



The Lord wants to talk to His people

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The Lord wants to talk to His people
(Study about Jewish themes)



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Estudo Bíblico Evangélico

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São Paulo - SP - Brazil - 2013

I dedicate to all those who wish to know the Lord of Hosts, Jesus Christ.

I thank the God Most High, to God, who fulfills His purpose for me.

“A highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Holy Way; the unclean shall not travel on it, but it shall be for God’s people; no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray.”
(Isa. 35: 8)

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Notes:

- Words or phrases enclosed in brackets [/] or parenthesis (), in italics, were placed by me, in most cases, to explain the biblical text, although some verses already contain them [not in italics].
- The version used here is the New Revised Standard Version, NRSV – 1989 (1995)
- NIV = New International Version (it will be used in brackets in some verses to make it easier for readers to understand).
- Here it will be used the Concordant Hebrew English Sublinear (**CHES**), based on the vocabulary of the Concordant Version of the Old Testament (**CVOT**), the transliterated Hebrew.
- In some parts of the text will be used the Concordant Greek Text Sublinear (**CGTS**), the Greek New Testament Version – 1984, based on KJV/AV translation, known as Greek Textus Receptus.
- In many texts we'll use '**Lexicon Strong's Concordance**.' Strong's Concordance is a concordance of the King James Bible (KJV), created by the English theologian Dr. James Strong (1822-1894), along with a team of theologians, and first published in 1890. It is about a cross-reference between each word in the KJV and the original text in Hebrew or Greek. To each word in its original language is given an entry number for the biblical concordance of KJV. Lexicon means a dictionary of ancient classic languages. In order to interpret Lexicon Strong's Concordance properly it's necessary to take into account the cultural context of that time, because Strong's numbers do not consider figures of speech, metaphors, idioms, common phrases, cultural references, references to historical events, or alternate meanings used by the writers of that time period to express their thoughts in their own language.
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Introduction

This book arose in parallel with the wish of writing some Jewish themes to put on my website, both for Christians (in special Evangelical Christians) and for the Jews themselves.

Browsing on Internet I saw many things that surprised me about many topics, both by Jews and Christians; in fact, even a reaction of despair in many people to discover certain truths, but not knowing how to deal well with them, as if suddenly they were frustrated and confused children by learning that Santa Claus does not exist. I also came across issues truly 'dangerous' from the spiritual point of view, because the devil has used them to confuse believers and take from their hearts the faith in Jesus Christ. One of the things I've seen is that, by the desire to please God and take His gospel to the Jews, Christians have assimilated many wrong concepts from Jews, and for us who live today and know the salvation brought by Jesus are not appropriate to be preached anymore or accepted as true knowledge. Among them we can mention: the names of God, the word Shekinah (to describe the glory of God), Mazel tov and many other subjects that I ended up removing them from the original study, for they were causing certain doctrinal conflicts. Many teachings are from esoteric and mystical origins, as for example the Kabbalah, and from Hebrew books such as Mishnah, Talmud, Tosefta, Gemara and others, which arose during the Middle Ages and the Intertestamental Period, in the four hundred years of "God's period of silence", without true prophetic inspiration and ended up establishing themselves only in human wisdom, and often, in mystical concepts of that time.

May the Holy Spirit teach you to put into practice each word that is good for your spiritual growth. Above all, may you be an instrument of blessing in His hands, stimulating many lives to understand the purity and simplicity of God's word.

The bible says: "Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise the words of prophets, but test everything; hold fast to what is good; abstain from every form of evil." (1 The. 5: 19-22)

It is also written: "As for you, the anointing that you received from him abides in you, and so you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, abide in him" (1 Jn. 2: 27).

Shalom! May the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with all of us.

Tânia Cristina

1

Languages spoken by the Jews

Let's start by talking a little about one of the languages spoken by the Jews, known as **Aramaic**.

Aramaic is the designation given to the different dialects of a language with its own alphabet and with a story of more than three thousand years, used by people living in the Middle East (Actually, all descendants of Noah's sons). It was the religious and administrative language of several empires of the Ancient times, besides to be the original language of many parts of the biblical books of Daniel and Ezra, as well as the Talmud. Aramaic was understood and spoken by many peoples, including the Jews, mainly by the people connected to the court, who needed that commercial and administrative language to make their political agreements and commercialize their products with other nations. Belonging to the family of African-Asiatic languages it is classified in the subgroup of Semitic languages to which also belong **Arabic and Hebrew**. The formal language of the Babylonian Empire was Aramaic (whose name derives from Aram Naharayim, 'Mesopotamia', or Aram, 'highlands' in Canaanite, and ancient name of Syria). The Persian Empire, which conquered the Babylonian Empire a few decades after the start of the Jewish exile, adopted Aramaic as an official language. Aramaic is also a Semitic language North-Western, quite similar to Hebrew. Aramaic lent many words and expressions to Hebrew, mainly due to be the language used in the Talmud and other religious writings. Aramaic was possibly the language spoken by Jesus. From the 7th century AD the Aramaic which was used as an official language in the Middle East was replaced by Arabic. However, Aramaic is still used in liturgy and literature among the Jews and some Christians. The story of Aramaic can be divided into three periods:

Archaic 1100 BC-200 AD including:

Biblical Aramaic, from the Hebrew.

The Aramaic of Jesus.

The Aramaic of Targum.

Middle Aramaic (200-1200 AD) including:

Syriac literary language.

The Aramaic of the Talmud and Midrashim.

Modern Aramaic (1200 AD to the present century).

Syriac is a dialect of middle Aramaic (200 – 1200 AD) spoken historically in much of the Fertile Crescent. Appearing around the 1st century AD, classical Syriac became one of the main literary languages throughout the Middle East from the 4th to the 8th century. It became the main vehicle of Eastern Orthodox Christianity and culture, spreading across Asia, reaching the Malabar region (south India) and eastern China, and was an important means of communication and cultural dissemination among Arabs and, to a lesser extent, the Persians. Initially a means of Christian expression, Syriac had a fundamental cultural and literary influence on the development of Arabic, which replaced it in the region at the end of the 8th century. Syriac remains the liturgical language of Syriac Christianity. Written in the Syriac alphabet, derived from the Aramaic alphabet, the Syriac belongs to the western branch of the Semitic linguistic family (source: wikipedia.org).

The Hebrew language is more directly related to the language of old Ugarit, the capital of a northern kingdom of the coast of Syria (now called Ras Shamra), as well as the Phoenician and Moabite kingdoms. In the OT is called **‘the language of Canaan’** (Isa. 19: 18) or **‘the language of Judah’** (NRSV – 2 Kin. 18: 26-30, Isa. 36: 11-13; Neh. 13: 24) or else, **the Jews’ language** (KJV). The term **‘Hebrew’** occurs for the first time in the book of Ben Sirach (Apocryphal Book). Thus, the Hebrew writing comes from the Northern language – Semitic or Phoenician.

The Book of Sirach is also known as Book of Ecclesiasticus (Ecclus.: ‘Book of the Church’ or ‘Book of the Assembly’, which was the name given by Saint Cyprian of Carthage) or the Book of the All-Virtuous Wisdom, written by a Hellenistic Jewish scribe, sage, and allegorist from Jerusalem, Joshua ben Sira or Yeshua ben Sira (Joshua son of Sirach or Jesus son of Sirach) around 200-175 BC in Hebrew tongue, possibly in Alexandria, Egypt, where he is thought to have established a school. The book contains ethical teaching. The author is also known as Shimon ben Yeshua ben Eliezer ben Sira, or Simon, son of Jesus, son of Eliezer, son of Sirach, from Jerusalem. In Greek, the book is known as Siracid or Sirach. It has 51 chapters and was translated into Greek by a grandson of ben Sira in 123 BC. It’s acknowledged in Judaism by its historical valor but it’s not part of the OT (Tanakh).

The Torah, which the Orthodox Jews believe that have been written in the time of Moses, about 3,300 years ago, was written in Hebrew called ‘classic.’ Although today it is a phonetically unpronounceable writing, therefore indecipherable, due to non-existence of vowels in the classic Hebrew alphabet, the Jews call it the Lashon haKodesh (לשון הקודש – ‘The Holy Tongue’ or ‘the tongue [of] holiness’), since many believe to have been chosen to convey the message of God to humanity. In fact, the original Torah no longer exists. What they have is a copy of copies that have been made over the centuries. Around the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians, classic Hebrew was replaced in everyday use by **Aramaic** (Babylonian language), becoming primarily a regional language, both used in the liturgy, in the study of the Mishnah and Talmud, and in trade.

The Hebrew strongly resembles the Aramaic, and although less to the Arabic and its dialects, it shares many linguistic features with them. The Hebrew has also changed. The **difference** between the Hebrew today and that of three thousand years ago is that the former had no vowels to form syllables. Vowels were signs invented by Masoretes rabbis to facilitate the pronunciation of very old texts and subsequently deactivated in current media. The formal language of the Babylonian Empire was Aramaic (whose

name, as we saw previously, derives from Aram Naharayim, 'Mesopotamia', or Aram, 'highlands' in Canaanite and the ancient name of Syria). The Persian Empire, which conquered the Babylonian Empire a few decades after the beginning of the Jewish exile, adopted Aramaic as an official language.

In addition to numerous words and expressions, Hebrew also received its alphabet from Aramaic. Although the original Aramaic letters had originated in the Phoenician alphabet that was used in ancient Israel, they differed significantly, both at the hands of the Jews and the Mesopotamians, taking the form that is familiar today, from the first century BC. The Jews who lived further north or in the Persian Empire were gradually adopting the Aramaic segment, and Hebrew quickly fell into disuse.

However, how this literature is part of the Scriptures, the characters are still preserved today in other languages. For the next 700 years, Aramaic became the language of the restored Judea; the Targum, for example.

After the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 AD, the Jews gradually began to disperse from Judea to the rest of the known world at the time. For many centuries the Aramaic remained the spoken language of the Jews of Mesopotamia, and the 'Judaic-Aramaic' is a modern descendant that is still spoken by a few thousand Jews (and many non-Jews) in the region known as Kurdistan (region comprising Turkey, Iraq, Iran, Armenia and Azerbaijan – on the border between Europe and Asia, along the Caspian Sea. Its name comes from the Persian, and means 'land of the Kurds'). However, this language gradually gave way to Arabic and other local languages in countries to where the Jews emigrated.

The dialect spoken in Jesus' time

Seven dialects of Western Aramaic were spoken at the time of Jesus. The old Jewish was the prominent dialect of Jerusalem and Judea. The Galilean Aramaic, the language of Jesus' home region is known only of a few places. Besides the **various dialects of Aramaic**, **Greek** was used extensively in urban centers. There is little evidence of the use of Hebrew during this period. **The Hebrew language written** in the OT was read and understood by educated classes. Hebrew ceased to be the everyday language. In addition, the various words in the Greek context of the NT that are not translated are clearly Aramaic rather than Hebrew. This Aramaic is not the Aramaic of Galilee, but the ancient Aramaic from Judea. This suggests that **Jesus' words** were transmitted in **the dialect of Judea and Jerusalem** instead of the Aramaic from His hometown.

Hebrew was not used as a language spoken by about 2,300 years, that is, it was considered a dead language, like Latin. However, the languages that the Jews adopted in their countries of residence, namely, the Latin (Sephardic) and Yiddish (German), were not directly related to the Hebrew (the first based on the peninsular Spanish with resemblance with the Arabic, and the latter, an old dialect from the medieval German); however, both are written from right to left using the Hebrew alphabet.

The Hebrew was reborn as spoken language during the end of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century as the modern Hebrew, adopting some elements of Arabic, Latin and Yiddish, and other languages that accompanied the Jewish Diaspora as language spoken by the majority of inhabitants of the State of Israel, of which it is the primary official language (Arabic also has status of official language).

1.1. Jewish literature of Antiquity

There are some interesting Jewish books to comment here, for they were written in Mishnaic Hebrew, with some Aramaic. They are:

- The Gemara (Gemarah, or in Ashkenazi pronunciation Gemore); comes from the Hebrew verb *gamar*, ‘to finish’ or ‘complete’. It is the component of the Talmud comprising the commentary on the Mishnah and Tannaim rabbinical analysis. Tannaim, ‘repeaters’, ‘teachers’, were the rabbinic sages who lived from approximately 10–220 CE.

- The Tosefta (meaning, ‘supplement’, ‘addition’) is a compilation of the Jewish oral law from the late 2nd century, the period of the Mishnah. According to the tradition, it was compiled in 189 CE, closely corresponding to the Mishnah, and mainly written in Mishnaic Hebrew, with some Aramaic.

- The Oral Law or Mishnah (in Hebrew: משנה) means ‘study by repetition’ or ‘to study and review’, from the verb *shanah* (Strong #8138): a repetition, a duplicate (copy of a document), or a double (in amount); by implication, a second (in order, rank, age, quality, location or college), copy, double, next, second (order), twice as much; from which is also derived the word *mishneh* (משנה, Strong #4932), ‘secondary’ or ‘second.’ It is the first major written work of the Rabbinic Jewish oral traditions, and known as the Oral Torah or Oral Law. It originated from a debate among a group of rabbinic sages (the Tannaim) between the 70s and 200 CE (they were at work from 10 to 220 CE) and redacted in 189 CE by Judah ha-Nasi (Yehudah HaNasi or Judah the Prince or Judah I, a second-century rabbi who lived from approximately 135 to 217 CE during the Roman occupation of Judea) so that the oral traditions of the Pharisees from the Second Temple period (536 BCE – 70 CE) would not be forgotten. Most of the Mishnah is written in Mishnaic Hebrew, but some parts are in Aramaic. The work claims to be the organization of precepts of oral teachings originating from the delivery of the Torah by Moses to the Jewish people.

Mishnah is the so-called ‘Oral Law’, given in secret to Moses, and recorded in written form by the rabbis in the 2nd century AD. There is no convincing evidence about the veracity or the existence of the oral law, given in secret by God to Moses. God has always given His laws to His people in writing both the first two tablets of the law and the Ten Commandments – Ex. 31: 18; Ex. 32: 15-16; Deut. 9: 10-11 (which Moses broke at the foot of Sinai – Ex. 32: 19; Deut. 9: 17), and the second (Ex. 34: 1; 2; Deut. 10: 1-5) and the laws written in the Book of Covenant (Ex. 21: 1; Deut. 4: 14; 40; Deut. 5: 31-32; Deut. 29: 1; 9; 21; 29) and given by Moses to the elders and priests, sons of Levi (Deut. 31: 9-13), to be read every seventh year before the people, in the year of remission, during the Feast of the Tabernacles (‘festival of booths’). If they were meant to be read, it was because they were written. And anyone who reads the infinity of statutes and rules given in the Pentateuch (Torah) to the Jewish people by God, in such detail, would never think of adding anything more. Moses wrote down all the words of the Law to the very end (Deut. 31: 24) and gave the book to the Levites to place beside the ark of the Covenant (Deut. 31: 26). In fact, the ‘oral law’ is nothing more than late rabbinical interpretations, probably initiated after the Babylonian exile and during the Intertestamental Period (period from the prophet Malachi to Christ, when God no longer spoke to His people through the prophets because of the sin of apostasy and idolatry of Israel; the oral traditions of the Pharisees from the Second Temple period), creating traditions to be obeyed, but with no real connection with the initial simple teaching that

was given to Moses, so Jesus rebuked both Pharisees, rabbis and teachers of the Law (Mk. 7: 1 -23; Matt. 23: 1-36).

- Talmud brings comments on the Mishnah (Oral Torah) and the Gemara, using Midrash (The methodology for interpreting Mishnah). Talmud contains many secular Jewish traditions and presents an enumeration of the writers of the OT books. Midrash is derived from the verb darash, which means ‘resort to, seek, seek with care, enquire, require.’

The Talmud is the primary source of Jewish religious law (halakha) and Jewish theology until modernity, serving also as ‘the guide for the daily life’ of Jews. It’s about a collection of writings named both Babylonian Talmud (Talmud Bavli) and an earlier collection known as the Jerusalem Talmud (Talmud Yerushalmi). The Talmud is the basis for all codes of Jewish law.

The Jerusalem Talmud, also known as the Palestinian Talmud contains Jewish religious teachings and commentary transmitted orally for centuries prior to its compilation by Jewish scholars in the Land of Israel (In Galilee, more exactly). Its final writing probably belongs to the end of the 4th century and the first half of the 5th century. It is written largely in Jewish Palestinian Aramaic, a Western Aramaic language.

Babylonian Talmud (Talmud Bavli) was a set of documents compiled in late Antiquity (3rd to 6th centuries), a little after the ‘Jerusalem Talmud.’ It was written in Jewish Babylonian Aramaic and comprises the Mishnah and the Babylonian Gemara. Israel and Babylon were two important centers of Jewish culture.

- Targumim (plural of Targum) consists in famous works written in Aramaic, comprising the translations and comments on the Hebrew bible (OT – Tanakh). They were written and compiled in Israel and Babylon, from the time of the Second Temple until the early Middle Ages. They also contain commentaries on the Mishnah (Oral Law – written in the 2nd century CE) and the Talmud, written around 500 CE, and contains many secular Jewish traditions and presents an enumeration of the writers of the books of the OT. Targum was used to facilitate understanding for Jews who did not speak Hebrew as their mother tongue, but Aramaic.

- Halakha is the name of the set of laws of the Jewish religion, including the 613 commandments contained in the Torah and the later rabbinical and talmudic commandments related to customs and traditions, serving as a guide to the Jewish way of life. Although there have been many attempts to codify and enumerate the commandments contained in the Torah, the traditional view is based on the enumeration of Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon, also known as Rambam or Maimonides, the most influential Jewish scholar of the Middle Ages. Thus, the Mishneh Torah (Repetition of the Torah) of Maimonides was compiled between 1170 and 1180 CE while he lived in Egypt. The 613 commandments (mitzvot) are both positive to perform an action (“this can”: 248 mitzvot aseh) and negative as for to refrain from certain acts (“this cannot”: 365 mitzvot lo taaseh).

The 613 commandments or 613 mitzvot (‘taryag mitzvot’) are the commandments contained in the Pentateuch (Torah) or ‘the Law of Moses.’ In Hebrew, to each letter is assigned a definite numerical value, which is called gematria (Jewish numerology), where a word is the sum of the values of the letters that compose it. This is an esoteric method often used by Kabbalah to explain the Scriptures, that is, by the numerical value of words.

Mitzvot is the plural of the word mitzvah, which means ‘commandment.’ According to the Babylonian Talmud, there are 365 negative commandments, corresponding to the number of days in the solar year, and 248 positive commandments,

corresponding to the number of bones or important organs in the human body. The Talmud refers to this number as a taryag mitzvot.

Rabbi Simlai, who developed the tradition of taryag mitzvot, made his reckoning based on the word 'Torah.' The Scriptures tell us that Moses commanded the Torah (Pentateuch) to the Children of Israel. The Hebrew numerical value (gematria) of the Hebrew letters of the word 'Torah' is 611. Adding the 611 commandments of Moses to the two received by all Israel directly from God on Mount Sinai, we have 613. The acronym TaRYaG (ת tav = 400, ר raish = 200, י yud = 10 and ג gimel = 3) adds up to 613.

It is strange to speak of the two commandments received by all Israel directly from God at Mount Sinai, because if the rabi refers to Deut. 6: 4-5 ("Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength."), it was Moses who told the people, not God directly. On the contrary, the Bible says that the people stood at the foot of Mount Horeb when the Lord descended in a cloud of fire, with lightning and thunder and a great blast of a trumpet and the people heard the Ten Commandments directly from the mouth of God and then He wrote them on the tablets that He gave to Moses when he stood 40 days and 40 nights on the top of the mountain and received all the laws and statutes to give to the people of Israel.

The Bible verses say:

- Ex. 19: 9; 11; 16-19: "Then the Lord said to Moses, 'I am going to come to you in a dense cloud, in order that the people may hear when I speak with you and so trust you ever after.' When Moses had told the words of the people to the Lord,... and prepare for the third day, because on the third day the Lord will come down upon Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people... On the morning of the third day there was thunder and lightning, as well as a thick cloud on the mountain, and a blast of a trumpet so loud that all the people who were in the camp trembled. Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God. They took their stand at the foot of the mountain. Now Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke, because the Lord had descended upon it in fire; the smoke went up like the smoke of a kiln, while the whole mountain shook violently. As the blast of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses would speak and God would answer him in thunder".

- Ex. 20: 1-17: God says The Ten Commandments to the people.

- Ex. 20: 18-21: "When all the people witnessed the thunder and lightning, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking, they were afraid and trembled and stood at a distance, and said to Moses, 'You speak to us, and we will listen; but do not let God speak to us, or we will die.' Moses said to the people, 'Do not be afraid; for God has come only to test you and to put the fear of him upon you so that you do not sin.' Then the people stood at a distance, while Moses drew near to the thick darkness where God was."

- Deut. 4: 10-13; 36: "... how you once stood before the Lord your God at Horeb, when the Lord said to me, 'Assemble the people for me, and I will let them hear my words, so that they may learn to fear me as long as they live on the earth, and may teach their children so'; you approached and stood at the foot of the mountain while the mountain was blazing up to the very heavens, shrouded in dark clouds. Then the Lord spoke to you out of the fire. You heard the sound of words but saw no form; there was only a voice. He declared to you his covenant, which he charged you to observe, that is, the ten commandments; and he wrote them on two stone tablets... From heaven he made you hear his voice to discipline you. On earth he showed you his great fire, while you heard his words coming out of the fire."

- Deut. 5: 4-5: “The Lord spoke with you face to face at the mountain, out of the fire. (At that time I was standing between the Lord and you to declare to you the words of the Lord; for you were afraid because of the fire and did not go up the mountain.) And he said...”

- Deut. 5: 6-21: God says The Ten Commandments to the people.

- Deut. 5: 22-27; 31: “These words the Lord spoke with a loud voice to your whole assembly at the mountain, out of the fire, the cloud, and the thick darkness, and he added no more. He wrote them on two stone tablets, and gave them to me. When you heard the voice out of the darkness, while the mountain was burning with fire, you approached me, all the heads of your tribes and your elders; and you said, ‘Look, the Lord our God has shown us his glory and greatness, and we have heard his voice out of the fire. Today we have seen that God may speak to someone and the person may still live. So now why should we die? For this great fire will consume us; if we hear the voice of the Lord our God any longer, we shall die. For who is there of all flesh that has heard the voice of the living God speaking out of fire, as we have, and remained alive? Go near, you yourself, and hear all that the Lord our God will say. Then tell us everything that the Lord our God tells you, and we will listen and do it.’... ‘But you, stand here by me, and I will tell you all the commandments, the statutes and the ordinances, that you shall teach them, so that they may do them in the land that I am giving them to possess.’”

1.2. Kabbalah

Although it's not a Jewish religious work, let's talk a little about **Kabbalah**.

A philosophy widely used by Jews, since the first century of the ‘Common Era’ (CE) or ‘After Christ or Anno Domini’ (AD) for us Christians, is the Kabbalah, where we find mystical and esoteric explanations on various biblical subjects. In other words, **it is an esoteric doctrine** that seeks to know the Universe and the nature of God, looking for a secret meaning in the Bible. The name of Kabbalah can be written in several ways: Kabbalah, Qabbala, Cabbala, Cabbalah, Kabala, Kabalah or Kabbala. Kabbalah (QBLH) is a word of Hebrew origin that means ‘reception.’ It is the mystical aspect of Judaism. Many of the branches of Kabbalah teach that every letter, word, number and accent of the Scripture contains a hidden meaning, secret, and offer methods of interpretation to verify these occult meanings. According to these teachings, each letter of the Hebrew alphabet has a numerical value, which is called gematria (Jewish numerology), an esoteric method often used by Kabbalah to explain the Scriptures, that is, by the numerical value of words. Thus, some characters in History had their name calculated, for example, Nero, Domitian, Hitler and the phrase that is written on the Pope's miter in Latin letters, ‘Vicarius Filii Dei’ (‘Substitute for the Son of God’) and whose letters add up to 666, the number of the Antichrist (The Beast – Rev. 13: 18). None of this, however, can be considered reliable information.

Ancient forms of Jewish mysticism consisted at first only of empirical doctrine (based on intuition and experience). Later, under the philosophy of Plato (Greek philosopher of the fifth century BC – 429-347 BC) and Pythagoras (Greek philosopher and mathematician who lived in the sixth century BC), it took on a speculative character (researcher, inquirer, theoretical) and grew in strength and expanded.

In medieval times, Kabbalah has developed greatly with the emergence of the mystical text *Sêfer Bahir*, which means Book of Light, of which there is mention before

the thirteenth century. But the eldest book about Kabbalah is the Book of Formation (Sêfer Yetsirah), considered prior to the sixth century where one defends the idea that the world is the emanation of God. From the thirteenth century onward, Kabbalah branched out into an extensive literature, alongside and in opposition to the Talmud. Most scholars think proper the use of the term Kabbalah to refer to Jewish mysticism since the first century AD, not only what grew out of medieval times.

