of the 15th becoming the 16th of Aviv. So either the 14th Aviv (Passover) was on the sixth day of the week (or a Friday) that year, or Joshua sinned and caused the whole house of Israel to sin with him, as he allowed them to eat grain and the produce of the land from the end of the following day. Note that they were not to eat of the new crop until they had offered the first fruits on the morrow after the sabbath.

We've seen from Deuteronomy 16: 9 that Elohim told the Israelites plainly to count seven weeks from the time they begin to put the sickle to the standing grain. As mentioned before the transliterated Hebrew word Shavuot simply means 'weeks'. But, we still need to ask: Why would Elohim inspire the use of the word sabbath in Leviticus 23? As mentioned in the Septuagint LXX written about 280 BCE, the line which is in most Scriptures translated from the Masoretic text as *'the day after the sabbath'* simply reads: *'the day after the first day'*. This was at least a hundred years before the beginning of the Jewish sects of the Pharisees and the Sadducees; long before there was any dispute about this portion of the

Scriptures. We know that the Sadducees count the Omer from the day after the weekly Sabbath, like many do today. However, is their interpretation correct? Most Jewish authorities agree that the Sadducees were incorrect. But what did Yahshua, our perfect example have to say about their interpretation? We turn to Matthew 22: 24 – 28, where the Sadducees started questioning Yahshua, saying that according to Moses (meaning Torah), if a man dies childless, his brother as next of kin should marry his wife to raise offspring for him. In the account that they related to Yahshua, there were seven brothers, and each one in turn married the first wife, after the brothers died one after the other, without leaving their brother offspring. Eventually the wife also died. Their question following the story is recorded in Matthew 22: 28, like this: ***‘In the resurrection therefore whose wife of the seven shall she be? For they all had her.’*** We read from Matthew 22: 29, ***‘But Yahshua answered and said to them, “You are mistaken, not understanding the Scriptures, or the power of Elohim.’*** Yahshua’s answer to them makes it clear, that we should not accept the Sadducees’ interpretation of the Scriptures and since we are told in Deuteronomy 18: 18 & 19, to listen to Him (Yahshua), it should be sufficient for us. The Sabbath spoken about in Leviticus 23: 11, was simply the first annual Sabbath of the year namely the First Day of Unleavened Bread. This is a day of rest also known as an annual sabbath (we see in Leviticus 23: 24, 32 & 39²¹ of the KJV that these Set-apart days are also referred to as Sabbaths). We read from verse 8 of Leviticus 23 that on the seventh day of Unleavened Bread, we shall have a Set-apart convocation and not do any laborious work, as this is also a day of rest or the second annual Sabbath of the year. In fact, the sabbath that we count the Omer from, is the same sabbath spoken about in John 19: 31, and which Christians misunderstand to be the weekly Sabbath, because they do not keep Elohim’s annual Feast Days, as follows: ***‘The Jews therefore, because it was the***

²¹ We read from verse 24 of Leviticus 23, ***‘Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, In the seventh month on the first of the month, you shall have a sabbath rest, a reminder by blowing of trumpets, a Set-apart convocation.’***; we read further in Leviticus 23: 32, ***‘It is to be a sabbath of complete rest to you, and you shall humble your souls; on the ninth of the month at evening, from evening until evening you shall keep your sabbath.’***; and finally we read in Leviticus 23: 39, ***‘On exactly the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the crops of the land, you shall celebrate the feast of YHVH for seven days, with a rest on the first day and a sabbath rest on the eighth day,’***

day of preparation, so that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.' This was, as all believers know, the first annual sabbath otherwise known as the First Day of Unleavened Bread. Do you realize that the same annual sabbath that Christians misconstrue has become the source of confusion to many Nazarene/Messianic Israelite and like-minded believers today?

We continue reading from Acts 2 verses 2 to 5, as follows: **'And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent, rushing wind, and it filled the whole house (of Elohim) where they were sitting. (3) And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them. (4) And they were all filled with the Set-apart Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance. (5) Now there were Jews living in Jerusalem, devout men, from every nation under heaven.'** As mentioned in a previous haftarah portion, the Shechinah glory or Kavod of Elohim only appeared in the tabernacle in the wilderness and in Solomon's temple. Both Rav Shaul and Rav Kepha likened new believers to the building blocks built upon the corner stone or foundation, namely Yahshua, as the temple of the Set-apart Spirit. Here we see that for the first time, since the kingdom of Israel split in two, the Shechinah glory of Elohim, or His Set-apart Spirit appear on the believers again. In addition we see that as YHVH changed the languages of the people who built the tower of Babel, so that they could not understand one another, here He lets people understand the languages spoken by the mostly Jewish believers, who attended the Pentecost service from all over the known world, at that time. We read further in verses 6 – 11, **'And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were bewildered, because they were each one hearing them speak in his own language. (7) And they were amazed and marveled, saying, "Why, are not all these who are speaking Galileans? (8) And how is it that we each hear them in our own language to which were born?" (9) Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, (10) Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the districts of Libya around Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, (11) Cretans and Arabs – we hear them in our own tongues speaking of the mighty deeds**

of Elohim.” So we see here that the miracle was not in the speaking of different languages, but that each person heard the other, as if he was speaking in his own language. This amazed every one present as we read in verse 12 & 13, as follows: **‘And they continued in amazement and great perplexity, saying to one another, “What does this mean?” (13) But others were mocking and saying, “They are full of sweet wine.”’**

This was totally absurd to Rav Kepha and we read his reaction in verse 14 – 21, in this way: **‘But Peter, taking his stand with the eleven, raised his voice and declared to them: “Men of Judea, and all you who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give heed to my words. (15) “For these men are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only the third hour of the day; (16) but this is what was spoken of through the prophet Joel- (17) ‘AND IT SHALL BE IN THE LAST DAY,’ Elohim says, ‘THAT I WILL POUR FORTH OF MY SPIRIT UPON ALL MANKIND; AND YOUR SONS AND YOUR DAUGHTERS SHALL PROPHECY, AND YOUR YOUNG MEN SHALL SEE VISIONS, AND YOUR OLD MEN SHALL DREAM DREAMS; (18) EVEN UPON MY BONDSLAVES, BOTH MEN AND WOMEN, I WILL IN THOSE DAYS POUR FORTH OF MY SPIRIT And they shall prophesy. (19) AND I WILL GRANT WONDERS IN THE SKY ABOVE, AND SIGN ON THE EARTH BENEATH, BLOOD, AND FIRE, AND VAPOR OF SMOKE. (20) THE SUN SHALL BE TURNED INTO DARKNESS, AND THE MOON INTO BLOOD, BEFORE THE GREAT AND GLORIOUS DAY OF YHVH SHALL COME. (21) AND IT SHALL BE, THAT EVERYONE WHO CALLS ON THE NAME OF YHVH SHALL BE SAVED.’** Kepha was repeating Joel’s prophesy, telling his fellow apostles, that it was beginning to be fulfilled at that time. However, we know that the last part of this prophesy will only be fulfilled, upon Yahshua’s soon coming return.

Jeremiah 1: 1 – 2: 3 & Matthew 5: 33 – 37.

This Haftarah portion is read with Torah portion Matot (Numbers 30: 1 to 32: 42) and Renewed Covenant portion Matthew 5: 33 - 37. Both the Torah and the Renewed Covenant portions deal with vows and because we have discussed both in the Torah portion, we will only consider the portion in Jeremiah at this time. We are reminded of how Elohim's anger burnt against the children of Israel in the wilderness and how He made them wander in the wilderness forty years and destroyed an entire generation of evil doers in the Torah portion. The prophecies in Jeremiah and the other major prophets tell us what YHVH is planning to do with this last generation of evil doers in Israel, before Yahshua's return.

Before we commence with the haftarah portion, we need to understand that YHVH used the prophets Jeremiah, Isaiah and Ezekiel to warn the nations of Israel and Judah of severe punishment, if they refused to repent of their sins and obey Him. Isaiah prophesied over a period of forty years from about 740 – 700 BCE, in the days of Uzziah, Jothan, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. Jeremiah in turn prophesied to the nation of Judah from 625 – 585 BCE during the time of power of Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin and Zedekiah; a period that covered the final tragic years of the kingdom of Judah to the destruction of Jerusalem and the deportation of the two tribes living in the kingdom of Judah, to Babylon. YHVH called Ezekiel to be His prophet whilst he was a prisoner in a slave camp near Babylon during the years 592 – 572 BCE. Ezekiel prophesied primarily about the nation of Israel, but, in studying these prophecies we will see that they were intended for their modern day descendants.

YHVH allowed the nation of Israel, to be conquered by the Assyrians during the years 721 – 718 BCE, because of the sins of Sabbath breaking and idolatry. But, this only happened after YHVH warned the nation of Israel through His servants the prophets, as may be read in 2 Kings 17 verse 22 and the first part of verse 23: ***'and the sons of Israel walked in all the sins of Jeroboam which he did; they did not depart from them, (23) until YHVH removed Israel from His sight, as He spoke through all His servants the prophets.'*** The Assyrians took the nation of Israel out of Samaria and settled another people in their place. The nation of Israel never

returned to their homeland, but was eventually taken northwest into Europe, where some settled. The rest moved on into England and further on to the USA, Canada, Australia, South Africa and New Zealand. The seed of the Israelites were spread throughout the world and can be found amongst virtually every nation in the world. The children of Abraham have indeed become a multitude of nations. However, they lost their identity because they forgot the commandments of YHVH and started keeping pagan holidays such as Sunday, Xmas and Easter, like the pagan nations amongst whom they lived.

The nation of Judah also went into captivity, about 130 years after Israel was taken captive. This happened in three stages, during 604 to 585 BCE, when the army of king Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, invaded and conquered the nation of Judah. However, they were allowed to return to their homeland about 70 years later, when YHVH stirred the spirit of Cyrus, king of Persia to let them return as is recorded for us in the book of Ezra. The prophet Ezekiel was commissioned by Elohim to go to the house of Israel with an important message, as we read in Ezekiel 3: 1, as follows: ***‘Then He said to me, “Son of man, eat what you find; eat this scroll, and go, speak to the house of Israel.”’*** But, when Ezekiel was given this message, he was one of many Jews in captivity in Babylon. He was far from Samaria, where the northern ten tribes had been taken captive 130 years earlier and still further away from the Israelites, where they have by that time migrated to. Ezekiel never took the message that YHVH gave him for Israel, to the house of Israel, since he was in prison and could not do so. Therefore the message that YHVH gave to Ezekiel is a prophesy intended primarily for the modern day descendants of the house of Israel and especially for those living in the western world. We will devote the next 10 haftarah portions studying sections from Jeremiah and Isaiah to help us to better understand what is ahead for us the modern descendants of both the nations of Israel and Judah.

We start reading from *Jeremiah 1: 1 -5*, as follows: ***‘The words of Jeremiah, the son of Hilkiah, of the priests who were in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin, (2) to whom the word of YHVH came in the days of Josiah, the son of Amon, king of Judah, in the thirteenth year of his reign. (3) It came also in the days of Jehoiakim, the son of Josiah, king of Judah, until the end of the***

eleventh year of Zedekiah, the son of Josiah, king of Judah, until the exile of Jerusalem in the fifth month. (4) Now the word of YHHW came to me saying, (5) “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations.” It is not easy for us to realize that like Jeremiah, those of us called by YHVH at this time, have been called from the before foundation of the world, as we read in Ephesians 1: 4 - 6, like this: **‘just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be set-apart and blameless before Him, in love. (5) He predestined us to adoption as sons through Yahshua Messiah to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, (6) to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.’** Yes, similar to Jeremiah, YHVH chose us from before we were born to fulfill a specific function in the future. Even though not one of us is aware of what YHVH has planned for us in the immediate future, we will be able to prepare better for what awaits us, if we diligently study the words of these Prophets.

Continuing from verses 6 – 10 of Jeremiah 1, we read: **‘Then I said, “Alas, YHVH Elohim! Behold, I do not know how to speak, because I am a youth.” (7) But YHVH said to me, “Do not say, ‘I am a youth,’ because everywhere I send you, you shall go, and all that I command you, you shall speak. (8) “Do not be afraid of them, For I am with you to deliver you,” declares YHVH. (9) Then YHVH stretched out His hand and touched my mouth, and YHVH said to me, “Behold, I have put My words in your mouth. (10) “See, I have appointed you this day over the nations and over the kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant.”’** YHVH does not usually call the best qualified person to do His work, as we read from 1 Corinthians 1: 26 – 29, as follows; **‘For consider your calling brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; (27) but Elohim has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and Elohim has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, (28) and the base things of the world and the despised, Elohim has chosen, the things that are not, that He might nullify the things that are, (29) that no man should boast before Elohim.’** This is why it is easy for most to criticize the servants whom YHVH has called. However, once called He expects us to grow in

grace and knowledge, so that we may qualify to do the work for which He has called us. In addition, we are assured that if we answer Elohim's call, He will empower us to perform the task at hand. Jeremiah listened to YHVH and because YHVH spoke through Jeremiah, his message had the power and authority of YHVH our Elohim.

Many of us called by YHVH do not always understand the purpose of our calling. Some are called to offer up intercessory prayers for the weak and suffering among us; some are called to support the publication of the good news of the kingdom of Elohim into all the world; some are called to teach new believers the things that they have learnt from those who came before them, be it Scriptural sermons or how to make unleavened bread and cakes during the Days of Unleavened Bread; whilst others are called to be hospitable and provide tea and biscuits before and after worship services, to name only a few. Yahshua commissioned us in Matthew 28: 18 – 20, to immerse new believers and to teach them how to keep Torah, as we have learnt from those who came before us. We should take our calling very seriously, if we want to rule under Yahshua during the millennium, as we read His words in Matthew 24: 45 – 49, as follows: ***“Who then is the faithful and sensible slave whom his master put in charge of his household to give them their food at the proper time? (teaching new believers the meaning of the different feast days at the correct time of the year) (46) Blessed is that slave whom his master finds so doing when he comes. (We will be blessed if we are busy doing Elohim’s work, at Yahshua’s return) (47) Truly I say to you, that he will put him in charge of all his possessions. (48) But if that evil slave says in his heart ‘My master is not coming for a long time; (49) and shall begin to beat his fellow slaves and eat and drink with drunkards.”*** If we remain loyal until Yahshua returns, we will benefit greatly, but if we go back into the world we will lose our salvation, as we are being judged at this time! Even though we know that we cannot earn salvation by good works, we understand from the parable of the minas in Luke 19: 12 – 26, that we will be awarded positions of leadership in accordance with the diligence with which we applied our talents in promoting the work of Elohim here on earth.

We read how YHVH started working with Jeremiah from verses 11 – 16 of Jeremiah 1, in this way: ***‘And the word of YHVH came to me***

saying, “What do you see, Jeremiah?” And I said, “I see a rod of an almond tree (12) Then YHVH said to me, “You have seen well, for I am watching over My word to perform it.” (13) And the word of YHVH came to me a second time saying, “What do you see?” And I said, “I see a boiling pot, facing away from the north.” (14) Then YHVH said to me, “Out of the north the evil will break forth on all the inhabitants of the land. (15) “For, behold, I am calling all the families of the kingdoms of the north,” declares YHVH; “and they will come, and they will set each one his throne at the entrance of the gates of Jerusalem, and against all its walls round about, and against all the cities of Judah. (16) “And I will pronounce My judgments on them concerning all their wickedness, whereby they have forsaken Me and have offered sacrifices to other gods, and worshiped the works of their own hands.” First YHVH showed Jeremiah an almond tree branch; an almond tree was literally known as ‘*the wake-up tree in ancient Israel*’, because it was the first tree awakened from its winter sleep. It bloomed in January and was indicative of Elohim’s early judgment, which He ordered Jeremiah to announce during 605 to 586 BCE. The second vision that YHVH showed Jeremiah was a boiling pot representing the Babylonian invaders bringing judgment on Judah.

The message that Jeremiah was to relate to Judah was not a pleasant one and YHVH warned him to expect opposition from those whom he would address, as we read in verses 17 – 19, as follows: **“Now, gird up your loins, and arise, and speak to them all which I command you. Do not be dismayed before them, lest I dismay you before them. (18) “Now behold, I have made you today as a fortified city, and as a pillar of iron and as walls of bronze against the whole land, to the kings of Judah, to its princes, to its priests and to the people of the land. (19) “And they will fight against you, but they will not overcome you, for I am with you to deliver you,” declares YHVH.’** It reminds me when as a Business Analyst, at times when things started going wrong, I had to inform the Executive Management of the companies where I worked, that they needed to take immediate action or face dire consequences. This information was not always accepted without severe resistance, because there is always resistance to change. Sometimes to correct problems, these managers had to make decisions which would affect the lives of some of their employees adversely, and such decisions

were not always easy to make and implement. Is this not where the well known saying *'don't shoot the messenger'* comes from, where the recipients of the bad news incorrectly assume the bearer of the bad news to be the cause of it? Similarly Jeremiah's part as being Elohim's mouthpiece, was to declare to the people their transgressions as well as what would befall them if they continue in their sins, whilst it was Elohim's role to defend and protect the prophet.

We conclude where Jeremiah in the first three verses of Chapter 2, points to Elohim's sensitivity and His care for the nation of Israel in early history. Nevertheless, after many years the nation were far from Elohim and had fallen in to idolatry, without any hope, as we read from verses 1 – 3, as follows: ***'Now the word of YHVH came to me saying, (2) "Go and proclaim in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, 'Thus says YHVH, "I remember concerning you the devotion of your youth, the love of your betrothals, your following after Me in the wilderness, through a land not sown. (3) "Israel was holy to YHVH, the first of His harvest; all who ate of it became guilty; evil came upon them," declares YHVH.'*** Israel was first to worship YHVH through His covenant with Abraham, which also assured his intention to bless people from all nations, through the blessings that He bestowed upon Israel. As Israelites, we are quick to point out that Jeremiah's prophecies were aimed at Judah, but we should not forget that the overall lesson of all the prophecies in the Scriptures are aimed at both Houses, since both are even now failing to obey YHVH fully.

Jeremiah 2: 4 – 28 & James 4: 1 – 12.

This Haftarah portion is read with Torah portion Sh'lach Le'Cha (Numbers 13: 1 to 15: 41) and Renewed Covenant portion Hebrews 3: 7 - 19. Whereas both the Torah and haftarah portions deal with sending men to spy out the Promised Land, the Renewed Covenant portion deals specifically with the result of the false report that the ten spies brought back to Moses regarding the Promised Land. We commence reading from verse 1 of Joshua 2, as follows: ***'Then Joshua the son of Nun sent two men as spies secretly from Shittim, saying, "Go, view the land, especially Jericho." So they went and came into the house of a harlot whose name was Rahab, and lodged there.'*** Like in the case where Moses sent out 12 spies, these two spies would inform Joshua of the landscape, drinking water and military defenses of Jericho. Even though these spies visited the house of a harlot, their purpose was not impure, but they were looking for a place which provided good cover. In addition Rahab's house which was on the city wall would allow for a quick get-away.

However, Elohim in His providence also wanted these spies to lodge with Rahab, as He planned the salvation of this harlot, since she would provide an example of His saving by faith, and by His favor as she is mentioned in the genealogy of Yahshua the Messiah in Matthew 1: 5. We see that in spite of the precautions taken by the spies, their presence became known, as we read from verses 2 & 3 of Joshua 2, like this: ***'And it was told the king of Jericho, saying, "Behold, men from the sons of Israel have come here tonight to search out the land."*** (3) ***And the king of Jericho sent word to Rahab, saying, "Bring out the men who have come to you, who have entered your house, for they have come to search out all the land."*** However, we see that Rahab had hidden the men and confirmed that they lodged with her, but said that she did not know where they came from, or where they went when they left. She further encouraged the king to pursue the men, who she said went out at dark when the city gates were shut. We see in verse 7, that the king's men pursued the two men on the road to the Jordan River.

Before the two spies went to hide in the stalks of flax on the roof of Rahab's house she spoke to them as we read from verses 9 – 12, saying: ***"I know that YHVH has given you the land, and that the***

terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land have melted away before you. (10) For we have heard how YHVH dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed. (11) And when we heard it, our hearts melted and no courage remained in any man any longer because of you; for YHVH your Elohim, He is Elohim in heaven above and on earth beneath. (12) Now therefore, please swear to me by YHVH, since I have dealt kindly with you, that you also will deal kindly with my father's household, and give me a pledge of truth, (13) and spare my father and my mother and my brothers and my sisters, with all who belong to them, and deliver our lives from death.” Wow, here this gentile woman told the two Israeli spies about the oneness of Elohim, a fact that many in Israel deny today; she also confessed that YHVH is the creator and sustainer of everything that exists.

We read the men's response to Rahab in verse 14, in this way: **“Our life for yours if you do not tell this business of ours; and it shall come about when YHVH gives us the land that we will deal kindly and faithfully with you.”** She let the men down by a rope through the window, her house being on the city wall, and she told them to go and hide in the hills for three days, until their pursuers returned to the city. We read the men's answer to her from verses 17 – 20, like this: **“We shall be free from this oath to you which you have made us swear, (18) unless, when we come into the land, you tie this cord of scarlet thread in the window through which you let us down, and gather to yourself into the house your father and your mother and your brothers and all your father's household. (19) And it shall come about that anyone who goes out of the doors of your house into the street, his blood shall be on his own head, and we shall be free; but anyone who is with you in the house, his blood shall be on our head, if a hand is laid on him. (20) But if you tell this business of ours, then we shall be free from the oath which you have made us swear.”** Rahab sent the two men away and tied a scarlet cord in her window, as agreed with them. They hid away in the hill country for three days as Rahab suggested, whilst their pursuers sought them all along the way. After three days they went down from the hill country and crossed the Jordan, where they came to Joshua and told him what

had happened. We see from reading verse 24 that the two spies, other than the ten spies who brought back a false report to Moses, brought back a good report about the land, as follows: ***‘And they said to Joshua, “Surely YHVH has given all the land into our hands, and all the inhabitants of the land, moreover, have melted away before us.”*** Is it not ironic that these two spies brought a good report to one of the two of the twelve spies who previously brought a good report about the Promised Land to Moses, namely Joshua himself?

We start reading the Renewed Covenant portion from verses 7 – 11 of Hebrews 3, in this way: ***‘Therefore, just as the Set-apart Spirit says: “TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE, (8) DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS AS WHEN THEY PROVOKED ME, AS IN THE DAY OF TRIAL IN THE WILDERNESS, (9) WHERE YOUR FATHERS TRIED ME BY TESTING ME, AND SAW MY WORKS FOR FORTY YEARS. (10) THEREFORE I WAS ANGRY WITH THIS GENERATION, AND SAID, ‘THEY ALWAYS GO ASTRAY IN THEIR HEART; AND THEY DID NOT KNOW MY WAYS’; (11) AS I SWORE IN MY WRATH, ‘THEY SHALL NOT ENTER MY REST.’”***

The author of Hebrews quotes from Psalm 95: 7 – 11, saying that these are the words of the Set-apart Spirit. He describes the wandering of the Israelites in the wilderness, after YHVH delivered them from Egypt as punishment for provoking Him. We know that ultimately, all those Israelites who came out of Egypt except for Joshua and Caleb, who brought a good report about the Promised Land, died in the wilderness. But their children who were born in the wilderness entered the Promised Land, according to Elohim’s word. We, who are called out of the world at this time, are admonished not to fall short like our forefathers did, because of fear and unbelief. We need to stop grumbling and diligently seek to enter the kingdom of Elohim, by persevering obediently in faith. There is a sense of urgency to immediately listen to the voice of Elohim, calling us to come out of the world and to get to know and follow His ways. The earthly rest which YHVH promised our forefathers was in the land of Canaan. The entire generation of Israelites was denied entry because of their rebellious nature and lack of faith. But we as believers are promised entry into the coming kingdom of Elohim, provided we learn from their mistakes and start obeying the voice of Elohim.