1.3. What is the difference between the words 'Hebrew', 'Israelite' and 'Jew?'

'Hebrew' is the eponym of the word 'Eber' (Gen. 10: 21 et seq.; Gen. 11: 14; 1 Chr. 1: 18), which by the Gentiles was written as 'ibhrî. It was initially used to describe the ethnic origin of Abraham and his descendants (Gen. 14: 13) because the Bible itself declares that Shem (son of Noah) was the father of all the children of Eber (Gen. 10: 24-25; 1 Chr. 1: 1-27). Applied in a broader sense, the term includes other non-Israelite peoples such as the Arabs, the Acadian and the Aramaeans (Syrians and Assyrians that occupied great part of Mesopotamia), because they were all descendants of Shem (Semitic peoples), in particular the family of Abraham, since the Ammonites and Moabites were descendants of his nephew Lot. The word 'Hebrew' became almost synonymous with **'Israelite'** after the changing of Jacob's name to Israel, being used by Moses in Ex. 5: 1-3. The word **'Jew'** was originally used to designate the children of Judah, son of Jacob. Later it was assigned to those born in Judea. After the liberation of the Babylonian captivity, the Hebrews began to be called Jews. The Latin word for 'Jew' is 'judaeu', and the Greek, 'ioudaios'. Both words come from the Aramaic יהודי (pronounced 'yahud'). The word 'Jew' originally described any inhabitant of Judah (2 Kin. 16: 6), and was employed in contemporary Assyrian texts from the eighth century BC, more or less. It is commonly used by non-Jews to refer to the Hebrews or the descendants of Abraham. In the NT, 'Jews' became a familiar term to include all Israelites (Judah and the other tribes of Israel).

2

The names of God



Here it will be used the Concordant Hebrew English Sublinear (CHES), based on the vocabulary of the Concordant Version of the Old Testament (CVOT), the transliterated Hebrew. In some parts of the text it will be used the Concordant Greek Text Sublinear (CGTS), the Greek New Testament Version – 1984, based on KJV/AV translation, known as Greek Textus Receptus.

Links:

https://www.scripture4all.org/OnlineInterlinear/Hebrew_Index.htm

https://www.scripture4all.org/OnlineInterlinear/Greek_Index.htm

Let's start talking about the most known names of God since the beginning of mankind:

I) El ('el, or al - אל), in our English version 'God' or 'god' comes from the same root of other Semitic languages and means a god, in the broadest sense of the word, true or false, therefore, spelled with an uppercase or lowercase letter in the Western languages to identify the true God (Creator of heaven and earth) from the false gods. For Hebrew, in fact, it does not matter, since this language there is no differentiation between uppercase and lowercase letters. Because of this general character, the word 'el in the Bible is associated with an adjective or predicate that defines God (the true God). In Deut. 5: 9 it is written: "... for I the Lord (YHWH) your God ('elōhīm) am a jealous God ('el)..." (CHES-CVOT, jealous God: 'al qna') or in Gen. 31: 13: "I am the God ('el) of Bethel, where you anointed a pillar and made a vow to me. Now leave this land at once and return to the land of your birth" (CHES-CVOT God of Bethel: al bith-al).

In Ras Shamra (ancient Ugarit, the capital of a kingdom to the north of the coast of Syria), however, 'El appears as a proper name, the name of the 'high god' of the Canaanites, later replaced by Baal. The plural of the word 'el is 'elōhīm, and when it is used as a plural, it is translated as 'God' (the true God) or 'gods', the false gods and graven images (Deut. 4: 28; Deut. 12: 2). Later we'll talk more about the word 'elōhīm.

'El 'elyôn (God Most High – Gen. 14: 22 – CHES-CVOT: 'al olium') was the title of God, as He was worshiped by Melchizedek and known to Abraham (Gen. 14: 18-24), as well as He was also known by Balaam (Num. 24: 16). We can also see the same word in Ps. 7: 17; Ps. 18: 13; Ps. 83: 18 and Dan. 7: 22; 27 (in Aramaic, in the plural: 'elyônîm; CHES-CVOT: 'oliunin') or the Aramaic equivalent of 'elyôn: 'illâyâ – Dan. 7: 25 (CHES-CVOT: 'oli-a').

II) Elohim – 'elôhîm – אלהים [CHES-CVOT, 'aleim']. Although a plural form it is interpreted as being singular when it comes to the true God, Creator of the universe; an expression of respect to His majesty. In Genesis, when speaking of the Creation, in all texts the word Elohim ('elôhîm) is written for 'God': Gen. 1: 1-31; Gen. 2: 1-3. Many other chapters bring the word 'God' written as 'Elohim', until the time of Noah and the patriarchs. In Gen. 2: 4 onward, and Gen. 3 onward, it is common to see the combined form: 'Lord God', which is discussed in item VII.

In Gen. 3: 5 (the dialogue between Eve and the serpent) it is written: "for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God [KJV, 'gods'; and NIV, 'God'], knowing good and evil" – Elohim (CHES-CVOT: אלהים, 'aleim') for the two words 'God' or 'gods.'

In Gen. 17: 7-8 God tells Abraham: "I will establish my covenant between me and you, and your offspring after you throughout their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you – Elohim (CHES-CVOT: אלהים, 'aleim') and to your offspring after you. And I will give to you, and to your offspring after you, the land where you are now an alien, all the land of Canaan, for a perpetual holding; and I will be their God – Elohim (CHES-CVOT: אלהים, 'aleim')."

III) Eloah – 'elôah – אלוה [CHES-CVOT, 'alue']. It is a singular form of Elohim, and has the same sense of 'el. The Aramaic form is 'elâh. In the OT this form is the most commonly found in the poetical books (Job) and in Deut. 32: 15; 17 (the song of Moses).

IV) YHWH is translated in our English version as 'Lord' or 'Jehovah.' For scholars of Judaism, the translation 'Javeh' (YAHWEH) is preferable to Jehovah (YAHOWAH), for the reasons we'll see later. In the original Hebrew text, the name that was given to Moses was YHWH (יהוה - ieue). The pronunciation of YAHWEH in the transliteration to the Greek is iaoue or iabe ('b', in Greek, has the pronunciation of 'v'), quite different from iaoua (YAHOWAH – Jehovah). The abbreviated form of the name is **Yah** (or Jah, in Latinized form), as in Psalm 89: 8 [ieue alei tzbauth mi – kmu-k chsin **ie** u-amunth-k abibuthi-k – 'O Lord God of Hosts who [is] a strong **Lord** like unto thee? or to thy faithfulness round about thee'] and in the expression HaleluYah (which means 'Praise Jah!' – translated by Hallelujah).

By the name YHWH, 'the Lord', 'I Am who I Am' (ehyeh-asher-ehyeh, אהיה אשר אהיה), God would be known by His people (Ex. 3: 14-15; Ex. 6: 2-3). I AM, in Hebrew, Ehyeh, comes from the verb, Hayah, 'to be', often translated as 'I will be', 'to become' or else 'to reveal to be'. Asher is an ambiguous pronoun which can mean, depending on context, 'that', 'who', 'which' or 'where.' Therefore, although Ehyeh-Asher-Ehyeh is generally translated as 'I Am who I Am' or 'I am that I am', this expression can mean: 'I will be what I will be' or 'I will be who I will be' or 'I shall prove to be what I shall reveal to be' or 'I will be because I will be.' YHWH was the same God of the patriarchs, the God of Abraham: Elohim ('elôhîm), as written above, or El-Shaddai

(‘The God Almighty’, ‘the God who is more than sufficient’ or ‘The God who holds all the power’) – Gen. 17: 1 or ‘El ’elyôn (the ‘God Most High’ – Gen. 14: 22).



When God showed Himself to Moses in the burning bush (Ex. 3: 6; 14-15), He said: “He said further, ‘I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.’ And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God... God said to Moses, ‘I AM WHO I AM.’ He said further, ‘Thus you shall say to the Israelites, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’” God also said to Moses, ‘Thus you shall say to the Israelites, ‘The LORD, the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you’: This is my name forever, and this my title for all generations.’” [NIV: ‘This is my name forever, the name by which I am to be remembered from generation to generation’].

In Ex. 6: 3 it is written: “I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as God Almighty, but by my name ‘The Lord’ [NIV: THE LORD] I did not make myself known to them.”

Check also what is written in Gen. 35: 10-12: “God (CHES-CVOT: אֱלֹהִים – Aleim – Elohim) said to him, ‘Your name is Jacob; no longer shall you be called Jacob (Gen. 32: 28), but Israel shall be your name.’ So he was called Israel. God said to him, ‘I am God Almighty (CHES-CVOT: ‘Aleim ani al (’el) shdi – Elohim I El Who-Suffices – El-Shaddai’): be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall come from you, and kings shall spring from you. The land that I gave to Abraham and Isaac I will give to you, and I will give the land to your offspring after you”. El-Shaddai, in truth, was not a name of God, but a qualification (a title) given to Him to differentiate Him from other gods (also called by the name El).

Strictly speaking, **YHWH is the only name of God**. In the book of Genesis, however, the word ‘shem’ (‘name’) is associated with the divine being whose name is YHWH (the Lord). When Abraham and Isaac built an altar, they called on **the name of the Lord**:

- Gen. 12: 8: “From there he [*Abram*] moved on to the hill country on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; and there he built an altar to the Lord and invoked the name of the Lord.”

- Gen. 13: 3-4: “He journeyed on by stages from the Negeb as far as Bethel, to the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai, to the place

where he had made an altar at the first; and there Abram called on the name of the Lord.”

- Gen. 26: 25: “So he (*Isaac*) built an altar there, called on the name of the Lord, and pitched his tent there. And there Isaac’s servants dug a well.”

We have to think that this was a retrospective narrative. The Pentateuch was written by Moses, theoretically (let’s leave aside the ‘revolutionary’ explanations that we read about it), based on a narrative of past events. Probably it was a story told from generation to generation. There is no evidence that he wrote the book of Genesis inspired by a written report, nor do we know if the story of the Garden of Eden was written in Sumerian and reached the hands of Abraham. Moses must have written the reports of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob using the name of God that he was getting to know at the moment (YHWH). Abraham and Isaac might have built altars and invoked the name of El-Shaddai (Gen. 17: 1 – ‘The God who is more than sufficient’; ‘the God who suffices’ = the God Almighty) or ‘El ’elyôn (Gen. 14: 22 – God Most High) – cf. Ex. 6: 3: “I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as God Almighty, but by my name ‘The Lord’ I did not make myself known to them.”

The name YHWH was first given to **Moses**, as a proper name, as one knows a friend. When He told Moses that He was the God of his ancestors, He was reaffirming His identity as the true God who had made a covenant with the patriarchs, but now would be known in a more intimate way by His people, and would be a God of the present and the future, because He was about to manifest great works. Thus, YHWH was a proper name, a name of a person, a divine person, to differentiate Him from the other names with what other gods were invoked. It was to take from the mouth of His people the name ‘El’ definitely. In other words, to clear the past of idolatry in their lives, even because Abraham was born in an idolatrous land, Ur of the Chaldeans, moved to another idolatrous land, Haran, and therefore, even the patriarchs used idolatrous names because of their coexistence with many people in Ur, Haran, Canaan and Egypt (Abraham lived in Egypt for a while). The difference is that, as seen above, with the knowledge of the true God that they had through their life experiences, even using the word ‘El’, the adjective placed after the noun suggested which God they served. But after the revelation of the name YHWH all this would change. In 250 BC, when the Septuagint was written, the tetragrammaton YHWH (in Hebrew) was replaced by the Greek words *Kýrios* (kurios, Lord) and *The-ós* (God).

Another argument to say that the patriarchs did not know the name YHWH is what happened to Jacob, not only at Peniel, but when separated from Laban, and when he buried the objects of idolatry under the oak of Shechem, to enter Canaan:

- Gen. 31: 53: “‘May the God of Abraham and the God of Nahor—the God of their father—judge between us.’ So Jacob swore by the Fear of his father Isaac” – CHES-CVOT: אֱלֹהִים, ‘Aleim’, Elohim.

- Gen. 35: 1: 4-5; 7: “God said to Jacob, ‘Arise, go up to Bethel, and settle there. Make an altar there to the God who appeared to you when you fled from your brother Esau... So they [*Jacob’s family and their servants who came from Paddan-Aram with him, including Rachel, who had stolen the idols from the house of Laban, her father*] gave to Jacob all the foreign gods that they had, and the rings that were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the oak that was near Shechem. As they journeyed, a terror from God fell upon the cities all around them, so that no one pursued them... and there he built an altar and called the place El-bethel, because it was there that God had revealed himself to him when he fled from his brother” – CHES-CVOT: אֱלֹהִים, ‘Aleim’, Elohim; ’el, אֵל, when referring to the God of Bethel; אֱלֹהִים, ‘Aleim’, Elohim, for foreign gods; terror from God – אֱלֹהִים, ‘Aleim’, Elohim, God.

• Gen. 35: 10-12: “God (CHES-CVOT: אֱלֹהִים – Aleim – Elohim) said to him, ‘Your name is Jacob; no longer shall you be called Jacob (Gen. 32: 28), but Israel shall be your name.’ So he was called Israel. God said to him, ‘I am God Almighty (CHES-CVOT: ‘Aleim ani al (’el) shdi – Elohim I El Who-Suffices – El-Shaddai’): be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall come from you, and kings shall spring from you. The land that I gave to Abraham and Isaac I will give to you, and I will give the land to your offspring after you.”

We saw that 'El, Elohim or 'Elōah were common names given to God or to gods, by various ancient civilizations. The word ‘name’ to the Hebrews meant a lot, and still means. He is not a mere title, but means and expresses the real personality of him to whom it belongs. Can be derived from the circumstances of one’s birth (the names of the sons of Jacob, for example), or it can reflect his character (Gen. 27: 36 – here, Esau talks about Jacob), and when a person put his name on something or on another person, the latter stayed under his influence or protection. That’s why God gave Moses His name, YHWH, which means ‘Lord’, for this was what He would be from that moment in relation to His people, i.e., what He always wanted to be, the Lord.



The Tetragrammaton written in Phoenician (1050–150 BCE); in Paleo-Hebrew (1000–135 BCE), and modern Hebrew (3rd century BCE to the present)

V) 'El-'Elōhe-Israel

When he came to Shechem, Jacob bought a land, erected an altar, and called it 'El-'Elōhe-Yisra'el (Gen. 33: 20) – CHES-CVOT: 'al alei ishral' – 'God' ('el) is the God ('elōhīm or 'alei') of Israel', after he had an encounter with the angel. Jacob took the name Israel as his own, and so, he provided worship to God.

VI) 'El 'Ōlām

In Beersheba, Abraham planted a tamarisk tree, and called there on the name of the Lord, the Eternal God (YHWH, 'el 'ôlām) – Gen. 21: 33: “Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beer-sheba, and called there on the name of the Lord, the Everlasting God” (CHES-CVOT: 'ieue al oulm'). In this passage, YHWH is followed by a description, the Everlasting God. The original form of this name is 'El dhü 'Ôlāmi, 'God of eternity.' That's why the Jews say: **'The Eternal'**, when they want to refer to God.

VII) Lord God – YHWH Elohim (CHES-CVOT: 'ieue aleim')

- Gen. 2: 4-5: “These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created. In the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens, when no plant of the field was yet in the earth and no herb of the field had yet sprung up – for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was no one to till the ground” – Lord God – YHWH Elohim (CHES-CVOT: 'ieue aleim').

- Gen 2: 7-9: “then the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being. And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there he put the man whom he had formed. Out of the ground the Lord God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil” – Lord God – YHWH Elohim (CHES-CVOT: 'ieue aleim').

- Gen. 2: 15-17: “The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, ‘You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die” – Lord God – YHWH Elohim (CHES-CVOT: 'ieue aleim').

- Gen. 2: 18-19: “Then the Lord God said, ‘It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner.’ So out of the ground the Lord God formed every animal of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name” – Lord God – YHWH Elohim (CHES-CVOT: 'ieue aleim').

- Gen. 2: 21-22: “So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then he took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man” – Lord God – YHWH Elohim (CHES-CVOT: 'ieue aleim').

- Gen. 3: 1: “Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, ‘Did God say, ‘You shall not eat from any tree in the garden?’” – Lord God – YHWH Elohim (CHES-CVOT: 'ieue aleim').

- Gen. 3: 8-9: “They heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man, and said to him, ‘Where are you?’” – Lord God – YHWH Elohim (CHES-CVOT: 'ieue aleim').

- Gen. 3: 13-14: “Then the Lord God said to the woman, ‘What is this that you have done?’ The woman said, ‘The serpent tricked me, and I ate.’ The Lord God said to the serpent, ‘Because you have done this, cursed are you among all animals and among all wild creatures; upon your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life’” – Lord God – YHWH Elohim (CHES-CVOT: 'ieue aleim').

- Gen. 3: 21-23: “And the Lord God made garments of skins for the man and for his wife, and clothed them. Then the Lord God said, ‘See, the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil; and now, he might reach out his hand and take also from the

tree of life, and eat, and live forever’ – therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from which he was taken” – Lord God – YHWH Elohim (CHES-CVOT: ‘ieue aleim’).

In Gen. 15: 2, when Abraham gets out the tent and look at the stars, he speaks to God with the words ‘Lord God.’ But here they are not the same words written above and used in the Creation – YHWH Elohim (CHES-CVOT: ‘ieue aleim’), but **‘adni ieue’**: “But Abram said, ‘O **Lord God**, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?’”

We’ve seen that the transliteration of YHWH, ‘ieue’, means ‘THE LORD’, and not ‘God’, which was written as ’el or ’elōhīm. YHWH was the name given to Moses: “God said to Moses, ‘I am who I am’ [NIV: I AM WHO I AM; KJV: I AM THAT I AM]. He said further, ‘Thus you shall say to the Israelites, ‘I am has sent me to you’ [NIV: ‘I AM has sent me to you’]. God also said to Moses, ‘Thus you shall say to the Israelites, **‘The Lord**, [NIV: THE LORD; KJV: the LORD] the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you’: This is my name forever, and this my title for all generations” (Ex. 3: 14-15)... “I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as God Almighty, but by my name **‘The Lord’** [NIV: THE LORD] I did not make myself known to them” (Ex. 6: 3).

This means that Abraham (Gen. 18: 3) said other word commonly used in the daily life, ‘lord’ (’adon, or in this biblical version: ‘adni’, ‘my lord’), in the sense of servants and masters (’adon or adon means ‘lord, master’). There was another common word for ‘lord’ or ‘husband’, which was baal (‘lord, master, owner or husband.’) used by women to call their husbands: my ‘baal’, i.e., my lord, my husband. But the word ‘lord’ was also used for the false gods of Canaan, Phoenicia, Syria, Mesopotamia and all surrounding regions, especially Baal. Baal means ‘lord, master, owner or husband.’ When the Israelites entered Canaan they noticed that each part of the land had its own deity, its ‘owner.’ So, there were many ‘Baals.’ The Hebrew plural be’ālim appears in English as ‘Baals’ (1 Kin. 18: 18). The gods of the individual locations had appropriate surnames, for example, Baal of Peor (Num 25: 3). The Hebrew God was the ‘Lord’ or ‘husband’ of the Israelites, and therefore they called him ‘baal’, and this led to a great confusion between the worship of the one true and living God and the rituals of Baal. So it became essential to call the Lord by a different name, like ’ish (Hos. 2: 16-17), which means ‘husband.’

This way, the word ‘baal’ gradually became a proper name (Baal), to indicate the supreme god, the great Canaanite god of fertility, the lord of storms and other natural manifestations linked to the atmosphere (lightning and thunder; similarly to Marduk, the main Babylonian deity, who was called ‘Bel’, and became a proper name). Baal was called ‘Lord of heaven and earth’ and ‘he who is riding on the clouds.’ As mentioned above, in the archaeological excavations of Ras Shamra (Ugarit) in Syria, temples were found to Baal, the god of storms, controller of rain and fertility, and who had already replaced ‘El, a remote and nebulous god of the Canaanite pantheon, the father of gods and men and possessor of many wives (Source: The New Bible Dictionary – J.D. Douglas – editions of new life, 2nd edition 1995). Baal has become a proper name, yes; no longer just a noun for ‘lord, master, owner or husband.’ The greatest example of this is in 1 Kin. 18: 21; 22; 24; 26; 36; 39-40 when Elijah defeated the 450 prophets of Baal (The Canaanite god). A similar thing happened to mammon, a word of Chaldean origin (in Greek, ‘mammonas’ (Strong #g3126) for ‘money’ or ‘wealth.’ Because it was so valued and worshiped, it ended up receiving an identity; it became the god of money, Mammon.

The bible says:

• Hos. 2: 8; 16; 17: “She [*God referred to the nation of Israel*] did not know that it was I who gave her the grain, the wine, and the oil, and who lavished upon her silver and gold that they used for Baal... On that day, says the Lord, you will call me, ‘My husband’ (‘ishi – Strong #376), and no longer will you call me, ‘My Baal (Baali – Strong #1180).’ For I will remove the names of the Baals from her mouth, and they shall be mentioned by name no more.”

• “They [*the false prophets*] plan to make my people forget my name by their dreams that they tell one another, just as their ancestors forgot my name for Baal” (Jer. 23: 27).

The expression used by Abraham (‘adni ieue’) could have been more exactly translated as ‘my Lord, The Lord’, since the two words mean ‘lord’.

This expression ‘Lord God’ in all passages of Genesis described above was written as YHWH Elohim (CHES-CVOT: ‘ieue aleim’).

In Gen. 18: 3, when the three angels go to the camp, and Abraham sees them, he says: “He said, ‘My lord, if I find favor with you, do not pass by your servant.’” In this verse he uses again the word **adoni** (CHES-CVOT: ‘adni’), and whose translation in English is ‘my lord’. Here, we can understand the meaning of the words, for the suffix ‘i’ represents the possessive pronoun ‘my’, and added to the noun in the singular form, besides being used in the human sense, because the angels of God and the Lord Himself were there in human form. Thus, adoni is found in several texts referring **to humans**. For example, in Gen. 24: 42; 48, the servant of Abraham says (CHES-CVOT): ‘ieue alei **adn-i** abrem’ (YHWH Elohim-of lord-of-me Abraham – “o Lord, God of my lord Abraham” ... – Gen. 24: 42 – in NRSV and NIV ‘my lord’ is substituted by ‘my master’) ... ‘l-ieue u-abrk ath-ieue alei **adni** abrem’ (... to Yahweh and I am blessing Yahweh Elohim-of lord-of me Abraham – “... and worshiped the Lord, and blessed the Lord, the God of my lord Abraham ... – Gen. 24: 48. In NRSV and NIV ‘my lord’ is substituted by ‘my master’). It’s worth remembering that only in the Western languages the difference between uppercase and lowercase letters is important, what doesn’t occur in Hebrew.

VIII) The Holy One of Israel – q’edoshôsh Yisra’el – was used as favorite by Isaiah (29 times), by Jeremiah and the Book of Psalms. Other titles similar to this are used: ‘The Mighty One of Israel’ – ‘abhîr Yisrâ’el – Isa. 1: 24; ‘The Glory of Israel’ – nêtsach Yisrâ’el – 1 Sam. 15: 29 – CHES-CVOT – ntzch (‘the Strength of Israel’; in Hebrew: the permanent-One)

IX) Ancient of Days (Aramaic: ‘attîq yômin) given by Daniel, which shows God in His throne ready to judge the empires (Dan. 7: 9; 13; 22). This title alternates with ‘the Most High’ (in Aramaic: ‘illâyâ’elyônin, verses 18; 22; 25; 27; CHES-CVOT – oliunin).

X) Adonai:

In the course of time, the tetragrammaton YHWH being considered too sacred to be pronounced, the word ‘Adhonaí (in Hebrew: ‘ādhōnāy or ‘adhōnāy) came to replace it in reading. ‘Adhonaí literally means ‘My Lords’; the suffix ‘i’ represents the possessive pronoun ‘my or mine’; and the vowel ‘a’ makes the plural. It was used exclusively with reference to Almighty God, meaning ‘My Lord’ or ‘Sovereign Lord.’ The singular forms adon (‘lord’) and adoni (‘my lord’) are used in the Hebrew Bible as royal titles and for distinguished persons, for example, in the Book of Samuel (1 Sam. 25: 26; 2 Sam. 14: 17; 20). The Phoenicians used adon (‘lord’) and adoni (‘my lord’) as a title of

Tammuz (the Greek Adonis). The word 'adon' is also used occasionally in Hebrew texts to refer to God (Ps 136: 3: "Give thanks to the Lord of lords: His love endures forever", where Lord and lords receive the same name, 'adon' – Strong #113).

There is no agreement as to the date when the Jewish superstition of not pronouncing the name of God in order to obey the 3rd of the Ten Commandments written on the tablets of the Law began. There is research in the OT that confirms that there is no solid evidence in relation to this, nothing in the Torah explicitly prohibits speaking the name of God, even with the explanations that some Jewish scholars give for the majestic appearance of God at Sinai, which left His people frightened [Ex. 19: 9; 11; 16-19; Ex. 20: 18-21; Deut. 5:4-5; Deut. 4:10-13; 36; Deut. 5:22-27; 31], generating in them His fear and a deep feeling of reverence. When God showed Himself to Moses in the burning bush (Ex. 3: 15) He said: "Thus you shall say to the Israelites, 'The LORD, the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you': This is my name forever, and this my title for all generations'" [NIV: 'This is my name forever, the name by which I am to be remembered from generation to generation'].

Some researchers say that the original correct and satisfactory pronunciation of the tetragrammaton (YHWH) disappeared because the original Hebrew was considered an almost completely extinct language, in addition to which the people's tongue would need to move inside the mouth in a way that experts on the subject would describe today as impossible.

The fact is that true servants of God never failed to speak His name. At least in written form, the pronunciation of the name YHWH was never abandoned in the period before Christ. In any case, Jews in some post-exilic period adopted the Hebrew word 'Adhonaí when pronouncing the Sacred Tetragrammaton; probably in the Hellenistic Period or during Second Temple Judaism (after the death of the Prophet Malachi), for as late as the 5th century BCE the tetragrammaton was pronounced. When the Septuagint (250 BC) was written, the tetragrammaton YHWH was replaced by the Greek words Ký-rios (kurios, Lord) and The-ós (God).