We read fittingly from verses 12 - 15, as follows: ***‘Take care, brethren, lest there should be in one of you an evil, unbelieving heart, in falling away from the living Elohim. (13) But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called “Today,” lest any one of you be hardened by deceitfulness of sin. (14) For we have become partakers of Messiah, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end; (15) while it is said, “TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE, DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEART, AS WHEN THEY PROVOKED ME.”’*** As long as we live in this world, we will be tempted to break the commandments of Elohim. We are therefore asked to encourage one another to faithfully follow the way that Yahshua came to show us. Because all men are born with an unbelieving heart, as we are told in Jeremiah 17: 9²², such as in the case of the ancient Israelites, and we need therefore ask for more of the Set-apart Spirit to help us obeying YHVH to the end of this age, when His kingdom will be established on earth. We need to be careful that we are not hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. Satan and his agents are always trying to deceive us, as we read in 1 Peter 5: 8, in this way: ***‘Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.’*** Even so, we are given hope in verses 9 & 10 of 1 Peter 5, like this: ***‘But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world. (10) And after you have suffered for a little while, the Elohim of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory (or esteem) in Messiah, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you.’***

Time is of the essence and the end of this age approaching faster than what we realize – those of us who are called at this time, need to repent and return to obeying the Torah teachings of Elohim immediately, else it will be too late for us to enter His eternal Kingdom. It will be like the foolish bridesmaids in Matthew 25. We are being judged at this time and should study and pray whilst there is still time, so that when Yahshua returns, we will be ready with our lamps full of oil, as we read from verses 6 – 10 of Matthew 25, as follows: ***“But at midnight there was a shout, ‘Behold, the***

²² Jeremiah 17: 9, *‘The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick (or wicked); who can understand it.’*

bridegroom! Come out to meet him.’ (7) Then all those virgins rose, and trimmed their lamps. (8) And the foolish said to the prudent, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ (9) But the prudent answered, saying, ‘No, there will not be enough for us and you too; go instead to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.’ (10) And while they were going away to make the purchase, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast; and the door was shut.”

The author of Hebrews, reminds us of the ones who did not make it into the Promised Land, as a warning not to make the same mistakes in verses 16 – 19 of Hebrews 3, in this way: ***‘For who provoked Him when they had heard? Indeed, did not all those who came out of Egypt led by Moses?’*** (The very people called out of Egypt by Elohim provoked Him. This should be a warning to us, the ones being called out of sin at this time, not to do likewise) ***(17) And with whom was He angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? (18) And to whom did He swear that they should not enter His rest, but to those who were disobedient? (19) And so we see that they were not able to enter because of unbelief.’***

Our forefathers, the ancient Israelites did not enter the Promised Land because of unbelief; they left us an example to see what not to do. What are we doing with the many examples that we are shown in the Scriptures? Do we take note in order not to make the same mistakes? Or are we totally oblivious of the facts before us, also going the same way? Let us ask ABBA YHVH to help us not to disappoint Him! Let us determine to be obedient to Yahshua our Messiah, for then we will make it into His eternal kingdom, as we read in John 3: 36, ***“He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of Elohim abides on him.”***

Isaiah 1: 1 – 27 & John 15: 1 – 11.

This Haftarah portion is read with Torah portion Devarim (Deuteronomy 1: 1 to 3: 22) and Renewed Covenant portion John 15: 1 – 11. Whereas the Torah portion is about the nation of Israel about to enter the Promised Land, the prophecy of Isaiah is about Judah about to go into captivity. The first verse on Isaiah 1, tells us the timing of Isaiah's prophecy as follows: ***'The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, concerning Judah and Jerusalem which he saw during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.***

Verses 2 – 9 of Isaiah 1 are a vision of a courtroom scene in which YHVH is the plaintiff and the nation of Israel the defendant. Instead of responding to Elohim's care for them, they have failed to give Him the obedience due to Him. YHVH intended for Israel to be a blessing to the nations amongst whom they lived, but instead they became a nation of shame. However, Abraham's descendants remain Elohim's chosen people in spite of their disobedience. We read accordingly in verse 2, ***'Listen, O heavens, and hear, O earth; for YHVH speaks, "Sons I have reared and brought up, but they have revolted against Me."*** In fact YHVH through Isaiah tells us that animals are more obedient to their masters, than what Israel is to Him, as we read from verses 3 & 4, in this way: ***"An ox knows its owner, and a donkey its master's manger, but Israel does not know, my people do not understand. (4) Alas, sinful nation, people weighed down with iniquity, offspring of evildoers, sons who act corruptly! They have abandoned YHVH, they have despised the Holy One of Israel, they have turned away from Him.'***

Even though Israel was already in ruins because of their rebellion against Elohim, they continued in their rebellion, as we read from verses 5 - 7, in this way: ***'Where will you be stricken again, as you continue in your rebellion? The whole head is sick, and the whole heart is faint. (6) From the sole of the foot even to the head there is nothing sound in it, only bruises, welts, and raw wounds, not pressed out or bandaged, nor softened with oil. (7) Your land is desolate, your cities are burned with fire, your fields – strangers are devouring them in your presence; it is desolation, as overthrown by strangers.'*** This is the state in which

we find most of the Israelite nations today. But it is only the beginning of troubles prophesied to occur before Yahshua's return.

We continue reading from verses 8 & 9, as follows: ***'And the daughter of Zion is left like a shelter in a vineyard, like a watchman's hut in a cucumber field, like a besieged city. (9) Unless YHVH of hosts had left us a few survivors, we would be like Sodom, we would be like Gomorrah.'*** The words 'daughter of Zion' is mentioned 6 times in Isaiah and it is a personification of Jerusalem, standing in this case for Judah. The phrase 'YHVH of hosts' pictures Elohim as a mighty warrior capable of conquering Israel's enemies assuring her survival. The word 'survivors' are sometimes called the remnant; such a remnant will constitute a nucleus of returning Israelites and Jews, just prior to Messiah's return. Yet, there are some Nazarene/Messianic Israelite and like minded believers who think that they will be the only ones to meet Yahshua at His return. King David ruled the united nation of Israel and his descendant (Yahshua) will again come and rule them during the millennium. We read accordingly from Jeremiah 33: 7 & 8, like this: ***"And I will restore the fortunes of Judah and the fortunes of Israel, and I will rebuild them as they were at first (when David ruled over them). (8) And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity by which they have sinned against Me, and I will pardon all their iniquities by which they have sinned against Me, and by which they have transgressed against Me."*** However, the two nations of Sodom and Gomorrah mentioned in verse 9 of Isaiah 1 became a proverbial expression for Elohim's ultimate judgment against those who will not obey, despite knowing the truth of the coming kingdom of Elohim. If in the end Elohim does not intervene, no life would be saved, as we read from Matthew 24: 21 & 22, in this way: ***"for then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall. (22) And unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days shall be cut short."***

We notice in verse 10 of Isaiah 1 that Isaiah related the names of Sodom and Gomorrah to Judah and Jerusalem in condemning their insincere form of worship, whilst persisting in their iniquity, as follows: ***"Hear the word of YHVH you rulers of Sodom; give ear to the instruction of our Elohim, you people of Gomorrah."***

Continuing in verses 11 & 12, we see that YHVH wants us to obey Him from the heart and finds all sacrifices meaningless and even hateful if the one offering it failed to obey His commandments, like this: ***“What are your multiplied sacrifices to me?” says YHVH. “I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed cattle. And I take no pleasure in the blood of bulls, lambs, or goats. (12) When you come to appear before Me, who requires of you this trampling of My courts? (13) Bring your worthless offerings no longer, incense is an abomination to Me. New moon and Sabbath, the calling of assemblies – I cannot endure iniquity and the solemn assembly. (14) I hate your new moon festivals and your appointed feasts, they have become a burden to Me. I am weary of bearing them.”*** Notice that the prophet talks about ‘your’ meaning their feasts and not the Feast days and new moons of Elohim. The reason being that those keeping it, do not even know that the Annual Feast Days of Elohim, are linked to His plan of salvation for all mankind, other wise known as the gospel, as we read in Nahum 1: 15, in this way: ***“Behold, on the mountains the feet of him who brings good news, who announces peace! Celebrate your feasts, O Judah; Pay your vows. For never again will the wicked one pass through you; He is cut off completely.”*** This verse shows that the Feast Days of Elohim are linked directly to the good news of the coming kingdom of Elohim. In addition, for those who suggest that Isaiah 1: 14, is aimed at the ‘incorrect’ timing of the Feast Day kept by Judah, this verse nullifies their mistaken assumption. Unless we keep these Feast Days knowing the meaning of each one of them; and unless we keep it at the correct time, YHVH wants nothing to do with them. Besides we need to clean up our lives, before we start keeping what is set-apart by YHVH, as we are told in verses 15 – 17 of Isaiah 1, as follows: ***“So when you spread out your hands in prayer, I will hide My eyes from you, yes, even though you multiply prayers, I will not listen. Your hands are covered with blood. (16) Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; Remove the evil of your deeds from My sight. Cease to do evil, (17) learn to do good; seek justice, reprove the ruthless; defend the orphan, plead for the widow.”***

However, YHVH is prepared to forgive us if we are prepared to return to Him, as we understand from reading verses 18 – 20, in this way: ***“Come now, and let us reason together,” says YHVH, though your sins are as scarlet, they will be as white as snow;***

though they are red like crimson, they will be like wool. (19) If you consent and obey, you will eat the best of the land; (20) But if you refuse and rebel, you will be devoured by the sword. Truly, the mouth of YHVH has spoken.” If the nations that make up the lost ten tribes, as well as those making up Judah, return in obedience to YHVH, He will certainly forgive us, but because many refuse to do things His way, only a remnant will survive the coming great tribulation. Most have become so callused and hard-hearted that threatening does not even help any longer. Some will have to experience what the prophets prophesied for the latter day descendants of Israel and Judah, before they will listen. The prophets offered the readers of their prophecies the same choice that Moses gave ancient Israel in Deuteronomy 28, a choice between blessings and curses. We may choose to repent and return to YHVH and reap the benefits of the land, or refuse to obey and become victims of foreign oppressors. Regrettably, many of us are beginning to experience just that.

The cross-examination continues in verse 21, as follows: ***“How the faithful city has become a harlot, she who was full of justice! Righteousness once lodged in her, but now murderers.”*** As mentioned before, idolatry is often depicted as harlotry, but in this instance the nation’s unfaithfulness included murders and general corruption. Ethical depravity has replaced the city’s former virtues, as we are told in verses 22 & 23, like this: ***“Your silver has become dross, your drink diluted with water. (23) Your rulers are rebels, and companions of thieves; everyone loves a bribe, and chases after rewards. They do not defend the orphan, nor does the widow’s plea come before them.*** A few years ago a Messianic believer in Jerusalem, wrote us how the city of Jerusalem is now run by certain corrupt secret societies. Jerusalem, like many other Israelite cities throughout the world are being run by corrupt officials who are in power for the specific purpose of enriching themselves. In addition legalized abortion has become a fashion statement in most Israelite nations.

Even so YHVH cares for His people and He is going to correct and redeem them with justice, as we read in verses 24 – 27, in this way: ***‘Therefore YHVH Elohim of hosts, the Mighty One of Israel declares, “Ah, I will be relieved of My adversaries, and avenge Myself on My foes. (25) I will also turn My hand against you, and***

will smelt away your dross as with lye, and will remove all your alloy. (26) Then I will restore your judges as at the first, and your counselors as at the beginning; After that you will be called the city of righteousness, a faithful city.” (27) Zion will be redeemed with justice, and her repentant ones with righteousness.’ Simultaneous with the future blessing of the faithful remnant, YHVH will destroy the unrepentant, thereby cleaning up Zion, the city of Elohim.

The same golden thread runs throughout The Scriptures; If we obey Elohim we will be blessed, but if we do not we will be cursed. This is the message of the haftarah portion, but also of our Renewed Covenant portion in John 15. If we feed on the teachings of Elohim, we will bear the fruit of the Spirit: Yahshua explained the basis of following Him, through the symbol of a vine and its branches, as we read from verses 1 & 2, as follows: **“I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. (2) Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it, that it may bear more fruit.”** The branch that does not bear fruit is a picture of those called-out of the world by YHVH, but never truly believed. In addition the vinedresser (the Father) chastises and cuts away those sins which hinder us to grow, thereby assisting us to bear fruit.

Because we were obedient to Elohim’s call; studied His word and were immersed into Yahshua’s saving name, Yahshua said in verses 3 & 4 of John 15, **“You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. (4) Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in Me.”** But to remain clean, we need to continue in Yahshua’s teachings, as it is the only way to ensure that we bear the required fruit, as explained in verse 5, like this: **“I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing.”** We cannot compromise at all; the road to eternal life is a narrow lonely road. We cannot agree with those who keep different Feast Days and Sabbath, to what we do, despite their ‘friendly’ gestures for us to work together. This is the message of those Torah commands which we find difficult to understand, namely: Not to plow with beasts of different species, yoked together (Deuteronomy 22; 10).

The consequences of not obeying Yahshua's teachings are explained in verse 6, in this way: ***'If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch, and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.'*** Those of us called at this time are having our one and only chance now. It is as we read in 1 Peter 4: 17, as follows: ***'For it is time for judgment to begin with the household of Elohim*** (those called during this age); ***and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those*** (of us) ***who do not obey the gospel of Elohim?'*** Being called at this time is a much more difficult calling; in many cases we are required to give up our way of life including our friends and family, but, if we make it as first fruits, we will become kings and priests under Messiah. We read accordingly from verses 7 – 11, in this way: ***'If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you. (8) By this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples. (9) Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. (10) If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love. (11) These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.'*** Just as Yahshua's obedience to the Father was a basis of His joy, so will believers who are obedient to His commandments experience the same joy. Bless the name of YHVH!

Isaiah 40: 1 – 26 & Mark 12: 28 – 34; Matthew 4: 1 – 11.

This Haftarah portion is read with Torah portion V'etchanan (Deuteronomy 3: 23 to 7: 11) and Renewed Covenant portions Mark 12: 28 – 34 and Matthew 4: 1 – 11. Whereas the Torah portion is a testimony to the Oneness of Elohim, the haftarah portion mentions the component parts of the One Elohim; the good news that His arm (Yahshua) will rule for Him during the millennium and that His Set-apart Spirit provides us with understanding His ways. While the prophecies of the first 39 chapters of Isaiah was addressed to Judah during his ministry (from 739 to 686 BCE), chapters 40 – 66 addressed Judah, as if the Babylonian captivity already happened. The section from chapter 40 to 48 looks at the hope and comfort of the future, after Elohim's judgment during the forthcoming Babylonian captivity.

We commence reading from Isaiah 40: 1, like this: ***“Comfort, O comfort My people,” says your Elohim.***” Elohim through His prophets comforts the captive people in a foreign land; He has plans to bless His people Israel greatly in the future, because they remain His covenant people. We continue reading from verse 2, as follows: ***“Speak kindly to Jerusalem; and call out to her, that her warfare has ended, that her iniquity has been removed, that she has received of (YHVH)’s hand double for all her sins.”*** The punishment at the hands of the Babylonians were adequate payment for their sins; and similarly someday soon after their worldwide dispersion, the modern day descendants of Israel will return to their homeland ruled by Messiah. We read further from verses 3 – 5, in this way: ***“A voice is calling, “Clear the way for YHVH in the wilderness; make smooth in the desert a highway for our Elohim. (4) Let every valley be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; and let the rough ground become a plain, and the rugged terrain a broad valley; (5) Then the glory of YHVH will be revealed, and all flesh will see it together; for the mouth of YHVH has spoken.”*** It was custom for middle eastern kings to send messengers before them to clear away obstacles and straighten crooked paths and valleys for their arrival. Israel is told by the prophet to prepare for the revelation of the Elohim Incarnated Messiah: We the remnant of Israel could remove obstacles from the coming Messiah's path, by repenting from our sins and returning to full Torah observance. When Messiah returns, Jerusalem's misery

will be over and those who remain faithful to the end, as well as those who survived the great tribulation, will see the salvation of YHVH in the kingdom of Elohim.

We read in verses 6 – 8 how transitory we as human beings are, as follows: ***“A voice says, “Call out.” Then he answered, “What shall I call out?” All flesh is grass, and all its loveliness is like the flower of the field. (7) The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of YHVH blows upon it; surely the people are grass. (8) The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our Elohim stands forever.”*** We pass away like plants, but for us there is permanence in the word of Elohim. YHVH promised deliverance through the coming Messiah, as we’ve seen in verse 3 to 5. The prophet is told to stand on a mountain so that he may be heard by all, as we read in verse 9, ***“Get yourself up on a high mountain, O Zion, bearer of good news, lift up your voice mightily, O Jerusalem, bearer of good news; lift it up, do not fear. Say to the cities of Judah, “Here is your Elohim!”*** The final restoration of the lost tribes of Israel to the land will include the resumption of Elohim’s presence in Jerusalem. That is also when the cities of Judah will know that Yahshua is Elohim. We read from verses 10 & 11, that at His second coming, Messiah will return with power to fight against His enemies and gather the remnant of dispersed Israelites to the land, as follows: ***‘Behold, YHVH will come with might, with His arm ruling for Him. Behold, His reward is with Him, and His recompense before Him. (11) Like a shepherd He will tend His flock, in His arm He will gather the lambs, and carry them in His bosom; he will gently lead the nursing ewes.’*** This is when Messiah will bring comfort to Israel, as we are told in verse 1.

We are reminded in verse 12 that only Elohim has the power to create the universe, including the planet earth and to keep it in perfect balance, allowing it to travel perfectly through space, in this way: ***“Who has measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, and marked off the heavens by the span, and calculated the dust of the earth by the measure, and weighed the mountains in a balance, and the hills in a pair of scales?”*** Continuing in verses 13 & 14 Isaiah reminds us about the incomparable wisdom of Elohim and how He gives us understanding, by imparting His Set-apart Spirit to us, as follows: ***“Who has directed the Spirit of YHVH, or as His***

counselor has informed Him? (14) With whom did He consult and who gave Him understanding? And who taught Him in the path of justice and taught Him knowledge, and informed Him of the way of understanding?" A second witness to this is found in 1 Corinthians 2: 10 - 12, in this way: **'For to us Elohim revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of Elohim. (11) For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man, which is in him? Even so the thoughts of Elohim no one knows except the Spirit of Elohim. (12) Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from Elohim, that we might know the things freely given us by Elohim.'**

Moving on to the nations who oppressed Judah and Israel, we read in verses 15 – 17 of Isaiah 40, like this: **'Behold, the nations are like a drop from a bucket, and are regarded as a speck of dust on the scales; behold, He lifts up the islands like fine dust. (16) Even Lebanon is not enough to burn, nor its beasts enough for burnt offering. (17) All the nations are as nothing before Him, they are regarded by Him as less than nothing and meaningless.'** Comparing to YHVH, these nations are utterly insignificant; they could not deter Him from accomplishing His purpose of delivering His people. Isaiah shows that it is futile to try to portray the greatness of Elohim; manmade idols cannot be compared to Him at all. We read accordingly from verses 18 – 20, as follows: **'To whom then will you liken Elohim? Or what likeness will you compare with Him? (19) As for the idol, a craftsman casts it, a goldsmith plates it with gold, and a silversmith fashions chains of silver. (20) He who is too impoverished for such an offering selects a tree that does not rot; He seeks out for himself a skillful craftsman to prepare an idol that will not totter.'**

We need to understand that YHVH is the Creator of everything, and we need to put our trust in only Him. This is confirmed in Hebrews 11: 6, like this: **'And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to Elohim must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.'** We read therefore from verses 21 – 24: **"Do you not know? Have you not heard? Has it not been declared to you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth? (22) It is He who**

sits above the vault of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers, who stretches out the heavens like a curtain and spreads them out like a tent to dwell in. (23) He it is who reduces rulers to nothing, who makes the judges of the earth meaningless. (24) Scarcely have they been planted, scarcely have they been sown, scarcely has their stock taken root in the earth, but He merely blows on them, and they wither, and the storm carries them away like stubble.' YHVH upholds and maintains His creation on an ongoing basis. Looking down to the earth we appear like mere grasshoppers to Him, and even our rulers are reduced to nothing in His sight.

We are told in verses 25 & 26 that we and our forefathers who taught us nothing but falsehood, were foolish to compare Elohim with the gods of those who took them captive, as follows: **"To whom then will you liken Me that I should be his equal?" says the Set-apart One.'** (26) **Lift up your eyes on high and see who has created these stars, the One who leads forth their host by number, He calls them all by name; because of the greatness of His might and the strength of His power not one of them is missing.'** We should have seen the evidence of YHVH in His creation, rather than worshipping created things like the moon and stars, as we are reminded in Isaiah 47: 13, in this way: **"You are wearied with your many counsels** (those trying to distract us from Scriptural truth); **Let now the astrologers, those who prophesy by the stars, those who predict by the new moons, stand up and save you from what will come upon you."**

We start reading the first Renewed Covenant portion from Mark 12: 28 - 31, as follows; **'And one of the scribes came and heard them arguing, and recognizing that He has answered them well, asked Him, "What commandment is the foremost of all?"** (29) **Yahshua answered, "The foremost is, 'HEAR, O ISRAEL! YHVH OUR ELOHIM IS ONE YHVH;** (30) **AND YOU SHALL LOVE YHVH YOUR ELOHIM WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH.** (31) **"The second is this, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.'** There is no other commandment greater than these." We notice from verse 30 that Yahshua answered by reciting *'the Shema'* as recorded in Deuteronomy 6: 4 & 5. He clearly stated that YHVH is Elohim and that there is no other.