In the first century CE, some evidence of a superstitious attitude towards that name appears for the first time. Flavius Josephus, Jewish historian who was descendant from a priestly family, after narrating the revelation that God provided to Moses before the burning bush, when speaking about the pronunciation of the name of God (YHWH), he only mentions: "The Name about which I am forbidden to speak."

The question, in fact, has to do with the ORAL form of pronouncing the Tetragrammaton. It remained written the way it was (יהוה – YHWH, Strong #3068); only that its vocalization became different.

Others say it was in the 2nd century CE with Mishnah, containing oral traditions in writing so that they would not be lost that they adopted the Hebrew Word 'Adhonaí to pronounce the Sacred Tetragrammaton. In the 6th century, the masoretes (= 'transmitters'; They replaced the ancient scribes as guardians of the sacred text and acted from 500-1000 AD) added the vowel punctuation to the biblical texts, so that it would be remembered that Adonai or Elohim should be pronounced in the place of YHWH. It was written on the edge of the scroll where YHWH was written in the bible verses. This vocalization created the word that was transliterated as YAHOWAH (in Greek; iaoa; for us, Jehovah, in the twelfth century AD). The pronunciation of YAHWEH in the transliteration to the Greek is iaoue or iabe ('b', in Greek, has the pronunciation of 'v').

One comment that I find important is on the Mishnah Berurah ('Clear Teaching') written now, in the 20th century of our era. It is a work on halacha, the name given to the

set of laws of the Jewish religion, including the 613 commandments contained in the Torah and the later rabbinic and Talmudic commandments related to customs and traditions, serving as a guide to the Jewish way of life.

In Mishnah Berurah 5: 2 it is written: “Because The Honored and Awesome Name is forbidden to pronounce it as it is written; like the Sages stated, ‘One who pronounces The Name [as it is written] with its letters has no portion in the World to Come.’ Rather, one must pronounce it as if the Name Adon-ai was written, and also [pronounce it].”

In Deuteronomy we can read:

- Deut. 7: 21: “Have no dread of them, for the Lord your God, who is present with you, is a great and awesome God.” In KJV with Lexicon Strong’s Concordance, the word used is ‘terrible’, in the place of awesome. In Hebrew, yare (Strong #3372).

- Deut. 10: 17: “For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who is not partial and takes no bribe.” In KJV with Lexicon Strong’s Concordance, the word used is ‘terrible’, in the place of awesome. In Hebrew, yare (Strong #3372).

With this, the Jewish people confirm that they continue to use the name Adonai and put the ‘terrible name’ (‘Awesome Name’) into disuse; and the ‘terrible name’ is the one given to Moses at Sinai: יהוה – YHWH, ‘The Lord.’

But isn’t it written in Joel 2: 32?

“Then everyone who calls on the name of the LORD (יהוה) shall be saved; for in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be those who escape [NIV: in Jerusalem there will be deliverance], as the Lord has said, and among the survivors shall be those whom the Lord calls.”

Thus, despite the reverent explanation given by the Jews, using the name ’Adhonaí (in Hebrew: ʾădhōnāy or ’adhōnāy – אֲדוֹנִי – sometimes translated as ‘Sovereign Lord’) in relation to God, even being a plural word, ‘My Lords’, as well as Elohim (’elōhīm or Elohím, ‘God’ – אֱלֹהִים), the plural of the word ’el to differentiate the true God from false gods and carved images (Deut. 4: 28; Deut. 12: 2) of Canaan, it is impossible to deny its relationship to the ancient gods of Canaan, for, as explained above, it was a created word by the Jews in some postexilic period, when intimacy with the true God of Sinai had been lost through the sin of idolatry and distorted by mysticism.

Did you understand what vowel signs did to many words in Hebrew, including the name of God? Let’s give a very simple example: let’s suppose that your name is written only with consonants: ‘b-r-d’, and suddenly, to make life easier for everyone, someone suggests adding vowels to it to make it easier to pronounce. And instead of adding the correct vowels that are closest to the pronunciation of your name, he adds others, which have a completely different meaning. For example: instead of adding the vowel ‘i’, which would be more correct, he would add two: ‘e’ and ‘a.’ So, your name, instead of being pronounced ‘bird,’ becomes pronounced ‘beard.’ ‘Bird’ is different from ‘beard’, isn’t it? In the same way, YHWH is different from Adonai, written in any language.

Unfortunately, throughout the ages of humanity this error has ended up prevailing and influencing many people. In the OT, when the prophets of God served Him with a pure and righteous heart, His name was spoken by them through the tetragrammaton given to Moses, YHWH (יהוה); certainly, a different and holier pronunciation than what we know today as Yahweh (in Greek: iaoue or iabe; in Latin: Yahweh) or Yahowah (in Greek: iaoa; in Latin: Jehovah).

HaShem:

Even today, the Jews use the word Adonai in relation to YHWH (יהוה) instead of pronouncing the tetragrammaton in solemn prayers and occasions. In everyday life they

use the word HaShem ('The Name'), a name whose origin is not biblical, but mystical, Kabbalistic. It is very similar to what the New Age uses: 'Higher Self', 'Infinite Spirit', 'Primal Stream', 'One Essence', and 'Universal Principle.' It all starts with a mystical Kabbalistic concept about the 'tree of life'; not the same one we know in Genesis and was created by God, symbolizing Jesus, but the one formed by the ten emanations of 'Ain Soph' ('Ein Soph', Ein Sof, or Eyn Sof – In Hebrew: 'the Endless One' or 'Unending'), the Supreme Whole of Kabbalah, what we can call 'God' (called by them, 'haShem' or 'the Name'). Ain Soph is the 'Non-Being' or 'Non-Existent', that is, from their point of view, God has no identity; He's just energy.

In fact, since the exilic and post-exilic period, with the writing of the Targums in Aramaic, Jewish writers have already begun to remove the concept of God with form and feelings, which traditional Judaism preached and did not allow to be removed. This new point of view, in fact, brought an abstract concept of God, colder and more distant (a simple 'cosmic energy', instead of a being with its own identity). They even created the word 'Shekinah' to indicate God himself. Shekinah, in fact, is a kabbalistic, mystical concept, which considers it as the feminine face of the Divine Presence. According to Kabbalah, Shekinah is an very powerful cosmic energy that lives within the Universe, vivifying it and being its soul or spirit.

As for the Ten Emanations of Ein Sof (or Sefirot) mentioned above (and which form the 'tree of life'), they are aligned in three layers, each of them associated with the 'four worlds' of Creation:

1) Assiah (The world of Action; the physical world and everything that concerns matter).

2) Yetzirah (The world of Formation; The Divine emotional sefirot; The world of relationships where our 'treasure' is found – Seghullâ).

3) Beri'ah (The world of Creation; corresponds to the spiritual world, that is, the relationship with God; where the souls and the angels have self-awareness, but without form; the intellectual understanding, predominates).

4) Atzilut (The world of Emanation; heaven itself; the wisdom beyond understanding).

This term 'HaShem' appeared for the first time with the Rishonim (medieval rabbinic authorities). Rishonim ('pioneers'), from Hebrew, ראשונים; Rishon, singular, ראשון, is the name given to the rabbis and scholars of Judaism, who lived during the 11th to 15th century AD.

XI) Jehovah:

YHWH (יהוה - ieue) is translated in our English version as 'Lord' or 'Jehovah.' For scholars of Judaism, the translation 'Javeh' (YAHWEH) is preferable to Jehovah (YAHOWAH). The pronunciation of YAHWEH in the transliteration to the Greek is iaoue or iabe ('b', in Greek, has the pronunciation of 'v'). When the masorettes (literally 'transmitters', replaced the ancient scribes as guardians of the sacred text and acted from 500-1000 AD) added the vowel punctuation to the texts of the Scriptures, the vowels of 'Adonai' were also added to the name YHWH. This vocalization created the word that was transliterated as YAHOWAH (in Greek; iaoa; for us, Jehovah, in the twelfth century AD). Masorah was a modern version written in Hebrew for the Jews themselves, using vowels, since the Hebrew spoken in the time of Moses no longer existed. Hebrew had no vowels, only consonants. Other scholars say the name with altered vowels (Adonai) was written in the margin of the roll where it was written the name of YHWH in biblical verses.

Based on this, emerged the combinations with the name Jehovah. But, first, let's read what is written in Genesis. In Gen. 22, Abraham gave to the place where Isaac was to be sacrificed the name YHWH yir'eh, 'the Lord provides' (Jehovah-Jireh).

- Gen. 22: 8; 14: "Abraham said *[to Isaac]*, 'God himself will provide (CHES-CVOT: 'aleim irae', that is, 'Elohim yir'eh) the lamb for a burnt offering, my son.' So the two of them walked on together... So Abraham called that place 'The Lord will provide' (CHES-CVOT: 'ieue irae); as it is said to this day, 'On the mount of the Lord it shall be provided.'"

My note: he probably used the name 'Elohim', 'God will provide', 'aleim irae', i.e., 'Elohim yir'eh or Elohim yêrâ'eh, because, as we saw before, he did not yet know the name YHWH. It should have been Moses who wrote in retrospective.

Other combinations of the name Jehovah:

- Jehovah nissi – The Lord is my banner, name given by Moses (Ex. 17: 15 – CHES-CVOT: ieue ns-i; Yahweh nissi), after the victory over the Amalekites, and is not another name of God but an adjective, we can say so, a name that qualifies Him, celebrating certain events.

- Jehovah shalom – The lord is peace, given by Gideon to the altar that He erected at Ophrah (Judg. 6: 24 – CHES-CVOT: ieue shlum; Yahweh shalom).

- Jehovah-Tsidquenu (CHES-CVOT: ieue tzdq-nu; Yahweh tsidhqênu): The Lord is our righteousness – Jer. 23: 6; 33: 16 – in contrast to the last king of Judah, an unworthy bearer of the name Zedekiah (çidhqiyâhü, the Lord is righteousness).

- Jehovah Shammah (CHES-CVOT: ieue shm-e; Yahweh Shammah): The Lord is present – Ezek. 48: 35 ('The Lord is there'), given by Ezekiel to the city that he saw.

- Jehovah Tsebaoth or Sabaoth (CHES-CVOT: ieue tzbauth; Yahweh tsebhâ'oth or s'bhâ'ôth): The Lord of Hosts – 1 Sam. 1: 3. It is a divine title that appears for the first time on the book of Samuel and by which God was worshiped at Shiloh. It was used by David when challenging Goliath (1 Sam. 17: 45), and then in a song of victory (Ps. 24: 10). This name is found too much in the book of the prophets (88 times only in Jeremiah) to show God as the Savior and Protector of His people (Ps. 46: 7; 11, for instance). The 'hosts' or 'armies' or 'heavenly hosts' are the heavenly powers, in the case, the angelic hosts ready to obey the Lord.

- Jehovah Maqed: The Lord who strikes – Ezek. 7: 9 (CHES-CVOT: ieue mke; Yahweh makkeh).

- Jehovah Mequedesh or Jehovah Mikadeskim: The Lord who sanctifies – Ex. 31: 13; Lev. 22: 32; Ezek. 20: 12 (CHES-CVOT: ieue mqdsh-km; Yahweh meqaddishkhem).

- Jehovah Rapha: The Lord who heals – Ex 15: 26 (CHES-CVOT: ieue rpha-k; Yahweh rophe'ekha)

- Jehovah Rohi: The lord is my shepherd – Ps 23: 1 (CHES-CVOT: ieue ro-i; Yahweh ro'iy)

- Jehovah Roi: The God who sees – Gen. 16: 13 (CHES-CVOT: al rai; Yahweh ro'iy).

- Jehovah Osenu: The Lord our maker – Ps. 95: 6 (CHES-CVOT: ieue osh-nu; Yahweh `osênu).

- Jehovah Hosseu: The Lord our Lord – Neh. 10: 29 (CHES-CVOT: 'ieue adni-nu', 'the LORD our Lord'; in masoretic translation: hâ'elohiym neshêyhem).

Conclusion

The New Testament (HaBrit HaHadashah) says that the name of Jesus is above every name (Phil. 2: 9-11) and everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved (Rom. 10: 13 cf. Joel 2: 32). Furthermore, I would like to remind you that in Jesus we have the freedom and permission given by Himself to call Him Lord:

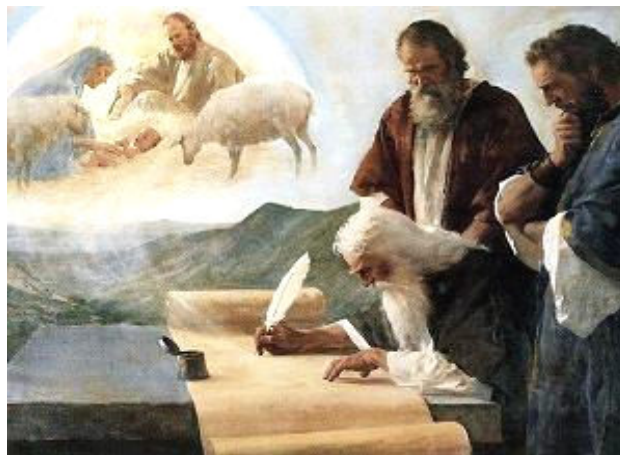
- Jn. 13: 13-14; 19: “You call me Teacher and Lord [Strong #2962 – kurios, κύριος]—and you are right, for that is what I am [In Greek: ‘egô eimi’]. So if I, your Lord [Strong #2962 – kurios, κύριος] and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet... I tell you this now, before it occurs, so that when it does occur, you may believe that I am he [NIV: ‘I am He’; In Greek: ‘egô eimi’].”

‘I am’ is written in Greek ‘egô eimi’ (as a response to the word used in v. 13 – kurios, ‘Lord’, the same used in the Septuagint for the Tetragrammaton YHWH: Kýrios, kurios, ‘The Lord’). Jesus merely confirmed His name given on Sinai to Moses: I AM, YHWH, THE LORD.

- Rev. 19: 15-16: “From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron; he will tread the wine press of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has a name inscribed, ‘King of kings and Lord of lords.’” [Strong #935 – basileus, βασιλεύς = King; Strong #2962 – kurios, κύριος = Lord].

3

The Messiah



The word ‘anointed’ and the act of anointing with oil (Mashach) refers to the custom of anointing with oil to consecrate and sanctify things or people: Gen. 28: 18; Ex. 30: 22-33; 2 Sam. 1: 21; Isa. 21: 5; Judg. 9: 8; 2 Sam. 2: 4; 1 Kin. 1: 34; Ex. 28: 41; 1 Kin. 19: 16; 2 Kin. 9: 1-3; 11-13.

The person or thing that was anointed became holy (Ex. 30: 22-33; 1 Sam. 24: 6; 10).

The anointing was an act from God (1 Sam. 10: 1; Ps. 89: 20; Acts 10: 38).

The anointing was used metaphorically to mean the bestowal of divine favor (Ps. 23: 5; Ps. 92: 10; Ps. 45: 7) or the appointment to a special role of God’s purpose (Ps. 105: 15; Isa. 45: 1; Ps. 89: 20; Ex. 28: 41).

Furthermore, the anointing symbolized enablement for a service, and is associated with the outpouring of the Spirit of God (1 Sam. 10: 1; 6; 9; 1 Sam. 16: 13; Isa. 61: 1; Zech. 4: 1-14 – The anointing of God upon Joshua and Zerubbabel, the priest and governor of Judah at the time of the rebuilding of the 2nd Temple – Hag. 2: 21).

This use is brought to the NT. The use of the oil for anointing the sick (Jam. 5: 14) is understood in the same way, as something that points to the Holy Spirit, the giver of life. In the NT we can see the use of oil or the act of anointing in relation to five situations:

1) Symbolizing the Holy Spirit bringing the divine enablement on someone (Lk. 4: 18; Acts 10: 38; 2 Cor. 1: 21; Heb. 1: 9; 1 Jn. 2: 20; 27).

2) As an ointment, used as medicine to heal wounds (Lk. 10: 34 – the parable of the Good Samaritan; Rev. 3: 18 – the church in Laodicea).

3) As a custom of anointing the dead with perfumes and spices (Mk. 14: 8, compare Jn. 19: 39-40; Lk. 23: 56, Lk. 24: 1; Mk. 16: 1).

4) As a sign of hospitality, associated with the washing of the feet and the kiss (Lk. 7: 46, Jn. 11: 2; Jn. 12: 3).

5) To the sick (Mk. 6: 13; Jam. 5:14).

Mashach ('to anoint') gives origin to Mashiach (mâshiyach or meshiycho, in Hebrew; or meshihâ, in Aramaic), which means 'anointed', like the kings, judges, prophets and priests in the OT. It also came to be used for Messiah, משיח, the Anointed One (Greek: Christ, Christòs, Χριστός), the awaited savior or deliverer of Israel, a descendant of King David that will rebuild the nation, bringing peace. 'Anointed' is found, at least, sixteen times in the Old Testament, being used the words mâshiyach or meshiycho [Lev 4: 3; Lev 4: 5; Lev 4: 16; Lev 6: 15; 1 Sam 2: 10; 1 Sam 24: 6; 10; 2 Sam 1: 21; 2 Sam 22: 51; Ps 2: 2; Ps 18: 50; Isa 45: 1; Ezek 28: 14; Zech 4: 14; Dan 9: 25-26 – when an angel announces to the prophet Daniel that the Messiah would come and would be killed 62 prophetic weeks after the rebuilding of Jerusalem, before the city and the temple were destroyed again (what happened in 70 AD by the Romans). In Ps. 105: 14-15 and 1 Chr. 16: 22 ("he allowed no one to oppress them; he rebuked kings on their account, saying, 'Do not touch my anointed ones; do my prophets no harm'"), the expression 'my anointed ones', in Hebrew, is used as equivalent to 'my prophets']. In the NT the Greek word Μεσσίας (Messiah) is written only two times: in Jn. 1: 41 and Jn. 4: 25. Christòs is the adjective, while the verb is chriō – to anoint.

As it was written above, Messiah, משיח, 'the Anointed One' (Greek: Christ, Christòs, Χριστός), is the awaited savior or deliverer of Israel, a man descendant of King David that will rebuild the nation, bringing peace. This is the idea that Jews (at least the traditional Jews) have about the Messiah. Christians consider Jesus Christ as the Messiah, as well as the Son of God and one of the three Persons of the Trinity, a doctrine that was established at the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD.

As we saw, in the OT the specific word, 'Messiah' (משיח), appears only in Dan. 9: 25-26 – when an angel announces to the prophet Daniel that the Messiah would come and would be killed 62 prophetic weeks after the rebuilding of Jerusalem, before the city and the temple were destroyed again (what happened in 70 AD by the Romans). In this text from Daniel, 'an anointed prince' (NRSV), is written as 'the Anointed One' with a capital letter in NIV.

²⁵ "Know therefore and understand: from the time that the word went out to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the time of an anointed prince [NIV, 'the Anointed One'], there shall be seven weeks; and for sixty-two weeks it shall be built again with streets and moat, but in a troubled time."

²⁶ "After the sixty-two weeks, an anointed one [NIV, 'the Anointed One'], shall be cut off and shall have nothing, and the troops of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. Its end shall come with a flood, and to the end there shall be war. Desolations are decreed."

In Hebrew, the word 'Mashiach' (mâshiyach) is very clear:

²⁵ vethêdha' vethaskêl min-motsâ' dhâbhâr.lehâshiybh velibhnoth yerushâlaim 'adh-mâshiyach nâghiydh shâbhu'iym shibh'âhveshâbhu'iym shishiyim ushenayim tâshubh venibhnethâh rechobh vechâruts ubhetsoqhâ'ittiyim

²⁶ ve'acharêy hashâbhu'iym shishiyim ushenayim yikkârêthmâshiyach ve'êyn lo vehâ'iyv vahaqqodhesh yashchiyth 'am nâghiydh habbâ'veqitso bhashetheph ve'adh qêts milchâmâh nechertseth shomêmoth

In the NT the Greek word Μεσσίας (Messiah) is written only two times: in John 1: 41 (when Andrew tells Peter that he and John had found the Messiah of Israel, which was Jesus) and John 4: 25 (when the Samaritan woman meets Jesus sitting by the well of Jacob and says to Him that she knew that the Messiah – who is called Christ – would

come and would proclaim all things to His people, and Jesus confirms to the woman that He is the Messiah awaited by Israel):

- Jn. 1: 41: “He first found his brother Simon and said to him, ‘We have found the Messiah’ (which is translated Anointed).”

In Greek: euriskei outos prôtos ton adelphon ton idion simôna kai legei autô eurêkamen ton **messian** o estin methermêneuomenon o christos

- Jn. 4: 25: “The woman said to him, ‘I know that Messiah is coming’ (who is called Christ). ‘When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us.’”

In Greek: legei autô ê gunê oida oti **messias** erchetai o legomenos christos otan elthê ekeinos anagelei êmin panta

In all the other texts of the NT, instead of ‘Messiah’, it’s written the Greek word ‘Christ’ (Christòs, Χριστός), even when our versions translate ‘Messiah’:

- Matt. 16: 16: “Simon Peter answered, ‘You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.’”

- Matt. 1: 18: “Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit.”

- Matt. 16: 20: “Then he sternly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.”

- Mk. 8: 29: “He asked them, ‘But who do you say that I am?’ Peter answered him, ‘You are the Messiah.’”

- Mk. 14: 61: “But he was silent and did not answer. Again the high priest asked him, ‘Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?’”

- Lk. 2: 11; 26: “to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord... It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Messiah.”

- Lk. 9: 20: “He said to them, ‘But who do you say that I am?’ Peter answered, ‘The Messiah of God.’”

- Lk. 22: 67: “They said, ‘If you are the Messiah, tell us.’ He replied, ‘If I tell you, you will not believe.’”

- Jn. 4: 29: “Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?”

- Jn. 7: 26-27; 31: “‘And here he is, speaking openly, but they say nothing to him! Can it be that the authorities really know that this is the Messiah? Yet we know where this man is from; but when the Messiah comes, no one will know where he is from’... Yet many in the crowd believed in him and were saying, ‘When the Messiah comes, will he do more signs than this man has done?’”

- Jn. 9: 22: “His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue.”

- Jn. 10: 24: “So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, ‘How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly.’”

- At 2: 36: “Therefore let the entire house of Israel know with certainty that God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified.”

- At 3: 20: “... so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Messiah appointed for you, that is, Jesus.”

- Acts 4: 26: “The kings of the earth took their stand, and the rulers have gathered together against the Lord and against his Messiah.”

- Acts 5: 42: “And every day in the temple and at home they did not cease to teach and proclaim Jesus as the Messiah.”
 - Acts 9: 22: “Saul became increasingly more powerful and confounded the Jews who lived in Damascus by proving that Jesus was the Messiah.”
 - Acts 17: 3: “... explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Messiah to suffer and to rise from the dead, and saying, ‘This is the Messiah, Jesus whom I am proclaiming to you.’”
 - Acts 18: 28: “... for he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, showing by the scriptures that the Messiah is Jesus.”
 - Acts 26: 23: “... that the Messiah must suffer, and that, by being the first to rise from the dead, he would proclaim light both to our people and to the Gentiles.”
- It is the same with the letters from Paul and the other writings of the NT.

In the OT, the kings, judges, prophets and priests were called ‘the anointed’, that is, someone who was chosen by God from whom the Holy Spirit took hold, causing that the person performed wonders, and demonstrated the people that his authority came from God. But until the first century BC, the word Messiah – משיח – (or ‘The Messiah’) was applied only to the prophecies which referred to the coming of the Deliverer of Israel.

The coming of the Messiah (Jesus) was prophesied by various prophets, especially Isaiah, therefore called ‘the messianic prophet.’ However, the word ‘Messiah’, ‘The Anointed One’, as I said before has only been used twice in Dan. 9: 25-26. The prophets referred to the Deliverer of Israel with other words such as: Servant, Righteous Branch or Root of David, Prince, and Immanuel (which means ‘God with us’). Other words such as ‘Redeemer’, ‘The Mighty One of Jacob’ and ‘The Holy One of Israel’ (q^edoshôsh Yisra’el) are in fact used to refer to God as a tireless defender of the nation. Biblical references about ‘Redeemer’ are: Isa. 41: 14; Isa. 44: 6; Isa. 47: 4; Isa. 48: 17; Isa. 49: 26; Isa. 54: 5; Isa. 54: 8; Isa. 59: 20; Isa. 60: 16.

The glory of the days of the Messiah is represented by the happy times of David and Solomon (Zech. 3: 10 – cf. 1 Kin. 4: 25), and the power of peace, by the union of Judah and Israel (Hos. 1: 11; Isa. 11: 13).

Let’s read some prophecies:

- Isa. 7: 14: “Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel [*immānu’ēl* = ‘With us (is) God’, or ‘God with us’].”
- Isa. 9: 1-7: “But there will be no gloom for those who were in anguish [*the prophet referred to the kingdom of Judah under threat from the Assyrian yoke*]. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he will make glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations. The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined. You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire. For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold

it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.”

- Isa. 11: 1-2: “A shoot [*a son, David*] shall come out from the stump of Jesse [*father of David*], and a branch [*Jesus*] shall grow out of his roots [*it means ‘from their descendants, from their family tree’*]. The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might [NIV, power], the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord” [*confirming His anointing as Messiah, who would come from the house of David*].

- Isa. 42:1: “Here is my servant [*referring to Jesus*], whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations.”