This leaves us with the question: How then could Thomas, after seeing Yahshua's hands after His impalement and subsequent resurrection say to Him: *"My Master and my Elohim!"*? The footnote against John 20: 28 in **"The Scriptures"** (published by the *'INSTITUTE FOR SCRIPTURAL RESEARCH (PTY) LTD* from South Africa), where Thomas made this statement, reads: **"יהושע (Yahshua) is also Elohim"**. Bear in mind that this footnote is not from the original translation, but that it is the author's personal interpretation, at the time of writing. Even so, this is how those who teach that there are two (YHVH)'s; Yahshua being the lesser YHVH, believe. But, if there are in fact two (YHVH)'s, why did Yahshua not tell the scribes about it in Mark 12. Two recent Haftarah portions identified false teachers in Jude 4 and 2nd Peter 2: 1, as those who deny or rather contradict the Master. We should believe YHVH our Elohim when He tells us that He is the only One, and not contradict Him. The Scriptures inform us in Colossians 1: 15 and in Second Corinthians 4: 4, that Yahshua is the visible image of the invisible Elohim and we understand the Set-apart Spirit to be the presence of Elohim's divine nature, yet, there is only One Elohim. By comparing 1st Thessalonians 5: 23 with Romans 1: 19 & 20, we understand that we (mankind) are like our Creator, composed of three parts, namely body, soul and spirit. However, we should not judge those who do not understand or believe this truth yet, as Yahshua explained in Luke 10: 22, saying: ***"All things have been handed to Me by My Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him."***

We conclude this section by reading from verse 32 – 34 of Mark 12, as follows: ***'And the scribe said to Him, "Right, Teacher, You have truly stated that HE IS ONE; AND THERE IS NO ONE ELSE BESIDES HIM; (33) AND TO LOVE HIM WITH ALL THE HEART AND WITH ALL THE UNDERSTANDING AND WITH ALL THE STRENGTH, AND TO LOVE ONE'S NEIGHBOR AS HIMSELF, is much more than all burnt offerings and sacrifices."*** (34) ***And when Yahshua saw that he had answered intelligently, He said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of Elohim" And after that, no one would venture to ask Him any more questions.'*** We as believers should love one another enough to want to share the good news of the coming kingdom of Elohim freely with new believers. We are required to use our talents to do the work of

Elohim, which is according to John 6: 29, to believe in Him whom YHVH has sent. If we believe in Yahshua, we will do as He taught us and proclaim the good news of the coming kingdom of Elohim into the entire world as a witness, then the end shall come (as per Matthew 24: 14). We will also immerse new believers into His saving name and teach them what we have learnt from those true teachers who came before us.

The second Renewed Covenant portion is from Matthew 4 and we read from verses 1 & 2, in this way: ***'Then Yahshua was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. (2) And after He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He then became hungry.'*** In preparation for this tremendous test (or task) Yahshua like Moses fasted for forty days and forty nights. When He became hungry, Satan immediately tried to get Him to sin, as we see from verse 3, like this: ***'And the tempter came and said to Him, "If You are the Son of Elohim, command that these stones become bread."'*** But, we see in verse 4, Yahshua did not fall for Satan's trick, but quoted Deuteronomy 8: 3 to him, as follows: ***'But He answered and said, "It is written, 'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE, BUT ON EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS OUT OF THE MOUTH OF ELOHIM.'"*** Food is very important to keep us alive in this world, but if we desire eternal life we need to study the word of Elohim, to discover the way, the truth and the life. Satan continued tempting Yahshua, and also quoted from the Scriptures as we read from verses 5 & 6 of Matthew 4, in this way: ***'Then the devil took Him into the holy city; and he had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, (6) and said to Him, "If You are the Son of Elohim throw Yourself down; for it is written, 'HE WILL GIVE HIS ANGELS CHARGE CONCERNING YOU': and 'On their HANDS THEY WILL BEAR YOU UP, LEST YOU STRIKE YOUR FOOT AGAINST A STONE.'"*** In His response Yahshua again quoted from the Scriptures, in verse 7, like this: ***'Yahshua said to him, "On the other hand, it is written, 'YOU SHALL NOT PUT YHVH YOUR ELOHIM TO THE TEST.'"*** This is sound advice for all to remember; we should believe the word of Elohim, and not contradict Him, as He is the Almighty.

Finally, Satan pulled out all the stops, as we read from verses 8 & 9, ***'Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world, and their glory; (9) and he***

said to Him, "All these things will I give You, if You fall down and worship me." If Satan made the statement about giving the kingdoms of the world to Yahshua falsely, Yahshua would have said so. However, He did not refute Satan's claim about the kingdoms of this world, but instead rebuked him, as we read from verse 10, as follows: **'Then Yahshua said to him, "Begone, Satan! For it is written 'YOU SHALL WORSHIP YHVH YOUR ELOHIM, AND SERVE HIM ONLY.'"** (11) **Then the devil left Him; and behold, angels came and began to minister to Him.'** By overcoming Satan, Yahshua qualified to become our King and High Priest in the coming kingdom of Elohim on earth. This is why immediately after His temptation by Satan in the wilderness we read from Matthew 4: 17, **'From that time Yahshua began to preach and say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."** HalleluYah!

Isaiah 49: 14 – 51: 3; 52: 1 – 15 & Luke 4: 1 – 13.

This Haftarah portion is read with Torah portion Ekev (Deuteronomy 7: 12 to 11: 25) and Renewed Covenant portion Luke 4: 1- 13. Both the Torah and haftarah portions deal with the prosperity that the Israelites will experience in the Promised land; the Torah portion deals with ancient Israel and this portion deals with a time when Yahshua will rule the united nation of Israel composed of both remnant of the house of Israel and the house of Judah. As we've seen in the previous haftarah portion, Isaiah 40 – 66 is addressed to Judah. The words *'There is no peace for the wicked'* shows a further division from Isaiah 48: 22 – 57: 21. As an introduction to the haftarah portion, we commence reading from Isaiah 48: 22 (not part of this haftarah portion), like this: ***“There is no peace for the wicked,” says YHVH.*”** This shows that not every Israelite will enjoy Elohim's salvation at this time, as it will only be available to the faithful remnant that will have turned back to the way of Elohim, before Messiah's return.

Isaiah 49: 1 to 57: 21 describes Messiah's prophetic priestly functions, His sufferings and humiliation and finally His exaltation. We read from verse 14 of Isaiah 49, in this way: ***'But Zion said, "YHVH has forsaken me, and YHVH has forgotten me."*** Verse 14 is a summary of the history of lament of the nation during its long period of suffering. Verses 15 to 23, are assuring words following this lamentation, as follows: ***“Can a woman forget her nursing child, and have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, but I will not forget you. (16) “Behold, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands; your walls are continually before Me. (YHVH knowing the end from the beginning, is telling us that the Elohim incarnated Messiah was nailed to the impalement stake – thereby inscribing us on His palms.) (17) Your builders hurry; your destroyers and devastators will depart from you. (18) “Lift up your eyes and look around; all of them gather together, they come to you. As I live,” declares YHVH, “You shall surely put on all of them as jewels, and bind them on as a bride. (Judah will return to Jerusalem, as the city's destroyers will depart and in the end of days the united nation of Israel will be the model nation that YHVH wanted her to be all along.) (19) “For your waste and desolate places, and your destroyed land – surely now you will be too cramped for the inhabitants, and those who***

swallowed you will be far away. (20) The children of whom you were bereaved will yet say in your ears, the place is too cramped for me; make room for me that I may live here. (21) Then you will say in your heart, 'Who has begotten these for me, since I have been bereaved of my children, and am barren, an exile and a wanderer? And who has reared these? Behold, I was left alone; from where did these come?'" After the faithful remnant has returned in salvation, and the other nations come to believe in the kingdom, through the witnesses of a united Israel of both the houses of Judah and Israel, Jerusalem will not be able to contain all its citizens.

We see according to verses 22 & 23 that the nations of the world will assist the faithful remnant to get back to their land, in this way: ***'Thus says YHVH Elohim, "Behold, I will lift up My hand to the nations, and set up My standard to the peoples; and they will bring your sons in their bosom, and your daughters will be carried on their shoulders. (23) "And kings will be your guardians, and their princesses your nurses. They will bow down to you with their faces to the earth, and lick the dust of your feet and you will know that I am YHVH; those who hopefully wait for Me will not be put to shame."*** Those nations, who used to oppress Israel, will humble themselves and know that those waiting upon YHVH will not be disappointed. In verse 24, Isaiah again mentions Zion's sadness about her captivity, speculating when they will be delivered, like this: ***"Can the prey be taken from the mighty man, or the captives of a tyrant be rescued?"*** However, YHVH replies with the words of encouragement in verses 25 & 26, as follows: ***'Surely, thus says YHVH, "Even the captives of the mighty man will be taken away, and the prey of the tyrant will be rescued; for I will contend with the one who contends with you, and I will save your sons. (26) And I will feed your oppressors with their own flesh, and they will become drunk with their own blood as with sweet wine; and all flesh will know that I, YHVH, am your Savior, and your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob."*** Here we have a witness that YHVH is our Savior and Redeemer, but He is also our Mighty One or Elohim.

We read from Isaiah 50: 1, that even though the sufferings of Judah were because of her sins, YHVH never divorced her, and her separation from YHVH was only temporary, as follows: ***'Thus says***

YHVH, “Where is the certificate of divorce, by which I have sent your mother away? Or to whom of My creditors did I sell you? Behold, you were sold for your iniquities, and for your transgressions your mother was sent away.” But we know from a previous haftarah portion (in Jeremiah 3: 8) that YHVH divorced the nation of Israel. In verses 2 & 3 YHVH wants to know why no one wanted to obey Him, despite the fact that He brought them out of Egypt and dried up the Red Sea for them to pass through on dry land, in this way: **“Why was there no man when I came? When I called, why was there none to answer? Is My hand so short that it cannot ransom? Or have I no power to deliver? Behold, I dry up the sea with My rebuke, I make the rivers a wilderness; their fish stink for lack of water, and die of thirst. (3) I clothe the heavens with blackness, and I make sackcloth their covering.”** He made the Egyptians suffer through ten plagues to let His people go, yet His people remained rebellious.

Verses 4 – 11 are the third of four songs (the other three being in Isaiah 42: 1 – 9; 49: 1 – 13; and 52: 13 – 53: 12) about Messiah being perfected through obedience and suffering, as follows: **‘YHVH has given Me the tongue of disciples, that I may know how to sustain the weary one with a word. He awakens Me morning by morning, He awakens My ear to listen as a disciple. (5) YHVH has opened My ear; and I was not disobedient, nor did I turn back. (6) I gave My back to those who strike Me, and My cheeks to those who pluck out the beard; I did not cover My face from humiliation and spitting.** (this being a fulfilled prophesy about Messiah’s suffering prior to His impalement (7) **For YHVH helps Me, therefore, I am not disgraced; therefore, I have set My face like flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed. (8) He who vindicates Me is near; who will contend with Me? Let us stand up to each other; Who has a case against Me? Let him draw near to Me. (9) Behold, YHVH helps Me; Who is he who condemns Me? Behold, they will all wear out like a garment; the moth will eat them.** (It did not matter how much He was mistreated He was confident that His Father would support Him) (10) **Who is among you that fears YHVH, that obeys the voice of His servant, that walks in darkness and has no light? Let him trust in the name of YHVH and rely on his Elohim. (11) Behold, all you who kindle a fire, who encircle yourselves with firebrands, walk in the light of your fire and among the brands you have set ablaze.**

This you will have from My hand; and you will lie down in torment.’ Verses 10 & 11 tell us that we cannot rely on our own strength, and unless we obey YHVH we will be burnt to ashes in the end.

Isaiah promised the nation deliverance in Isaiah 51: 1 & 2 by reminding them of Elohim’s covenant with Abraham, as follows: ***‘Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness, who seek YHVH: Look to the rock from which you were hewn, and to the quarry from which you were dug. (2) “Look to Abraham your father, and to Sarah who gave birth to you in pain; when he was one I called him, then I blessed him and multiplied him.”***’ Abraham was only one person, but Elohim promised to multiply his descendants to become an uncountable multitude today. This same Elohim, whom we know has fulfilled that promise to Abraham, will transform the desolation of Israel into the Garden of Eden, as we read from verse 3, in this way: ***‘Indeed, YHVH will comfort Zion; He will comfort all her waste places. And her wilderness He will make like Eden, and her desert like the garden of YHVH; joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and sound of a melody.’***

Zion is called to wake up and get dressed in Isaiah 52: 1 & 2, like this: ***‘Awake, awake, clothe yourself in your strength, O Zion; clothe yourself in your beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city. For the uncircumcised and the unclean will no more come into you. (2) Shake yourself from the dust, rise up, O captive Jerusalem; loose yourself from the chains around your neck, O captive daughter of Zion.’*** Clothe yourself in beautiful garments, refers to the cleaning or washing of our garments by studying the word of Elohim. If we obey all the Torah commands we will also be circumcised, as those who will become kings and priest during the millennium will have to be circumcised both spiritually (be immersed) and physically, as may be seen from Ezekiel 44: 7 – 9. Both Judah and Israel were taken captive by people who paid nothing for them, but YHVH has redeemed them from their sin, as we read from verse 3, as follows: ***‘For thus says YHVH, “You were sold for nothing and you will be redeemed without money.”***’ We see further from verses 4 & 5 that Israel was oppressed without any reason, in this way: ***‘For thus says YHVH Elohim, “My people went down at the first into Egypt to reside there, then the***

Assyrian oppressed them without cause. (5) “Now therefore, what do I have here,” declares YHVH, “seeing that My people have been taken away without cause?” Again YHVH declares, “Those who rule over them howl, and My name is continually blasphemed all day long.’ The foreign rulers despise the Elohim of Israel, whilst His people remained in captivity. However, we see in verse 6 that by the time that Yahshua returns, Elohim’s people will know His name, as follows: (6) **“Therefore My people shall know My name; therefore in that day I am the one who is speaking, ‘Here I am.’”** The remnant will remember that the ‘I am’ or YHVH saved them from Egypt, and is about to save them once again.

In verse 7 of Isaiah 52 we have another witness that the true gospel or good news has to do with the coming kingdom of Elohim, during which Yahshua will rule us for a thousand years, in this way: **‘How lovely on the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who announces peace and brings good news of happiness, who announces salvation, and says to Zion, “Your Elohim reigns!”’** In the meantime, we as watchmen (Nazarenes) need to continue to remind YHVH to make Jerusalem a praise in the earth, as we are told in Isaiah 62: 6 & 7, as follows: **‘On your walls, O Jerusalem, I have appointed watchmen; all day and all night they will never keep silent. You will remind YHVH, take no rest for yourselves; (7) And give Him no rest until He establishes and makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth.’** Are we praying for Jerusalem on a regular basis? If not, then be reminded that YHVH through Isaiah told us to do so. Let’s not be negligent in performing this important duty. We read in verses 8 & 9 of Isaiah 52, that if we diligently perform our duty, we will see our Master return to redeem Jerusalem, in this way: **‘Listen! Your watchmen lift up their voices, they shout joyfully together, for they will see with their own eyes when YHVH restores Zion. (9) Break forth, shout joyfully together, you waste places of Jerusalem; for YHVH has comforted His people, He has redeemed Jerusalem.’** This will be the day for which we all have waited, to the salvation of YHVH, as we are assured in verse 10, as follows: **‘YHVH has bared His holy arm in the sight of all the nations, that all the ends of the earth may see the salvation of our Elohim.’** In fact Yahshua told His disciples about this event in Matthew 24: 29 & 30, like this: **“But immediately after the tribulation of those days THE SUN WILL BE DARKENED, AND THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE ITS LIGHT,**

AND THE STARS WILL FALL from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken, (30) and then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the SON OF MAN ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY with power and great glory.”

In verse 11 the prophet Isaiah commands the Israelites to depart from their exile and to return to Jerusalem, as follows: **‘Depart, depart, go out from there, touch nothing unclean; go out of the midst of her, purify yourselves, you who carry the vessels of YHVH. (12) But you will not go out in haste, nor will you go as fugitives, for YHVH will go before you, and the Elohim of Israel will be your rear guard.’** However, we will not leave in a hurry as the ancient Israelites left Egypt. We will be able to move in safety as YHVH will be with us all the way. At that time Yahshua will become our King and High Priest, as we understand from verses 13 – 15, in this way: **‘Behold, My servant will prosper, he will be high and lifted up, and greatly exalted. (14) Just as many were astonished at you, My people, so His appearance was marred more than any man, And His form more than the sons of men. (15) Thus He will sprinkle many nations, kings will shut their mouths on account of Him; for what had not been told them they will see, and what they had not heard they will understand.’** This provides us with further assurance that Yahshua, the One who gave His life for the sins of the world, will return to rule us from Jerusalem; He is not a fraud as some suggest.

In last weeks Renewed Covenant portion we discussed the account of Yahshua’s temptation by Satan in Matthew 4. This week’s portion is about the same event from Luke’s perspective. We commence reading from Luke 4: 1 & 2 as follows: **‘And Yahshua, full of the Set-apart Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led about by the Spirit in the wilderness (2) for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And He ate nothing during those days; and when they had ended, He became hungry.’** Luke tells us that Yahshua was led about by the Spirit in the wilderness for forty days. Matthews account mentions that He fasted for forty days, but does not mention that He moved around during the forty days. The point is that if one sits still in one place, you do not use up as much energy as when you move around. Even though this is not a contradiction, it provides us with additional information regarding the time that Yahshua spent

in the wilderness. In addition we will see that Luke reverses the order of the last two temptations discussed in the book of Matthew. We proceed by reading from verses 3 & 4, in this way: ***'And the devil said to Him, "If You are the Son of Elohim, tell this stone to become bread" (4) And Yahshua answered him, "It is written, 'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE.'"*** Here as in Matthew's account we notice that Yahshua quoted from Deuteronomy 8: 3. It is vital for us to understand that we need more than food and drink to live a happy and fulfilled life. The word of Elohim spells out how we should live and respond in every situation that we encounter in life. As much as we need to eat regular meals to survive in this world, we need to study the word of Elohim regularly to make the right decisions in this life, in order to make it into the kingdom of Elohim.

Satan tried a second time to get Yahshua to sin, as is recorded in verses 5 – 7, as follows: ***'And he led Him up and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. (6) And the devil said to Him, "I will give You all this domain and its glory; for it has been handed over to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. (7) "Therefore if You worship before me, it shall all be Yours."'*** But different to in the account in Matthew, here in Luke's account, Satan reminds Yahshua that he is the ruler of the world at present. A second witness to this is found in 1st John 5: 19, like this: ***'We know that we are of Elohim, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.'*** But, Yahshua knowing Torah could easily counter Satan's attack as we read from verse 8, saying to Satan, ***"It is written, 'YOU SHALL WORSHIP YHVH YOUR ELOHIM AND SERVE HIM ONLY.'"*** Here Yahshua quoted from Deuteronomy 6: 13, another testimony to the Oneness of Elohim.

However, Satan being the ultimate deceiver also quoted from Psalm 91: 11 & 12 in his final attempt to trick our Master, in this way: ***'And he led Him to Jerusalem and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, "If You are the Son of Elohim, throw Yourself down from here; (10) for it is written, 'HE WILL GIVE HIS ANGELS CHARGE CONCERNING YOU TO GUARD YOU,' (11) and, 'On their HANDS THEY WILL BEAR YOU UP, LEST YOU STRIKE YOUR FOOT AGAINST A STONE.'"*** Yahshua countered Satan in verse 12, saying: ***"It is said, 'YOU SHALL NOT PUT YHVH YOUR ELOHIM TO THE TEST.'"*** Satan's temptation of

Yahshua did not end here, as we read from verse 13, as follows: ***'And when the devil had finished every temptation, he departed from Him until an opportune time.'*** This is also confirmed in Hebrews 4: 15, where we read: ***'For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.'***

Isaiah 44: 11 – 45: 5 & 1 John 4: 1 – 6; 2: 18 – 25.

This Haftarah portion is read with Torah portion Re'eh (Deuteronomy 11: 26 to 16: 17) and Renewed Covenant portions 1 John 4: 1 – 6 and 2: 18 – 25. Whereas the Torah portion deals with kosher food, the Feast Days of Elohim, including the Feast of Weeks determined by counting from the time the sickle is put to the standing grain (as per Joshua 5: 11), and also warns Israel to purge out their idolatrous practices, the haftarah similarly warns them to stop squandering time and money on worthless idols, because YHVH formed them to be a model nation to Him. Isaiah also prophesied that king Cyrus will be instrumental in letting Judah return to Jerusalem after their captivity in Babylon, to rebuild the temple - a prophecy that came to fruition seventy years after their captivity.

We commence reading from verse 11 of Isaiah 44, as follows: ***'Behold, all his companions will be put to shame, for the craftsmen themselves are mere men. Let them all assemble themselves, let them stand up, let them tremble, let them together be put to shame.'*** The workers who spend their time making idols are mere men, only able to make immovable objects as idols and those who put their trust in such idols had enough reason to fear for their foolishness. The same warning continues in verses 12 – 19, in this way: ***'The man shapes iron into a cutting tool, and does his work over the coals, fashioning it with hammers, and working it with his strong arm. He also gets hungry and his strength fails; he drinks no water and becomes weary. (13) Another shapes wood, he extends a measuring line; he outlines it with red chalk. He works it with planes, and outlines it with a compass, and makes it like the form of a man, like the beauty of man, so that it may sit in a house. (14) Surely he cuts cedars for himself, and takes a cypress or an oak, and raises it for himself among the trees of the forest. He plants a fir, and the rain makes it grow. (15) Then it becomes something for a man to burn, so he takes one of them and warms himself; he also makes a fire to bake bread. He also makes a god and worships it; he makes it a graven image, and falls down before it. (16) Half of it he burns in the fire; over this half he eats meat as he roasts a roast, and is satisfied. He also warms himself and says, "Aha! I am warm, I have seen the fire." (17) But the rest of it he makes into a god, his graven image. He falls down before it and worships; he also***

prays to it and says, "Deliver me, for thou art my god." (18) They do not know, nor do they understand, for He has smeared over their eyes so that they cannot see and their hearts so that they cannot comprehend. (Yes it is as we read in 2 Corinthians 4: 4, YHVH allowed Satan to blind the minds of the unbelievers.) (19) And no one recalls, nor is there knowledge or understanding to say, "I have burned half of it in the fire, and also have baked bread over its coals. I roast meat and eat it. Then I make the rest of it into an abomination, I fall down before a block of wood!"