- Jer. 23: 5-6: “The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. And this is the name by which he will be called: ‘The Lord is our righteousness.’”

- Jer. 30: 21: “Their prince [*referring to Jesus*], shall be one of their own [*Judah and Israel*], their ruler shall come from their midst; I will bring him near, and he shall approach me, for who would otherwise dare to approach me? says the Lord.”

- Jer. 33: 14-16: “The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. And this is the name by which it will be called: ‘The Lord is our righteousness.’”

- Ezek. 37: 24: “My servant David [*referring to Jesus*], shall be king over them; and they shall all have one shepherd. They shall follow my ordinances and be careful to observe my statutes.”

- Mic. 5: 2: “But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days” cf. John 7: 42: “Has not the scripture said that the Messiah is descended from David and comes from Bethlehem, the village where David lived?”

In some prophecies the word ‘**servant**’ is directly linked to the figure of Jesus. In others, the reference to the Messiah is symbolized in David or Cyrus as servants used by God to be kings and anointed conquerors, with the task of reigning over Israel and the Gentiles, freeing His people from their tyrants.

The Anointed Conqueror will be a king to rule over Jews and Gentiles, executing God’s vengeance against His enemies, getting dressed in the armor of salvation (Isa. 59: 16-21) and completely defeating His enemies, thus redeeming His people. In chapter 63: 1-6, the Anointed Conqueror, using appropriate garments, makes revenge and redemption. In his person, this Messianic conqueror is not so different from the king and the Servant. He has the same spiritual gifts and is a man among men. But he shows two other facets about himself. First, he is described as the conqueror of Edom (Isa. 63: 1), a task that was accomplished by any other Israelite king but David: Num. 24: 17-19; 1 Chr. 18: 11-12 (18,000 Edomites struck down by Abishai, David’s cousin); 2 Sam. 8: 13-14 (18,000 men); Ps. 60 – title [NIV]: “*For the director of music. To the tune of ‘The lily of the Covenant.’ A mitktam (poem) of David. For teaching. When he fought Aram Naharaim (Arameans of North-west Mesopotamia – The Euphrates River, 1 Chr.*

18: 3 – and Aram Zobah (*Arameans of central Syria*), and when and Joab returned and struck down twelve thousand Edomites in the Valley of Salt” cf. Ps 108: 6-13. Here, we can see the identity of the Anointed Conqueror with the Davidic Messiah. Second, he wears the garments of salvation and revenge, with which YHWH Himself will get dressed (Isa. 59: 16-21). In Isa. 61: 1-3 we can see another characteristic of the Messiah, who is someone endowed with the Spirit and the Word:

- Isa. 61: 1-3: “The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; to provide for those who mourn in Zion—to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, to display his glory.” Jesus took on this prophecy as it is written in Lk. 4: 18-19: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

Righteous Branch or Root of David:

- Isa. 4: 2: “On that day the branch of the Lord shall be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the land shall be the pride and glory of the survivors of Israel.”

- Isa. 11: 1: “A shoot [*a son, David*] shall come out from the stump of Jesse [*father of David*], and a branch [*Jesus*] shall grow out of his roots [*it means ‘from their descendants, from their family tree’*]” cf. Rev. 5: 5 b: “... See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals.”

- Isa. 53: 2: “For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him” (‘young plant’ = ‘The Branch’, to continue the priestly work).

- Jer. 23: 5: “The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land.”

- Jer. 33: 14-18: “The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. And this is the name by which it will be called: ‘The Lord is our righteousness.’ For thus says the Lord: David shall never lack a man to sit on the throne of the house of Israel, and the levitical priests shall never lack a man in my presence to offer burnt offerings, to make grain offerings, and to make sacrifices for all time.” (Righteous Branch or Root of David, Branch of David – confirming Jesus as king and priest, for they were also called ‘anointed’).

In the book of Zechariah it also appears the word ‘Branch’ (not only as a reference to the priest Joshua, who was present at the building of the second temple, but also to the Messiah):

- Zech. 3: 8: “Now listen, Joshua, high priest, you and your colleagues who sit before you! For they are an omen of things to come: I am going to bring my servant the Branch.” (The Branch – in Hebrew: ‘tsemach’ – would carry out the priestly work of removing the sin of the land in a single day).

• Zech. 6: 12-13: “say to him: Thus says the Lord of hosts: Here is a man whose name is Branch [*figure of Joshua the high priest*]: for he shall branch out in his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord. It is he that shall build the temple of the Lord; he shall bear royal honor, and shall sit upon his throne and rule. There shall be a priest by his throne, with peaceful understanding between the two of them.”

The Branch would grow in its place, would build the temple of YHWH, would be a priest on His throne and would enjoy perfect peace and covenant with the Lord. Thus, it is clear that the branch is the Messiah, seen in His offices, kingly and priestly. He is the fulfillment of the words of Psalm 110, where the king appears as an eternal priest after the order of Melchizedek.

Servant

There’s a comment to make about the word ‘servant’, which is used in the Bible to other people besides the Messiah. In addition to be used in relation to servants and masters, God uses this word even to the wicked, which are His instruments on earth for correction of His people. For example, He calls the people of Israel ‘servant’, as well as His prophets, King David and Zerubbabel and even the king of Babylon. He also calls **Cyrus** the Persian a servant, as we will see later on, not only as a king to help His people but also as a prophetic figure of the **Messiah**. Let’s see the biblical references:

- Israel (Jacob) Jer. 30: 10; Jer. 46: 27-28; Isa. 41: 8-9; Isa. 44: 1-2; Isa. 44: 21; Isa. 45: 4; Isa. 48: 20; Isa. 49: 3.
- Prophets (Servants): Jer. 7: 25; Jer. 25: 4; Jer. 29: 19; Jer. 35: 15; Jer. 44: 4.
- Zerubbabel: Hag. 2: 23.
- David: Jer. 33: 21; Jer. 33: 22; Jer. 33: 26; Isa. 37: 35; Ezek. 37: 24.
- King of Babylon: Jer. 25: 9; Jer. 27: 6; Jer. 43: 10.

Cyrus is a figure of the Messiah as king and anointed conqueror.

In Isaiah 41: 1-29, especially verses 2 and 25, the prophet is speaking of Cyrus, who is chosen by God to deliver His people from the Babylonian yoke, and also called His **servant**. And in other verses, his name is clearly mentioned:

- Isa. 44: 28: “... who says of Cyrus, ‘He is my shepherd, and he shall carry out all my purpose’; and who says of Jerusalem, ‘It shall be rebuilt’, and of the temple, ‘Your foundation shall be laid.’”
- Isa. 45: 1: “Thus says the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have grasped to subdue nations before him and strip kings of their robes, to open doors before him—and the gates shall not be closed.”
- Isa. 45: 13: “I have aroused Cyrus in righteousness, and I will make all his paths straight; he shall build my city and set my exiles free, not for price or reward, says the Lord of hosts.”
- Isa. 48: 14-15: “Assemble, all of you, and hear! Who among them has declared these things? The Lord loves him [*Cyrus; in ARA his name is clearly written*]; he shall perform his purpose on Babylon, and his arm shall be against the Chaldeans. I, even I, have spoken and called him, I have brought him, and he will prosper in his way.”
- Isa. 44: 26; 28 (the victory of Cyrus leads to the rebuilding of Zion): “... who confirms [*He, God*] the word of his servant* [*probably Isaiah, prophesying the deliverance of his people*], and fulfills [*He, God*] the prediction of his messengers [*the prophets*]; who says of Jerusalem, ‘It shall be inhabited’, and of the cities of Judah, ‘They shall be rebuilt, and I will raise up their ruins’... who says of Cyrus, ‘He is my shepherd, and he shall carry out all my purpose’; and who says of Jerusalem, ‘It shall be rebuilt’, and of the temple, ‘Your foundation shall be laid.’”

* In NIV, it is written: "... who confirms [*He, God*] the word of his servants [*The word is in the plural, which can mean 'the prophets'*], and fulfills the prediction of his messengers; who says of Jerusalem, 'It shall be inhabited', and of the cities of Judah, 'They shall be rebuilt, and I will raise up their ruins.'

The Messiah – the servant

In the next biblical references it's very clear the relation between the word 'servant' and the Messiah, for us, Jesus:

- Isa. 42: 1-9 (Jesus) cf. Matt. 12: 18-21: "Here is my **servant**, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations. He will not cry or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street; a bruised reed he will not break, and a dimly burning wick he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice. He will not grow faint or be crushed until he has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands wait for his teaching. Thus says God, the Lord, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and what comes from it, who gives breath to the people upon it and spirit to those who walk in it: I am the Lord, I have called you in righteousness, I have taken you by the hand and kept you; I have given you as a covenant to the people, a light to the nations, to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness. I am the Lord, that is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to idols. See, the former things have come to pass, and new things I now declare; before they spring forth, I tell you of them." – cf. Matt. 12: 18-21: "Here is my **servant**, whom I have chosen, my beloved, with whom my soul is well pleased. I will put my Spirit upon him, and he will proclaim justice to the Gentiles. He will not wrangle or cry aloud, nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets. He will not break a bruised reed or quench a smoldering wick until he brings justice to victory. And in his name the Gentiles will hope."

- Isa. 49: 1-7 with special focus on verse 7: "Thus says the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel and his Holy One, to one deeply despised, abhorred by the nations, the **slave** of rulers [*NIV, 'to the servant of rulers'*], 'Kings shall see and stand up, princes, and they shall prostrate themselves [*they'll worship the Messiah, Jesus*], because of the Lord, who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you.'"

- Isa. 50: 1-11 (with special focus on verse 10): "Who among you fears the Lord and obeys the voice of his **servant**, who walks in darkness and has no light, yet trusts in the name of the Lord and relies upon his God?"

- Isa. 52: 13: "See, my **servant** shall prosper; he shall be exalted and lifted up, and shall be very high."

- Isa. 53: 1-12 (with special focus on verse 11): "Out of his anguish he shall see light; he shall find satisfaction through his knowledge. The righteous one, my **servant**, shall make many righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities."

David, a figure of the Messiah.

- Jer. 30: 8-9: "On that day, says the Lord of hosts, I will break the yoke from off his neck, and I will burst his bonds, and strangers shall no more make a servant of him. But they shall serve the Lord their God and **David** their king [*referring to Jesus, who would be born from the house of David*], whom I will raise up for them."

- Ezek. 34: 22-24: "I will save my flock, and they shall no longer be ravaged; and I will judge between sheep and sheep. I will set up over them one shepherd, **my servant David** [*referring to Jesus*], and he shall feed them: he shall feed them (Rev. 7: 17) and

be their shepherd. And I, the Lord, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them; I, the Lord, have spoken.”

- Ezek. 37: 24: “My **servant David** [*referring to Jesus*] shall be king over them; and they shall all have one shepherd. They shall follow my ordinances and be careful to observe my statutes.”

As we saw, the Messiah is a figure of Salvation to Israel.

The word ‘salvation’ (in Hebrew, ישועה) appears 146 times in the bible – 103 times in the OT and 43 times in the NT. In the OT it is transliterated as yeshu`âh (Strong #3444), just as Jesus (Yeshua – ישוע) is commonly known. In the NT the word ‘salvation’ (σωτηρία) is written in Greek as: sôtêrias (σωτηρίας – Lk. 1: 69; 77), sôtêria (σωτηρία – Acts 4: 12) or sôtêrion or sôtêrian (σωτηριαν – Lk. 3: 6; Acts 28: 28), for example. The word ‘Savior’ is written as Sôtêr (Σωτήρ = a deliverer, i.e., God or Christ), and that may correspond to the Hebrew words: mattan and mattnay, meaning ‘to give’ or ‘reward.’ The Greek words ‘sôtêrias, sôtêria or sôtêrion’ mean ‘rescue, safety, to set free, health, salvation, save, to save, defense, and defender’.

The Hebrew word, yeshu`âh (salvation), is clearly seen in three verses from Isaiah:

- Isa. 26: 1: “On that day this song will be sung in the land of Judah: We have a strong city; he [*God*] sets up victory like walls and bulwarks” [NIV: God makes salvation (yeshu`âh) its walls and ramparts].

- Isa. 49: 8: “Thus says the Lord: In a time of favor I have answered you, on a day of salvation (yeshu`âh) I have helped you; I have kept you and given you as a covenant to the people, to establish the land, to apportion the desolate heritages.”

- Isa. 60: 18: “Violence shall no more be heard in your land, devastation or destruction within your borders; you shall call your walls Salvation (yeshu`âh), and your gates Praise.”

Even translated in different ways (yeshu, yshu, yish, etc.) in other biblical verses, the word keeps the same basic letters, and the most important of all, the same meaning: **salvation**.

According to the ‘Lexicon Strong’s Concordance’, the word yshuw`ah (or yeshu`âh) means ‘something saved’ that is, ‘deliverance’; therefore, aid, victory, prosperity, deliverance, health, help, to save, to protect, to guard, to preserve (health), welfare. The word yshuw`ah is linked to the word yasha` (Strong #3467), which is a primitive root whose meaning is: to be open, wide or free, and consequently, to be safe, free; or succor (or come to the aid of), to avenge, to defend, to deliver or deliverer, to help, to preserve, to rescue, to bring or to have salvation, to save (or savior), to get victory.

As we’ve seen, the word ‘salvation’ (yshuw`ah) appears 103 times in the OT and 43 times in the NT.

Old Testament:

Gen. 49: 18	Ps 51: 14	Isa. 17: 10
Ex. 15: 2	Ps 62: 1	Isa. 25: 9
Deut. 32: 15	Ps 62: 2	Isa. 26: 1
Judg. 15: 18	Ps 62: 6	Isa. 30: 15
1 Sam. 2: 1	Ps 62: 7	Isa. 33: 2
1 Sam. 14: 45	Ps 67: 2	Isa. 33: 6
2 Sam. 22: 3	Ps 68: 19	Isa. 43: 12
2 Sam. 22: 47	Ps 70: 4	Isa. 45: 8

2 Sam. 23: 5	Ps 71: 15	Isa. 45: 17
1 Chr. 16: 23	Ps 78: 22	Isa. 46: 13
1 Chr. 16: 35	Ps 85: 4	Isa. 49: 6
2 Chr. 6: 42	Ps 85: 7	Isa. 49: 8
Job 13: 16	Ps 85: 9	Isa. 51: 5
Ps 3: 2	Ps 88: 1	Isa. 51: 6
Ps 3: 8	Ps 89: 26	Isa. 51: 8
Ps 9: 14	Ps 91: 16	Isa. 52: 7
Ps 13: 5	Ps 95: 1	Isa. 52: 10
Ps 14: 7	Ps 96: 2	Isa. 56: 1
Ps 18: 2	Ps 98: 2	Isa. 59: 11
Ps 18: 35	Ps 98: 3	Isa. 59: 16
Ps 18: 46	Ps 106: 4	Isa. 59: 17
Ps 21: 1	Ps 116: 13	Isa. 60: 18
Ps 21: 5	Ps 118: 15	Isa. 61: 10
Ps 22: 1	Ps 118: 21	Isa. 62: 1
Ps 24: 5	Ps 119: 41	Isa. 63: 5
Ps 25:5	Ps 119: 81	Jer. 3: 23
Ps 27:1	Ps 119: 123	Lam. 3: 26
Ps 27:9	Ps 119: 155	Jon. 2: 9
Ps 35:3	Ps 119: 166	Micah 7: 7
Ps 35: 9	Ps 119: 174	Habakkuk 3: 18
Ps 37: 39	Ps 132:16	Mal. 4: 2
Ps 38: 22	Ps 140:7	
Ps 40: 10	Ps 146:3	
Ps 40: 16	Ps 149:4	
Ps 50: 23	Isa. 12:2	
Ps 51: 12	Isa. 12: 3	

New Testament:

Lk. 1: 69	2 Cor. 1: 6	Heb. 5: 9
Lk. 1: 77	2 Cor. 6: 2	Heb. 6: 9
Lk. 2: 30	2 Cor. 7: 10	Heb. 9: 28
Lk. 3: 6	Eph. 1: 13	Heb. 11: 7
Lk 19; 9	Eph. 3: 17	1 Pe 1: 5
Jn. 4: 22	Phil. 1: 28	1 Pe 1: 9
Act 4: 12	Phil. 2: 12	1 Pe 1: 10
Act 13: 26	1 The. 1: 8	1 Pe 2: 2
Act 13: 47	1 The. 5: 9	2 Pe 3: 15
Act 16: 17	2 The. 2: 13	Jude 1: 3
Act 28: 28	2 Tim. 2: 10	Rev. 7: 10
Rom. 1: 16	2 Tim. 3: 15	Rev. 12: 10
Rom.10: 10	Heb. 1: 14	Rev. 19: 1
Rom. 11: 11	Heb. 2: 3	
Rom. 13: 11	Heb. 2: 10	

Yshuw`ah (or yeshu`âh = salvation), therefore, **Yeshua** (Jesus – יֵשׁוּעַ) is derived from Yhowshuwa` (Yehôshua‘, יהושע, Strong #3091, Jehoshua; Joshua = YHWH saved), transliterated to the Greek as Iēsoûs (Ἰησοῦς – Strong #g2424), Jesus, in Latin (Strong # g2424) – Matt. 1: 21: “She will bear a son, and you [*the angel was talking to Joseph about Mary*] are to name him Jesus, for **he will save** his people from their sins” cf. Lk. 1: 31: “And now, you [*Mary*] will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus.”

yeshu`âh or yshuw`ah (**‘Salvation’**) or Yeshua (**‘Jesus’**) have the same letters as **YHWH**, the name of God revealed to Moses on Sinai: **YsHuW`AH** (salvation); **YesHu(W)a(H)** – Jesus.

“God said to Moses, ‘I am who I am.’ [NIV: I AM WHO I AM] He said further, ‘Thus you shall say to the Israelites, ‘I am (Strong #1961 – hayah) has sent me to you.’ [NIV: I AM...]]” (Ex 3:14).

“I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as God Almighty, but by my name ‘The Lord’ [NIV: THE LORD] I did not make myself known to them” (Ex. 6: 3).

The LORD (Strong #3068 – יהוה – Transliterated: YHWH, LORD), from hayah; (the) self-Existent or Eternal; Jewish national name of God.

Thus, we can say that in Jesus Christ the prophecies about the Messiah were fulfilled, that is, He came as a man, from the royal offspring of David and as a servant of God to fulfill His role as the Redeemer of Israel (God always said to be the Redeemer of Israel, the Mighty One of Jacob, the Holy One of Israel: Isa. 41: 14; Isa. 44: 6; Isa. 47: 4; Isa. 48: 17; Isa. 49: 26; Isa. 54: 5; Isa. 54: 8; Isa. 59: 20; Isa. 60: 16). Contrary to what the Jews were expecting, He also came as a king and anointed conqueror (Lk.17: 20-21; Acts 10: 38; Jn. 18: 33-37; Jn. 19: 19; Matt. 11: 12-13; Jn. 1: 29; Col. 2: 13-15), freeing us, definitely, from the power of death (generated by our own sins; Jn. 1: 29; Col. 2: 13-15), and giving us a spiritual kingdom (Jn. 18: 33-37), not material, where we not only receive the adoption of children, but the same authority that was in Him through the Holy Spirit (Jn. 1: 10-14; Jn. 14: 12-15; Rom. 8: 14-17).

As for **the genealogy of Jesus**, He was of the seed of David as was prophesied (Isa. 11: 1; Mic. 5: 2; Matt. 2: 5-6; Matt. 22: 41-46; Mk. 12: 35-37; Lk. 20: 41-44; Jn. 7:42). **Matthew and Luke** describe the genealogy of Jesus (Matt. 1: 1-17; Lk. 3: 23-38), but in a slightly different way. Matthew, writing more directly to the Jews, showed that the Savior came from Abraham and David, to whom God promised a descendant who would bear the name of his Jewish ancestors, and who would sit on the throne as ruler (Jesus the Messiah the King of the kings, the son of Abraham); thus, Matthew wrote the genealogy of Joseph, the descendant of David by Solomon (son of David and Bathsheba – 1 Chr. 3: 5; Matt. 1: 6), emphasizing, therefore, the royal lineage of the Messiah.

The fourteen generations (Matt. 1: 17) from Abraham to David confirm the Abrahamic covenant and the establishment of David’s throne. The next fourteen generations (from David to the Babylonian exile) show the Davidic covenant and his throne destroyed; and the last fourteen generations, from the exile to Christ, refer to the Messiah and the new covenant with His people as well as with mankind. In other words, the 1st part represents God’s initial project for man, starting with Adam, that is, making him His friend and a king over His Creation, giving him possession of the earth. The 2nd part represents the decline of this position of honor and power, with the fall of man, and the corruption of himself and all Creation because of his sin. The 3rd part refers to the restoration of God’s initial project for man, his rescue through the Messiah, bringing a new covenant.

Matthew also mentions five women in this genealogy, which was not very common in the description of a Jewish genealogy, for priority was given to men. With the

exception of Mary (v. 16), who was Jewish and a descendant of David as well, but through another of his sons, Nathan, and therefore not of royal lineage, the rest were Gentiles; and we can say that in human eyes those women were totally unqualified to be ancestors of Jesus the Messiah. They were all gentiles and their attitudes were not so 'good.' For example: Tamar (v. 3) was Judah's daughter-in-law and her children were the result of the sexual relationship between her and her father-in-law. Rahab (v. 5) was a prostitute in Jericho, but her change in behavior turned her into a member of the tribe of Judah. Still in v. 5 Matthew refers to another Gentile, Ruth, a Moabitess, an idolater; and in the law of Moses the Moabites and Ammonites were forbidden to enter the tabernacle (Deut. 23: 3-4), not exactly by the sin of incest of their ancestors, but because they hired Balaam to curse the Israelites (Num. 22: 1-6). By converting to the God of Israel and marrying Boaz, she became part of the tribe of Judah as well. And in v. 6, Matthew mentions Bathsheba, wife of Uriah the Hittite (2 Sam. 11: 3; 2 Sam. 23: 34). She was probably a Hittite as well and committed adultery with David, who killed her husband. And from her, Solomon was born (1 Chr. 3: 5).

Luke, however, writing to the Gentiles, traces the offspring back to Adam, thereby showing the human portion of the Messiah, as was promised by God Himself when He rebuked the serpent and said that the woman's offspring would strike his head (Gen. 3: 15: "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will strike your head, and you will strike his heel"). Therefore, Luke describes Jesus as the grandson of Heli, the father of Mary. Joseph was counted as a son of Heli because he was his son-in-law. Thus we can see that Mary was also from the House of Judah, being descended of David by his other son, Nathan (another son of David and Bathsheba – 1 Chr. 3: 5). Jews are accustomed to marry members of their own tribes of origin.

4

The glory of God



In the Portuguese dictionary, ‘glory’ has the following meanings: celebrity, renown, reputation, honor, pride, magnificence, brilliance, splendor, prestige, joy, satisfaction, great merit, superiority and dignity. In the English dictionary, other definitions can be added: exaltation, praise or honor, which is awarded by general consent; something that brings or is worthy of praise (especially in the phrase ‘crown of glory’); an expression of thanksgiving, worship or cult: ‘Glory to God!'; pomp; splendor: the glory of the king’s reign, for example; radiant beauty; resplendence of sunset; the beauty and happiness of heaven (in spiritual sense); a state of extreme happiness and prosperity.

The biblical word for ‘the glory of God’ is **kābhôdh** (or kabowd, in Heb.) or **doxa** (Septuagint, the Greek version of the OT) = weight or dignity, and which can be understood as the manifestation of God’s power where it is needed, honor, victory, protection, abundance, wealth, reputation (Ex. 40: 35; 1 Sam. 4: 22; 1 Sam. 6: 5; 1 Kin. 3: 13; 1 Kin. 8: 11; 1 Chr. 16: 28; 1 Chr. 29: 12; Isa. 11: 10; Isa. 24: 23; Isa. 42: 12 etc.). It is the Jewish equivalent of the Holy Spirit. The Lord is worthy to receive all honor and glory, “You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created” (Rev. 4: 11). **Kābhôdh** serves to describe the revelation of the character and presence of God in the person and the work of Jesus Christ. He is the radiance of God’s glory (Heb. 1: 3-4, “He [*Jesus*] is the reflection [radiance – NIV] of God’s glory and the exact imprint of God’s very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word. When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs”).

The word ‘honor’, or the verb ‘to honor’, is written in an important biblical commandment (the 5th of the Ten Commandments):

- “Honor your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.” – Ex. 20: 12.

In Hebrew is: kabbêdh'eth-'ābhîykha ve'eth-'immekha lema'an ya'arikhun yāmeykha 'alhâ'adhâmâh 'asher-yhvh 'eloheykha nothên lakh

• “Honor your father and your mother, as the Lord your God commanded you, so that your days may be long and that it may go well with you in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.” – Deut. 5: 16.

In Hebrew is: kabbêdh 'eth-'âbhiykha ve'eth-'immekha ka'ashertsivvekha yhvh 'eloheykha lema'an ya'ariykhun yâmeykhaulema'an yiythabh lâkh `al hâ'adhâmâh 'asher-yhvh 'eloheykhanothên lâkh s

• Mother – In Hebrew: 'ima (אִמָּא) or 'ēm (אֵם), Strong #517

• Father – In Hebrew: abh or av (אָב), Strong #1

According to the Concordant Hebrew English Sublinear (CHES), based on the vocabulary of the Concordant Version of the Old Testament (CVOT), the transliterated Hebrew, the phrase: ‘honor your father and your mother’ is written as: ‘glorify your father and your mother.’ This shows us the close relationship between the two words: honor and glory.