Workers waste much time and energy to produce idols; the best of which could only be made to look like a man and could not do anything for them. On the contrary those who spend their time and energy in studying the way of Elohim and to get to know Him will be re-vitalized by Him. Mankind uses the same wood that they use to cook with and give them warmth to make idols from – nothing could be more wrong than to worship a piece of wood as a god, since it cannot do anything for you, but to provide the energy which is expended when burned, as we read in verse 20, like this: **'He feeds on ashes; a deceived heart has turned him aside. And he cannot deliver himself, nor say, "Is there not a lie in my right hand?"'** Idol worshipers live a lie, which is like eating ashes which provide no nourishment at all and will result in nothing in the end. Mankind is obsessed with manmade things, but are not in the least interested in finding out Elohim's purpose for creating us. There is much more to life than manmade idols and activities, such as watching TV and sport activities which could take up most of our time. Most do not want to spend one minute more than the half an hour they spent in worship services on their day of worship, in studying the Scriptures. But they are prepared to spend many hours watching TV and attending spectator sports. No wonder Yahshua asked in the second part of Luke 18: 8, saying: **"(However), when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?"**

We read further from verses 21 & 22, of Isaiah 44, as follows: **"Remember these things, O Jacob, and Israel, for you are My servant; I have formed you, you are My servant, O Israel, you will not be forgotten by Me. (22) "I have wiped out your transgressions like a thick cloud, and your sins like a heavy mist. Return to Me, for I have redeemed you."** Here YHVH through Isaiah gives Israel further assurances of His mercy. He tells

them that He blotted out their sins recorded in His book against them. Even though their sins were blocking their view like a thick cloud, Elohim obliterated the sins of those that He redeemed. All that He requires in return is that we return to Him in obedience. He calls on His people to repent so that they may receive His promises. The national redemption of all of Israel at Messiah's second coming will also set all of creation free as we read in Romans 8: 19 – 22. Isaiah therefore calls on the whole of creation to rejoice in Isaiah 44: 23, in this way: ***'Shout for joy, O heavens, for YHVH has done it! Shout joyfully, you lower parts of the earth; break forth into a shout of joy, you mountains, O forest, and every tree in it; for YHVH has redeemed Jacob and in Israel He shows for the His glory.'*** In verses 24 -26, YHVH tells us through Isaiah that He our Creator and Redeemer causes the predictions of our enemies to fail and confirming the prophesies of His servant the prophet, as follows: ***'Thus says YHVH, your Redeemer, and the one who formed you from the womb, "I, YHVH, am the maker of all things, stretching out the heavens by Myself, and spreading out the earth all alone. (25) Causing the omens of boasters to fail, making fools out of diviners, causing wise men to draw back, and turning their knowledge into foolishness, (26) confirming the word of His servant, and performing the purpose of His messengers. It is I who says of Jerusalem, 'She shall be inhabited!' and of the cities of Judah, 'They shall be built.' And I will raise up her ruins again.'***

YHVH reminds Judah of the wonders He performed in the past, assuring them that He will do so again in the future, as in verses 27 & 28, like this: ***"It is I who says to the depth of the sea, 'Be dried up!' And I will make your rivers dry. (28) "It is I who says of Cyrus, 'He is My shepherd! And he will perform all My desire.' And he declares of Jerusalem, 'She will be built,' and of the temple, 'Your foundation will be laid.'"*** There are many promises for Judah and even for us, the remnant of the lost ten tribes scattered throughout the earth, that will come true in the end. This is exactly what happened when YHVH inspired king Cyrus to let Judah return to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple as we read from Isaiah 45: 1 – 5, in this way: ***'Thus says YHVH to Cyrus His anointed, whom I have taken by the right hand, to subdue nations before him, and to loose the loins of kings; to open doors before him so that gates will not be shut: (The words 'His anointed' is***

transliterated in Hebrew as “Messiah” – a word used for the messianic redeemer king – referring here to Cyrus who was to fulfill Elohim's purpose. Even though not a believer in Elohim he played the role as Judah's shepherd.) (2) ***“I will go before you and make the rough places smooth; I will shatter the doors of bronze, and cut through their iron bars.*** (3) ***“And I will give you the treasures of darkness, and hidden wealth of secret places, in order that you may know that it is I, YHVH, the Elohim of Israel, who calls you by your name.*** (YHVH intended for Cyrus to be aware that He the Elohim of Israel was giving him his victorious conquests.) (4) ***“For the sake of Jacob My servant, and Israel My chosen one, I have also called you by your name; I have given you a title of honor though you have not known Me.*** (5) ***“I am YHVH, and there is no other; besides Me there is no Elohim. I will gird you, though you have not known Me.’*** YHVH raised up King Cyrus for Judah's sake, calling him by name. When YHVH called Cyrus to assist Judah he did not have a personal relationship with Him, but Cyrus later became aware of the fact that YHVH the true Elohim controls the affairs of all mankind. The fact that YHVH tells us in verse 5 that He alone is the Elohim of Israel is further highlighted in the Renewed Covenant portions.

Both Renewed Covenant portions are significant for those of us who believe that Yahshua and YHVH are one, as is confirmed in John 10: 30. The reason being that there are Nazarene /Messianic Israelite and like-minded believers who insist that we who believe in the Oneness of Elohim are (the) ‘*anti-Messiah.*’ They site the second part of 1 John 2: 22 as evidence of this view. Even so, we commence reading the first Renewed Covenant portion from 1 John 4: 1 – 3, as follows: ***‘Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from Elohim; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.*** (2) ***By this you know the Spirit of Elohim: every spirit that confesses that Yahshua Messiah has come in the flesh is from Elohim;*** (3) ***and every spirit that does not confess Yahshua is not from Elohim; and this is the spirit of the anti-Messiah, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world.’*** The point is that we need to be very careful to believe every spirit that comes to us. We also need to be very careful of people who come to us saying: ‘The spirit laid it upon my heart, to tell you so and so.’ We are told in verse 2 above that every spirit that confesses that

Yahshua Messiah has come in the flesh is from Elohim, and every spirit that does not confess (or denies) Yahshua is not from Elohim. The spirit of anti-Messiah is present in people or an individual person, but is not a person as such. In fact the spirit of anti-Messiah could also be present in us.

We believe that Yahshua is the Messiah, but do we believe that Messiah came in the flesh? For a better understanding of this, we read from Isaiah 7: 14, like this: ***'Therefore YHVH Himself will give you a sign; Behold a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel.'*** - meaning Elohim with us. Therefore, Yahshua is Messiah, but He is also YHVH in the flesh. Are you beginning to understand what it means to confess that Yahshua Messiah has come in the flesh? It implies that Yahshua was somewhere else before He was born as a 'man'. This is in fact verified in John 1: 1 – 3 and 14, as follows: ***'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with Elohim, and the Word was Elohim. (2) He was in the beginning with Elohim. (3) All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. (14) And the word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.'*** It is this very fact about Yahshua which tests the spirit of the professing believer. We understand from 1 Thessalonians 5: 23 that mankind is made up of three component parts, namely: spirit, soul and body - yet as individuals we are one. As explained in Romans 1: 19 & 20, Elohim is similar to us, not three persons in one, but is composed of three parts, like this: ***'because that which is known about Him is evident within them (us); for Elohim made it evident to them. (20) For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes²³, His eternal power²⁴ and divine nature²⁵, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.'*** For those who claim that this is simply another view of the doctrine of the Trinity, permit me to say that this does not teach that you, who like all other human beings, composed of body, soul and spirit, are a trinity or three persons in one, but clearly

²³ *Elohim is invisible: First Timothy 1: 17.*

²⁴ *Yahshua is the power of Elohim: First Corinthians 1: 24.*

²⁵ *The Set-apart Spirit is the divine nature: Second Peter 1: 4.*

teaches that although you have three component parts, of which two are invisible, you as an individual are only one person.

At this point some might interject, saying that it cannot be true, since the Tanach has nothing to say concerning three component parts. Let's therefore turn to Isaiah 48: 16, where this truth is authenticated as follows: ***“Come near to Me, listen to this: From the first I have not spoken in secret, from the time it took place, I was there. And now YHVH Elohim has sent Me and His Spirit.”*** We read in verse 3 of I John 4 that the spirit who denies Yahshua is already in the world; but those of us called, who believe in Yahshua the salvation of YHVH, are from Elohim, as is confirmed in verse 4, like this: ***‘You are from Elohim, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.’*** We should be positive about our faith; because the One that we believe in is far greater than the one who is in the world. We read further from verses 5 & 6, ***‘They are from the world; therefore they speak as from the world, and the world listens to them. (6) We are from Elohim; he who knows Elohim listens to us; he who is not from Elohim does not listen to us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.’***

We proceed with the same topic in the second Renewed Covenant portion from 1 John 2: 18, ***‘Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that anti-Messiah is coming, even now many anti-Messiahs have arisen; from this we know that it is the last hour.’*** This is the first time that the term ‘anti-Messiah’ is used in the Scriptures. The term only appears in the 1st and 2nd books of John and refers to the final coming world ruler, empowered by Satan to oppose the true Messiah, at His return. However, Yochanan uses this term here to identify the false teachers who started troubling the ecclesia during his time, but who are even now busy contradicting and opposing the teachings of Yahshua our Messiah. Yochanan wrote this section specifically to expose the false teachers who distorted the teachings and doctrine that Yahshua taught. Like with us today, there were many who joined the original Nazarene assembly, but who later left again, because they believed differently, as we read from verse 19 - 21, as follows: ***‘They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, in order that it might be shown that they all are not of us. (20) But you have an***

anointing from the Set Apart One, and you all know. (21) I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it, and because no lie is of the truth.'

Continuing in verse 22 we Read: ***'Who is the liar but the one who denies that Yahshua is the Messiah? This is the anti-Messiah, the one who denies the Father and the Son.'*** We know without doubt that Yahshua Messiah is YHVH in the flesh. He is Elohim, as is confirmed in the prophesy about Him in Isaiah 9: 6 & 7, as follows: ***'For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty Elohim, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. (7) There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and forever more, The zeal of YHVH of hosts will accomplish this.'*** Satan is doing everything in his power to suppress the knowledge about the identity of Yahshua. Denial of Messiah also constitutes a denial of Elohim. The question is: Are believers in the Oneness of Elohim the anti-Messiah? Not according to 1 John 2: 23: ***'Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father also.'***

We believe that Yahshua, the only begotten Son of Elohim was/is our perfect example of how to follow our heavenly Father. It is as Yahshua taught in John 12: 44 & 45, in this way: ***'And Yahshua cried out and said, "He who believes in Me does not believe in Me, but in Him who sent Me. (45) and he who beholds Me beholds the One who sent Me."*** In addition we read the words of YHVH in a prophecy about Yahshua's betrayal by Judas in Zechariah 11: 12 & 13, as follows: ***'And I said to them, "If it is good in your sight, give me my wages; but if not, never mind!" So they weighed out thirty shekels of silver as my wages. (13) Then YHVH said to me, "Throw it to the potter, that magnificent price at which I was valued by them." So I took the thirty shekels of silver and threw them to the potter in the house of YHVH.'***

We conclude with the incredible promise in verses 24 & 25 of 1 John 2, like this: ***'As for you, let that abide in you which you heard***

from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father. (25) And this is the promise which He Himself made to us: eternal life.’ What have we heard from the beginning? We read the answer from Deuteronomy 6: 4, as follows: ***“Hear, O Israel! YHVH is our Elohim, YHVH is one!”***

Isaiah 9: 1 – 6; 49: 1 – 6 & Acts 7: 35 – 60.

This Haftarah portion is read with Torah portion Shoftim (Deuteronomy 16: 18 to 21: 9) and Renewed Covenant portion Acts 7: 35 – 60. Whereas the Torah portion spells out the way in which Israel should walk (halakah), by obeying the rules specified by the Levitical priest or judge who is in office in those days (as per Deuteronomy 17: 8 – 17); and by listening to the prophet whom YHVH will raise up from amongst their countrymen, who will have Elohim's word in His mouth (Deuteronomy 18: 18 & 19), the haftarah portions deal with this prophet who will be born to rule His people and will be designated amongst other, as '*Mighty Elohim*'.

We start reading from Isaiah 9: 1 & 2, as follows: ***'But there will be no more gloom for her who was in anguish; in earlier times He treated the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali with contempt, but later on He shall make it glorious, by the way of the sea, on the other side of Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles. (2) "The peoples who walk in darkness will see a great light; those who live in a dark land, the light will shine on them."*** This is talking about the former residents of the region in the land of Israel, who were already in captivity by the time that Yahshua was born. Zebulun and Naphtali on the northern border, north-east of Galilee were the first to suffer from the invasion by the Assyrian king, causing the beginning of dark days for Israel. The coming of Messiah is likened to a light to remove the darkness of captivity. But, as we see in verses 3 – 5 this is already talking about Yahshua's second coming, during which time He will come and rule the world from Jerusalem, in this way: ***'Thou shalt multiply the nation, thou shalt increase their gladness; they will be glad in Thy presence as with the gladness of harvest, as men rejoice when they divide the spoil.*** (Here once again, the covenant that YHVH made with Abraham, to multiply the nation, is confirmed.) (4) ***For Thou shalt break the yoke of their burden and the staff on their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, as at the battle of Midian. (5) For every boot of the booted warrior in the battle tumult, and cloak rolled in blood, will be for burning, fuel for the fire.'*** When Yahshua returns He is going to break the yoke of those who oppress the united nation of Israel and will set-up a kingdom which will not pass away and cannot be destroyed, as we read in Daniel 7: 14, like this: ***"And to Him was given dominion, glory (or esteem) and a***

kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and men of every language might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away; and His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed.” Please note that this is speaking about an earthly kingdom, which Yahshua our Messiah will rule here on earth.

This is confirmed for us in verse 6 of Isaiah 9, as follows: **‘For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest on His shoulders; and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty Elohim, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.’** Even though this is a prophesy about the future, beyond the present day gloom, we need to realize that it is going to go a lot worse before it will go better. YHVH does not want this present world to last for too much longer. He allowed mankind a period of 6000 years, to proof without doubt, that life without Elohim only brings misery. This is also why it is so important for us to proclaim the good news about the coming kingdom of Elohim into the entire world, before the end will come. There are presently many who have become so despondent that they have no hope. Even though most of the things that we teach seem like old hat to most, and sometimes even bore them to tears, we need to remember that we have been commissioned by Yahshua, to teach the good news about the Kingdom of Elohim as the only hope to this dying world.

Continuing in Isaiah 49: 1, we read a prophesy about Yahshua, in this way: **‘Listen to Me, O islands, and pay attention, you peoples from afar. YHVH called Me from the womb; from the body of My mother He named Me.’** We recall here the words recorded about this event in Matthew 1: 20 & 21, as follows: **‘But when he (Joseph) had considered this (to give Miriam a ‘get’ or to divorce her), behold, an angel of YHVH appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Miriam as your wife; for that which has been conceived in her is of the Set-apart Spirit. (21) And she will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Yahshua, for it is He who will save His people from their sins.”’** This tells us that Messiah was once a little child born of a woman, but when He returns, He will return with power and might to fight against His adversaries and to come and rule us, as our High Priest and King. We read appropriately from verse 2, in this way: **‘And He has made My mouth like a sharp sword; In the shadow**

of His hand He has concealed Me, and He has also made Me a select arrow; He has hidden Me in His quiver.’ YHVH has given power to Messiah to speak effectively and thereby conquer His enemies. We see from verse 3 that YHVH referred to Messiah as His servant, a title that will later be used in identifying Him as the arm of YHVH, in this way: **‘And He said to me, “You are My Servant, Israel, in whom I will show My glory.”** Continuing in verse 4, we read: **‘But I said, “I have toiled in vain, I have spent My strength for nothing and vanity; yet surely the justice due to Me is with YHVH, and My reward with My Elohim.’** At Messiah’s first advent He was met with rejection by His nation. It is for this reason that some believe that His mission was a failure. However, His first mission was not to come and rule His people, but as He put it in Matthew 15: 24, saying: **“I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”** At this time YHVH is calling out a remnant according to His gracious choice (Romans 11: 5) to make the Jews jealous (Romans 11: 11), until the fullness of the Gentiles (those who believe they are Gentiles, plus a few genuine Gentiles) have been called and come in, then all Israel (from both houses) will be saved (Romans 11: 25 & 26), to rule as kings and priests under Yahshua for a thousand years (Revelation 5: 10 & 20: 6). In the meantime Judah is blinded to the identity of Messiah (Romans 11: 32), but at His return to Jerusalem on Yom Teruah, the righteous Jews will be in their synagogues and when they see His hands, will recognize Him and accept Him as their Savior and King (Zechariah 10: 12).

We read consequently from verses 5 & 6 of Isaiah 49, **‘And now says YHVH, who formed Me from the womb to be His Servant, to bring Jacob back to Him, in order that Israel might be gathered to Him (For I am honored in the sight of YHVH, and My Elohim is My strength), (6) He says, “It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved ones (Notstrim – believers in Yahshua who keep Torah, also known as Nazarenes) of Israel; I will also make You a light of the nations so that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth.”** Yes the servant’s mission will include bringing a remnant of the lost ten tribes as well as Judah back to the Promised Land. His goal is the salvation and restoration of Israel as once ruled by King David, for the fulfillment of the covenant promise. However, His mission of salvation is not restricted to Israel, but also to function as a light bringing salvation to the Gentiles. Israel’s mission was

always to bring the nations to Elohim. This will be done very effectively by the kingdom of priests specially prepared to assist Messiah during His millennial rule and beyond.

The Renewed Covenant portion in Acts 7: 35 to 60 is part of Stephan's testimony before the high priest, just prior to being stoned to death as the first martyr for his faith in Yahshua. We start reading from verse 35, in this way: ***"This Moses whom they disowned, saying 'WHO MADE YOU A RULER AND A JUDGE?' is the one whom Elohim sent to be both a ruler and a deliverer with the help of the angel who appeared to him in the thorn bush."*** Moses was sent to be both the ruler and deliver of the ancient nation Israel. His rejection by the nation began Israel's long history of rejecting her Elohim sent deliverers. YHVH used the ten plagues and miracles in the wilderness to get His chosen people to the Promised Land, as we read from verse 36, as follows: ***"This man led them out, performing wonders and signs in the land of Egypt and in the Red Sea and in the wilderness for forty years."*** Prior to entering the Promised Land, Moses told the nation about Yahshua as is recorded in verse 37, like this: ***"This is the Moses who said to the sons of Israel, 'ELOHIM SHALL RAISE UP FOR YOU A PROPHET LIKE ME FROM YOUR BRETHREN.'"***

The original ecclesia of Elohim was the congregation in the wilderness led by Moses and his brother Aaron. This was where Elohim's ecclesia started and the same one built upon by Yahshua. We are told about Moses in verses 38 – 40, as follows: ***"This is the one who was in the congregation in the wilderness together with the angel who was speaking to him on Mount Sinai, and who was with our fathers; and he received living oracles to pass on to you. (39) And our fathers were unwilling to be obedient to him, but repudiated him and in their hearts turned back to Egypt, (40) SAYING TO AARON, 'MAKE FOR US GODS WHO WILL GO BEFORE US; FOR THIS MOSES WHO LED US OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT – WE DO NOT KNOW WHAT HAPPENED TO HIM.'"*** Whilst Moses was on Mount Sinai, receiving the Torah from Elohim, he was away for a period of forty days and the nation did not know what happened to him. This caused them to believe that Moses was missing, and because of their lack of faith, we read about their resultant misconduct, from verses 41 to 43, like this: ***"And at that time they made a calf and brought a sacrifice to the***

idol, and were rejoicing in the works of their hands. (42) But Elohim turned away and delivered them up to serve the host of heaven; as it is written in the book of the prophets, 'IT WAS NOT TO ME THAT YOU OFFERED VICTIMS AND SACRIFICES FORTY YEARS IN THE WILDERNESS, WAS IT, O HOUSE OF ISRAEL? (43) YOU ALSO TOOK ALONG THE TABERNACLE OF MOLOCH AND THE STAR OF THE GOD ROMPHA, THE IMAGES WHICH YOU MADE TO WORSHIP THEM. I ALSO WILL REMOVE YOU BEYOND BABYLON.'" Both the nations of Israel and Judah were taken captive because of idolatry.

We read from verses 44 – 50 about Stephen's counter to the false charge of blasphemy against the temple, that was brought in against him, by describing the history of the temple, thereby showing his respect for it, as follows: *"Our fathers had the tabernacle of testimony in the wilderness, just as He who spoke to Moses directed him to make it according to the pattern which he had seen. (45) And having received it in their turn, our fathers brought it in with Joshua upon dispossessing the nations whom Elohim drove out before our fathers, until the time of David. (46) And David found favor in Elohim's sight, and asked that he might find a dwelling place for the Elohim of Jacob. (47) But it was Solomon who built a house for Him. (48) However, the Most High does not dwell in houses made by human hands; as the prophet says: (49) 'HEAVEN IS MY THRONE, AND EARTH IS THE FOOTSTOOL OF MY FEET; WHAT KIND OF HOUSE WILL YOU BUILD FOR ME? Says YHVH; 'OR WHAT PLACE IS THERE FOR MY REPOSE? (50) 'WAS IT NOT MY HAND WHICH MADE ALL THESE THINGS?'"* Stephen's point in verses 49 & 50 was that Elohim is greater than the temple, and that the Jewish leaders were therefore the ones guilty of blasphemy, by confining Elohim to it. In fact we see from verses 51 – 53, that Stephen indicated by his testimony, that these Jewish leaders were rejecting Elohim, the same way as our ancestors did in the Tanach, in this way: *"You men who are stiff necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears are always resisting the Set-apart Spirit; you are doing just as your fathers did. (52) Which one of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who had previously announced the coming of the Righteous One, whose betrayers and murderers you have now become; (53) you who received the law as ordained by angels, and yet did not keep it."*

The Scriptures does not explain the role the angels had in the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai, but clearly states that they were present at that time, as we read in Deuteronomy 33: 2 and Galatians 3: 19.

Stephen's last statement obviously angered the Jewish leaders, as we read from verse 54, as follows: ***'Now when they heard this, they were cut to the quick, and they began gnashing their teeth at him.'*** However, we see that Stephen was not deterred, but continued motivated to tell those present about a vision that he saw as recorded in verses 55 & 56, in this way: ***'But being full of the Set-apart Spirit, he gazed intently into heaven and saw the glory of Elohim, and Yahshua standing at the right hand of Elohim; (56) and he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened up and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of Elohim."*** Stephen reports a similar vision as the one we read about in Daniel 7: 13, like this: ***"I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, and He came up to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him."***

However, we see from verses 57 & 58 that Stephen's persecutors were not even in the least interested in what he had to say, as follows: ***'But they cried out with a loud voice, and covered their ears, and they rushed upon him with one impulse. (58) And when they had driven him out of the city, they began stoning him, and the witnesses laid aside their robes at the feet of a young man named Saul.'*** Here in verse 58, we see the name of Shaul appearing on the scene for the first time. Even though he did not partake in Stephen's stoning, he was near enough to the action to be holding the clothes of Stephen's killers. Stephen was stoned because the Jewish leaders accused him of blasphemy. We read his final words from verses 59 to 60, as follows: ***'And they went on stoning Stephen as he called upon the Master and said, "Master Yahshua, receive my spirit!" (60) And falling on his knees, he cried out with a loud voice, "Master, do not hold this sin against them!" And having said this, he fell asleep.'*** Stephen's words are very similar to that of Yahshua, when He died on the tree, as is recorded for us in Luke 46, in this way: ***'And Yahshua, crying out with a loud voice, said, "Father, INTO THY HANDS I COMMIT MY SPIRIT."*** ***And having said this, He breathed His last.'*** The statement: ***"Master Yahshua, receive my (or his/her) spirit!"*** are the words we should recite when we bury a fellow believer, or if the

person performing the burial service neglects to do so, be it quietly. In addition, the fact that Stephen used these words, confirms that he believed Yahshua to be Elohim.

Isaiah 40: 1 – 11 & Mark 1: 1 – 14.