In a practical way for us, ‘giving honor’ means to recognize, to respect, not to defame, not to make who is honored feel ashamed because of us, to be a motive of pride (in the sense of pleasure), joy and satisfaction; to give pleasure to those we honor; to show the dignity of who is honored, and to have zeal for his/her reputation. A child who follows God’s ways and does His will is honoring his parents. When we honor God in this way, He honors us before the world. As we do with Him, we should do with our earthly parents, and not only our carnal fathers and mothers, but also our spiritual fathers and mothers and higher authorities that the Lord places over us.

The word Kâbhôdh or doxa does not need to convey to anyone the spiritual weight that it does, only to say that the glory and dignity of God have weight, or that it is heavy to pay honor to Him or to our parents and authorities. Showing that someone is worthy of our respect is not something that needs to be done with weight, when we serve that person with love for him/her and for God. The word ‘weight’ should be understood here as: ‘a greater importance,’ ‘relevance,’ ‘priority,’ especially when it comes to God.

In the Bible, the glory of God is often associated to brightness or radiance (Lk. 2: 9 – the shepherds beheld the Glory of God at the birth of Jesus; Matt. 17: 5 – at the moment of transfiguration of Jesus, when the bible says that a bright cloud overshadowed the disciples), both in the Old and the New Testament, as it is also associated to cloud or smoke, stormy wind and fire. Most of the times, it is almost impossible to separate the expression ‘Glory of God’ or ‘Glory the Lord’ from the presence of these physical phenomena, specially the cloud. So, ‘Glory of God’ or ‘Glory of the Lord’ symbolizes the revelation of the power, the person, the nature and the presence of God for humanity, sometimes accompanied by physical phenomena; therefore, the Holy Spirit is implied in this manifestation. Only in Ex. 19: 9; 16; 18; Ex. 20: 18 the bible describes the presence of God as dark cloud, accompanied by thunder and lightning and fire: “Then the Lord said to Moses, ‘I am going to come to you in a dense cloud, in order that the people may hear when I speak with you and so trust you ever after.’ When Moses had told the words of the people to the Lord, ... On the morning of the third day there was thunder and lightning, as well as a thick cloud on the mountain, and a blast of a trumpet so loud that all the people who were in the camp trembled... Now Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke, because the Lord had descended upon it in fire; the smoke went up like the smoke of a kiln, while the whole mountain shook violently... When all the people witnessed the thunder and lightning, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking, they were afraid and trembled and stood at a distance.”

In the OT, the physical manifestation that the presence of God was coming (the glory of God) could be the appearance of a ‘consuming fire’ – Heb. 12: 29; Ex. 24: 17 –

cf. Deut. 4: 24 ('a devouring fire'), in the case of His authority and His power being used. In other cases, when His purpose was different and He wanted to show another aspect of His character, instead of the fire (Ex. 13: 21; Num. 9: 15-16), it appeared the cloud, smoke and wind, or the gentle whisper, as it happened with Elijah. The cloud in the NT is something closely related to the presence of Jesus, and not only represents the glory of God, where the Holy Spirit is implied, but is also a physical symbol of the divine essence, which is partially hidden to man.

The known word **Shekinah (Shekînah)** can be translated as 'brightness, presence of God dwelling among His people', but it does not appear in the OT or the NT. It derives from the verb Shakhan – Strong #7931 (שָׁכַן = to dwell, abide, continue, have habitation, inhabit), which appears in verses such as Gen. 9: 27; Gen. 14: 13 and Jer. 33: 16. Also appears in Ex. 40: 35: "Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud settled upon it [Shakhan], and the glory of the Lord [kābhôdh] filled the tabernacle." Shekinah (Shekhinah, Shekînah), in fact, is a Kabbalistic concept, mystic, which considers this word as the female face of the Divine Presence. According to Kabbalah, Shekinah is a powerful cosmic energy, which dwells within the universe, vivifying it and being its soul or spirit.

The writers of Targumim* created the word Shekinah (Shekhinah, Shekînah) to indicate God Himself, removing the concept of God with a form and feelings, something that the traditional Judaism preached and didn't let be removed. This new standpoint, actually, brought an abstract concept of God, colder and distant (a simple 'cosmic energy', rather than a being with its own identity).

* Targumim (plural of Targum) consists in famous works written in Aramaic, comprising the translations and comments on the Hebrew Bible (OT – Tanakh). They were written and compiled in Israel and Babylon, from the time of the Second Temple until the early Middle Ages. They also contain the comments on the Mishnah (Oral Law – written on the 2nd century of the CE) and the Talmud (which includes comments on the Mishnah and Torah), using the Midrash (The methodology for interpreting the Mishnah). The Targum was used to facilitate the understanding of the Jews who did not speak Hebrew as their mother tongue, but the Aramaic.

As it was written above, the glory of God is often associated to brightness or radiance.

In Ezek. 1: 26-28 it is written: "And above the dome over their heads there was something like a throne, in appearance like sapphire; and seated above the likeness of a throne was something that seemed like a human form. Upward from what appeared like the loins I saw something like gleaming amber, something that looked like fire enclosed all around; and downward from what looked like the loins I saw something that looked like fire, and there was a splendor all around.²⁸ Like the bow in a cloud on a rainy day, such was the appearance of the **splendor** all around. **This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord.** When I saw it, I fell on my face, and I heard the voice of someone speaking."

In Hebrew it is written:

²⁸ kemar'êh haqqesheth 'asher yihyeh bhe'ânân beyom haggeshem kênmar'êh **hannoghah** sâbhiybh hu' mar'êh demuth kebhodh-yhvâ'er'eh vâ'epol 'al-pânay vâ'eshma` qol medhabbêr s

"Such was the appearance of the **splendor** all around" is translated in the Hebrew bible in the following manner: "this was the **reflection** all around."

Therefore, **noghah** (נוֹגַהּ) is the word used for 'reflection', 'radiance', 'brightness' or 'splendor', representing 'the glory of the Lord' before His people. I want you to notice that the word is noghah (נוֹגַהּ – Strong #5051) and not Shekinah. Many English versions

of this text say the same thing, that is, they use similar words to the same verse (even the Bible of Jerusalem): ‘brilliance’, ‘brightness’, ‘radiance’.

Ezekiel, like all the others prophets who had the vision of the throne, described the glory of God with the appearance of radiance and splendor. This shows us that the Lord is the same yesterday, today and forever, that is, light; a light of truth that shines in the darkness, expelling all kinds of false teaching and lie of the enemy. Hence John wrote, “This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in him there is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him while we are walking in darkness, we lie and do not do what is true” (1 Jn. 1: 5-6).

Jesus said, “The eye [*in Greek: the action of seeing, aiming, vision that one has*] is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy [NIV, good], your whole body will be full of light; but if your eye is unhealthy [NIV, bad], your whole body will be full of darkness [*lack of understanding, of revelation, of true knowledge of God*]. If then the light in you is darkness [*the light we receive in the mind, so we must be careful with the ideas that we welcome*], how great is the darkness!” (Matt. 6: 22-23)... “Your eye is the lamp of your body. If your eye is healthy, your whole body is full of light; but if it is not healthy, your body is full of darkness. Therefore consider whether the light in you is not darkness. If then your whole body is full of light, with no part of it in darkness, it will be as full of light as when a lamp gives you light with its rays” (Lk. 11: 34-36).

• 2 Cor. 11: 12-15: “And what I do I will also continue to do, in order to deny an opportunity to those who want an opportunity to be recognized as our equals in what they boast about. For such boasters are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder! Even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. So it is not strange if his ministers also disguise themselves as ministers of righteousness. Their end will match their deeds.”

Paul also confirms the value of having perfect communion with the Holy Spirit in order to have the true teaching that flows from the throne of God, the mighty sword that cuts sophistry and hypocrisy of those who think themselves the owners of the knowledge. It was already prophesied that in the end times, false teaching, false prophecies and false teachers would be spread throughout the world, trying to deceive even the children of God with their lies. Analyze what you have learned up to now and put all this face to face with the bible. Is this knowledge actually in accordance with God’s word?

5

*Biblical study on the words -
Grace / Mercy; Amen; Hosanna; Hallelujah; Anointing*



Grace / Mercy:

In the NT, '**Grace**' means 'unmerited favor of God poured on someone, the loving strength bestowed upon a person, even small and undeserving of so much privilege such as being able to praise and touch the King of kings.'

We have in the **Old Testament** the noun 'chen', which means 'grace', 'to find favor' (Gen. 6: 8, for example, in relation to Noah: "But Noah found favor in the sight of the Lord" – venoach mâtsâ' **chên** be'êynêy yhv' ph), whose adjective is 'chanun', from the root 'Chanan', a primitive root, which means: to bend or stoop in kindness to an inferior; to favor; to bestow; consequently: to implore (to move to favor by petition); to beseech, to show favor or favorable; to deal, to give or to grant graciously; be merciful, have or show mercy (on, upon someone), have pity upon, to pray, to make supplication. The noun 'chen' can mean 'grace' (elegance) or 'beauty', but usually means 'favor' or 'good will.'

The Greek word used in the NT is 'charis' (from 'chairein'), and means 'a gift, advantage, to rejoice, charm, to please, liberality, generosity, acceptability, favor or good will, sympathy, goodness or benevolence of our Lord, favor shown or granted by God' (which refers to material blessings), 'gratitude' and 'the unmerited operation of God in man's heart', which is an operation performed by the Holy Spirit.

Grace also expresses the divine mercy, whereby man is called, is saved, is justified and enabled to live well and find this enough for him (Gal. 1: 15; Eph. 2: 8; Rom. 3: 24; 1 Cor. 15: 10; 2 Cor. 12: 9). In other words, the mercy of God arouses the liberation of His favor (grace).

In Matt. 5: 1-12, Jesus talks about the beatitudes:

"When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying: Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. Blessed are

those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you" (Matt. 5: 1-12).

In verse 7 it's written, "Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy."

'Mercy' means indulgence, grace, compassion aroused by the misery of others. The Hebrew word is *Hesedh* or *Chesedh* (חסד), which means mercy, loving kindness, steadfast love, grace, kindness, benevolence, beauty, favor, good deed, pity (Gen. 21: 23; Gen. 24: 12; 14; Gen. 24: 49; Ex. 20: 6; Ex. 34: 6-7; Num. 14: 18; Deut. 5: 10; Deut. 7: 9; 12; Josh. 2: 12; 14; Judg. 8: 25; Rut. 1: 8; 1 Sam. 15: 6 etc.); more rarely (by opposition): reproof, wicked thing (Lev. 20: 17).

In Greek, the verse above ("Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy") is: *makarioi oi eleêmones oti autoi eleêthêsontai*

The Greek word corresponding to *Hesedh* or *Chesedh* is 'eleeo', which means: compassionate (by word or deed, especially, by divine grace), to have compassion (pity on), to have (to obtain, to receive, to show) mercy (on).

As it was said, the mercy of God arouses the liberation of His favor (grace). Thus, 'grace' and 'mercy' are words very close both in the OT and the NT. Because He is merciful, He favors us, even though we do not deserve this favor. Again He surprises us with His revelation, for it is not only in the NT that is written it is by His grace that we are saved (Eph. 2: 8-9), through faith, not by works. In the OT it is also implicit; for example, in Ex. 20: 6 and Dt. 5: 10 (the Ten Commandments), when God says that He shows steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love Him and keep His commandments. This is also implicit in Gen. 6: 8 in relation to Noah: "But Noah found favor in the sight of the Lord." It was by finding grace in the Lord and believing in Him that Noah and his family were saved from the destruction that came with the Flood. It was by God's grace and not by works that he was saved. Thus, who believes in the Lord, does not need 'to do in order to deserve' his blessings, for He Himself, by His grace, enables the person to accomplish His plan and achieve salvation in any test by which he has to go through.

Let us ask today this mercy of God upon our lives, so we can always eat at His table, and thank Him for having let it available to us through the sacrifice of His Son on the cross of Calvary.

Hosanna



We can find this word, for example, in the following text from the NT:

“The crowds that went ahead of him and that followed were shouting, ‘Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest heaven!’” (Matt. 21: 9).

In this text we see the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem on Sunday before Passover and He was recognized as the son of David, the Messiah, who came in the name of the Lord to deliver His people of a so heavy yoke. Both in Greek and Hebrew, we find the word ‘Hosanna’, the same that is written in Psalm 118: 25: “Save us, we beseech you, O Lord! O Lord, we beseech you, give us success!”

In Ps. 118 (in Hebrew) it is written, ‘*ânnâ yhvhhoshiy`âh nâ` 'ânnâ` yvh hatsliychâh nâ`* (Oh! Yahweh save you! Please! Oh! Yahweh prosper you! Please!).

In Matt. 21: 9 the verse in Greek says, “*oi de ochloi oi proagontes kai oi akolouthountes ekrazon legontes ôsanna tô uiô dabit eulogêmenos o erchomenos en onomati kuriou ôsanna en tois upsistois*” (Literally: ‘The yet throngs the before-leading and the ones-following cried saying Hosanna to the son of David being blessed the one-coming in name of Master hosanna in the highest-ones’ = And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried saying, Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed [is] he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest – KJV).

Thus, ‘Hosanna’ means ‘Lord, save us, we beseech you.’ ‘Beseech’ means ‘to supplicate, to implore’ not only ask, but ask with more intensity, as a desperate supplication. So, when the Lord comes into our lives and our ways, we must supplicate that He may bring His salvation, His deepest rescue for us because He is the Messiah, the Son of God, the only one who can free us from all yokes of the enemy. Thus we can say: “Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!”, for He is blessed and welcome in our lives. If God the Father had not sent Him, we would not have the salvation of our souls. Today, God also sends some of His servants speaking of this salvation so that we can hear and believe in Him, people who come into our lives and come to bring His word of comfort and a promise of eternal life; therefore, we can also praise God for having sent them, and they also are worthy of hearing: “Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!”, for they are His servants used by Him to

illuminate our path and bring us peace, salvation and His prosperity. Let Jesus come into your life today to bring you the ransom you need.

Amen (אמן)



Amen (אמן, amen), Strong #543, is a Hebrew adverb formed from a root (aman) which means: to ensure, to firm, sure, faithfulness or truly. Therefore, employed as a way to confirm what other person said. So, ‘Amen’ means: ‘so be it’, ‘truth.’

In the Old Testament, the word ‘amen’ **accepts and ratifies a curse** (Num. 5: 22 – the bitter water that was given to a woman accused of being an unfaithful wife; Deut. 27: 15-26 – the curses on Mount Ebal), as well as **a royal order** (1 Kin. 1: 36 – David gives orders to his officers, to the prophet Nathan, and the priest Zadok about the coronation of Solomon as king in his place). The word ‘amen’ **confirms a prophecy** (Jer. 28: 6: Jeremiah prophesies that the vessels of the temple, which had been taken by Nebuchadnezzar, would be returned to the House of the Lord), **and every prayer**, especially at the end of it (Neh. 8: 6: Ezra the priest reads the book of the Law before the people), and it is also **a response of the people** to the words of a Psalm; for instance: Ps. 41: 13 cf. 1 Chr. 16: 36; Ps. 72: 19; Ps. 89: 52; Ps. 106: 48 cf. 1 Chr. 16: 36, where the people usually answer: ‘Amen and amen’ (אמן ואמן – ‘âmên ve’âmên).

In the New Testament, we can see this word (in Greek: amên – ἀμην – trustworthy, surely, verily, so be it) in the **end of public worship** (1 Cor. 14: 16), in the **end of the Lord’s Prayer** (Matt. 6: 13), and also **to confirm individual prayers and prayers of thanksgiving** (Rom. 1: 25; Rom. 9: 5; Rom. 11: 36; 1 Cor. 14: 16; Gal. 6: 18; Rev. 1: 6-7, etc.). Jesus, when he wanted to draw the attention of the listeners to an important subject said: ‘Very truly, I tell you’ or ‘I tell you the truth’ (Jn. 1: 51). This expression in Hebrew is literally: ‘**amen**’; and it appears 30 times in Matthew, 13 times in Mark, 6 times in Luke, and 25 times in the Gospel of John. In Rev. 22: 20, the apostle John writes the word ‘amen’ to confirm his visions and prophecies. In 2 Cor. 1: 20 it is written that in Christ every one of God’s promises is a ‘Yes.’ And through Him these same promises find their confirmation and fulfillment (“For this reason it is through him that we say the ‘Amen’, to the glory of God”). In Rev. 3: 14 Jesus Himself is called ‘the Amen, the faithful and true witness.’

We are accustomed to say ‘amen’ at the end of our prayers. It must be understood as a way to say that we accept His word in our lives as true and active and we submit to it. It is a word of praise to the power and majesty of God, confirming the veracity of our prayer according to His word, and magnifying the Lord and sovereign of all things, who will decide and judge fairly what we pray.

According to Lexicon Strong’s Concordance, the word ‘amen’ (’ā·mên – אָמֵן, Strong #543) means: ‘so be it,’ ‘truth.’ It comes from the root, ’aman (which is a primitive root), and means more properly: to build up or to support; to nurture (raise, care for, breastfeed) as a father, a mother or nurse; figuratively: to become (or be) firm or faithful, to trust or believe, to be permanent; morally: to be true or certain; to take the right hand road (Isa. 30: 21); hence, assurance, belief, bring up, establish, to raise (a child), to be faithful, of long continuance, steadfast, sure (safe, secure, convinced), surely (certainty), trusted, proven, to turn to the right.

Let’s say ‘amen’ in the end of our prayers with the consciousness that if we are praying in accordance to God’s will, all our requests will be met because He is and will be always faithful to His promises. His will is always good and acceptable and perfect; therefore, we can say: ‘so be it’ for every word that comes out of God’s mouth. That’s why Paul wrote in Rom. 4: 20-22 referring to the faith of Abraham: “No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, being fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. Therefore his faith was reckoned to him as righteousness.” Abraham believed, he said amen to the Lord, and He said His amen to Abraham, fulfilling what He had promised.

Hallelujah



As we’ve said in the topic about the names of God, YHWH is translated in our English version as ‘Lord’ or ‘Jehovah.’ For scholars of Judaism, the translation ‘Javeh’ (YAHWEH) is preferable to Jehovah (YAHOWAH).

The abbreviated form of the name YAHWEH (יהוה – YHWH) is **Yah** (or Jah, in Latinized form; in Hebrew: יֵה), as in Psalm 89: 8 [ieue alei tzbauth mi – kmu-k chsin ie

u-amunth-k abibuthi-k – KJV: ‘O Lord God of Hosts who [is] a strong **Lord** like unto thee? or to thy faithfulness round about thee’].

The expression ‘HaleluYah’ (in Hebrew: halelu yâh – הללו יה) means ‘Praise Jah!’ and which is translated as ‘Hallelujah’ (halelu-yâh – הללויה); it is written in Greek as ‘Allêlouia’ – αλληλουια.

Therefore, the Hebrew word, halelu, means: ‘praise’, ‘to praise (someone).’ The word ‘halelu’ is derived from the primitive root ‘halal’, which means, among many other things: to celebrate, to commend, to glorify (oneself), to give glory, to sing, to be worthy of praise, renowned, to shine, to boast, to brag.

Thus, ‘Hallelujah’ has become a form of praise to God, especially in the Psalms. The Hebrew word ‘haleluhu’ (praise him), or ‘halelu’ (to praise, to commend, to glorify), or else, ‘halelu-yah’ (Praise the Lord, praise Yah) appears 56 times in the OT:

Gen. 12: 15; Jdg. 16: 24; 1 Chr. 16: 10; 2 Chr. 29: 30; Neh. 5: 13; Ps. 22: 23; Ps. 22: 26; Ps. 64: 10; Ps. 69: 34; Ps. 74: 21; Ps. 84: 4; Ps. 104: 35; Ps. 105: 3; Ps. 105: 45; Ps. 106: 1; Ps. 106: 48; Ps. 107: 32; Ps. 111: 1; Ps. 112: 1; Ps. 113: 1; Ps. 113: 9; Ps. 115: 17; Ps. 115: 18; Ps. 116: 19; Ps. 117: 1; Ps. 117: 2; Ps. 135: 1; Ps. 135: 3; Ps. 135: 21; Ps. 146: 1; Ps. 146: 10; Ps. 147: 1; Ps. 147: 20; Ps. 148: 1; Ps. 148: 2; Ps. 148: 3; Ps. 148: 4; Ps. 148: 5; Ps. 148: 7; Ps. 148: 13; Ps. 148: 14; Ps. 149: 1; Ps. 149: 3; Ps. 149: 9; Ps. 150: 1; Ps. 150: 2; Ps. 150: 3; Ps. 150: 4; Ps. 150: 5; Ps. 150: 6; Prov. 28: 4; Prov. 31: 31; Song 6: 9; Isa. 45: 25; Jer. 20: 13; Jer. 31: 7.

In the NT, the word appears in Greek (‘Allêlouia’ – αλληλουια) in the book of Revelation four times: Rev. 19: 1; Rev. 19: 3; Rev. 19: 4; Rev. 19: 6.

Anointing



When we studied about the Messiah, we made clear the meaning of the word ‘anointing.’ Let’s repeat its meaning and add some practical comments:

The anointing is like a shield that covers us completely so that the evil has no power to touch us. The word ‘anointed’ and the act of anointing with oil (Mashach) refers to the custom of anointing with oil to consecrate and sanctify things or people: Gen. 28: 18; Ex. 30: 22-33; 2 Sam. 1: 21; Isa. 21: 5; Judg. 9: 8; 2 Sam. 2: 4; 1 Kin. 1: 34; Ex. 28: 41; 1 Kin. 19: 16; 2 Kin. 9: 1-3; 11-13.

The person or thing that was anointed became holy (Ex. 30: 22-33; 1 Sam. 24: 6; 10).

The anointing was an act from God (1 Sam. 10: 1; Ps. 89: 20; Acts 10: 38).

The anointing was used metaphorically to mean the bestowal of divine favor (Ps. 23: 5; Ps. 92: 10; Ps. 45: 7) or the appointment to a special role of God's purpose (Ps. 105: 15; Isa. 45: 1; Ps. 89: 20; Ex. 28: 41).

Furthermore, the anointing symbolized enablement for a service, and is associated with the outpouring of the Spirit of God (1 Sam. 10: 1; 6; 9; 1 Sam. 16: 13; Isa. 61: 1; Zech. 4: 1-14 – The anointing of God on Joshua and Zerubbabel, the priest and governor of Judah at the time of the rebuilding of the 2nd Temple – Hag. 2: 21).

This use is brought to the NT. The use of the oil for anointing the sick (Jam. 5: 14) is understood in the same way, as something that points to the Holy Spirit, the giver of life. In the NT we can see the use of oil or the act of anointing in relation to five situations:

1) Symbolizing the Holy Spirit bringing the divine enablement on someone (Lk. 4: 18; Acts 10: 38; 2 Cor. 1: 21; Heb. 1: 9; 1 Jn. 2: 20; 27).

2) As an ointment, used as medicine to heal wounds (Lk. 10: 34 – the parable of the Good Samaritan; Rev. 3: 18 – the church in Laodicea).

3) As a custom of anointing the dead with perfumes and spices (Mk. 14: 8, compare Jn. 19: 39-40; Lk. 23: 56, Lk. 24: 1; Mk. 16: 1).

4) As a sign of hospitality, associated with the washing of the feet and the kiss (Lk. 7: 46, Jn. 11: 2; Jn. 12: 3).

5) To the sick (Mk. 6: 13; Jam. 5:14).

Mashach ('to anoint') gives origin to Mashiach (mâshiyach or meshiycho, in Hebrew; or meshîhâ, in Aramaic), which means 'anointed', like the kings, judges, prophets and priests in the OT. It also came to be used for Messiah, משיח, the Anointed One (Greek: Christ, Christòs, Χριστός), the awaited Savior or Deliverer of Israel, a descendant of King David that will rebuild the nation, bringing peace. 'Anointed' is found, at least, sixteen times in the Old Testament, being used the words mâshiyach or meshiycho [Lev. 4: 3; Lev. 4: 5; Lev. 4: 16; Lev. 6: 15; 1 Sam. 2: 10; 1 Sam. 24: 6; 10; 2 Sam. 1: 21; 2 Sam. 22: 51; Ps. 2: 2; Ps. 18: 50; Isa. 45: 1; Ezek. 28: 14; Zech. 4: 14; Dan. 9: 25-26 – when an angel announces to the prophet Daniel that the Messiah would come and would be killed 62 prophetic weeks after the rebuilding of Jerusalem, before the city and the temple were destroyed again (what happened in 70 AD by the Romans)]. In Ps. 105: 14-15 and 1 Chr. 16: 22 ("he allowed no one to oppress them; he rebuked kings on their account, saying, 'Do not touch my anointed ones; do my prophets no harm'"), the expression 'my anointed ones', in Hebrew, is used as equivalent to 'my prophets.' In the NT the Greek word Μεσσίας (Messiah) is written only two times, in Jn. 1: 41 and Jn. 4: 25. Christòs is the adjective, while the verb is chriō – to anoint.

What does consecrate or consecration mean?

To consecrate means to make sacred, to dedicate or offer to God, to separate oneself for God, to offer for worship or a vow. But in Hebrew, to consecrate or consecration has a more specific meaning, for example, in the case of the consecration of the priests of the OT (see chapter 9 – The sacrifices of the OT).