This Haftarah portion is read with Torah portion Ki Tetzei (Deuteronomy 21: 10 to 25: 19) and Renewed Covenant portion Mark 1: 1 – 14. Whereas the Torah portion deals with the right relationship that we should have with fellow human beings, the haftarah and Renewed Covenant portions give us the good news of how YHVH reconciled us to Him through Messiah and about the coming kingdom of Elohim.

Even though this portion was supposed to be words of comfort to Judah, assuring her that her captivity will soon be over and that she more than paid for her past iniquities, it is also a prophecy about Messiah returning to usher in the kingdom of Elohim. Like in the first Chapters in the books known as the four gospels in the Renewed Covenant, it mentions the clearing or preparing of the way before the first advent of Messiah to become our kinsman redeemer; paying the indebtedness for transgressing Elohim's Torah on our behalf, but also to eventually at His second coming be revealed as our High Priest and King. This is when Judah, similar to what happened to Thomas, will look on Him whom they have pierced, and in repentance will accept Him as their Savior and Elohim (as per Zechariah 10: 12). We commence reading from Isaiah 40: 1, as follows: **“Comfort, O comfort My people,” says your Elohim. (2) Speak kindly to Jerusalem; and call out to her, that her warfare has ended, that her iniquity has been removed, that she has received of YHVH(s) hand double for all her sins.** The prophet comforts Judah, but by implication also the latter day descendants of Israel, telling them that their captivity will soon be over, and that they will be allowed to return to their home land.

Continuing in verses 3 - 5, we read a prophecy about Yochanan the Immerser who will go as a forerunner before Messiah in the spirit of Elijah, but because of the duality principle that runs throughout The Scriptures, also about a future person or group that will prepare the way for Messiah's second coming, as follows: **‘A voice is calling, “Clear the way for YHVH in the wilderness; make smooth in the desert a highway for our Elohim. (4) Let every valley be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; and let the rough ground become a plain, and the rugged terrain a broad valley; (5) Then the glory of YHVH will be revealed, and all flesh will see**

it together; for the mouth of YHVH has spoken.’ When Yahshua returns one day on the Feast of Trumpets all the people of the earth will see His arrival. This is confirmed by Yahshua himself in Matthew 24: 29 & 30, in this way: ***“But immediately after the tribulation of those day the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken, (30) and then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory.”***

We are reminded about our mortality in verses 6 – 8, like this: ***‘A voice says, “Call out.” Then he answered, “What shall I call out?” All flesh is grass, and all its loveliness is like the flower of the field. (7) The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of YHVH blows upon it; surely the people are grass. (8) The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our Elohim stands forever.’*** Other than us, the word of Elohim, which includes the Tanach and Renewed Covenant and is also another name for Yahshua, the embodiment of Torah; remains forever. YHVH promised to come and deliver Jerusalem and as promised He will remain true to His word, as we understand from verse 9, in this way: ***‘Get yourself up on a high mountain, O Zion, bearer of good news, lift up your voice mightily, O Jerusalem, bearer of good news; lift it up, do not fear. Say to the cities of Judah, “Here is your Elohim!”’*** When Yahshua returns with power, He will defeat His enemies and those who persecuted His people. He will return the remnant of His scattered people to their land, as we read from verses 10 & 11, as follows: ***‘Behold, YHVH Elohim will come with might, with His arm ruling for Him. Behold, His reward is with Him, and His recompense before Him. (11) Like a shepherd He will tend His flock, in His arm He will gather the lambs, and carry them in His bosom; He will gently lead the nursing ewes.’*** We read a second witness about Yahshua’s return to come and make war with His enemies in Revelation 19: 11, like this: ***‘And I saw heaven opened; and behold, a white horse, and He who sat upon it is called Faithful and True; and in righteousness He judges and wages war.’*** But, we also see (in verse 11) Yahshua pictured as the arm of YHVH, who will gather Israelites from both houses from all the nations amongst whom they were scattered and carry them back in His bosom to the Promised Land.

We start reading the Renewed Covenant portion from Mark 1: 1 - 4, in this way: ***‘The beginning of the gospel of Yahshua Messiah, the Son of Elohim.’*** (2) ***As it is written in Isaiah the prophet, “BEHOLD, I SEND MY MESSENGER BEFORE YOUR FACE, WHO WILL PREPARE YOUR WAY; (3) THE VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS, ‘MAKE READY THE WAY OF YHVH, MAKE HIS PATHS STRAIGHT.”*** (4) ***John the Immerser appeared in the wilderness preaching an immersion of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.’*** The historical record or gospel of Elohim starts with a messenger like Elijah, who is prophesied, to clear the way before the arrival of Messiah, by teaching believers to return to Torah and the faith of our fathers, and to foster a right relationship within our families. The question at this point is: What is the true gospel? Is it like the commentary of most Christian Scriptures teach, i.e. ‘The good news about the life, death and resurrection of Yahshua Messiah²⁶?’ Do you know that the Gospel was actually introduced before Messiah’s earthly life? In fact it is called an eternal (or everlasting) Gospel in Revelation 14: 6, like this: ***‘And I saw another angel flying in midheaven, having an eternal gospel to preach to those who live on the earth, and to every nation and tribe and tongue and people.’*** We also read from Hebrews 4: 2 that the Gospel was preached to ancient Israel, as follows: ***“For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they also; but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united in faith in those who heard.”*** The gospel was also preached to Abraham as we read from Galatians 3: 8, in this way: ***“And the Scriptures foreseeing that Elohim would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, ‘ALL THE NATIONS SHALL BE BLESSED IN YOU.”***

We continue reading about John the Immerser’s work in verses 5 – 8 of Mark 1, as follows: ***‘And all the country of Judea was going out to him and all the people of Jerusalem; and they were being immersed by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins. (6) And John was clothed with camel’s hair and wore a leather belt around his waist, and his diet was locusts and wild honey. (7) And he was preaching, and saying, “After me One is coming***

²⁶ Most Christian Bibles refer to Yahshua Messiah as Jesus Christ.

who is mightier than I, and I am not fit to stoop down and untie the thong of His sandals. (8) I immerse you with water; but He will immerse you with the Set-apart Spirit.” Immersion was a distinctive mark of John’s ministry, but the Jews of his day also performed similar one-time washings known as ‘mikvahs’ on Gentile proselytes; symbolizing their acceptance of the true faith. John’s immersion was an immersion to call Israel to repentance in preparation for the coming of Messiah. Repentance or as it is known in the Hebrew, transliterations as ‘teshuvah’, means much more than a change of mind or remorse; Teshuvah means to confess our sins to YHVH and to stop sinning, i.e. breaking the commandments of Elohim and to return to obeying those commandments which we have transgressed. John’s immersion did not produce forgiveness of sin, but was only an outward confession of true repentance. John the Immerser’s clothing was not exactly a fashion statement, but as a wilderness dweller it had to protect him from the elements. John ate mainly locusts and honey, as it was the only kosher food available to him in the wilderness. His diet was further in keeping with his status as a lifelong Nazirite like Samson, as may be understood from Luke 1: 15, in this way: ***“For he will be great in the sight of YHVH, and he will drink no wine or liquor; and he will be filled with the Set-apart Spirit, while yet in his mother’s womb.”***

We read further from verse 9 of Mark 1, what must have been the highlight in John the Immerser’s life, as follows: ***‘And it came about in those days that Yahshua came from Nazareth in Galilee, and was immersed by John in the Jordan.’*** Knowing Yahshua, John saw no reason for Him to be immersed, as we read from Matthew 3: 13 – 15, like this: ***‘Then Yahshua arrived from Galilee at the Jordan coming to John, to be immersed by him. (14) But John tried to prevent Him, saying, “I have need to be immersed by You, and do You come to me? (15) But Yahshua answering said to him, “Permit it at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he permitted Him.’*** Verses 10 & 11 of Mark 1 record the events following Yahshua’s immersion, in this way: ***‘And immediately coming up out of the water, He saw the heavens opening, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon Him; (11) and a voice came out of the heavens: “Thou art My beloved Son, in Thee I am well-pleased.”’*** This pronouncement by the Father reminds us of the Messianic prophecy of Psalm 2: 7, as follows: ***“I will surely tell of the decree of YHVH: He said to Me,***

‘Thou art My Son, today I have begotten Thee.’ Like in the case of most of us today, temptation came immediately after His immersion, as we read from verses 12 & 13 of Mark 1, as follows: ***‘And immediately the Spirit impelled Him to go out into the wilderness. (13) And He was in the wilderness forty days being tempted by Satan; and He was with the wild beasts, and the angels were ministering to Him.’*** Yahshua most likely went into the same wilderness where John the Immerser lived, and even though we are not given the exact location where Yahshua was led about by the Spirit for forty days, we know the wilderness spoken about here, to be the desolate arid region between Jerusalem and the Dead Sea.

Soon after Yahshua’s immersion John the Immerser was taken into custody for rebuking Herod for marrying his niece, the daughter of his half brother. We read about it from verse 14, like this: ***‘And after John had been taken into custody, Yahshua came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of Elohim,’*** As mentioned before, the gospel of Elohim is the good news about Elohim’s plan of salvation for all mankind, and is depicted by His annual Feast Days. Even though not part of this haftarah portion, we see what is meant by the gospel of Elohim, by reading from verse 15 of Mark 1, like this: ***‘and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of Elohim is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.”’*** The good news is that the Kingdom of Elohim is soon coming to replace all the kingdoms of mankind on the earth. For the first time the whole world will be obeying Elohim and His Torah, resulting in peace, prosperity and a life akin to what Adam and Eve had, before they were expelled from the Garden of Eden.

The Good News about the glorious future of mankind has been Elohim’s plan from the beginning. King David knew about it and wrote accordingly in Psalm 145: 10 – 13 as follows: ***“All Thy works shall give thanks to Thee, O YHVH, and Thy faithful (godly) ones shall bless Thee. They shall speak of the esteem (glory) of Thy Kingdom and talk of Thy power; To make known to the sons of men Thy mighty acts, and the glory of the majesty of thy kingdom. Thy Kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and Thy dominion endures throughout all generations.”*** Daniel was also fully aware about the coming kingdom of Elohim as recorded for us in Daniel 7: 27: ***“Then the sovereignty, the dominion, and the***

greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One; His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all the dominions will serve and obey Him.” One of the misunderstandings about the Kingdom of Elohim, was that two thousand years would separate Yahshua’s first coming as the sacrificial Lamb in John 1: 29 from His return as conquering King to judge in righteousness and to wage war against His enemies as in Revelation 19: 11 -16. His first coming fulfilled a vital role of the Gospel - His sacrifice to make possible our forgiveness and justification, to finally enter His Kingdom and also to re-marry His bride Israel. His Second Coming will be to come and establish that incredible Kingdom.

Yahshua will rule as King and High Priest from Jerusalem. He will rule the survivors of the Great Tribulation and their children during the Millennium. Those of us, who are being called-out of the world at this time, will if we qualify, be in the first resurrection at Messiah’s return and will rule under Him as kings and priests for 1000 years. We read about this in Revelation 5:10 as follows: ***“And Thou hast made them to be a kingdom and priests to our Elohim; and they will reign upon the earth”*** A second witness is recorded in Revelation 20:6, in this way: ***“Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of Elohim and of Messiah and will reign with Him for a thousand years.”*** Yahshua our Messiah stressed the importance of proclaiming this good news in Matthew 24: 14, like this: ***“And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a witness to all nations, and then the end shall come.”*** Praise YHVH!

Isaiah 60: 1 – 22 & Matthew 13: 1 – 23.

This Haftarah portion is read with Torah portion Ki Tavo (Deuteronomy 26: 1 to 29: 8) and Renewed Covenant portion Matthew 13: 1 – 23. Whereas the Torah portion has to do with first-fruits that have to be brought to the priest at the harvest times corresponding to the annual Feast Days of Elohim, the haftarah deals with the period during which Yahshua will return to rule us from Jerusalem, namely the Millennium – which is pictured by the Feast of Tabernacles.

We start reading from Isaiah 60: 1 & 2, like this: ***'Arise, shine for your light has come, and the glory of YHVH has risen upon you. (2) For behold, darkness will cover the earth, and deep darkness the peoples; but YHVH will rise upon you, and His glory will appear upon you.'*** By reading from verse 20 of Isaiah 59, we understand that at His return, Messiah will come to redeem Zion (meaning Judah) and all the faithful Israelites, a prophesy that formed the basis of Rav Shaul's assurance to the remnant of latter day Israelites in Romans 11: 26 & 27. We read further about this in verse 3, as follows: ***'And nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising.'*** The light emanating from Jerusalem will attract nations seeking respite from darkness. Only a remnant of Israel and Judah, as well as some believing gentiles will enter the kingdom of Elohim, to rule under Yahshua during the millennium. However, there will also be those who will come to repentance during the tribulation and will return to the way of Elohim. Some of them as well as those people of the world who survive the tribulation, will live on into the millennium and as time goes on, children will be born and nations will become populated again. These nations will be drawn to Jerusalem, by the mighty power and esteem of its eternal King. We read another promise of the re-gathering of the remnant of Israel in verse 4, like this: ***'Lift up your eyes round about, and see; they all gather together, they come to you. Your sons will come from afar, and your daughters will be carried in the arms.'***

The kingdom of Elohim will be a place of abundance and joy, as we read from verse 5, in this way: ***'Then you will see and be radiant, and your heart will thrill and rejoice; because the abundance of the sea will be turned to you, the wealth of the nations will come***

to you.' We read from verses 6 & 7 that the descendants of Midian, Abraham's son through Keturah, will provide Israel with camels as transport and Nebaioth the descendants of Kedar, a son of Ishmael will provide them with rams to offer as sacrifices on the altar in the house of Elohim. We read from verse 8 about the sudden influx of those Israelites who thought that they are Gentiles into Jerusalem, as follows: **'Who are these who fly like a cloud, and like the doves to their lattices?'** We also read from verse 9 that those Israelites who live at the far flung areas of the world will be brought to the Promised Land in ships, like this: **'Surely the coastlands will wait for Me; and the ships of Tarshish will come first, to bring your sons from afar, their silver and their gold with them, for the name of YHVH your Elohim, and for the Holy One of Israel because He has glorified you.'** The Gentile nations among whom we lived, will come and assist us in rebuilding the cities in Israel, as is recorded in verse 10: **'And foreigners will build up your walls, and their kings will minister to you; for in My wrath I struck you, and in My favor I have had compassion on you.'** These nations will continue to send their kings to Jerusalem, to share their wealth with Israel, as we read from verse 11: **'And your gates will be open continually; they will not be closed day or night, so that men may bring to you the wealth of the nations, with their kings led in procession.'** In fact, survival in the future world will not be possible for nations who do not come to terms with Israel, as we read from verse 12: **'For the nation and the kingdom which will not serve you will perish, and the nations will be utterly ruined.'** We read further from verse 13 that these nations will also provide materials and assist to rebuild a temple, like this: **'The glory of Lebanon will come to you, the juniper, the box tree, and the cypress together, to beautify the place of My sanctuary; and I shall make the place of My feet glorious.'**

We also read from verses 14 & 15, how those who despised and hated Israel, will bow down before her and she will become a pride and joy, and will be called the Zion of Elohim, as follows: **'And the sons of those who afflicted you will come bowing to you, and all those who despised you will bow themselves at the soles of your feet; and they will call you the city of YHVH, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel. (15) Whereas you have been forsaken and hated with no one passing through, I will make you an everlasting pride, a joy from generation to generation.'** As a

mother nurtures her infant, so the Gentiles and their kings will provide Israel with wealth, and will recognize YHVH as her Savior and Redeemer, as we read from verse 16, in this way: ***'You will also suck the milk of nations, and will suck the breast of kings; then you will know that I, YHVH am your Savior, and your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob.'*** At that time Jerusalem will be a place of peace and beauty, where righteousness will prevail, as explained in verses 17 & 18, as follows: ***'Instead of bronze I will bring gold, and instead of iron I will bring silver, and instead of wood, bronze, and instead of stones, iron. And I will make peace your administrators, and righteousness your overseers. (18) Violence will not be heard again in your land, nor devastation or destruction within your borders; but you will call your walls salvation, and your gates praise.'*** Verses 19 & 20 gives us a glimpse beyond the Millennium, after the second resurrection and the Great White Throne judgment, also mentioned in Revelation 21 & 22, in this way: ***'No longer will you have the sun for light by day, nor for brightness will the moon give you light; but you will have YHVH for an everlasting light, and your Elohim for your glory. (20) Your sun will set no more, neither will your moon wane; for you will have YHVH for an everlasting light, and the days of your mourning will be finished.'*** However, returning to the millennium, we read from verses 21 & 22 of Isaiah 60, that Israel will inherit the land promised to Abraham forever, as follows: ***'Then all your people will be righteous; they will possess the land forever, the branch of My planting, the work of My hands, that I may be glorified. (22) The smallest one will become a clan, and the least one a mighty nation. I, YHVH, will hasten it in its time.'*** At that time Israel will truly become the model nation that YHVH planned from the beginning and will have world prominence as never experienced before.

We start reading the Renewed Covenant portion from Matthew 13: 1 – 2, as follows: ***'On that day Yahshua went out of the house, and was sitting by the sea. (2) And great multitudes gathered to Him so that He got into a boat and sat down, and the whole multitude was standing on the beach.'*** Yahshua like most of the Rabbis of His day used parables as a method to teach his disciples. A parable is an allegory used to teach important lessons, but it is not to be understood literally nor does it describe actual events taking place. Even though Yahshua's method of teaching was similar to

His first century contemporaries, it differed from them, in that He taught in His own name, and not like they did, in the names of their teachers. In addition His messages focused mainly on the coming kingdom of Elohim. Yahshua taught His disciples a number of parables, one of which was the parable of the sower, as we read from verses 3 – 9, like this: ***‘And He spoke many things to them in parables, saying, “Behold, the sower went out to sow; (4) and as he sowed, some seeds fell beside the road, and the birds came and ate them up. (5) And others fell upon the rocky places, where they did not have much soil; and immediately they sprang up, because they had no depth of soil. (6) But when the sun had risen, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. (7) And others fell among the thorns, and the thorns came up and choked them out. (8) And others fell on the good soil, and yielded a crop, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty. (9) He who has ears, let him hear.”’*** It is very important for those of us who teach new believers, to understand the meaning of this parable, so as not to become too despondent.

Yahshua told this parable and several others to His disciples and as is recorded in verse 10, His disciples questioned Him as to why He used this method of teaching, as follows: ***‘And the disciples came and said to Him, “Why do You speak to them in parables?”’*** Yahshua explained to them in verses 11 – 16, in this way: ***‘And He answered and said to them, “To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted. (12) For whoever has, to him shall more be given, and he shall have an abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him. (13) Therefore I speak to them in parables; because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. (14) And in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says, ‘YOU WILL KEEP ON HEARING, BUT WILL NOT UNDERSTAND; AND YOU WILL KEEP ON SEEING, BUT WILL NOT PERCEIVE; (15) FOR THE HEART OF THIS PEOPLE HAS BECOME DULL, AND WITH THEIR EARS THEY SCARCELY HEAR, AND THEY HAVE CLOSED THEIR EYES LEST THEY SHOULD SEE WITH THEIR EYES, AND HEAR WITH THEIR EARS, AND UNDERSTAND WITH THEIR HEART AND RETURN, AND I SHOULD HEAL THEM.’*** The people in the

world hear and see but they do not understand, because their eyes are closed to the truth and they cannot understand the same. From Yahshua's explanation we understand that YHVH is not calling everyone alive during this age. He is only calling out first fruits who if they finally make it into the kingdom of Elohim, will rule under Yahshua as kings and priests during the millennium and beyond. One example in the Scriptures where YHVH promised rulership to those who overcome and endure to the end of their lives, or until Messiah returns, is found in Revelation 3: 21, as follows: ***“He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.”***

Even though those of us called at this time, have to make some sacrifices in that in many cases we have to give up friends, and family as well as our previous ways of life, we will be much more blessed in the world to come (transliterated in Hebrew as the 'Olam Haba'), as we are told in verses 16 & 17 of Matthew 13, as follows: ***‘But blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears because they hear. (17) For truly I say to you, that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it; and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.’*** Yahshua gave His disciples the full explanation of this parable by starting with the seed that fell besides the road in verses 18 – 19, in this way: ***‘Hear then the parable of the sower. (19) When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is the one on whom seed was sown beside the road.’*** YHVH allows Satan to blind the minds of unbelievers, so that they do not understand the good news of Messiah. We read a second witness in 2 Corinthians 4: 3 & 4, as follows: ***‘And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, (4) in whose case the god of this world (Satan) has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the esteem of Messiah, who is the image of Elohim.’*** Yahshua continued explaining the parable in verse 20 & 21 of Matthew 13, like this: ***‘And the one on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, this is the man who hears the word, and immediately received it with joy; (21) yet he has no firm root in himself, but is only temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he falls away.’*** The seed that was 'sown on rocky ground' is about the

individual who hears the truth and immediately receives it with joy. However, he has no firm root in himself, but is only temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the world, immediately falls away. When this person's family and friends reject him for his beliefs, or when keeping the Sabbath and Set-apart days, bring harassment, he shuts his heart to the truth.

Yahshua explained about the seed that was sown among thorns in verse 22, as follows: ***'And the one on whom seed was sown among the thorns, this is the man who hears the word, and the worry of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.'*** The seed that was 'sown among thorns', tells us about the individual who hears the truth and responds for a while, but the worries of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. This individual's life is very complicated. He belongs to all sorts of clubs and societies and is living the high life. He is physically stretched to the limit and because he is so concerned about his investments and the irons that he has in many fires, he soon forgets his newly found faith. Finally Yahshua dealt with the seed that was sown on good soil in verse 23, saying: ***'And the one on whom seed was sown on the good soil, this is the man who hears the word and understands it; who indeed bears fruit, and brings forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty.'*** The seed that was 'sown in good soil' are those who hear and understand the truth. They bear fruit and in one case bear a hundred fold, in another, sixty fold and in another, thirty fold. We are blessed because we hear and see the truth, because YHVH has opened our minds to it, through His Set-apart Spirit, which indwells us. They will finally make it into the kingdom of Elohim, and will rule a number of cities, commensurate with how well they applied their given talents.

However, even though not part of this portion, Yahshua also explained about a time during which people from all generations will be judged at the same time (during the great white throne judgment) in Matthew 12: 41 as follows: ***'The men of Nineveh shall stand up with this generation at the judgment and shall condemn it because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, something greater than Jonah is here.'*** These people from ancient times will be resurrected after the millennium rule of Yahshua and will respond once they have had a genuine opportunity to understand

the Scriptures. Yahshua further explained about the Queen of the South (or Sheba) in Mathew 12: 42 as follows: ***“The Queen of the South shall rise up with this generation at the judgment and shall condemn it, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, something greater than Solomon is here.”*** The Queen of the South will be in the second resurrection, after the millennium. She will be part of the second harvest of souls into the Kingdom of Elohim. She will repent and accept Yahshua our Messiah as her personal Savior. She will also accept and live by what is written in the books (The Scriptures) and her name will be entered into the book of life as per Revelation 20: 12. The majority of people who ever lived, who are not called during this age, will only have their first chance after the second resurrection.