Now, let's give a more practical sense to all the definitions above. Summarizing in a simpler word, 'anointing' is the power of God comes upon us, **especially** after our 'personal Pentecost', i.e., after the baptism with the Holy Spirit, where we start

speaking in other tongues, we receive the spiritual gifts and the empowerment to carry out our calling and fulfill the will of God with a different force from that we were accustomed to use through our flesh (1 Jn. 2: 20). Thus, the Lord set us apart for Him, and through the continuous action of His Spirit in us, He Himself will work sanctification in our soul. The more we exercise the spiritual gifts, the more we receive anointing from God. An example is the story of the prophet Samuel. The Bible says that each year Hannah brought Samuel a new tunic. He grew in stature and his mother gave him a tunic suitable to his size. This symbolized the anointing that the Lord poured out on his life each moment, because he served Him faithfully (1 Sam. 2: 18-19; 21; 26).

As we saw above, all this is an act of God, not of men. What we do, using the anointing oil on a person, is just a symbol of what the Lord is already doing internally. In other words, it is not by the hands of men that someone becomes a pastor or receives ability to drive out demons. The person goes demonstrating that the Lord has already given him (her) the capacity to take care of His children on earth, he (she) begins to manifest the gifts and fruit of the Holy Spirit through his (her) life, and then, recognized by the church for having this divine enablement, he (she) receives the anointing with oil before the congregation, as a sign of his (her) separation for God's call to be a pastor.

The same applies to people who, by divine design coupled with their spiritual experience, receive from the Lord a special empowerment and a stronger spiritual authority to drive out demons from other persons. The same happens with the ministry of teacher and prophet. The Holy Spirit gives someone special gifts like love, the word of knowledge, word of wisdom and understanding so that a person may minister His word of teaching (1 Jn. 2: 27), most of the time without learning from anyone, just with his own experience with God. With the prophet is no different. He receives a special strength and a different ability from other people to make that the word of God come manifesting with deliverance, with correction, with encouragement, bringing into existence God's blessings already released in the spiritual world.

We saw at the beginning of the text that the use of oil in the OT was taken to the NT to anoint the sick (Jam. 5: 14), restoring health and life. Here is interesting to stress that the anointing with oil is not something fictitious; quite the contrary, it is real, when the oil is consecrated in prayer and given to the control of the Spirit of God to act according to His will (The Lord uses an anointed child of His to be the channel of power to His Spirit). One of the interesting features is that the anointing oil carries the divine light to manifest what was hidden. Hence, when we want to consecrate someone or heal him from an illness, we must have the gift of discernment of spirits to see if there is any evil spirit hidden in that person or in that infirmity. First we expel the demon; then we consecrate the person, if this is the case.

Due to this force of spiritual action is that one should not use the anointing oil indiscriminately, lightly, for anything, even with the intention of consecrating something to God. The oil does not replace the truth of His word used with faith to break the invisible barriers; it does not replace the sanctity of our walk with the Holy Spirit; it is not an amulet that is used to protect us from harm. The change of mind and attitude is more important to a true child of God.

The word 'Mashiach' (māshiyach or meshiycho, in Hebrew; or meshīhā, in Aramaic) means 'anointed', as were the kings, judges, priests and prophets in the OT. Today, we are directly anointed by the Spirit of God when we are converted to Jesus, and the Bible says that He has made us kings and priests. This means we receive the mastery and the authority to move the spiritual world and we are placed in a position of mediators between God and men, as were the priests of the Old Testament. Through our prayers and our words of strength, comfort, peace, and even encouragement and rebuke,

we can restore the communion between the Lord and the people who were away from Him by their sin (Jer. 5: 25; Jam. 5: 20).

The essences mentioned in the bible are only a physical symbol of the true anointing poured upon us by the Holy Spirit, as our spiritual growth takes place. In other words, perfumes mustn't be seen as a means to conquer this or that, but a symbol of what we must ask the Lord as spiritual gifts and what He can do to flow from our hands when He wants to use us for a particular purpose. The word of God is sovereign. A priori, the anointing with oil, as described in the NT seems to be restricted to its use in healing the sick, and as an outward symbol of the anointing that God Himself poured upon a child of His, separating him to a ministry. When you are not sure if the Lord wants the oil, it is better not to use it.



“As for you, the anointing that you received from him abides in you, and so you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, abide in him” (1 Jn. 2: 27).

Blessing and curse



Blessing

‘Blessing’, in Hebrew, *brakah* or *berakah* (ברכה – Strong #1293) means blessing; by implication prosperity, present. It gives rise to the word *Berachah* or *Berakah* (Strong #1294, ‘blessing’), the name of a valley in Palestine (2 Chr. 20:26: the valley of Blessing or valley of *Berachah*). *Berakah* originates from the word *barak* (בָּרַךְ – Strong’s #1288), a primitive root meaning ‘to kneel’; by implication to bless God (as an act of adoration) and man (as a benefit); bless, congratulate, kneel (down), praise, salute, thank.

In Gen. 12: 3 it is written [NRSV]: “I will bless (*barak* – בָּרַךְ – Strong #1288) those who bless you (*barak*), and the one who curses (*qalal* – קָלַל – Strong #7043) you I will curse (‘*ārar* – אָרַר – Strong #779); and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed (*barak*). KJV writes: “And I will bless (H1288) them that bless (H1288) thee, and curse (H779) him that curseth (H7043) thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed (H1288).” ‘*ārar* means ‘cursed’, and comes from a primitive root meaning ‘to execrate, bitterly curse. And *qālal* means ‘cursed’; to make small, easy, trifling, vile; diminish, abate, make bright, bring into contempt, cursed, curse, despise, make light or lightly afflict, lightly esteem or little esteemed, among other meanings.

The promise made to Abraham (Abraham’s blessing) is composed of three main elements: offspring (in him would all the nations of the earth be blessed, including the Gentiles – Gal. 3: 14), land (the blessing of prosperity, the possession of land of Canaan) and relationship with God (intimacy and friendship with the Lord, for God called him ‘my friend’ – Jam. 2: 23; Isa. 41: 8; 2 Chr. 20: 7).

There is an understated but interesting thing about the fact that the Hebrew word is different in Gen. 12: 3, even though that was not the intention of the biblical writer. God would curse ‘bitterly’ (‘*ārar*) all who cursed (*qālal*) Abraham in any way. This blessing remains upon the Jews, ‘the children of Abraham’, but also upon us, the Gentiles, grafted into the family of God’s chosen ones through Jesus. Therefore, whoever curses a chosen one of God runs the risk of suffering under His judgment. Isaac blessed Jacob with the same phrase spoken by God to Abraham (Gen. 27: 29b): “Cursed (‘*ārar*) be everyone who curses (‘*ārar*) you, and blessed (*barak*) be everyone who blesses (*barak*) you!”

The word ‘blessing’ (*barak*) can also be seen in Num. 23: 20, in the case of Balaam: “See, I received a command to bless (*barak* – Strong #1288); he has blessed [*Balaam referred to God*], and I cannot revoke it.” Later, in Num. 24: 9b, Balaam blesses Israel for the third time: “Blessed (*barak*) is everyone who blesses (*barak*) you, and cursed (‘*ārar*) is everyone who curses (‘*ārar*) you.”

In Deut. 11: 26 and Deut. 30: 19 the word ‘blessing’ is written as ‘*berakah*’ (Strong #1293), and the word ‘curse’ is ‘*qelalah*’ (קִלְלָה, Strong #7045), meaning: slander, vilification (speech or writing abusively derogatory), curse, accursed, cursing.

“See, I am setting before you today a blessing (*berakah*; blessing; by implication: prosperity, gift, present) and a curse (*qelalah*)” (Deut. 11: 26).

• “I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessings (*berakah*; blessing; by implication: prosperity, gift, present) and curses (*qelalah*). Choose life so that you and your descendants may live” (Deut. 30: 19).

The blessing would ‘reach’ the obedient, and the curse would ‘reach’ the disobedient (Deut. 28: 2,15). Thus, the bible makes a direct link between blessing and obedience; curse and disobedience.

In Psalms 109: 28 it is written: “Let them curse (*qalal*), but you will bless (*barak*). Let my assailants be put to shame; may your servant be glad.”

Isa. 65: 16: “Then whoever invokes a blessing (*barak*) in the land shall bless (*barak*) by the God of faithfulness, and whoever takes an oath in the land shall swear by the

God of faithfulness; because the former troubles are forgotten and are hidden from my sight.”

In the NT the Greek word for ‘blessing’ is eulogia (εὐλογία – Strong #2129, a feminine noun), which means: adulation, praise, blessing, gift. Eulogia comes from the same root as eulogéō (εὐλογέω – Strong #2127, a verb). Eulogéō comes from ‘eu’ (Strong #2095): ‘well, good, well done, correctly’ and ‘lógos’ (Strong #2095): ‘word, reason; a divine word, speech, expression or utterance, analogy’; ‘fine speaking, i.e., elegance of language; commendation (‘eulogia’), speaking well of someone or something; speak properly; fair language, which confers benefit; therefore, to bless (to give thanks or invoke a blessing, to prosper); to pass a blessing, be blessed; worship (with reverence); by implication, consecration; by extension, benefit or generosity (liberality); blessing (a matter of) bounty, bountifully. Eulogéō is used for God blessing people (Lk. 1: 28; Eph. 1: 3; Heb. 6: 14) and His people blessing Him (Lk. 1: 64; Lk. 2: 28; Lk. 24: 53; 1 Cor. 14: 16; Jam. 3: 9).

In Lk. 6: 28 Jesus teaches us: “Bless (eulogéō) those who curse you (kataraoimai = to curse, execrate, condemn), pray for those who abuse you” [NIV: “bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you”].

The same Greek words are used in Rom. 12: 14: “Bless (eulogéō) those who persecute you, bless (eulogéō) and do not curse (kataraoimai) them.”

And in Gal. 3: 14 it is written: “In order that in Christ Jesus the blessing (eulogia, εὐλογία – Strong #2129) of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.”

Jam. 3:10: “From the same mouth come blessing (Strong #7122 – eulogia, εὐλογία) and cursing (katara, κατάρα – Strong #2671). My brothers and sisters, this ought not to be so.”

Curse

To the Hebrews, curses uttered by a person were not harmless; they were active agents that caused harm, for they were sent with a purpose and with spiritual force; therefore, with the force of destruction, that is, they had life.

The Hebrew Bible uses three synonymous words for curse: ‘ārar (ארר), qālal (קלל) and ‘ālā (אלה), which correspond to the Greek terms: kataraoimai (καταράομαι), katara (καταρα) and epikataratos (ἐπικατάρατος).

- The verb ‘ārar (arar, ארר – Strong #779) means ‘cursed’, and comes from a primitive root meaning ‘to execrate, bitterly curse. It appears in Num. 5: 18 and Num. 5: 24. ‘Ārar gives rise to ‘meerah’ (מארת – Strong #3994) a feminine noun meaning ‘an execration, curse’. Execration means: abhorrence, horror or unlimited hatred, curse, imprecation (plague, curse, entreaty, supplication to a higher power for good or ill). Meerah appears in Deut. 28: 20; Prov. 3: 33; Mal. 2: 2 and Mal. 3: 9.

- The verb qālal (קלל – Strong #7043) means ‘cursed’. It comes from a primitive root meaning: to be (causatively, make) light, literally (swift, small, sharp, etc.) or figuratively (easy, trifling, vile, etc.); and is used in the sense of: to diminish, bring into contempt, accursed, curse, despise, afflict lightly, ho have little esteem, among other meanings. It appears in 1 Kin. 2: 8, for example: “And, behold, thou hast with thee Shimei the son of Gera, a Benjamite of Bahurim, which cursed (qālal) me with a grievous curse (qelalah) in the day when I went to Mahanaim: but he came down to meet me at Jordan, and I swore to him by the LORD, saying, I will not put thee to death with the sword.”

The verb *qālal* gives rise to the feminine noun ‘*qelalah*’ (קללה – Strong #7045), meaning: slander, vilification (speech or writing abusively derogatory), curse, accursed, cursing. The word appears in: Gen. 27: 12,13; Deut. 11: 26; Deut. 11: 28; Deut. 11: 29; Deut. 23: 5; Deut. 29: 27; Deut. 30: 1; Deut. 30: 19; Josh. 8: 34; Judg. 9: 57; 2 Sam. 16: 12; 2 Kin. 22: 19; Neh. 13: 2; Ps. 109: 17; Ps. 109: 18; Prov. 26: 2; Prov. 27: 14; Jer. 24: 9; Jer. 25: 18; Jer. 26: 6; Jer. 29: 22; Jer. 42: 18; Jer. 44: 12; Zech. 8: 13.

Ps. 109: 17: curse – “He loved to curse (*qelalah* קללה); let curses come on him. He did not like blessing; may it be far from him.”

Ps. 109: 18: curse – “He clothed himself with cursing (*qelalah* קללה) as his coat, may it soak into his body like water, like oil into his bones”.

Prov 26: 2: curse – NRSV: “Like a sparrow in its flitting, like a swallow in its flying, an undeserved curse (*qelalah* קללה) goes nowhere.”; KJV: “As the bird by wandering, as the swallow by flying, so the curse (*qelalah* קללה) causeless shall not come.”

- Finally, the word ‘*ālā*’ (אלה, Strong #423) is a feminine noun meaning ‘an imprecation’ and is used to indicate curse, cursing, execration, swearing (oath). The word appears in: Num. 5: 21; Num. 5: 27; Deut. 29: 19; Deut. 29: 20; Ps. 10: 7; Isa. 24: 6; Jer. 23: 10; Jer. 29: 18 (KJV: ‘to be a curse’; NIV and NRSV, ‘object of cursing’); Dan. 9: 11; Zech. 5: 3.

There is still another Hebrew term used in Lam. 3: 65 for ‘curse’, which is *taalah* (תאלת), Strong #8381, derived from ‘*ālā*’ (alah, אלה), meaning ‘an imprecation, curse’.

- The Greek terms corresponding to these Hebrew words are: *kataraomai* (καταράομαι – Strong #2672), *katara* (καταραν – Strong #2671) and *epikataratos* (ἐπικατάρατος – Strong #1944). *Kataraomai* (καταράομαι – Strong #2672) is a verb meaning: ‘I curse, to curse, cursed’ and can be seen in appears in Lk. 6: 28; Rom. 12: 14. It comes from *katara* (Strong #2671): to execrate; by analogy, to doom.

Katara (καταραν – Strong #2671) is a feminine noun meaning: to curse; a curse, cursed, a doomed one. It can be seen in Gal. 3: 10; Gal. 3: 13: “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse (*katara*) of the law, being made a curse (*katara*) for us: for it is written, ‘Cursed (*epikataratos*) is every one that hangeth on a tree’”; Heb. 6: 8; Jam. 3: 10. *Katara* comes from *kata* and *ara* (αρας – Strong #685): imprecation, execration, a prayer (as raised to heaven); more commonly: a prayer for evil, a curse, an imprecation, and which appears in Rom. 3: 14.

And *epikatharatos* (ἐπικατάρατος – Strong #1944) means: on whom a curse has been invoked, accursed, doomed to destruction; imprecated, that is, execrable (condemnable, odious, abominable, detestable). The word is used only in the biblical and ecclesiastical field, as: accursed, execrable, exposed to divine vengeance, lying under God’s curse. *Epikatharatos* appears in Gal. 3: 13: “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree’” (cf. Deut. 21: 23).

In Rev. 22: 3 the word ‘curse’ is written as *katanathema* (καταναθεμα – Strong #2652: a curse, an accursed thing), from *kata* and *anathema*, an imprecation.

- The following Hebrew words *heherim* and *herem* (הרם) correspond to the Greek terms *anathematizō* (verb, *ανεθεματισαν* – Strong #332) and *anathema* (neuter noun). *Anathema* (αναθεμα) or *anathemati* (αναθεματι – Strong #331), ‘curse’, are derived from *anathithimi*, *anathithimi*, ‘to dedicate’. *Anathithimi* gave rise to the word *anathima* (αναθημα), ‘votive offering’, which later to be written as *anathema* (αναθεμα), ‘curse’.

The Hebrew root *hāram* or *charam* (הרם or חרם – Strong #2763) means: accursed, to seclude; to isolate, separate; specifically (by a ban or prohibition) to devote to religious uses (especially destruction); make accursed, consecrate, (utterly) destroy, devote,

forfeit, to consecrate, to confiscate, to kill, to make totally disappear, to set aside, to set aside, to undo; 'separate from society.' This applies to things open to human use but deliberately made out of man's reach:

a) Lev. 27: 28-29 (dedicated, consecrated – herem – Strong #2764) – man or animal consecrated to the Lord could not be redeemed, otherwise it would be killed.

b) In Ezek. 44: 29; Num. 18: 14, the offerings to God are called herem and qōdhash ('holiness'), expressing the act that man sets aside something entirely for God (herem), and God accepts and marks it as His (qōdhash), after which it can no longer be redeemed by man.

c) This word can be used to indicate 'curse, accursed, cursed, accursed thing, dedicated thing, things which should have been utterly destroyed, (appointed to) utter destruction, devoted thing' (Zech. 14: 11 – KJV uses the word 'destruction'. NRSV uses: 'doomed to destruction', and NIV says, 'never again it will be destroyed'). Sometimes the implied motive is the wrath of God (Isa. 24: 5), but more often this is in order to remove a potential contagion out of love for Israel (Deut. 7: 26; Deut. 20: 17). Any contact with such a 'devoted thing' involved implication in its contagion and sharing in its lot (Josh. 6: 18 – NRSV: 'the things devoted to destruction' and 'the devoted things'; KJV: 'the accursed thing'; Josh. 7: 1 – 'the devoted things'; Josh. 7: 12 – NRSV: 'a thing devoted for destruction' and 'the devoted things'; KJV: 'the accursed'; Josh. 7: 15 – 'the devoted things' (NRSV); KJV: "And it shall be, that he that is taken with the accursed thing (H2764) shall be burnt with fire, he and all that he hath: because he hath transgressed the covenant of the LORD, and because he hath wrought folly in Israel"; 1 Sam. 15: 21 – NRSV: 'the things devoted to destruction'; KJV: 'things which should have been utterly destroyed'; 1 Kin. 20: 42 – 'a man devoted to destruction'; KJV: 'a man whom I appointed to utter destruction').

d) Spiritually, herem is the judgment of God against impenitent sinners (Mal. 4: 6), and it is this the case that the impossibility of redeeming herem is clearly seen; the NT anathema.

- The Greek terms corresponding to herem are anathematizō (verb) and anathema (neuter noun), anathema, seen 8 times in the NT. Anathematizō (ἀναθεματίζω – Strong #332) originates from anathema (ἀναθεμα), and means: to curse, invoke curses, devote to destruction; to declare or vow under penalty of execration; (bind under a) curse, bind with an oath. This verb can be seen in the bible in Acts 23: 12 (ἀναθεματίζω anathematizō, verb = put under a curse); Acts 23: 21 (ἀναθεματίζω anathematizō, verb = put under a curse).

Anathemati (ἀναθεματι), also spelled anathema (ἀναθεμα), Strong's #331, means a votive offering (according to the word formerly used: anáthima, ἀνάθημα, 'votive offering'), a thing devoted to God; a curse, the thing cursed; accused, anathema, curse. Anathemati comes from another word, anatithemai; and means: a religious ban or (concretely), an excommunicated (thing or person). It can be seen in Acts 23: 14 ['a solemn oath'; anathema or anathemati anathema (noun, neuter)]; Rom. 9: (ἀναθεματι anathemati or anathema ἀναθεμα)]; 1 Cor. 12: 3; 1 Cor. 16: 22; Gal. 1: 8, 9 (in these verses, the word anathema, 'accursed' in NRSV is translated as 'under God's curse' in the NIV).

In easier words, 'herem' or 'anathema' was a thing that was devoted to God, but became accursed to anyone who touched it or used it for another purpose. This is what happened to Achan, who touched on the condemned things, after the fall of Jericho (Josh. 6: 18 – NRSV: 'the things devoted to destruction' and 'the devoted things'; KJV: 'the accursed thing'; Josh. 7: 1 – 'the devoted things'; ; Josh. 7: 11 – NRSV / NIV: 'the devoted things'; KJV: 'the accursed thing'; Josh. 7: 12 – NRSV: 'a thing devoted for

destruction' and 'the devoted things'; KJV: 'the accursed'; Josh. 7: 15 – 'the devoted things' (NRSV); 'the accursed thing' (KJV).

Source: J. D. Douglas – The New Bible Dictionary, 2nd edition 1995.

A personal message from God to those seeking His blessings

I would just like to leave you with a very practical lesson here about the words of blessing that come out of a believer's mouth, often automatically, since the fear of God within him and the Holy Spirit Himself prevent him from cursing people, especially God's anointed ones. Know that the devil uses bodies. God also uses human bodies for His work on earth, including to bless His children and those who need His help. So, why keep saying, "God bless you so much! May God give you health, prosperity, peace, etc., etc., etc.", if you do not allow yourself to be a tangible instrument of blessing in His hands?

Let's take a look at the Word:

- "What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but do not have works? Can faith save you? If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill,' and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead." (Jam. 2: 14-17).

- "All who hate a brother or sister are murderers, and you know that murderers do not have eternal life abiding in them. We know love by this, that he laid down his life for us—and we ought to lay down our lives for one another. How does God's love abide in anyone who has the world's goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help? Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action. And by this we will know that we are from the truth and will reassure our hearts before him." (1 Jn. 3: 15-18).

- "If there is among you anyone in need, a member of your community in any of your towns within the land that the Lord your God is giving you, do not be hard-hearted or tight-fisted toward your needy neighbor. You should rather open your hand, willingly lending enough to meet the need, whatever it may be... Give liberally and be ungrudging when you do so, for on this account the Lord your God will bless you in all your work and in all that you undertake. Since there will never cease to be some in need on the earth, I therefore command you, 'Open your hand to the poor and needy neighbor in your land.'" (Deut. 15: 7-8; 10-11).

- "Do not be deceived; God is not mocked, for you reap whatever you sow... So let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest time, if we do not give up. So then, whenever we have an opportunity, let us work for the good of all, and especially for those of the family of faith." (Gal. 6: 7; 9-10). Are you sowing? There is no harvest without sowing.

- "But be doers of the word, and not merely hearers who deceive themselves." (Jam. 1: 22).

- "You want something and do not have it; so you commit murder. And you covet something and cannot obtain it; so you engage in disputes and conflicts [*The apostle James was speaking to believers, not ungodly people*]. You do not have, because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, in order to spend what you get on your pleasures. Adulterers! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world [*with its lures and advantageous offers*] becomes an enemy of God." (Jam. 4: 2-4).

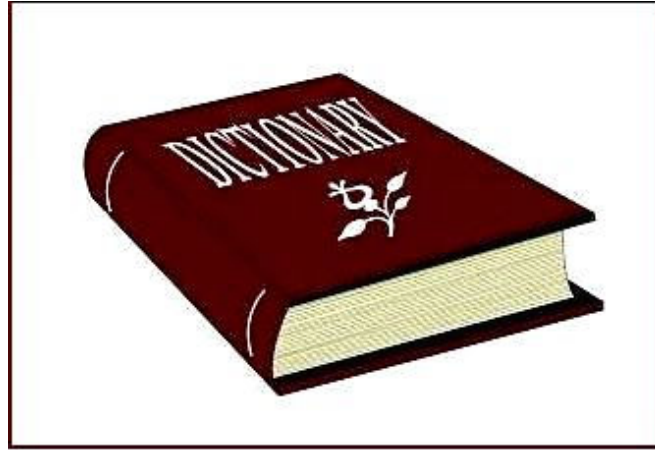
- “Anyone, then, who knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, commits sin.” (Jam. 4: 17).

Do you know why I’m saying this?

Because many times, God puts a person in front of you because He needs to use your mouth to illuminate that desperate mind, in need of light; or a person who needs a word of strength, encouragement and affection to continue to believe in God and not surrender himself into the hands of the devil and commit suicide because of despair; or, then, a sick person, barely breathing, with a bottle of bronchodilator in their hands (which can only be sold with a prescription), with no place to live and who has not eaten for 4 days, as happened to me once (and countless similar experiences on the street). However, if the believer simply says, “May God bless you greatly! May He give you health, prosperity, peace, etc., etc., etc.” and does not put his hand in his pocket to give him US\$20.00 to buy a lunch box to satisfy his hunger at that moment and to be able to seek medical help so he can breathe again, what is the point of arriving at church, raising his hands dirty with rebellion, self-pity and disobedience to praise God and just hug the sweet-smelling and friendly little brothers he only talks on Sundays? Pharisaic hypocrisy!

To summarize everything that has been said about blessing: rebellion and disobedience do not bring blessing, but rather correction and a curse from God, that is, financial need, social isolation and emotional deprivation, illness, deprivation and legality for the devil to touch with destruction. If we want blessings from God and to be blessed by our brothers, we need to practice this, that is, we need to bless as well, to be instruments of blessing in the hands of God in a tangible and practical way.

6

Biblical study about some Hebrew words

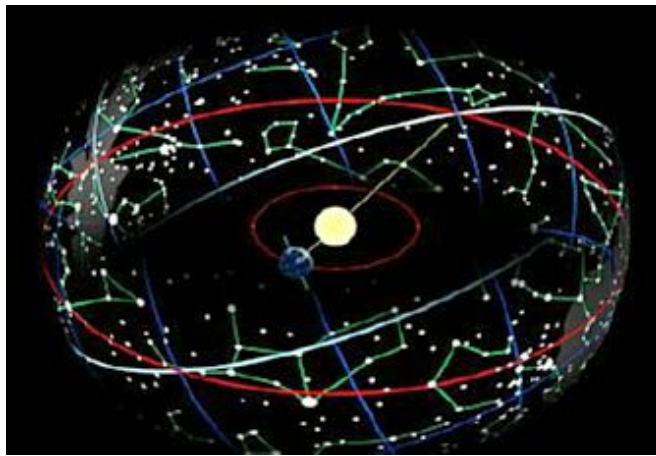
In this Chapter, we'll study the meaning of some words and Hebrew expressions, commonly found in the bible: Mazzaroth, Tehom (bottomless pit or Abyss); Tohu VaVohu; Abaddon or Apollyon; Urim and Thummim; the pool of Siloam; the expression 'Until Shiloh comes'; Nazirite / Naziriteship; Tefillin (Phylacteries); Tallit; Mezuzah; Megillot.

1) Mazzaroth

In Job 38: 31-32 it is written: "Can you bind the chains of the Pleiades [refers to the constellation of Pleiades], or loose the cords of Orion? Can you lead forth the Mazzaroth* in their season, or can you guide the Bear** with its children?" [NIV: "Can you bind the beautiful Pleiades? Can you loose the cords of Orion? Can you bring forth the constellations in their seasons (in the original, 'the morning star') or lead out the Bear with its cubs?"]].

*Mazzaroth is a Hebrew word (Mazzâroth), which occurs once in the Hebrew bible, in Job 38: 31-32 (KJV: "Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion? Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth in his season? or canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons?"). The meaning of the word has been described as 'uncertain.' Some English versions of the bible translate the Hebrew word Mazzaroth (Mazzâroth) as 'zodiac', 'stars', 'stars in the southern signs', 'morning star', 'day star', 'Crown season', 'sequence of seasons', 'Lucifer', that is, 'dai sterre' (day star), 'constellations'. Latin Vulgate translates the word as 'luciferum'. Zodiac, in these biblical translations, does not refer to Astrology but to Astronomy, for Zodiac is the ring of constellations in elliptical lines, the apparent path of the Sun across the celestial sphere over the course of the year. Most constellations have names of animals, hence the name 'Zodiac', from the Greek word 'zōdiakos'; 'zoo', meaning 'animal', and 'diakós', meaning 'circle', or 'circle of animals.' The names of the constellations of the zodiac are the same that the ancient cultures called them before the Flood.

**As for the word Bear in this verse, it refers to Arcturus, which is the brightest star in the northern hemisphere and the fourth brightest star in the nightly sky (1st our sun, 2nd Sirius, 3rd Pollux). Above Arcturus, there are four stars more brilliant – Rigel, Aldebaran, Betelgeuse, Antares. Arcturus has the same name of the ancient Greek Arktouros, which means ‘guardian of the bear’ because it is the brightest star near the constellations Ursa Major (Great Bear) and Ursa Minor (Little Bear). The size of Arcturus is nearly thirty times our sun. It is about thirty-three light-years of distance from the solar system and shines one hundred and ten times more than it. Great part of the light it emanates is infrared and invisible to human eyes. Greater than Arcturus is Antares, which is six hundred light-years far from the Earth, is seven hundred times greater than our sun and shines ten thousand times than it. Antares belongs to the Scorpio Constellation. In this proportion our sun is invisible.



Mazzaroth (Mazzâroth) or Zodiac



Pleiades – group of 7 stars called ‘Blue Stars’



The great stars – our sun, Sirius, Pollux, Arcturus, Rigel, Aldebaran, Betelgeuse and Antares



The constellation of Orion: the bright white star in the upper right is Aldebaran

2) Tohu VaVohu

In Gen. 1: 2 it is written: “the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters.” – cf. Jer. 4: 23: “I looked on the earth, and lo, it was waste and void; and to the heavens, and they had no light.”

Let's compare with the Hebrew bible (Gen. 1: 1-2):

¹ Bereshit **bara** Elohim et hashamayim veet haarets (In the beginning God **created** the heavens and the earth).

² Vehaarets haytah **tohu vavohu** vechosher al pney **tehom** veruach Elohim merachefet al pney hamayim (And the earth was **a formless void** and darkness covered the face of **the deep**, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters).

The word used to 'created' is 'bara', which indicates a creation of something out of nothing.

The expression **Tohu VaVohu** would be explained as an amorphous and malleable substrate from which all other elements were formed. Rabbi Rashi in the eleventh century, referred to that expression as a 'great and incredible void.' In turn, Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch describes Tohu VaVohu as 'surprisingly chaotic.' But the meaning of the expression Tohu VaVohu is 'an amorphous and malleable substrate' from which all other elements were formed. Even because the translation says: "And the earth **was** a formless void." It does not say: "and **became** without form and void." Therefore, there could not be a chaos. Satan, by falling, did not leave chaos on Earth because it had not yet been formed. He left the chaos in the spiritual world. In Isaiah it is written:

• Isa. 45: 18: "For thus says the Lord, who created the heavens (he is God!), who formed the earth and made it (he established it; he did not create it a chaos, he formed it to be inhabited!); I am the Lord, and there is no other."

This means that the Lord made the Earth, probably, out of gases and clouds of cosmic dust, which that have no shape at all, as we can see in the so-called 'Nebulae', that is, star-forming regions, the 'nursery' of a large number of planets and planetary systems of the Universe.

3) **Tehom**

As for the word 'deep' or 'great deep' (in other versions, bottomless pit or abyss), in Hebrew, '**tehom**', we can say:

The bible writers conceived the physical heaven as an inverted cup, the firmament, where the sun made its daily pilgrimage through it and where there were windows through which rain could fall: "In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the fountains of the great deep burst forth, and the windows [NIV, floodgates] of the heavens were opened" (Gen. 7: 11). The word '**deep**' (or **pit**) in Hebrew is **tehôm** (deep place): "the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters" (Gen. 1: 2), with reference to the primitive idea of a vast mass of water on which the world floated [which would correspond to groundwater, such as water table and artesian wells, or water-bearing strata (aquifer) for example] or with reference to the underworld (habitation of demons, the place of the dead, the place of torment). Therefore, it is written that Lucifer was thrown to the place of the dead, "to the depths of the Pit" – Isa. 14: 15 (NRSV) or "to the sides of the pit" (KJV); 'Pit' in this text of Isaiah is written with the Hebrew word **bowr**, Strong #953, which means: a pit hole, especially one used as a cistern or a prison; cistern, dungeon, fountain, pit, well) – cf. Matt. 11: 23; Lk. 10: 15, where KJV writes 'hell' in both verses, and NRSV writes 'hades', the Greek equivalent of Sheol (in Hebrew). But we can notice that the words used for 'deep' or 'great deep' or 'pit' (in English) are different from those used in Hebrew.

4) Abaddon or Apollyon

In the bible only three angels have their names revealed: Michael, Gabriel and Apollyon (Abaddon) the angel described in Revelation (Rev. 9: 11: “They [*the locusts, the personification of demons*] have as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit [NIV, the Abyss]; his name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in Greek he is called Apollyon”).

Abaddon or Apollyon (Rev. 9: 11) is the satanic angel of Abyss (Bottomless Pit), whose name in Greek means ‘Destroyer’ (figure of Satan). In Hebrew, ‘abhaddôn’ means ‘Destroyer, i.e. Destroying Angel’ or ‘place of destruction’ and is regularly translated as such in certain versions of the Old Testament, to denote the grave (region of the dead). This region was considered by ancient Jews as hell, in Hebrew Sheol; Hades and Geenna in Greek, the latter name from ge (Valley) Hinnom (Valley of Hinnom), where idolatrous sacrifices were made to the south of Jerusalem (especially to Molech, also called Milcom or Malcam, Ammonite god). The meaning of ‘Hinnom’ is unknown; some scholars suggest ‘Ben Hinnom’, son of Hinnom, hinting that it is a proper noun (2 Chr. 28: 3; 2 Kin. 23: 10). In Jer. 7: 32; Jer. 19: 6 the name is altered by the prophet to ‘valley of slaughter.’ It’s also called ‘Valley of Topheth or Tophet (‘place of fire, burning place’ (Isa. 30: 33) or ‘roasting place’) by the Canaanites (Jer. 7: 31-32; Jer. 19: 12). It also has the meaning of ‘furnace’, ‘bonfire’, ‘place of flame or annoyance’.



Valley of Hinnom

The region of the dead was considered by ancient Jews as hell, in Hebrew Sheol (Strong #7585: grave, hell, pit, lower world, underworld); Hades and Gehenna in Greek. The Jews thought Sheol was like a shell where the dead remained and were put on trial. There, could have a separated place for the righteous and the wicked. The word Hades (Greek: hadés, ᾍδης – Strong #g86) comes from ‘a’ (as negative particle) and ‘eido’; properly, unseen, i.e. ‘Hades’ or the place (state) of departed souls; grave, hell; the habitation of the dead in the underworld until the last judgment. In the Latin Vulgate, the Greek word Hades was translated as ‘inferna’ (= hell). The other Greek word ‘Geenna’ (Greek: Gehenna, γέεννης – Strong #g1067), as it was explained before, comes from ‘ge’ (Valley) ‘Hinnom’ (Valley of Hinnom), where idolatrous sacrifices

were made to the south of Jerusalem or a place underneath the earth, a place of punishment for criminals; also used (figuratively) as a name for the place (or state) of everlasting punishment; hell. The Greek word Gehenna can be found in the NT in the following verses: Matt. 5: 22; 29; 30; Matt. 10: 28; Matt. 11: 23; Mk. 9: 43; 45; 47; Lk. 12: 5; Jam. 3: 6. The word Hades is written in Lk. 10: 15; Lk. 16: 23; Rev. 1: 18; Rev. 6: 8; Rev. 20: 14. In 2 Pet. 2: 4, in our translation, ‘hell’ (NIV), it’s written the Greek word ‘tartarus’ (tartaróō, τάρταρωσας – Strong #g5020: cast down to hell; the deepest abyss of Hades; to incarcerate in eternal torment). There seems to have a difference between the words Hades and Gehenna, for Hades conveys the idea of ‘the place (state) of departed souls; hell, grave’, while Gehenna seems to refer to something stronger than simple grave or physical death. It suggests spiritual death, true hell or eternal punishment, as we saw in the definition.

The locust [NRSV] or pests [NIV] (from Mal. 3: 11) or Abaddon (the ‘Destroyer’ of Rev. 9: 11) can be the demon that was released to kill all the firstborn of Egypt in Ex 12: 23 (‘the destroyer’ – KJV, NIV, NRSV), hinting a proper name (‘the Destroyer’, as in Rev. 9: 11), although it can refer also to a destructive action from God Himself (shachath; Strong #7843: ruin, batter, destroy, destroyer, destruction, to corrupt, perish, lose, spoiler, waste). There, the Destroyer (the ‘angel of the abyss’ or ‘the angel of death’) passed over the houses marked with lamb’s blood and did not touch them:

- Ex. 12: 12-13: “For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike down every firstborn in the land of Egypt, both human beings and animals; on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the Lord. The blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live: when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and **no plague shall destroy** you when I strike the land of Egypt.”

- Ex. 12: 23: “For the Lord will pass through to strike down the Egyptians; when he sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the Lord will pass over that door and will not allow **the destroyer** to enter your houses to strike you down.”

- Ex. 12: 27: “you shall say, ‘It is the Passover sacrifice to the Lord, for **he passed over** the houses of the Israelites in Egypt, when he struck down the Egyptians but spared our houses’. And the people bowed down and worshiped.”

- Ex. 12: 1-28 (When God established the Passover before taking His people out of Egypt): “The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt: ‘This month shall mark for you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year for you. Tell the whole congregation of Israel that on the tenth of this month they are to take a lamb for each family, a lamb for each household. If a household is too small for a whole lamb, it shall join its closest neighbor in obtaining one; the lamb shall be divided in proportion to the number of people who eat of it. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a year-old male; you may take it from the sheep or from the goats. You shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month; then the whole assembled congregation of Israel shall slaughter it at twilight. They shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. They shall eat the lamb that same night; they shall eat it roasted over the fire with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. Do not eat any of it raw or boiled in water, but roasted over the fire, with its head, legs, and inner organs. You shall let none of it remain until the morning; anything that remains until the morning you shall burn. This is how you shall eat it: your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it hurriedly. It is the Passover of the Lord. For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike down every firstborn in the land of Egypt, both human beings and animals; on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the Lord. The blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live: when I see the blood, I will pass over you,

and **no plague shall destroy** you when I strike the land of Egypt. This day shall be a day of remembrance for you. You shall celebrate it as a festival to the Lord; throughout your generations you shall observe it as a perpetual ordinance. Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread; on the first day you shall remove leaven from your houses, for whoever eats leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day shall be cut off from Israel. On the first day you shall hold a solemn assembly and on the seventh day a solemn assembly; no work shall be done on those days; only what everyone must eat, that alone may be prepared by you. You shall observe the festival of unleavened bread, for on this very day I brought your companies out of the land of Egypt: you shall observe this day throughout your generations as a perpetual ordinance. In the first month, from the evening of the fourteenth day until the evening of the twenty-first day, you shall eat unleavened bread. For seven days no leaven shall be found in your houses; for whoever eats what is leavened shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether an alien or a native of the land. You shall eat nothing leavened; in all your settlements you shall eat unleavened bread.’ Then Moses called all the elders of Israel and said to them, ‘Go, select lambs for your families, and slaughter the Passover lamb. Take a bunch of hyssop, dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and touch the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood in the basin. None of you shall go outside the door of your house until morning. For the Lord will pass through to strike down the Egyptians; when he sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the Lord will pass over that door and will not allow **the destroyer** to enter your houses to strike you down. You shall observe this rite as a perpetual ordinance for you and your children. When you come to the land that the Lord will give you, as he has promised, you shall keep this observance. And when your children ask you, ‘What do you mean by this observance?’ you shall say, ‘It is the Passover sacrifice to the Lord, for he passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt, when he struck down the Egyptians but spared our houses.’ And the people bowed down and worshiped. The Israelites went and did just as the Lord had commanded Moses and Aaron.”

5) The pool of Siloam

The word ‘Siloam’ (Shilôah, in Hebrew שלח) – translated as ‘Sent’ – is written in Greek in the NT (Greek Textus Receptus) as Siloam (silôam, σιλωαμ) and can be found three times in the Bible: **1)** Neh. 3: 15 (‘Pool of Shelah’, NRSV, or ‘Pool of Siloam’, NIV; in Hebrew, in this text of Nehemiah: ‘Fountain of Shelah’– shelach – 2 ;(שלחן) Isa. 8: 6 (‘the waters of Shiloah’); **3)** Jn. 9: 7 (‘pool of Siloam’).

The Pool of Siloam was built by King Hezekiah to bring water to Jerusalem.

Hezekiah was king of Judah (2 Kin. 18–20; 2 Chr. 29–32; Isa. 22, and Isa. 36–39), and his reign period was from 729 to 687 BC:

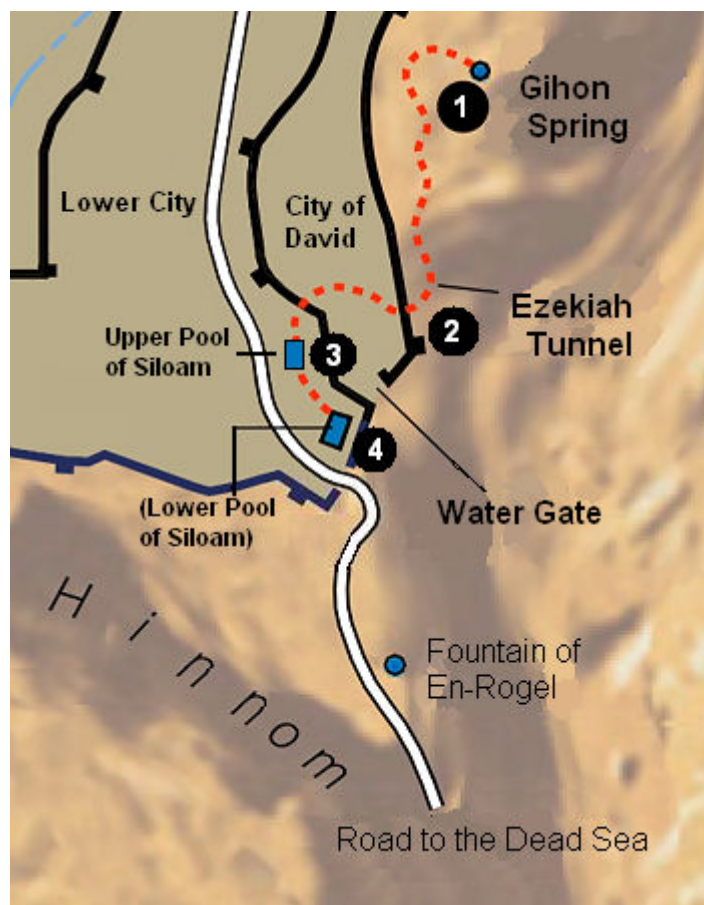
1) 729 BC (as co-regent of Ahaz his father), and in the 6th year (722 BC) the fall of Samaria occurred (the Northern kingdom of Israel).

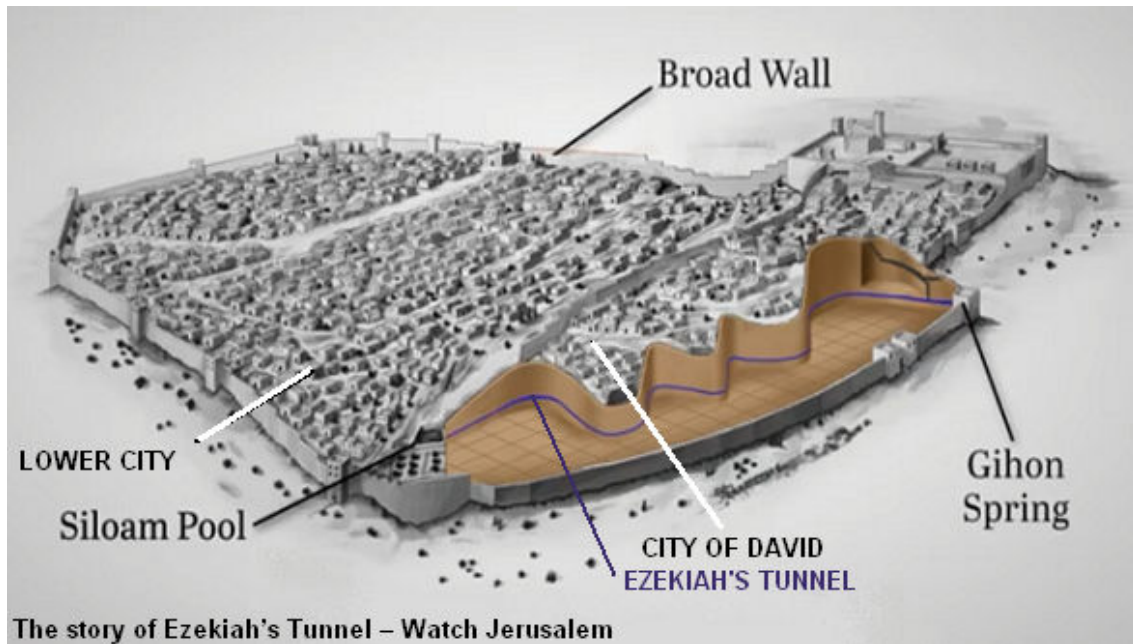
2) 716 (as the sole occupant of the throne) to 687 BC (in the 14th year of his reign – 701 BC – there was the invasion of Judah by Sennacherib. The reign of Sennacherib, king of Assyria, goes from 705 to 681 BC).

In the 14th year of his reign, Sennacherib king of Assyria rose against all the cities of Judah and took them. To escape the invader, Hezekiah chose to make a peace agreement and pay him tribute. Thus, he gave him three hundred talents of silver (22,487 pounds or 11 tons) and thirty talents of gold (2,250 pounds or 1 ton), besides all the silver that was found in the House of the Lord and in the treasures of his house. He

stripped the gold that covered the doorposts and the gates of the temple and gave to the enemy (2 Kin. 18: 16). The Assyrian king, however, sent messengers, who were also received by the envoys of King Hezekiah. Through lying words, the messengers of Sennacherib sought to take away Hezekiah's trust in the Lord and threatened to destroy the city, putting fear in people and diminishing their confidence in the king. The royal messengers came to Hezekiah and told them the words of the enemy. The king sent them to the prophet Isaiah who gave them words of consolation and strength, urging them to trust in the Lord's deliverance and prophesying to them a word that spoke to their hearts (2 Kin. 19: 6-7).

Hezekiah was troubled by the Assyrian yoke. By preparing for the invasion, he built the defenses of Jerusalem (2 Chr. 32: 3-5) and safeguarded the city's water supply, building the tunnel of Siloam (2 Kin. 20: 20 and Isa. 22: 9). Siloam (Shilôah, 'sent', in Hebrew) was one of the major sources of water supply of Jerusalem, linked to the Gihon Spring (גִּיחֹן 'Gichon' – Strong #1521, derived from 'giyach', which means 'stream'), to southeast of the city, which, in turn, poured water in it through an open channel. From Siloam, the canal flowed into the old pool or lower pool (Birket el-Hamra). When Hezekiah was faced with the threat of Sennacherib, he stopped all the fountains, streams and all subsidiary channels that led to the river that flowed through the land (2 Chr. 32: 3-4). The king then sent the waters of the upper Gihon through an aqueduct or tunnel two meters high to a cistern or upper pool or pool of Siloam (Birket Silwān) at the west side of the city of David (2 Chr. 32: 30). He defended the new source of supply with a ramp (2 Chr. 32: 30).





Pool of Siloam

The construction of Hezekiah's tunnel was amazing in terms of engineering, for it was quite advanced for that time, and we can say that the hand of God in the entire project is undeniable. Although the prophet did not leave the details given by the Lord to Hezekiah, we can see from the archaeological evidence found today that the miners hewed a narrow tunnel (only for one man to pass) two meters high in solid rock over a distance of 591 yards (or 1,200 cubits), which is its length, the height of the rock above the stonecutters was 100 cubits (49.21 yards). Two teams dug toward each other, based on the sound of the pickaxes until they meet in the center. 'And while there were still three cubits (1.48 yards) to [cut], the voice of a man was heard calling to his counterpart', as shown in the tunneling records found on a stone with an inscription where Hezekiah's name can be read, and which today is possession of Muslims.



6) What does the expression ‘until Shiloh comes’ mean?

It was uttered by Jacob in Gen. 49: 1-28, when he blessed his sons.

Let’s read the whole passage.

- Genesis 49: 1-28 (Jacob’s blessing on his children): “Then Jacob called his sons, and said: ‘Gather around, that I may tell you what will happen to you in days to come. Assemble and hear, O sons of Jacob; listen to Israel your father. Reuben, you are my firstborn, my might and the first fruits of my vigor, excelling in rank and excelling in power. Unstable as water, you shall no longer excel because you went up onto your father’s bed; then you defiled it – you went up onto my couch! *[He referred to the fact that Reuben lay down with his father’s concubine]*. Simeon and Levi are brothers; weapons of violence are their swords. May I never come into their council; may I not be joined to their company—for in their anger they killed men, and at their whim they hamstringed oxen *[he referred to the betrayal of Simeon and Levi, killing the men of Hamor, father of Shechem, who married Jacob’s daughter, Dinah. Hamor’s people had made a pact to unite with Jacob and, therefore, they circumcised all males; however,*

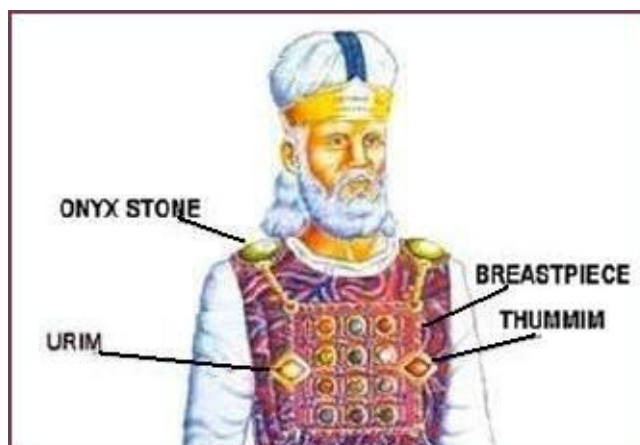
while they were being healed of their wounds in the camp, Simeon and Levi came and killed them all – Gen. 34: 1-31]. Cursed be their anger, for it is fierce, and their wrath, for it is cruel! I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel. Judah, your brothers shall praise you; your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies; your father's sons shall bow down before you. Judah is a lion's whelp; from the prey, my son, you have gone up. He crouches down, he stretches out like a lion, like a lioness—who dares rouse him up? The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, *until tribute comes to him* [NIV, '*until he comes to whom it belongs*'; in Hebrew, '*until Shiloh comes*' or '*until he comes to whom tribute belongs*' *]; and the obedience of the peoples is his. Binding his foal to the vine and his donkey's colt to the choice vine, he washes his garments in wine and his robe in the blood of grapes; his eyes are darker than wine, and his teeth whiter than milk. Zebulun shall settle at the shore of the sea; he shall be a haven for ships, and his border shall be at Sidon. Issachar is a strong donkey, lying down between the sheepfolds; he saw that a resting place was good, and that the land was pleasant; so he bowed his shoulder to the burden, and became a slave at forced labor. Dan shall judge his people as one of the tribes of Israel. Dan shall be a snake by the roadside, a viper along the path, that bites the horse's heels so that its rider falls backward. I wait for your salvation, O Lord. Gad shall be raided by raiders, but he shall raid at their heels. Asher's food shall be rich, and he shall provide royal delicacies. Naphtali is a doe let loose that bears lovely fawns. Joseph is a fruitful bough, a fruitful bough by a spring; his branches run over the wall. The archers fiercely attacked him; they shot at him and pressed him hard. Yet his bow remained taut, and his arms were made agile by the hands of the Mighty One of Jacob, by the name of the Shepherd, the Rock of Israel, by the God of your father, who will help you, by the Almighty who will bless you with blessings of heaven above [*spiritual blessings*], blessings of the deep [*emotional blessings*] that lies beneath, blessings of the breasts and of the womb [*material blessings*]. The blessings of your father are stronger than the blessings of the eternal mountains, the bounties of the everlasting hills; may they be on the head of Joseph, on the brow of him who was set apart from his brothers. Benjamin is a ravenous wolf, in the morning devouring the prey, and at evening dividing the spoil.' All these are the twelve tribes of Israel, and this is what their father said to them when he blessed them, blessing each one of them with a suitable blessing."