Isaiah 61: 1 – 63: 9 & Romans 9: 30 – 10: 13.

This Haftarah portion is read with Torah portions Nitzavim (Deuteronomy 29: 9 to 30: 20) and Renewed Covenant portion Romans 9: 30 to 10: 13. Whereas The Torah portion is intended for all Elohim's servants to obey His Torah with understanding, as a matter of the heart, the haftarah portion confirms that those who overcome and finally qualify, will be priests ruling under Messiah during the millennium.

We commence reading from Isaiah 61: 1 – 3, in this way: ***'The Spirit of YHVH Elohim is upon me, because YHVH has anointed me to bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to captives, and freedom to prisoners; (2) To proclaim the favorable year of YHVH, and the day of vengeance of Elohim; to comfort all who mourn, (3) to grant those who mourn in Zion, giving them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a spirit of fainting. So they will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of YHVH, that He may be glorified.'*** Yahshua Messiah started His ministry during the Jubilee year of 27/28 CE and will most probably return during a Jubilee year some time in the future. The portion of The Scriptures read by Yahshua after His temptation by Satan in the wilderness, came from Isaiah verse one and the first part of verse two. He concluded by saying that this scripture was fulfilled in the hearing of those present in the synagogue that day. The prisoners spoken about in this section of the Scriptures, are the lost ten tribes of Israel, who remained in captivity to this day. The reason why Yahshua did not read the second part of verse 2, was that it will only be fulfilled during His second coming, when as part of the deliverance of YHVH, He will pour out His wrath on those who oppose Him. The ones who mourn in Zion will be given a garland (peer shaped head covering worn by priests) to cover their heads instead of ashes. We read from verse 4 that the cities of Israel will be rebuilt during Yahshua's millennial rule, as follows: ***'Then they will rebuild the ancient ruins, they will raise up the former devastations, and they will repair the ruined cities, the desolations of many generations.'***

Foreigners will serve the united nation of Israel (consisting of both the houses of Judah and Israel), by taking care of the farm

management, whilst those of us who make it into the kingdom of Elohim, will become priests of YHVH our Elohim, as we read from verses 5 & 6, like this: ***'And strangers will stand and pasture your flocks, and foreigners will be your farmers and your vinedressers. (6) But you will be called the priests of YHVH; you will be spoken of as ministers of our Elohim, you will eat the wealth of nations, and in their riches you will boast.'*** Those who make it into the kingdom will be given a double portion of blessings, and will enjoy the wealth of the nations as is confirmed in verse 7, in this way: ***'Instead of your shame you will have a double portion, and instead of humiliation they will shout for joy over their portion. Therefore they will possess a double portion in their land, everlasting joy will be theirs.'*** Because those who make it into the kingdom of Elohim, will obey Him from the heart and did not rob Him in the burnt offerings that they offered to Him, He will make an everlasting covenant - known as the Renewed Covenant with them, as is recorded in verse 8, as follows: ***'For I, YHVH, love justice, I hate robbery in the burnt offering; and I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.'*** We see from verse 9, that even the children and grand children of the first fruits will be treated as princes and princesses, like this: ***'Then their offspring will be known among the nations, and their descendants in the midst of the peoples. All who see them will recognize them because they are the offspring whom YHVH has blessed.'***

At that time the redeemed will express joy, because YHVH has saved us and dressed us in priestly garments, as we read from verse 10, as follows: ***'I will rejoice greatly in YHVH, my soul will exult in my Elohim; For He has clothed me with garments of salvation, He has wrapped me with a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.'*** After Yahshua's return, righteousness and praise resulting from the renewed covenant will spring up before the gentiles, as we read from verse 11, in this way: ***'For as the earth brings forth its sprouts, and as a garden causes the things sown in it to spring up, so YHVH Elohim will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations.'*** Reading from Isaiah 62: 1 to 3, we see that YHVH expressed His desire through the prophet Isaiah to make Jerusalem a lighthouse or model city in the world, as follows: ***'For Zion's sake I will not keep***

silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not keep quiet, until her righteousness goes forth like brightness, and her salvation like a torch that is burning. (2) And the nations will see your righteousness, and all kings your glory; and you will be called by a new name, which the mouth of YHVH will designate. (3) You will also be a crown of beauty in the hand of YHVH, and a royal diadem in the hand of your Elohim. The words 'My delight is in her' and 'married' in verse 4 indicates that Israel's close relationship with YHVH will once again be restored, in this way: '***It will no longer be said to you, "Forsaken," nor to your land will it any longer be said, "Desolate"; But you will be called, "My delight is in her," and your land, "Married"; For YHVH delights in you, and to Him your land will be married.***' The words 'your sons will marry you' in verse 5 shows the sense of occupying or possessing the city, as follows: '***For as a young man marries a virgin, so your sons will marry you; and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so your Elohim will rejoice over you.***'

In ancient times, the prophets of Israel constantly warned them, about looming trouble in the form of the paganism of the nations around them that could rub off on them, resulting in idolatry. At this time YHVH has appointed those of us whom He has called-out to follow His ways, as watchmen to preach the good news of the coming kingdom of Elohim, thus, reminding Him to once again make Jerusalem a praise in the earth, as we read from verse 6 & 7 in this way: '***On your walls, O Jerusalem, I have appointed watchmen; all day and all night they will never keep silent. You who remind YHVH, take no rest for yourselves; (7) And give Him no rest until He establishes and makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth.***' It is our duty to proclaim the coming kingdom of Elohim into the entire world, witnessing to the fact that Yahshua is soon coming to rule the world, with Jerusalem as His head quarters. We should also remind YHVH about His promise to make Jerusalem a praise in the earth, on an ongoing basis. But most of all, it is incumbent upon us as watchmen, to as we are told in Isaiah 58: 1, "***Cry loudly, do not hold back; raise your voice like a trumpet, and declare to My people their transgression, and to the house of Jacob their sins.***" Even though some accused us of preaching hatred in the past, Yahshua pointed out that our faith and what we preach will result in people hating us, as they hated Him. When Yahshua returns, the end of foreign domination over Jerusalem is assured, as

we read suitably from verses 8 & 9, as follows: ***‘YHVH has sworn by His right hand and by His strong arm, “I will never again give your grain as food for your enemies; nor will foreigners drink your new wine, for which you have labored.” (9) But those who garner it will eat it, and praise YHVH; And those who gather it will drink it in the courts of My sanctuary.’*** The words ‘courts of My Sanctuary’ here, is a reference to the millennial temple spoken about in Ezekiel 40 – 46.

Verses 10 & 11 talks about Yahshua’s first and second coming, but also reminds us that He is the standard against which we should measure ourselves, in this way: ***‘Go through, go through the gates; clear the way for the people; build up, build up the highway; remove the stones, lift up a standard over the peoples.’ (11) Behold, YHVH has proclaimed to the end of the earth, say to the daughter of Zion, “Lo, your salvation comes; behold His reward is with Him, and His recompense before Him.”*** Immediately prior to His final Passover, Yahshua entered the gates of Jerusalem on a donkey as per Matthew 21: 4 – 10, but will do so a second time when He comes to reward those who remained loyal, and to repay those who oppose Him. Talking about true believers, we read from verse 12, as follows: ***‘And they will call them, “The holy people, the redeemed of YHVH”; And you will be called, “Sought out, a city not forsaken.”*** People in the world like to be addressed by all sorts of fancy titles, acknowledging their achievements here on earth, but how much better will it be to have overcome Satan, the world and the self and be called *‘the set-apart people, the redeemed of YHVH’*. Think about it!

Yahshua is coming back to make war and judge a rebellious world. At that time He will destroy the nations who will gather around Jerusalem, ready to annihilate the Jewish nation in the middle-east, known as Israel. We read fittingly from Isaiah 63: 1, ***‘Who is this who comes from Edom, with garments of glowing colors from Bozrah, this One who is majestic in His apparel, marching in the greatness of His strength? It is I who speak in righteousness, mighty to save.’*** There is no doubt that this is talking about Yahshua our Savior, as we read from verses 2 – 3, in this way: ***‘Why is Your apparel red, and Your garments like the one who treads in the wine press? (3) I have trodden the wine trough alone, and from the peoples there was no man with Me.*** (Even though Yahshua

came in the form of a man, He had to be fully Elohim, to be able to redeem us from the power of the grave, as explained in Ps. 49: 7 & 15.) ***I also trod them in My anger, and trampled them in My wrath; and their lifeblood is sprinkled on My garments, and I stained all My raiment.*** At this point we also need to ask: Why will Yahshua come from Bozrah? Will He perhaps come through the ancient city of Edom in Southern Jordan to bring with Him the 144,000 (made up of 12,000 of each of the 12 tribes), mentioned in Revelation 7, who were taken to be there out of harm's way, during the tribulation? We do not know the answer, but should understand from verse 4 of Isaiah 63, ***'For the day of vengeance was in My heart, and My year of redemption has come.'*** The Messiah's reckoning with his enemies will coincide with the redemption of His people.

We need to understand that YHVH had no option; only He our Creator could redeem us from the penalty that we earned by disobeying His Torah teachings, as only His life was worth more than all of ours put together. That is why our salvation became a personal issue with Him, as may be understood from verses 5 to 8, in this way: ***And I looked, and there was no one to help, and I was astonished and there was no one to uphold; so My own arm brought salvation to Me; and My wrath upheld Me.*** (6) ***And I trod down the peoples in My anger, and made them drunk in My wrath, and I poured out their lifeblood on the earth.*** (7) ***I shall make mention of the loving kindnesses of YHVH, the praises of YHVH, according to all that YHVH has granted us, and the great goodness toward the house of Israel*** (Yahshua our Messiah came specifically for the house of Israel – to redeem us from the penalty due to us for disobeying Torah, and to be able to remarry us at His return, by dying in our stead), ***which He has granted them according to His compassion, and according to the multitude of His loving kindnesses.*** (8) ***For He said, "Surely, they are My people, sons who will not deal falsely." So He became their Savior.*** Yes, YHVH the one who is going to trample those who want to destroy Israel (Judah) also became our Savior. Most do not fully understand and appreciate what He has done for us. We read fittingly from verse 9, as follows: ***'In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them; In His love and in His mercy He redeemed them; and He lifted them and carried them all the days of old.'*** The angel of His presence who

saved us is the visible form of YHVH (or YHVH Himself) who wrestled with Jacob, as we read from Hosea 12: 4 & 5.

We start reading the Renewed Covenant portion from Romans 9: 30 & 31, like this: ***'What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, attained righteousness, even the righteousness which is by faith; (31) but Israel (Judah), pursuing a law of righteousness, did not arrive at that law.'*** Those of us called by Elohim to become first fruits, have started obeying His Torah teachings, because we have faith in Yahshua the salvation of YHVH; and since repentance is a process, YHVH is slowly busy writing His Torah on our hearts. However, Judah presently keeps the Law because it is in their documentation and as YHVH has written their sins on their hearts, they obey Torah, because of fear, as we read from Jeremiah 17: 1, as follows: ***'The sin of Judah is written down with an iron stylus; with a diamond point it is engraved upon the tablet of their heart, and on the horns of their altars.'*** When Yahshua returns YHVH will write His Torah on the hearts of all believers, as we are told in Jeremiah 31: 33. Our Jewish brothers are presently blinded to the identity of Yahshua and are keeping Torah, for the sake of (or rather to show their) good works, and not by faith, as confirmed in verses 32 & 33 of Romans 9, in this way: ***'Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as though it were by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone, (33) just as it is written, "BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENCE, AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED."*** Their fear of disobedience ensures that they are very meticulous about keeping the Oracles entrusted to them by Elohim²⁷. Even so, they are not the only ones who are stumbling over the identity of Yahshua, as there are many called out believers, who believe in two (YHVH)'s and fail to recognize that YHVH is our Messiah and Savior, who came in the

²⁷ Rav Shaul talking about the Oracles that Judah (his kinsmen who are blinded to Yahshua's identity) reserved for us in Romans 9: 3 - 5, in this way: ***'For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Messiah for the sake of my brethren, kinsmen according to the flesh, who are Israelites, to whom belongs the adoption as sons and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the temple services (i.e. the timing of such services) and the promises, whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Messiah according to the flesh, who is over all, Elohim blessed forever. Amen.'***

flesh as Yahshua the salvation of Yah, as previously confirmed in verse 8 of Isaiah 63.

Continuing in Romans 10: 1 – 3, Rav Shaul, talks about the Jews, being his blood relatives, as follows: ***‘Brethren, my heart’s desire and my prayer to Elohim for them (Judah) is for their salvation. (2) For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for Elohim, but not in accordance with knowledge. (3) For not knowing about Elohim’s righteousness, and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of Elohim.’*** Because of fear, the Jews have an almost mechanical view of Torah and do not fully understand Elohim’s righteousness. They keep Torah without much thought and because they try to establish their own righteousness, they do not subject themselves to Elohim’s righteousness. At this time they do not fully understand that without Yahshua, who is (the way) the truth (and the life), we have no righteousness. He is the goal of the Torah for those who believe, as is recorded in verse 4, like this: ***‘For Messiah is the end (goal) of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.’*** Those who are truly converted will want to obey Torah, because they came to love YHVH from their hearts. They studied His word and realized what He, their Creator and Savior has accomplished for them, resulting in their obedience to show Him that they love Him. It does not mean that the Law was done away with, but the difference is that we want to obey YHVH because we have come to know Him and therefore love Him. It is as we read from verses 5 – 10, in this way: ***‘For Moses writes that the man who practices the righteousness which is based on law shall live by that righteousness. (6) But the righteousness based on faith speaks thus, “DO NOT SAY IN YOUR HEART, ‘WHO WILL ASCEND INTO HEAVEN?’ (that is, to bring Messiah down), (7) or ‘WHO WILL DESCEND INTO THE ABYSS?’ (that is, to bring Messiah up from the dead).” (8) But what does it say? “THE WORD IS NEAR YOU, IN YOUR MOUTH AND IN YOUR HEART”– that is, the word of faith which we are preaching, (9) that if you confess with your mouth Yahshua as Master (MarYah in Aramaic, meaning YHVH), and believe in your heart that Elohim raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved; (10) for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.’***

We do not need Doctorate Degrees from the best University in the world to understand these things, but those of us who have been immersed into Yahshua's saving Name will understand, because after immersion and the laying on of hands, we received the Set-apart Spirit, as Yahshua promised in John 14: 26 (and Act 2: 38 – not quoted here), as follows: ***“But the Helper, the Set-apart Spirit. Whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.”*** As a result it is easy for us to understand the truth recorded in verses 11 & 12, as follows: ***‘For the Scripture says, “WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED.” (12) For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Master is Master of all, abounding in riches for all who call upon Him; (13) for “WHOEVER WILL CALL UPON THE NAME OF YHVH WILL BE SAVED.”’*** Believe in Yahshua the salvation of YHVH, also entails that we believe in what He taught whilst He was on earth. Our salvation is not only depended on what we know, but also on Who we know.

Hosea 14: 2 – 10 & Hebrews 13: 5 – 8; Matthew 28: 16 – 20.

This Haftarah portion is read with Torah portions Va-Yelech (Deuteronomy 31: 1 to 30) and Renewed Covenant portions Hebrews 13: 5 – 8 & Matthew 28: 16 – 20. Whereas the Torah portion deals with the time just prior to Israel entering the promised land, with Moses assuring them that YHVH will go before them, the haftarah portion, read on the Sabbath before Yom Kippur (Atonement) known as Shabbat Shuvah, persuades Israel to return in repentance to YHVH and the way things were during the first week of creation.

Commencing in Hosea 14: 2, we read: ***‘Take words with you and return to YHVH. Say to Him. “Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously, that we may present the fruit of our lips.”*** The prophet encourages Israel to take words, meaning Torah and to return to YHVH in repentance; to reflect on the commandments that they have transgressed; confess their sins and return to Him in obedience to His teachings. This is a call for all Israel to return to our heritage - It is time to realize that those who captured us, cannot save us, as we read from verse 3, as follows: ***‘Assyria will not save us, we will not ride on horses; nor will we say again, ‘Our god,’ to the work of our hands; for in Thee the orphan finds mercy.’***

Not many years from today, the oil which we have come to rely upon so much will be depleted. The transport so essential to our economies will grind to a halt. So will all the gadgets that we came to depend on with our lives, come to and end. It is too late to turn around - even if we try to prevent it from happening. Mr. Al Gore, the man who I believe should have become the President of the United States a few years ago, and was swindled out of victory by George Bush at that time, is doing a sterling job in trying to get world government leaders to work on a strategy, to at least try and preserve some of the blessings that we have experienced and destroyed, for our children. However, honorable as his attempts are, it is all in vain: YHVH has given mankind a period of six thousand years, to prove to ourselves that life without Him is meaningless. His plan of salvation, depicted by His annual Set-apart Days, tells us that He is about to intervene in our lives. Suddenly all of what we have become so accustomed to will disappear; we will not ride on horses, or on motorbikes, or in cars any longer. Our manmade idols will be useless, and cannot save us. Throughout the Scriptures, Elohim

demands mercy for the orphan, consequently Israel is assured of His compassion.

We need to repent and return to the way of Elohim, because He is our Father and is prepared to forgive us, as we read from verses 4 to 8, in this way: ***'I will heal their apostasy, I will love them freely, for My anger has turned away from them. (5) I will be like the dew to Israel; he will blossom like the lily, and he will take root like the cedars of Lebanon. (6) His shoots will sprout, and his beauty will be like the olive tree, and his fragrance like the cedars of Lebanon. (7) Those who live in his shadow will again raise grain, and they will blossom like the vine. His renown will be like the wine of Lebanon. (8) O Ephraim, what more have I to do with idols? It is I who answer and look after you. I am like a luxuriant cypress, from Me comes your fruit.'*** The ultimate fulfillment of this prophecy will be millennial, since all of Israel has not repented at this time. YHVH is only calling a remnant from the lost ten tribes, scattered throughout the nations of the world, to repent and follow Him. If those of us called at this time, overcome Satan, the world and the self, we will become kings and priests under Yahshua to rule those who survive the great tribulation and live on during the millennium. Elohim's love for His people is beautifully expressed here in metaphors of the lily, the wine of the Lebanon and the olive tree. As explained in verse 8, YHVH and not idols will take care of the united Israel – He, and not Israel or Judah, is the tree providing both shelter and prosperity.

Verse 9 is an epilogue to the theme of the book of Hosea; namely Elohim's love for His covenant people, in spite of their apostasy. Hosea concludes his prophecy by presenting his audience with two ways of life; he pleads with them to make a wise decision, and choose the way of Elohim, as follows: ***'Whoever is wise, let him understand these things; whoever is discerning, let him know them. For the ways of YHVH are right, and the righteous will walk in them, but transgressors will stumble in them.'*** We need to get away from evil, by refraining from sin, which is simply the transgression of the Law, and start doing good. This will bring us back to our roots, or the faith of our fathers in the faith.

We start reading the first Renewed Covenant portion from Hebrews 13: 5, in this way: ***‘Let your character be free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, “I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU,”***” Lusting after material wealth and created things is the root of most evils. It is like an idol, taking up the time and energy of many in an effort to obtain it; their longing to have riches have caused many to wander away from the faith once delivered to the ecclesia. We as believers should be content in every situation we find ourselves, because Yahshua promised that He will never desert us. Continuing in verse 6 we are further assured of Elohim’s concern for us, as follows: ***‘so that we confidently say, “YHVH IS MY HELPER, I WILL NOT BE AFRAID. WHAT SHALL MAN DO TO ME?”***” The prophet urges us in verse 7, to remember those who taught us the truths that we know today, as follows: ***‘Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of Elohim to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith.’*** When my wife and I got married, we attended a little church with friendly people who believed the many falsehoods taught them by their deceived ministers. At the same time a friend of mine, subscribed me to a magazine called the ‘Plain Truth’ which eventually resulted in us becoming Nazarene Jews/Israelites, to follow the way of Elohim ever since (about 38 years in all). I will always be thankful to the organization who published that Magazine, as it is through them that we were called out of the darkness of the world into Elohim’s marvelous light. Even though many have tried to speak evil about the then leader of that organization, I will for ever be thankful to YHVH for letting my path cross with them. Unfortunately, like with any other group who wanted to follow the way of Elohim, Satan and his agents, did everything in their power to finally destroy what that group stood for, because of (what I believe to be) anti-Semitism. I am told that the Seventh Day Adventist Church is currently under the same attack, for keeping only one commandment (namely the Sabbath) different to what nominal Christianity does.

However, YHVH gave us a perfect example in Yahshua of how to conduct our lives. He confirmed in Matthew 5: 17 – 19, that He did not come to abolish the Torah or the Prophets, but to make it more binding, showing us how to keep it, with a Spiritual intent. He laid down His life for His people and became a sacrifice for our past lawlessness. That was the only part of the law that He effectively

fulfilled, doing away with the requirement to sacrifice the blood of animals every time we transgress the law. The law of clean and unclean foods given in Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14 are still in effect. The laws concerning Elohim's weekly and annual Sabbaths, as given in Leviticus 23, are still in effect. The law of not eating fat or blood is still applicable. All the sexual laws are still in force. Yahshua is the embodiment of the law; He is the word of Elohim; so why will He want to do away with Himself. Why will the one who gave us these laws for our own good, want to destroy it. YHVH set the law of gravity in motion, and that is as we know still in force today (see Hebrews 1: 3). Rav Shaul said that the commandments are just, good and perfect as may be read in Romans 7: 12. In his writings he concluded that the law is Spiritual and can therefore not be destroyed (as per Romans 7: 14). In addition we know that Yahshua did not change His mind after His impalement, and as we read from verse 6 of Hebrews 13, ***'Yahshua Messiah is the same yesterday and today, yes and forever.'***

Before getting to the second Renewed Covenant portion, it is necessary to repeat part of a previous teaching; The reason being that there are Messianic/Nazarene Israelites believers who at times want to know, who gave people like me the right to teach others the truths that we learnt from those who came before us. To begin with, we need to realize that Yahshua did not start a church as some believe, but continued with a discipleship program similar to the Rabbis before Him. After His immersion at around age 30, He became a Torah teacher and taught His Jewish disciples and other people from the Tenach. His disciples called Him Master (or Rabbi), even though He like other first century Rabbis, were not ordained like the ministers or clergymen of today: They were not on the payroll of a synagogue, but instead practiced a trade to support their own teaching ministries. An example being Rav Shaul; he chose to be a tent maker rather than to accept donations from his students. Yahshua taught in local synagogues, as we read in Luke 4: 16, as follows: ***'And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up; and as was His custom, He entered the synagogue on the Sabbath and stood up and read.'*** We see from the first four books of the Renewed Covenant that Yahshua taught in the Temple during the Festivals; one example being in John 10, where He attended the Feast of Dedication (a minor Festival) in Jerusalem. The Rabbi-disciple method of teaching Torah, where the knowledge of Elohim is

taught by one generation to the next, was originally instituted by Moses, when he taught Joshua. Teachers of each generation were delegated to raise-up disciples and future teachers for the next generation. A Rabbi like Yahshua, dedicated to conveying the knowledge of Elohim, explained the Torah in practical terms and even though His interpretation of Torah was at times at odds with other Rabbis of His day, He never abolished the Torah teachings of Elohim.

Other than with His peers, Yahshua taught in His own authority. His messages were mainly focused on the coming kingdom of Elohim and were often accompanied by miracles which validated his claim to be one with the Father. YHVH calls us to become students of Yahshua, as Yahshua did His first century disciples. Yes, He is our Savior, but He wants us to get to know Him as our Teacher or Rabbi. As Yahshua's students or disciples we need to commit our lives to Him and get to know what He taught and practiced whilst He was on earth, and then do likewise. We read about Yahshua's disciples, just prior to His return to heaven in Matthew 28: 16 & 17, like this: ***'But the eleven disciples proceeded to Galilee, to the mountain which Yahshua had designated. (17) And when they saw Him, they worshipped Him; but some were doubtful.'*** We see here that some of the disciples, whom Yahshua personally chose at that time, still did not believe that He was Elohim, and were doubtful about worshipping Him. Nothing has changed, since there are many amongst us who are still doubtful. Even though it is not wrong to worship Yahshua, He said in John 15: 16, ***"You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and appointed that you should bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask of the Father in My name, He may give to you."*** It is for that reason that we pray to the Father in and through the name of Yahshua the Messiah.

Continuing in Matthew 28: 18 – 20, we read about the commission that Yahshua gave His disciples, and by implication us, His modern day disciples, as follows: ***'And Yahshua came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority (The KJV reads 'power') has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. (19) Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, immersing them in the name (one name) of the Father and the Son and the Set-apart Spirit, (20) teaching them to observe all that I command you; and lo, I am with you***

always, even to the end of the age.’ Once we are familiar with the teachings of Yahshua, and have practiced the same for a number of years, He expects us to become teachers, in order to ensure that His ecclesia will continue, until He returns one day. In accordance with the commission Yahshua gave us, the teachers who immersed us are also responsible to teach us what they have learnt from their teachers. The role and purpose of teachers, are given in Ephesians 4: 11 -13, as follows: ***‘And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, (12) for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Messiah; (13) until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of Elohim, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Messiah.’*** So there you have it – after you have learnt and practice Torah for a number of years, by eating only kosher food, keeping the Sabbath and Feast Days of Elohim, wearing Tzi-tzit and if you are a gentleman, to eventually be circumcised in the flesh (if you were not circumcised as a child); you are also commissioned to immerse and teach new believers called into His ecclesia by YHVH.

2 Samuel 22: 1 – 51 & Romans 10: 14 – 21.

This Haftarah portion is read with Torah portion Ha'Azinu (Deuteronomy 32: 1 - 52) and Renewed Covenant portion Romans 10: 14 – 21. Whereas the Torah portion contains the song which Moses wrote to glorify Elohim, for bringing Israel out of Egypt and to the threshold of the Promised Land, the haftarah contains the song which David spoke to YHVH in the day that He delivered him from the hand of his enemies and from King Saul.

We start reading from verse 1 of 2 Samuel 22, in this way: ***'And David spoke the words of this song to YHVH in the day that YHVH delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul.'*** David wrote this song near the end of his life, when YHVH blessed him with a settled kingdom and promised him the Messianic seed to rule from his throne. Continuing from verses 2 – 4, we read: ***'And he said, "YHVH is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; (3) My Elohim, my rock, in whom I take refuge; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold and my refuge; My savior, Thou dost save me from violence.'*** (4) ***I call upon YHVH, who is worthy to be praised; and I am saved from my enemies.'*** This introduction of David's song contains a summary of the entire psalm, as David praises YHVH for His defense, refuge and deliverance, during his life experiences. David uses the word 'rock' here to refer to the steadfastness and permanence of Elohim. He also refers to YHVH as his 'shield' which is transliterated as 'magen' in Hebrew. For the sake of interest, we see that David identified YHVH as his shield or the Magen David; We also know that our Jewish brothers refer to the six pointed star on the Israeli flag as the Magen David. Even so, we are commanded in Exodus 20: 4 & 5, not to worship created things such as stars, but need to be mindful of Yahshua's words in Revelation 22: 16, where He says: ***"I, Yahshua, have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the ecclesia. I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright morning star."*** When Messiah returns, He will be like the morning star that shatters the darkness of the world and heralds the dawn of Elohim's glorious day. However, let's remember that this is only an allegory - and we do not worship anything, but YHVH our Elohim.

In verses 5 – 7 David describes how he cried to Elohim in the midst of his distress, as follows: ***'For the waves of death encompassed***

me; the torrents of destruction overwhelmed me; (6) The cords of Sheol surrounded me; The snares of death confronted me. (7) In my distress I called upon YHVH, yes, I cried to Elohim; and from His temple He heard my voice, and my cry for help came into His ears.' David pictures death as floods of water ready to overtake him and as traps set by a hunter to confront him. David faced death when pursued by Saul, by his son Absalom and during conditions of war, but when He cried out to Elohim, YHVH heard him in His heavenly temple. In verses 8 – 16 David reaffirms the majesty of Elohim, by describing His coming in power from heaven to earth, in this way: **'Then the earth shook and quaked, the foundations of heaven were trembling and were shaken, because He was angry. (9) Smoke went up out of His nostrils, and fire from His mouth devoured; coals were kindled by it. (10) He bowed the heavens also, and came down with thick darkness under His feet. (11) And He rode on a cherub and flew; and He appeared on the wings of the wind. (12) And He made darkness canopies around Him a mass of waters, thick clouds of the sky. (13) From the brightness before Him coals of fire were kindled. (14) YHVH thundered from heaven, and the Most High uttered His voice. (15) And He sent out arrows, and scattered them, lightning, and routed them. (16) Then the channels of the sea appeared, the foundations of the world were laid bare, by the rebuke of YHVH, at the blast of the breath of His nostrils.'** As seen in verse 14, Job in Job 37: 2 also refers to thunder as the voice of YHVH.

However, we notice that in these few verses, David compares His eventful life to the events resulting from Lucifer's rebellion, when YHVH caused a catastrophe to thwart his plan to take over the throne of Elohim in the third heaven, as recorded in Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28. This same catastrophe is spoken about in Job 38; in verse 8 we read about the control of violent waters; verse 9 mentions a dense cloud covering and darkness; and verse 13 talks about the shaking of the earth to deal with the wicked. In Psalm 18: 7 as here in the song of David, we read that the earth shook and quaked and went out of course and in Jeremiah 4: 23 we see that the earth became formless and void and the heavens had no light. Rav Kepha in 2 Peter 3: 5 & 6 wrote: **'For when they maintain this, it escapes their notice that by the word of Elohim the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and by water, (6) through which the world at that time was destroyed, being**

flooded with water. When Lucifer rebelled against YHVH, He had to bring judgment upon him (Lucifer) and as a result the contaminated earth perished. In addition, the earth's axial position in reference to its journey around the sun shifted by more than 23 degrees, causing a pendulum effect to the waters of the earth, moving it to and fro, until it eventually came to rest. Evidence of animal hordes and plant fragments destroyed by these swirling waters, submerged the continents with animal fossils and destroyed plant life which bears witness to the earth's shaking catastrophe. In Noah's day the world was not destroyed and the ark drifted only a few hundred miles without sails. But this catastrophe caused by Lucifer's rebellion carried masses of ice and rock for thousands of kilometers and is known by geologists as the last Ice Age. All life forms perished and the earth became formless and void, the condition we find it in, when opening our Scriptures in Genesis 1: 2, when YHVH decided to recreate the heavens and the earth.

Personalizing what he just said in verses 8 – 16, David explained in verses 17 – 20 how Elohim reached down from heaven to save him here on earth, as follows: ***'He sent from on high, He took me; He drew me out of many waters. (18) He delivered me from my strong enemy, from those who hated me, for they were too strong for me. (19) They confronted me in the day of my calamity, but YHVH was my support. (20) He also brought me forth into a broad place; He rescued me, because He delighted in me.'*** David indicates that YHVH was pleased with him, providing a prologue for verses 22 – 28, in which David described the basis of Elohim's saving deliverance. Even though David was not claiming to be blameless in any way, but believed that Elohim, considered him to be righteous because of his faith and desire to please Him, and thus, compared to his enemies, he was blameless, as we read from verses 21 – 25: ***'YHVH has rewarded me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands He has recompensed me. (22) For I have kept the ways of YHVH, and have not acted wickedly against my Elohim. (23) For all His ordinances were before me; and as for His statutes, I did not depart from them. (24) I was also blameless toward Him and I kept myself from my iniquity. (25) Therefore YHVH has recompensed me according to my righteousness, according to my cleanness before His eyes.'***

We read from verses 26 – 28, how David describes the basic principles that YHVH follows, when judging people, as follows: ***'With the kind Thou dost show Thyself kind, with the blameless Thou dost show Thyself blameless; (27) With the pure Thou dost show Thyself pure, and with the perverted thou dost show Thyself astute. (28) And Thou dost save an afflicted people; but Thine eyes are on the haughty whom Thou dost abase.'*** We understand from verse 28, that YHVH saves the humble, but humbles those who are arrogant. We read from verse 29, that David is the lamp of Israel, as much as YHVH was David's light source, like this: ***'For Thou art my lamp, O YHVH; and YHVH illumines my darkness.'*** David tells us here and in verses 30 – 37 that he was empowered by Elohim, in this way: ***'For by Thee I can run upon a troop; by my Elohim I can leap over a wall. (31) As for Elohim, His way is blameless; the word of YHVH is tested; He is a shield to all who take refuge in Him. (32) For who is Elohim, besides YHVH? And who is a rock, besides our Elohim? (33) Elohim is my strong fortress; and He sets the blameless in His way. (34) He makes my feet like hinds' feet, and sets me on my high places. (35) He trains my hands for battle, so that my arms can bend a bow of bronze. (36) Thou hast also given me the shield of Thy salvation, and Thy help makes me great. (37) Thou dost enlarge my steps under me, and my feet have not slipped.'***

It was because of Elohim's help that David was able to destroy his enemies in Israel, as we read from verses 38 – 43, as follows: ***'I pursued my enemies and destroyed them, and I did not turn back until they were consumed. (39) And I have devoured them and shattered them, so that they did not rise; and they fell under my feet. (40) For Thou hast girded me with strength for battle; Thou hast subdued under me those who rose up against me. (41) Thou hast also made my enemies turn their backs to me, and I destroyed those who hated me. (42) They looked, but there was none to save; even to YHVH, but He did not answer them. (43) Then I pulverized them as the dust of the earth, I crushed and stamped them as the mire of the streets.'*** But continuing from verses 44 – 46 we read that YHVH also helped David to overcome his enemies outside Israel, like this: ***'Thou hast also delivered me from the contentions of my people; Thou hast kept me as head of the nations; a people whom I have not known serve me. (45) Foreigners pretend obedience to me; as soon as they hear, they***

obey me. (46) *Foreigners lose heart, and come trembling out of their fortresses.*'

David continues to praise YHVH for saving Him in the remainder of the chapter, as we read from verses 47 – 51, as follows: ***'YHVH lives, and blessed be my rock; and exalted be Elohim, the rock of my salvation, (48) the Elohim who executes vengeance for me, and brings down peoples under me, (49) who also brings me out from my enemies; Thou dost even lift me above those who rise up against me; Thou dost rescue me from the violent man. (50) Therefore I will give thanks to Thee, O YHVH, among the nations, and I will sing praises to Thy name. (51) He is a tower of deliverance to His king, and shows loving kindness to His anointed, to David and his descendants forever.'*** The terms *'His king'* and *'His anointed'* are singular and does not refer to David and his descendants, but rather to his promised descendant Messiah. David's deliverance and ultimate triumph foreshadows the coming Messiah. At the close of his life, David looked back in faith at Elohim's promises and forward in hope to their fulfillment in the coming future king, the anointed one.

We start reading the Renewed Covenant portion from Romans 10: 14: ***'How then shall they call upon Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?*** To fully understand what is being discussed here, we need go back to verse 13, where we read: ***'for "WHOEVER WILL CALL UPON THE NAME OF YHVH WILL BE SAVED."*** From this we understand the question asked in verse 14 to be: How will those who do not know or believe in the Name of YHVH call upon His name – not realizing that His Name is not G-d? Will He overlook their ignorance? This is why we need teachers who came through the Teacher/Discipleship program started by Moses, and continued by Yahshua, to teach us the things that Yahshua taught His original disciples. We see from reading John 17: 25 & 26, that Yahshua made the name of YHVH known to His disciples, as follows: ***"O righteous Father, although the world has not known Thee, yet I have known Thee; and these have known that Thou didst send Me; (26) and I have made Thy name known to them, and will make it known; that the love wherewith Thou dist love Me may be in them, and I in them."***

Continuing in verse 15, we read: ***‘And how shall they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, “HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THOSE WHO BRING GLAD TIDINGS OF GOOD THINGS!”*** This verse is quoted from Isaiah 52: 7, and is talking about those whom YHVH called to eventually become teachers to proclaim the good news of His coming kingdom into the entire world. We are assured in Jeremiah 33: 20 – 22, that as much as Elohim’s Sabbath Day will always be at the same time so will He always provide descendants for David and Levitical priests to serve Him as ministers (or teachers), as follows: ***“Thus says YHVH, ‘if you can break My covenant for the day, and My covenant for the night, so that day and night will not be at their appointed time, (21) then My covenant may also be broken with David My servant that he shall not have a son to reign on his throne, and with the Levitical priests, My ministers. (22) ‘As the host of heaven cannot be counted, and the sand of the sea cannot be measured, so I will multiply the descendants of David My servant and the Levites who minister to Me.”*** Even so, there are only a few from the house of Israel who believe the good news about the coming kingdom of Elohim, as we read from verse 16: ***‘However, they did not all heed the glad tidings; for Isaiah says, “YHVH, WHO HAS BELIEVED OUR REPORT?”’*** But, even if most in Judah believe the good news about the coming kingdom of Elohim, including the resurrection of the dead and the coming of a Messiah to rule the world from Jerusalem²⁸, they are totally oblivious of the identity of Yahshua the Messiah, as indicated by the above question quoted from Isaiah 53: 1. The problem is as explained in verse 17, like this: ***‘So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Messiah.’*** The question is: How many truly heard and understood the word of Messiah? How many in Christianity really believe the true gospel? The majority of Christianity believe a ‘gospel’ about the person of Messiah, and since they have been deceived to believe

²⁸ Quoting from ‘A Concise Encyclopedia of Judaism’ about the Pharisees, we read: ***‘A Religious sect of the Second Temple period. The Pharisees are first mentioned c. 160BCE. Their name means ‘the separated ones’, and they were scrupulous in their observance of the WRITTEN and ORAL LAW. They taught in the SYNAGOGUES and their beliefs, particularly in the RESURRECTION of the dead and the coming of the MESSIAH, influenced the majority of the Jewish nation. After the destruction of the TEMPLE in 70 CE, the SACRIFICIAL system came to an end, and the Pharisees became the dominant group in the Jewish community.’***

that good people go to heaven at death, and wicked people go to hell to be tormented for ever, they do not believe the gospel of the coming kingdom of Elohim. But we see according to Roman 11: 5, that only a relatively small number of Gentiles (Israelites who have lost their identity and believe they are Gentiles, plus a few real Gentiles) will be called at this time, as follows ***'In the same way then, there has also come to be at the present time a remnant according to Elohim's gracious choice.'***

So on the one hand we have the Jews who believe the gospel about the coming kingdom of Elohim, under a Messiah, but are totally unaware that Yahshua is that Messiah, and on the other hand we have Christianity who believe that Yahshua (the one they call J*e*s*u*s) is their savior, and because they were deceived, they do not believe the gospel about the coming kingdom of Elohim, right here on earth. Yahshua is our Savior, but He is also our Master (Teacher or Rabbi) and will return one day soon to come and rule us as our King and High Priest. The true faith is Judaism, i.e. belief in YHVH, knowing that Yahshua the Messiah is YHVH in the flesh, who died for the sins of the world, and to remarry His bride, and will after His return rule the world from Jerusalem. However, let's at this point return to Romans 10: 18, where we read: ***'But I say, surely they have never heard, have they? Indeed they have; "THEIR VOICE HAS GONE OUT INTO ALL THE EARTH, AND THEIR WORDS TO THE ENDS OF THE WORLD.'*** Rav Shaul cited this quotation from Psalm 19 to show that even David understood that Elohim's revelation of Himself has reached the entire earth. This is also confirmed in Colossians 1: 5 & 6, in this way: ***'Because of the hope laid up for you in heaven, of which you previously heard in the word of truth, the gospel, (6) which has come to you, just as in all the world also it is constantly bearing fruit and increasing, even as it has been doing in you also since the day you heard of it and understood the grace of Elohim in truth.'***

Continuing in verse 19, we read Rav Shaul's next question and explanation, as follows: ***'But I say, surely Israel did not know, did they? At the first Moses says, "I WILL MAKE YOU JEALOUS BY THAT WHICH IS NOT A NATION, BY A NATION WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING WILL I ANGER YOU.'*** The words *'that which is not a nation'* here refers to the Israelites who were scattered into all the nations of the world, and do not know their identity any longer.

This is in fact talking about us the remnant of the lost ten tribes, called out by YHVH, to make our Jewish brothers jealous, by keeping the same Torah that they do, with the understanding that Yahshua is the Messiah who is coming to rule us from Jerusalem. We read accordingly from verses 20 & 21: ***‘And Isaiah is very bold and says, “I WAS FOUND BY THOSE WHO SOUGHT ME NOT, I BECAME MANIFEST TO THOSE WHO DID NOT ASK FOR ME.”*** (21) ***But as for Israel He says, “ALL THE DAY LONG I HAVE STRETCHED OUT MY HANDS TO A DISOBEDIENT AND OBSTINATE PEOPLE.”*** I trust that this gives you a much better understanding of why we should defend and encourage brother Judah, until Messiah comes to them on Yom Teruah (Rosh Hashanah) one day, and when they will see His hands, repent and also accept Him as their Messiah and King. Not only will the true Messiah be revealed to them, but their brother Joseph or Ephraim (a name used in the Scriptures for the lost ten tribes), will also be revealed to them on that day. Baruch HaShem YHVH!

Joshua 1: 1 – 18 & Matthew 17: 1 – 9; Jude 1: 8 – 9.

This Haftarah portion is read with Torah portion V'zot Ha B'rachah (Deuteronomy 33: 1 to 34: 12); and Renewed Covenant portions Matthew 17: 1 - 9 and Jude 1: 8 & 9. Whereas in the final Torah portion, Moses blessed the twelve tribes before they entered into the promised land; YHVH showed him the promised land from mount Nebo, after which Moses died and is buried in the valley in the land of Moab, without anybody knowing the place of his burial; the haftarah portion is about the Israelites entering the promised land with Joshua the son of Nun. We also read in the final Torah portion that Joshua was specially prepared to take over from Moses, by receiving the spirit of wisdom.

We start reading from Joshua 1: 1 & 2, as follows: ***'Now it came about after the death of Moses the servant of YHVH that YHVH spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' servant saying, (2) Moses My servant is dead; now therefore arise, cross this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them, to the sons of Israel.'*** Here YHVH uses the same words that He spoke to Abraham when He reaffirmed the everlasting covenant that He made with him. We see that the borders of the promised land is far larger than the small piece of land known as Israel today, as we read from verses 3 & 4, in this way: ***'Every place on which the sole of your foot treads, I have given it to you, just as I spoke to Moses. (4) From the wilderness and this Lebanon, even as far as the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and as far as the Great Sea toward the setting of the sun, will be your territory.'*** The borders of the promised Land are the Mediterranean seacoast in the west, the Euphrates river in the east, the wilderness to the south of the Nile of Egypt and the Lebanon in the north. In verses 5 & 6 Joshua is again assured of Elohim's help and support in the battle before him, in this way: ***'No man will be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I have been with Moses, I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you. (6) Be strong and courageous, for you shall give this people possession of the land which I swore to their fathers to give them.'*** The strength and courage of those who fight for Israel comes from knowing that Elohim is with them and would not forsake them. Moses repeated these words to Joshua in the presence of the

nation, to encourage him and to remind him that his leadership carried the full approval of Elohim.

These same words are again repeated in verses 7 - 9 to Joshua by YHVH, with the condition that he keeps the commandments given to Moses as follows: ***'Only be strong and very courageous; be careful to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, so that you may have success wherever you go. (8) This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success. (9) Have I commanded you? Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed, for YHVH your Elohim is with you wherever you go.'*** The book of the Law refers to the five books of the Torah which YHVH gave to Moses on Mount Sinai. YHVH promised Joshua His blessings for the responsibility that He has given him to lead the nation into the Promised Land. The belief that YHVH is with us is essential to every spiritual endeavor that we undertake, and the same staying competence was also present in Abraham and Moses. We consequently read about Joshua's actions in verses 10 – 15, in this way: ***'Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, saying, (11) Pass through the midst of the camp and command the people, saying, 'Prepare provisions for yourselves, for within three days you are to cross this Jordan, to go in to possess the land which YHVH your Elohim is giving you, to possess it.'*** (12) ***And to the Reubenites and to the Gadites and to the half-tribe of Manasseh, Joshua said, (13) Remember the word which Moses the servant of YHVH commanded you, saying, 'YHVH your Elohim gives you rest, and will give you this land.'*** (14) ***Your wives, your little ones, and your cattle shall remain in the land which Moses gave you beyond the Jordan, but you shall cross before your brothers in battle array, all your valiant warriors, and shall help them, (15) until YHVH gives your brothers rest, as He gives you, and they also possess the land which YHVH your Elohim is giving them. Then you shall return to your own land, and possess that which Moses the servant of YHVH gave you beyond the Jordan toward the sunrise.'***

Jacob blessed the sons of Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh in Genesis 48, so that here as since the 18th century they actually received a double portion of the blessings, allowing for 12 allotments of the land, with Levi being excluded because of their spiritual duties. We see that YHVH gave the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half tribe of Manasseh the land directly across the Jordan river on the east. However, it was their duty to assist the other tribes to invade and secure their portions of the land, as they replied to Joshua in verses 16 – 18, as follows: ***‘And they answered Joshua, saying, “All that you have commanded us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go. (17) Just as we obeyed Moses in all things, so we will obey you; only may YHVH your Elohim be with you, as He was with Moses. (18) Anyone who rebels against your command and does not obey your words in all that you command him, shall be put to death; only be strong and courageous.”’***

We read the first Renewed Covenant portion from Matthew 17: 1 & 2, in this way: ***‘And six days later Yahshua took with Him Peter and James and John his brother, and brought them up to a high mountain by themselves. (2) And He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light.’*** The reference to the number of days that elapsed from the time of Yahshua’s promise in Matthew 16: 28, saying that some of the disciples would be alive to see Him coming to His kingdom, referred to the six thousand years of mankind’s mismanagement, before He will return to rule us from Jerusalem. But His actual statement came true in that He underwent a dramatic change in appearance, so the three disciples saw Him in His kavod or Shechinah glory and in this way He also showed them what He would look like when He returns one day, as pictured in Revelation 1: 14 & 15, as follows: ***‘And His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire, (15) and His feet were like burnished bronze, when it has been caused to glow in a furnace, and His voice was like the sound of many waters.’*** Continuing from verse 3 of Matthew 17, we read: ***‘And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him.’*** The question is: Why did Moses and Elijah appear with Yahshua? Both Moses and Elijah prophesied about Yahshua and together the three, represented the authenticity of the Scriptures that

we have available to us today; Moses represented the Torah, Elijah the prophets and Yahshua the Renewed Covenant.

We read further from verse 4, ***'And Peter answered and said to Yahshua, "Master, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, I will make three tabernacles here, one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah."*** This was undoubtedly a reference to the Feast of Tabernacles, which pictures the millennium during which Yahshua will come into His kingdom, and when both Moses and Elijah will fulfill major roles. We read about the dramatic incident that followed from verse 5, as follows: ***'While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and behold, a voice out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!"'*** This calls to mind Moses' prophesy about Yahshua in Deuteronomy 18: 18 & 19, in this way: ***'I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. (19) And it shall come about that whoever will not listen to My words which he shall speak in My name, I Myself will require it of him.'*** Both Moses and Elijah prophesied about Yahshua and at that time Peter incorrectly assumed that Moses and Elijah was on par with Yahshua, but when he and the other disciples heard the Father's voice, they became afraid as we read from verse 6 of Matthew 17, ***'And when the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces and were much afraid. (7) And Yahshua came to them and touched them and said, "Arise, and do not be afraid."*** His disciples fell down when they realized that the Creator of the universe was present with them.

We read the same account recorded by Luke in chapter 9: 32 – 35, as follows: ***Now Peter and his companions had been overcome with sleep; but when they were fully awake, they saw His glory and the two men standing with Him. (33) And it came about, as these were parting from Him, Peter said to Yahshua, "Master, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles: one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah"- not realizing what he was saying. (34) And while he was saying this, a cloud formed and began to overshadow them; and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. (35) And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My Son. My Chosen One; Listen to Him!"'*** Notice again the cloud that formed and covered the disciples

here. We conclude this portion by reading verses 8 & 9 of Matthew 17, in this way: ***'And lifting up their eyes, they saw no one, except Yahshua Himself alone. (9) And as they were coming down from the mountain, Yahshua commanded them, saying, "Tell the vision to no one until the Son of Man has risen from the dead."***

Before moving on, we need to look at an alleged anomaly in the Scriptures which is often cited when reading about the transfiguration of Messiah. Let's turn to 2 Kings 2: 8 – 11, where we read the following about Elijah: ***'And Elijah took his mantle and folded it together and struck the waters, and they were divided here and there, so that the two of them crossed over on dry ground. (9) Now it came about when they had crossed over, that Elijah said to Elisha, "Ask what I shall do for you before I am taken from you." And Elisha said, "Please, let a double portion of your spirit be upon me." (10) And he said, "You have asked a hard thing, Nevertheless, if you see me when I am taken from you, it shall be so for you; but if not, it shall not be so." (11) Then it came about as they were going along and talking, that behold, there appeared a chariot of fire and horses of fire which separated the two of them. And Elijah went up by a whirlwind to heaven.'*** For many centuries people have been taught that Elijah was taken from this planet to the realm where Elohim lives and from which He rules, even though the Scriptures clearly states that no one except Messiah has ascended into the heaven where Elohim's throne is located, as we read from John 3: 13, as follows: ***'And no one has ascended into heaven, but He who descended from heaven, even the Son of Man.'*** Do we believe Yahshua the word of Elohim? But, I hear some asking: is our father Abraham not in heaven? What about David?

We read in the faith chapter in the Renewed Covenant in Hebrews 11: 8 – 10, ***'By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going. (9) By faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise; (10) for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is Elohim.'*** But these our fathers in the faith did not receive what they were promised. We

read accordingly in verses 39 & 40 of Hebrews 11, **'And all these, having gained approval through their faith, did not receive what was promised, (40) because Elohim had provided something better for us, so that apart from us they should not be made perfect.'** We read the same thing about king David, in Acts 2: 29 – 34: **'Brethren, I may confidently say to you regarding the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. (30) And so, because he was a prophet, and knew that ELOHIM HAD SWORN TO HIM WITH AN OATH TO SEAT ONE OF HIS DESCENDANTS UPON HIS THRONE, (31) he looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, that HE WAS NEITHER ABANDONED TO HADES, NOR DID HIS FLESH SUFFER DECAY. (32) This Yahshua Elohim raised up again, to which we are all witnesses. (33) Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of Elohim, and having received from the Father the promise of the Set-apart Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear. (34) For it was not David who ascended into heaven, but he himself says: 'YHVH SAID TO MY MASTER, "SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND."'** Do we believe in the resurrection of the dead? And if we do, then why do we want to go to heaven - if Yahshua is coming back to resurrect the dead?

But what about Elijah? The Scriptures clearly show that Elijah was taken up into heaven. However, I would like to point out that there are three heavens mentioned in The Scriptures. The first is the atmosphere surrounding earth to a depth of about forty miles, in the lower part of which birds fly and we read about it in Genesis 1: 20, in this way: **'Then Elohim said, "Let the waters teem with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth in the open expanse of the heavens."'** The second heaven is the space of the whole universe, the starry expanse that is billions and billions of miles across, spoken about in Genesis 1: 14 – 16, as follows: **'Then Elohim said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night, and let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and years; (15) and let them be for lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth; and it was so. (16) And Elohim made the two great lights, the greater light to govern the day, and the lesser light to govern the night; He made the stars also.'** A second witness to this is given in Ezekiel 32: 8, **'All the shining lights in the heavens I will darken over you and will set darkness on your land, declares**

YHVH Elohim. The third heaven is the unseen place or throne from which Elohim controls the whole universe, as we read from Isaiah 66: 1, in this way: ***‘Thus says YHVH, “Heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool. Where then is a house you could build for Me? And where is a place that I may rest?’*** We read further about it from 2nd Corinthians 12: 2, as follows: ***‘I know a man in Messiah who fourteen years ago – whether in the body I do not know, or out of the body I do not know, Elohim knows – such a man was caught up to the third heaven.’*** Deuteronomy 10: 14 and Psalm 148: 4 refers to it as *‘the highest heaven’*; and Ephesians 4: 10 refers to it, as *‘above all the heavens’*.

The first heaven, or atmosphere, is the one into which Elijah was taken. We live and move in that heaven, inasmuch as we need air to keep us alive. Elijah was taken up to a high altitude, but still remained in the first heaven. Elijah was taken from his previous domain in Israel, but he did not die at that time. He was taken to a different environment some distance away where he was not known, to peacefully live out the rest of his life there. Even so, Elijah kept in touch with the events happening both in Israel and Judah. A full four years after his disappearance, when Jehoram, an evil man was king of Judah, Elijah wrote to Jehoram, warning him that he would soon become diseased and die because of the terrible things he had done, as we read from 2 Chronicles 21: 12, like this: ***‘Then a letter came to him from Elijah the prophet saying, “Thus says YHVH Elohim of your father David, “Because you have not walked in the ways of Jehoshaphat your father and the ways of Asa king of Judah.’*** Some Bible commentaries try to hide this fact, by writing that Elijah must have written this letter before he went to ‘heaven’. How long did Elijah live after sending this letter is not recorded in the Scriptures, but we will be able to ask him, when he is resurrected at Yahshua’s return one day. That is when all of those who qualified will be resurrected and be taken into the first heaven or the clouds, to meet Yahshua coming down from the third heaven to rule earth for the next thousand years.

At this point we also need to touch on another related subject that is equally misunderstood and has been taught about Yahshua’s return; many believe in a so-called rapture into heaven, to occur when Yahshua returns one day. This erroneous belief stems from the fact that most understand the presence of YHVH on Mount Sinai to be

the Father as a distinct being from the Son. Most in Churchianity thinks of YHVH as being the YHVH of the 'Old Testament' and Yahshua as being the YHVH of the 'New Testament'. But we see according to the song that Moses and the sons of Israel sang in Exodus 15: 2, ***"YHVH is my strength and song and He has become my salvation (or Yahshua)."*** This is confirmed in Isaiah 43: 10 & 11 and 63: 8, where YHVH says through Isaiah, ***"You are My witnesses." Declares YHVH, "And My servant whom I have chosen, in order that you may know and believe Me, and understand that I am He. Before Me there was no Elohim formed, and there will be none after Me. (10) I, even I, am YHVH; and there is no savior besides Me."*** Isaiah 63: 8, ***'For He said, "Surely, they are My people, sons who will not deal falsely." So He became their Savior.'*** We can therefore say that Yahshua was the manifestation of YHVH, who revealed Himself to Moses (as may be read in Numbers 12: 8) and the same One who gave the Torah to both houses of Israel on Mount Sinai. It must have been Yahshua who came to earth on Mount Sinai, appearing as fire. Yahshua is the visible image of the invisible Elohim (as per Colossians 1: 15), whom no one has ever seen as we read from First Timothy 6: 16. When Yahshua appeared on Mount Sinai, He did not appear as a flesh and blood 'Human Being' as He did when He was incarnated as the Son of Elohim, but as fire.

We need to understand that Moses' ascent and descent on Mount Sinai was a type or pattern of Yahshua's ascension to heaven, from where He is about to return. Rav Shaul understood Yahshua's second coming to be patterned after Moses' descent from Mount Sinai. We understand this by comparing Exodus 19: 18 - 20 and 1 Thessalonians 4: 16 & 17, as follows: (18) ***'Now Mount Sinai was all in smoke because YHVH descended upon it in fire; and its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked violently. (19) When the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder Moses spoke and Elohim answered him with thunder. (20) And YHVH came down on Mount Sinai, to the top of the mountain; and YHVH called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up.'*** 1 Thessalonians 4: 16 & 17, ***'For the Master Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of Elohim; and the dead in Messiah shall rise first. (17) Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up to meet the Master in the air, and***

thus we shall always be with the Master. We see in Exodus 19: 18 ‘YHVH descended’ and in 1 Thessalonians 4: 16 ‘*the Master Himself will descend from heaven.*’ In Exodus 19: 19 we read ‘*the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder*’ and in 1 Thessalonians 4: 16, ‘*the voice of the archangel and the trumpet of YHVH*’, and in Exodus 19: 20, ‘*Moses went up*’ and in 1 Thessalonians 17, ‘*Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Master in the air.*’ Rav Shaul who was familiar with the Torah and how Moses went up to Mount Sinai and came back 40 days later, knew that the pattern of Yahshua’s second coming was laid by Moses many years before.

We see further patterns of Yahshua’s return, when Moses actually came down from Mount Sinai. Moses ascended and descended Mount Sinai 8 times, and each time he confirmed additional details about Yahshua’s second coming. We read from Exodus 24: 13 – 18, as follows: ***‘So Moses arose with Joshua his servant, and Moses went up to the Mountain of Elohim. (14) But to the elders he said, “Wait here for us until we return to you. And behold, Aaron and Hur are with you; whoever has a legal matter, let him approach them.” (15) Then Moses went up to the mountain, and the cloud covered the mountain. (16) And the glory of YHVH rested on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it for six days; and on the seventh day He called to Moses from the midst of the cloud. (17) And to the eyes of the sons of Israel the appearance of the glory of YHVH was like a consuming fire on the mountain top. (18) And Moses entered the midst of the cloud as he went up to the mountain; and Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights.’*** The incidents that occurred here pictured a pattern of Yahshua’s resurrection, ascension, and second coming. Before Moses went up to the Mountain of Elohim, he said to the elders, ‘*Wait here for us until we return to you.*’ This is almost similar to the words that Yahshua used in Luke 24: 46, as follows: ‘*you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.*’ We also see from Acts 1: 9, ***‘And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.’***

Moses went up to the mountain and remained there for 40 days, a prophetic view of the 40 Jubilees that Yahshua has remained in heaven, since His ascension (40 Jubilees = 40 times 50 years =

2000 years). The resurrected dead in Messiah and those believers who are alive and will be changed at Yahshua's return to meet Him in the air (in 1 Thessalonians 4: 17), is a picture of the ancient Hebrew wedding ceremony, when the bridegroom returns, as we read in Matthew 25: 6, ***“But at midnight there was a shout, ‘Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.’*** We see from Acts 1: 10 - 12, ***‘And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was departing, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them; (11) and they also said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Yahshua, who has been taken up from you into heaven will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven.” (12) Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day’s journey away.’*** Yahshua will return to the Mount of Olives (a Sabbath day’s journey from Jerusalem) on Yom Teruah, an annual Sabbath. We see further from Matthew 24: 30 that Yahshua will return in or on the clouds of heaven, as follows: ***‘And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY with power and great glory.’***

We also read about Yahshua's return to the Mount of Olives from Zechariah 14: 4, in this way: ***‘And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south.’*** Those who will meet Yahshua in the clouds will be with Him forever where He is. We read further from Revelation 5: 10 and 20: 6 that those resurrected and changed at Messiah's return, will rule under Him for a thousand years, right here on earth. So, we see that if we qualify, we will be with Yahshua right where He is here on earth. We also see that those who will see His return in the clouds on the Mount of Olives, will be gathered together from one end of the sky to the other, as recorded in verse 31 of Matthew 24, like this: ***“And He will send forth His angels with A GREAT TRUMPET and THEY WILL GATHER TOGETHER HIS elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other.”*** The angels will bring the elect from all over the world to Jerusalem, from where they will meet up

with our Master Yahshua on the Mount of Olives, which will be covered by clouds.

We read the final Renewed Covenant portion from Jude 1: 8, as follows: ***'Yet in the same manner these men, also by dreaming, defile the flesh, and reject authority, and revile angelic majesties.'*** These men's minds were numbed to the truth of Elohim's word so that being deceived they fantasized wicked perversions, and became blinded to reality and the truth. The word *'these'* occurs 5 more times in reference to those who have fallen away from the true faith, who are characterized in 3 ways: namely (a) they defile the flesh and have few moral restraints and are frequently characterized by immoral lifestyles – similar to the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah; (b) they reject all authority, civil and spiritual, thus rejecting the Scriptures and contradicting the Master Yahshua; and (c) they revile angelic majesties as is supported by verse 9. We conclude by reading verse 9, ***'But Michael the archangel, when he disputed with the devil and argued about the body of Moses, did not dare pronounce against him a railing judgment, but said, "YHVH rebuke you."'*** Michael is one of the archangels especially watching over Israel and even he did not pronounce a railing against Satan. People, who revile angels, are not concerned about what the Scriptures have to say regarding angels. An example being in 1 Corinthians 11: 10, where we read: ***'Therefore the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels.'*** Nowhere else in the Scriptures is this struggle over the body of Moses mentioned - Michael fought with Satan in order to hide from him the burial place of Moses.

As mentioned before, Moses died in Moab and did not enter the promised land, but we are certain that both He and Elijah will be resurrected one day to enter the kingdom of Elohim, as we read in Hebrews 11: 23, 32 – 34, as follows: ***'By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king's edict.'*** (32) ***And what more shall I say? For time will fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets,*** (33) ***who by faith conquered kingdoms, performed acts of righteousness, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions,*** (34) ***quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made***

strong, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. As quoted before in Hebrews 11: 39 & 40, all these believers who already gained approval to enter the kingdom of Elohim, have not yet received the promise, as they are waiting for us, the rest of the first fruits, when we will all be in the first resurrection, after Messiah. HalleluYah!

Please Note: Some information mentioned in this teaching was obtained from www.nephos.com (a very useful web site for reading material prepared by likeminded believers); and some from as far as I know a now defunct Magazine that used to be called: 'The Plain Truth.'

Weekly Torah reading schedule

Week	Torah portion	Haftarah portion	Renewed Covenant portion
1	Genesis 1: 1- 6: 8	Isaiah 42: 5 – 43: 10	John 1: 1 – 18
2	Genesis 6:9 – 11: 32	Isaiah 54: 1 – 55: 5	Matthew 24: 36 – 44
3	Genesis 12: 1 – 17: 27	Isaiah 40: 27 – 41: 16	Roman 3: 19 – 5: 6
4	Genesis 18: 1 – 22: 24	2 Kings 4: 1 – 37	James 2: 14 – 24
5	Genesis 23: 1 – 25: 18	1 Kings 1: 1 – 31	Math. 8: 19 – 22; Luke 9: 57 – 62
6	Genesis 25: 19 – 28: 9	Malachi 1: 1 – 2: 7	Romans 9: 6 – 16
7	Genesis 28: 10 – 32: 3	Hosea 12: 13 – 14: 10	John 1: 43 – 51
8	Genesis 32: 4 – 36: 43	Hosea 11: 7 – 12: 12	1 Corinthians 5: 1 – 13
9	Genesis 37: 1 – 40: 23	Amos 2: 6 – 3: 8	Acts 7: 9 – 16
10	Genesis 41: 1 – 44: 17	1 Kings 3: 15 – 4: 1	Acts 7: 9 – 16
11	Genesis 41: 18 – 47: 27	Ezekiel 37: 15 – 28	John 10: 11 – 19
12	Genesis 47: 28 – 50: 26	1 Kings 2: 1 – 12	Heb. 11: 21 – 22; 1 Pet. 2: 11 – 17
13	Exodus 1: 1 – 6: 1	Isaiah 27: 6 – 28: 13	John 17: 1 – 26
14	Exodus 6: 2 – 9: 35	Ezekiel 28: 25 – 27: 21	Rom. 9: 14 – 17; 2 Cor. 6: 14 – 7: 1
15	Exodus 10: 1 – 13: 16	Jeremiah 46: 13 – 28	Revelation 19: 1 – 16
16	Exodus 13: 17 – 17: 16	Judges 4: 4 – 5: 31	Revelation 15: 1 – 8
17	Exodus 18: 1 – 20: 23	Isaiah 6: 1 – 7: 14	1 Timothy 3: 1 – 14
18	Exodus 21: 1 – 24: 18	Jeremiah 34: 8 – 22: 31; 31 – 34	Hebrews 9: 15 – 22
19	Exodus 25: 1 – 27: 19	1 Kings 5: 26 – 6: 13	Hebrews 8: 1 – 13
20	Exodus 27: 20 – 30: 10	Ezekiel 43: 10 – 27	Philippians 4: 10 – 20
21	Exodus 30: 11 – 34: 35	1 Kings 18: 1 – 39	2 Corinthians 3: 1 – 8
22 read separately – 13mth year	Exodus 35: 1 – 38: 20	1 Kings 7: 40 – 50	Hebrews 9: 1 – 14
23 read separately – 13mth year	Exodus 38: 21 – 40: 38	1 Kings 7: 51 – 8: 21	Acts 1: 1 – 11
24	Leviticus 1: 1 – 6: 7	Isaiah 43: 21 – 44: 23	Romans 8: 1 – 13
25	Leviticus 6: 8 – 8: 36	Jeremiah 47: 21 – 8: 3	Romans 12: 1 – 8
26	Leviticus 9: 1 – 11: 47	2 Samuel 6: 1 – 7: 17	Mark 7: 1 – 23
27 read separately – 13mth year	Leviticus 12: 1 – 13: 59	2 Kings 4: 42 – 5: 19	Math. 8: 1 – 4; Luke 17: 11 – 19
28 read separately – 13mth year	Leviticus 14: 1 – 15: 33	2 Kings 7: 3 – 20	Mark 5: 24b – 34
29 read separately – 13mth year	Leviticus 16: 1 – 18: 30	Isaiah 53: 1 – 12	Hebrews 7: 23 – 10: 25
30 read separately – 13mth year	Leviticus 19: 1 – 20: 72	Amos 9: 7 – 15	Acts 15: 1 – 21
31	Leviticus 21: 1 – 24: 23	Ezekiel 44: 15 – 31	Colossians 2: 11 – 23
32 read separately – 13mth year	Leviticus 25: 1 – 26: 2	Jeremiah 52: 6 – 27	Luke 4: 16 – 21; Galatians 5: 1 – 13
33 read separately – 13mth year	Leviticus 26: 3 – 27: 34	Jeremiah 16: 19 – 17: 14	Ephesians 2: 11 – 19
34	Numbers 1: 1 – 4: 20	Hosea 2: 1 – 22	Revelation 7: 1 – 17
35	Numbers 4: 21 – 7: 89	Judges 13: 2 – 25	Acts 21: 17 – 32
36	Numbers 8: 1 – 12: 16	Zechariah 2: 14 – 4: 7	Hebrews 4: 1 – 16
37	Numbers 13: 1 – 15: 41	Joshua 2: 1 – 24	Hebrews 3: 7 – 19
38	Numbers 16: 1 – 18: 32	1 Samuel 11: 14 – 12: 22	Jude 1: 25
39 read separately – 13mth year	Numbers 19: 1 – 22: 1	Judges 11: 1 – 33	John 3: 9 – 21
40 read separately – 13mth year	Numbers 22: 2 – 25: 9	Micah 5: 6 – 6: 8	2 Peter 2: 1 – 22
41	Numbers 25: 10 – 29: 40	1 Kings 18: 46 – 19: 21	Acts 2: 1 – 21
42 read separately – 13mth year	Numbers 30: 1 – 32: 42	Jeremiah 1: 1 – 2: 3	Matthew 5: 33 – 37
43 read separately – 13mth year	Numbers 33: 1 – 36: 13	Jeremiah 2: 4 – 28	James 4: 1 – 12
44	Deuteronomy 1: 1 – 3: 22	Isaiah 1: 1 – 27	John 15: 1 – 11
45	Deuteronomy 3: 23 – 7: 11	Isaiah 40: 1 – 26	Mark 12: 28 – 34; Matthew 4: 1 – 11
46	Deuteronomy 7: 12 – 11: 25	Isaiah 49: 14 – 51: 3; 52: 1 – 15	Luke 4: 1 – 13
47	Deuteronomy 11: 26 – 16: 17	Isaiah 44: 11 – 45: 5	1 John 4: 1 – 6; 2: 18 – 25
48	Deuteronomy 16: 18 – 21: 9	Isaiah 9: 1 – 6; 49: 1 – 6	Acts 7: 35 – 60
49	Deuteronomy 21: 10 – 25: 19	Isaiah 40: 1 – 11	Mark 1: 1 – 14
50	Deuteronomy 26: 1 – 29: 8	Isaiah 60: 1 – 22	Matthew 13: 1 – 23
51 read separately – 13mth year	Deuteronomy 29: 9 – 30: 20	Isaiah 61: 1 – 63: 9	Romans 9: 30 – 10: 13
52 read separately – 13mth year	Deuteronomy 31: 1 – 30	Hosea 14: 2 – 10	Hebrews 13: 5 – 8; Matthew 28: 16 – 20
53	Deuteronomy 32: 1 – 52	2 Samuel 22: 1 – 51	Romans 10: 14 – 21
54	Deuteronomy 33: 1 – 34: 12	Joshua 1: 1 – 18	Matthew 17: 1 – 9; Jude 1: 8 – 9