(*) "Until Shiloh comes" or "Until he comes to whom tribute belongs." It was in Shiloh that the tent of meeting was set up on the first days after the conquest of the Promised Land (Josh. 18: 1), and this was the main sanctuary of the Israelites during the time of the Judges (Judg. 18: 31). By the time of Eli (the priest) and his sons, the sanctuary had become a well-established structure of centered worship. After Shiloh, the Ark of the Covenant has changed place several times because it was stolen by the enemies (Philistines), until being transferred to Baalah of Judah [or Baale Judah, in Hebrew], also called Kiriath Jearim or Kiriath Baal (Josh. 18: 14; 1 Sam. 7: 1-2; 1 Chr. 13: 5) to the house of Abinadab and his sons, Uzzah and Ahio (2 Sam. 6: 2-3); from there it went to the house of Obed-Edom (probably a Philistine of Gath, and who lived near Jerusalem – 2 Sam. 6: 10; 1 Chr. 13: 13-14; 1 Chr. 15: 25 – according to "J. D. Douglas – The New Bible Dictionary, 2nd edition 1995"), from where David (as king) took it and brought it to Zion, the city of David, until take its place permanently in the temple in Jerusalem built by Solomon (The people offered sacrifices on the altar of the burnt offering at the high place in Gibeon – 1 Chr. 16: 39; 1 Chr. 21: 29; 2 Chr. 1: 3-5 – but the ark stayed in Jerusalem, in a tent David built for it: 1 Chr. 15: 1; 1 Chr. 16: 1; 37-39; 2 Chr. 1: 3-5; 1 Kin. 3: 4; 15). The phrase used by Jacob, "until Shiloh comes or until he comes to whom tribute belongs" in reference to Judah, in Hebrew is 'adh ki-

yābhô' shîlôh, and can be translated in several ways. The two most reasonable in my opinion are: 1) “until he [in reference to Judah] comes to Shiloh”, fulfilling what is written in Josh. 18: 1, when at a meeting, the tribe nobly rejected the prominence they had enjoyed previously (in the pilgrimage through the desert). 2) Amending shîlôh to shellôh and translating the phrase as does the Septuagint (the Greek version of the OT), “until he comes to whom it belongs” or “until he comes to whom tribute belongs”, namely, “the things in store for him”, maybe here is a reference to David or a messianic reference [he = Jesus].

7) The Urim and Thummim

The priest of the OT had two little stones on the breastpiece of his clothes: the Urim and Thummim – Ex. 28: 30 (Aaron); 1 Sam. 23: 6; 9-14 (David and Abiathar). They were two flattened objects through which God's will was consulted. The two had written in one side the word Urim, derived from 'ārar (to curse); on the other side it was written the word Thummim, from tāmam (be perfect). If when casting lots, both sides of the Urim were facing upwards, it meant a ‘no’ from God. If they were both Thummim, it meant ‘yes,’ and if one was Urim and another Thummim, it meant unanswered. As in the OT there was not the distribution of the Holy Spirit on all people, only on the leader with whom God spoke personally, the consults were made to Him by the priest through these two objects. But this was only delegated to the priests. After the coming of Jesus, the Holy Spirit began to speak to all His children (Acts 1: 23-26 is the only time in the NT when are mentioned the act of casting lots as a means of divine choice; Acts 13: 1-3 – here, there were already prophets, through whom the Holy Spirit spoke). The most important thing for us today is that we must always consult the Lord, in all circumstances of our lives, and hear clearly the voice of His Spirit in our hearts so that we take the right direction.



8) Nazirite, Naziriteship

Nazirite comes from the Hebrew nāzîr (vine), derived from nāzar: to separate, to consecrate, to abstain; compared with the word nezer: diadem, crown of God, sometimes identified with the long hair of Nazirites. Although the Law of Moses talks about Naziriteship (Num. 6: 1-21), the origin of the practice is pre-Mosaic and obscure

(Semites and other primitive peoples). There were three rules to be respected by the Nazirite:

1) To renounce wine and other fermented drink, or grape juice and not to eat anything that comes from the grapevine, fresh or dried, not even the seeds or the skins (Num. 6: 3-4) to maintain his integrity and holiness and not to be possessed by any other than the Spirit of God (Prov. 20: 1; Lev. 10: 9-11). Thus, he approached Him in a more worthy way. For us, the spiritual significance of this abstinence is to renounce carnal passions and emotional imbalance; learn to control the desires of the flesh and have emotional control through the Holy Spirit.

2) Not to cut the hair (Num. 6: 5). The hair, for the Jews of that time, symbolized the seat of life, the source of life, as well as the vine (nāzīr = unpruned vine – Lev. 25: 5; 11 [NRSV]; at the end of separation time the hair was burned on the altar – Num. 6: 18-19). For us, the spiritual meaning of this practice is not to leave God's spiritual covering, but to be aware of His protection and the presence of His Spirit.

3) Not to approach any corpse (Num. 6: 6), even if relatives and this applied also to the high priest (Aaron could not mourn the death of his sons Nadab and Abihu who were killed by the Lord for burning incense on the altar without His order, nor could go to the funeral because he was high priest: Lev. 10: 6-7). Other references: Lev. 21: 1-4; 10-12. For us, the meaning of this is not to touch again what is old, the past things, the dead things, the sin.

The Naziriteship was usually done to get certain favors from God. Some men made temporary vow (at least for thirty days, as in the case of Paul – Acts 18: 18; Acts 21: 23-24); others did so as a vow for life: Samuel, Samson and John the Baptist.

As for the expression 'Mazal tov' or 'Mazel tov' and its connection with luck, we'll read about it on the next chapter.

8) Tefillin (phylacteries)

In Matt. 23: 5 it's written: "They [*Jesus was referring to the scribes and Pharisees*] do all their deeds to be seen by others; for they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long." (NRSV); "Everything they do is done for men to see: They make their phylacteries wide and the tassels on their garments long" (NIV).

The Greek word in this verse from Matthew 23 is 'Phylacteries' (Phylactery, in Greek, phulaktérion, φυλακτήριον – Strong #G5440); in the plural Phylacteries (Phulakteria, φυλακτηρια), is also mentioned in Deut. 6: 8 as thothâphoth (תֹּתָאֲפֹת – Strong #2903), translated as 'Frontlets' or 'Browbands.'

'Phylacteries' (in Greek) is equivalent to the Hebrew word 'Tefillin' (the plural form of 'Tefillah'). The biblical references concerning 'Tefillin' can be found in Ex. 13: 9; Ex. 13: 16; Deut. 6: 8 e Deut. 11: 18. Although 'Tefillin' is the plural form of Tefillah, it is rarely used as singular.

Tephillin or phylacteries are a set of two small black boxes containing parchment inscribed with verses from the Torah and attached to the hands and foreheads: Ex. 13: 9; Ex. 13: 16; Deut. 6: 8; Deut. 11: 18. Tephillin are worn by observant Jews in the morning prayers during the week, especially when reciting the 'Shema Israel' (Sh'ma Yisrael – 'Hear O Israel' – Deut. 6: 4-9).

These texts of the Torah (Ex. 13: 1-10; Ex. 13: 11-16; Deut. 6: 4-9; Deut. 11: 13-21 and Num. 15: 37-41) are known as Sh'ma Yisrael, especially the 3rd text (Deut. 6: 4-9).

The Sh'ma Yisrael begins with: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the only one God. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might" (Deut. 6: 4-5). But it is read along with the other texts from Ex. 13: 1-16 (Vehayá Ki Yeviachá – 'And it shall be when I (the Lord) shall bring you': "When the Lord brings you into the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, which he swore to your ancestors to give you, a land flowing with milk and honey, you shall keep this observance in this month" – Ex. 13: 5); Ex. 13: 2 (Cadêsh Li – 'all to me sanctify' or 'consecrate to me': "Consecrate to me all the firstborn; whatever is the first to open the womb among the Israelites, of human beings and animals, is mine") and Deuteronomy 11: 13-21 (Vehaiá Im Shamoá – 'And it shall come to pass if you shall listen': "If you will only heed [shāma' be: 'give ears to] his every commandment that I am commanding you today—loving the Lord your God, and serving him with all your heart and with all your soul"—Deut. 11: 13).

'Tefillin' (תפילין) is not a word found in the bible. In Hebrew texts we can find the word thothâphoth (טוֹתָפוֹת – Strong #2903 – Ex. 13: 9; Ex. 13: 16; Deut. 6: 8; Deut. 11: 18), which is translated as 'Frontlets' or 'Browbands'. In the Concordant Version of the Old Testament (CVOT), the word thothâphoth is written as 'zikkaron' (Strong #2146) = 'memorial, reminder' (זִכְרוֹן – Ex. 13: 9), or 'tutphth' (ttphth) = frontlets, browbands (Ex. 13: 16; Deut. 6: 8; Deut. 11: 18). The Septuagint (the Greek Version of the Torah) translates thothâphoth – ἀσχευτόν – for 'something immutable.' Most likely, the word 'Tefillin' was created by rabbis from the end of the second temple period until the medieval era.

According to other researchers, 'Tefillin' may be derived from the Aramaic verb 'to plead', 'to pray'; a word closely related to the Hebrew word 'Tefillah', 'Prayer'. Jacob ben Asher (fourteenth century CE) suggests that 'Tephillin' is derived from the Hebrew 'pelilah', 'the justice, the proof', as an act, sign and proof of God's presence among the Jewish people.

The only mention to the name 'Tefillin' in the New Testament occurs in Matt. 23: 5, when Jesus rebukes the Pharisees and says that the only thing they do is to make their phylacteries increasingly wide (NIV). 'Phylacteries' literally means 'an amulet'; derives from the Greek 'phylacterion' or phulaktērion' – φυλακτήριον (Strong #G5440), whose plural is 'Phulakteria' (φυλακτηρια, phylacteries), the ancient Greek form of phylássein, φυλάσσειν or phylássō (φυλάσσω – Strong #G5442), which means 'to guard, to preserve, to protect', 'I keep, I maintain, I observe', and which refers, in fact, to 'amulets.'

In Jesus' time, a phylactery was a parchment case containing small scrolls of parchment with the Hebrew texts, affixed to the left arm or forehead of men in morning prayer and regarded as a protection (hence the name phylactery, 'amulet') against the evil spirits. They were also tied at the wrist and forehead signifying how the Word of God should regulate all behavior and thoughts.

The Torah commanded that they be used to serve as a sign and memorial that God brought the children of Israel out of Egypt. For example, in Deut 11: 18 it is written, "You shall put these words of mine in your heart and soul, and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and fix them as an emblem on your forehead".

We can think that God could be talking just about to write the Ten Commandments on the parchments, or about to keep the God's commandments, to love and serve Him with all their hearts and all their souls, if we base ourselves on the sequence of the text, which starts in Deut. 10: 2 (when the Lord writes the words of the covenant on the second stone tablets that Moses carved out), following with the verses 12-13, where Moses shows the people what God expects from them ("So now, O Israel, what does the

Lord your God require of you? Only to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments of the Lord your God and his decrees that I am commanding you today, for your own well-being”), going on to Deut. 11: 1 (“You shall love the Lord your God, therefore, and keep his charge, his decrees, his ordinances, and his commandments always”), Deut. 11: 8 (“Keep, then, this entire commandment that I am commanding you today, so that you may have strength to go in and occupy the land that you are crossing over to occupy”), and finally, to Deut. 11: 13 (“If you will only heed his every commandment that I am commanding you today—loving the Lord your God, and serving him with all your heart and with all your soul”). Here, the word ‘soul’ in Hebrew is *nephesh* (Strong #5315), which comes from ‘*naphash*’, and means a soul, living being, life, self, person, desire, passion, appetite, emotion. This makes us think that what God wanted from them is that they obey Him and His commandments with all of their being: body (physical strength and the material resources they had), intelligence (mind, spirit), emotions and feelings (soul) and will (heart), and they wrote this on their arms and foreheads so they would not forget the Lord and His covenant with them.

This can be made clearer in Deut 6: 4-8, where He talks about how Israel should think about their God: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might” (Deut. 6: 4-5). **These words, then, should be kept in their hearts and written on a scroll to be bound to the arms and forehead of the Israelites (Deut 6: 6; 8):** “Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart... Bind them as a sign on your hand, fix them as an emblem on your forehead.” He clearly says to keep these words in the heart (“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might”), on the hand and between the eyes, that is, to feel, think and act as He does.

The biblical texts for tefillin are obscure in literal sense, according to some Jewish scholars because for them the text of Deut. 11: 18 does not designate specifically what ‘to bind as a sign on the hand’ and doesn’t make clear how this had to be done either. Rabbis determined the texts to be placed in the tefillin and read (as the case of Shema described above). And it was Talmud (around 500 CE) that explained and gave shape to what is to be bound to the body.

The hand-tefillin (*shel yad*) is placed on the upper arm, and the strap wrapped around the arm seven times, hand and fingers, and stays next to the heart, while the head-tefillin (*shel rosh*) is placed above the forehead.



Image above (source: wikipedia.org): A set of tefillin in the Ashkanazi tradition made in a single piece from cow hide rather than sheep hide, and includes the arm-tefillah (to the left) and the head-tefillah (to the right). The term 'Ashkenazim' refers to Jews from Central and Eastern Europe and comes from the medieval Hebrew word for Germany (Ashkenaz – אשכנז). In Hebrew, the singular is 'Ashkenazi' and the plural is Ashkenazim. Today, the term Ashkenazi refers to the descendants of those early Eastern European Jews, scattered throughout the world after the Holocaust. Ashkenaz was one of the descendants of Noah, through Gomer, son of Japheth (Gen 10: 3; 1 Chr. 1: 6), and who inhabited an area between the Caspian and Black Seas. These people were allied with the Minni (or Mannai, in Akadian) against the Assyrians in the 7th century BC. This revolt is reflected in Jer. 51: 27. The Ashkenazi can be identified with the Scythians mentioned by Herodotus. Scythia today corresponds to the following countries: Romania, Bulgaria, Ukraine, Russia, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, formerly a member of the USSR (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) or simply, the Soviet Union.



Image above (source: wikipedia.org): The Lieutenant Asael Lubotzky from the Golani Infantry Brigade during the Second Lebanon War prays with tefillin (wikipedia.org).

Image below (source: wikipedia.org): Arm-tefillah (shel yad) on the left hand with the letter ש (shin) pattern, according to one of the Ashkenazi opinions. The large letter ש (Shin) stands for שדי (Shadday), one of the names of God in Ancient times: El- Shadday or El- Shaddai, the Almighty God.



In this text, Jesus not only mentions the phylacteries or tefillin, but also the ‘tzitzit’, written in the ARA as ‘fringes.’ And the word ‘fringue’ is written in Greek as kraspedon (κράσπεδον – Strong #G2899), corresponding to the Hebrew word tsitsith (צִיצִית – Num 15: 38 – Strong #6734), which means: forelock of hair, a tassel; bangs, braid; fringe, lock. Kraspedon means: fringe, tassel, corner, edge, hem; a margin, that is, a fringe or tassel.

Tzitzit (in Hebrew צִיצִית) is the set of fringes of the tallit, which serve as a means of reminding Jews of God’s commandments. The command about tzitzit is found in two passages of the Torah: Num 15: 37-41; Deut. 22: 12 (where it is written ‘tassels’). This brings us to the next topic, which is the tallit.

10) Tallit

The commandment concerning the fringes is mentioned twice in the Torah:

- Num. 15: 38-41: “Speak to the Israelites, and tell them to make fringes (tsitsith – Strong #6734) on the corners (kanaph, כַּנָּף – Strong #3671) of their garments throughout their generations and to put a blue cord on the fringe (tsitsith – Strong #6734) at each corner (kanaph, כַּנָּף – Strong #3671). You have the fringe (tsitsith – Strong #6734) so that, when you see it, you will remember all the commandments of the Lord and do them, and not follow the lust of your own heart and your own eyes. So you shall remember and do all my commandments, and you shall be holy to your God. I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: I am the Lord your God.”

- Deut. 22: 12: “You shall make tassels (fringes) on the four corners (kanaph, כַּנָּף – Strong #3671) of the cloak with which you cover yourself.”

The tallit (in modern Hebrew, also known as a tallit gadol, referring to the great shawl), talet (in Jewish-Spanish, Sephardic) or talis (in German-Jewish, Yiddish) is a shawl made of silk, wool or linen, which has fringes (tzitziot, plural, or tzsitzi, singular) at its edges. The plural of tallit in Hebrew is tallitot. The Yiddish plural is taleisim. It is used by men as a covering at the time of Jewish prayers, especially at the time of the Morning Prayer (Shacharit) and at the time of prayer in the synagogue.

It was designed by God to remind His people of the importance of the obedience to His commandments and His covering and authority over them. In other words, the fringes work as a reminder of all the commandments of the Law, warning man against

the inclinations of the heart (symbol of feelings and emotions and the seat of the will and decisions) and eyes (symbol of wisdom and intellect, generating desire), the two ‘provocateurs of sin.’ About tallit having four corners, this means that in any direction (north, south, east and west) that the Israelites turned, the fringes would become them aware of the presence of God. The fringes were therefore placed in the four corners of the mantle (the shawl).

As for its measures, the number of knots, the number of fringes and the fabric to be used, there is no biblical reference, unlike what we see in relation to the tabernacle and sacred utensils, whose precise measures were given to Moses.

There are two types of tallit: the tallit katan (the small one), also called tzitzit, worn during the day under the shirt; and the tallit gadol (the large one), used only in Morning Prayer.



Tallit Gadol – black stripes according to the Orthodox Ashkenazic tradition

Images below: tallit katan (small) also called tzitzit, worn during the day under the shirt.



Thus, according to rabbinic knowledge, it is interpreted that the main objectives of this accessory are:

- To isolate who is praying from the world around him, helping him to concentrate himself during prayer.
- To create an environment of equality between those who are praying in the synagogue, having then, agreement with a homogeneous covering that would be over the clothes of the people there. Thus, one would leave aside the social or financial position of one another.

The term tzitzit recalls the tzitz, the gold plate used by the Kohen Gadol, the high priest, on which were engraved the words “Holy to the Lord” (Ex. 28: 36: “You shall make a rosette of pure gold, and engrave on it, like the engraving of a signet, ‘Holy to the Lord’ [NIV, “Make a plate of pure gold and engrave on it as on a seal: Holy to the Lord”). This gold plate was tied with a blue cord on the turban (Ex. 28: 37), which was

placed in the head of the priest. Tzitz means ‘to gaze’ because it was worn on the forehead in a place visible to everybody. Thus, this word denotes that the fringes should be seen and, therefore, the best translation is: ‘fringes on display’ (i.e., the fringes attached to the garments in order to be seen).



The high priest's miter on which the phrase
“Holiness to the Lord on the gold plate” is engraved

The fringes on display awaken in man a direct consciousness of the Divine Presence. This was the special function of the blue thread (פְּתִיל תְּכֵלֶת; pəthiyl = thread, פְּתִיל – Strong #6616, and blue = tək·ā'·leth, tekeleth or techelet, תְּכֵלֶת – Strong #8504), whose color (a deep sky blue or turquoise or blue-violet according to researchers, written as ‘amethyst’ in CVOT – Concordant Version of the Old Testament) was obtained by extracting the pigment from the Chilazon, a shellfish, now extinct. Today, the blue color is obtained from another mollusk, the Hexaplex trunculus, belonging to the Muricidae family, molluscs generally known by the name ‘murex’. Blue color resembles the sea and the sea looks like the color of the sky and the sky resembles the color of the throne of God, according to the interpretation of Ancient times. For us, it represents the Holy Spirit.

For many centuries since the exile of the Jewish people from the Land of Israel, the tzitzit have been used without the ‘blue’ (‘techelet’) fringe, although there has been an attempt to return for the past hundred years.

The tallit used by Jews today is made of silk, wool or linen, but always of the same fabric (Deut. 22: 11: “You shall not wear clothes made of wool and linen woven together”; Lev. 19: 19: “You shall keep my statutes. You shall not let your animals breed with a different kind; you shall not sow your field with two kinds of seed; nor shall you put on a garment made of two different materials”). In Deut. 22: 11, we can understand that this observation figuratively means not to mix the things of the world with the things of God, holiness with uncleanness, for wool made sweating, and in Ancient times, sweat was considered a sign of impurity. Wool and linen woven fabric is called shatnez.

So far we can see that these were the only guidelines given by God regarding the tallit: to make fringes on the four corners of the cloak (Deut. 22: 12) and to put a blue cord on the fringe at each corner (that is, twisted threads with a blue cord between them, as the priest's belt – Num. 15: 38 cf. Ex. 39: 5; Ex. 28: 8) so that they remembered all the commandments of the Lord and fulfilled them; in other words, a simple order and with a clear and simple objective.



Tzitzit without the 'blue' fringe – Photo: DRosenbach – wikipedia.org

However, from the end of the second temple period until the medieval era, the rabbis added other details. They describe five knots in the tzitzit of the tallit, meaning the five Books of Moses (Torah) and eight threads in each of the fringes at the corners of the cloak suggesting the eight organs of the body that encourage man to sin (ears, eyes, mouth, nose, hands, feet, genitals and heart), instead of the heart and eyes, as written in Num. 15: 39. Both the tallit and the fringes need to be of the same material (wool, silk or linen) or at least as the yarns are of wool. The length of the threads and tallit varies according to the different lines of thought of Judaism and its communities around the world and is generally based on the ancient measure of the cubit or 'amah' (which is around 48 cm or 18.90 inches, for the measure of the Jewish tallit). In Antiquity, the prayer shawl worn by men was like a rectangular mantle that looked like a blanket.

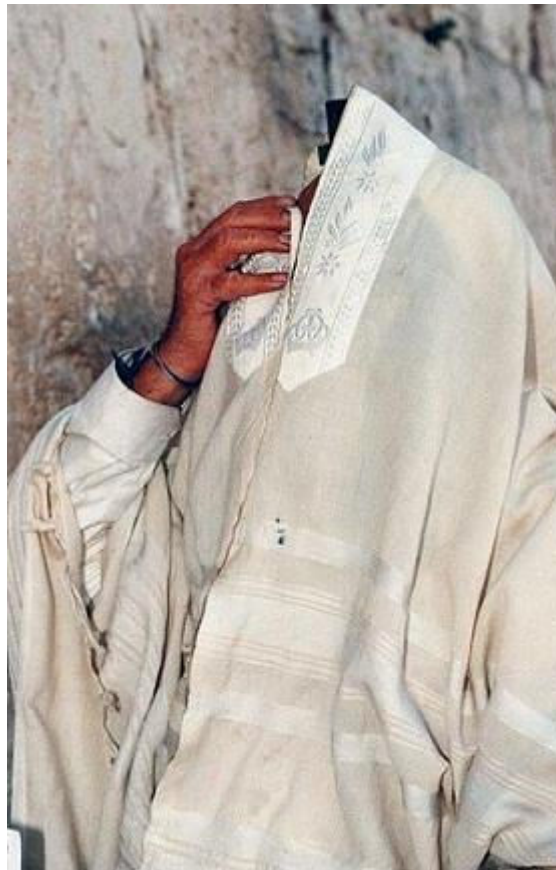
Image below: A set of Tzitzit, four tassels or fringes with blue threads produced from a dye based on Hexaplex trunculus – tied according to the opinion of the Sefer ha-Chinuch. Sefer ha-Chinuch (Hebrew: ספר החינוך, 'Book of Education') is a Jewish rabbinic text which systematically discusses the 613 commandments of the Torah (based upon Maimonides' system of counting). It was published anonymously in Spain in the 13th century. Hexaplex trunculus is a species of mollusc belonging to the Muricidae family, molluscs generally known by the name 'murex', some of them large and with shells with unusual shapes and colors – wikipedia.org.



A folded tallit; woolen yarns; Photo: Mushki Brichta – wikipedia.org

Image below (Photo: Eliel Joseph Schafler – wikipedia.org): We can see a white tallit according to some Sephardic traditions. This is a Cohen at the western wall at the Feast of Sukkot (Feast of the Tabernacles). Sephardim are the Jews of the Iberian Peninsula. Jews from Greece are called Romaniote or Romaniotes. And the Jews of the Middle East, those of the Islamic world, are called Mizrahim. The term 'Italian Jews' or 'Roman Jews' can be used in a broad sense to mean all Jews living in or with roots in Italy. The Jews living in Italy since the Roman times, distinct from the Sephardim and the Ashkenazim, are sometimes mentioned in the Hebrew literature as Italkim, the

plural of Italki, a loanword from the Latin adjective *italicu* or *italicum*, meaning ‘Italic’; in Latin, ‘Roman’. Italki is also used in Modern Hebrew as the name of the Italian language. They traditionally speak a variety of Judeo-Italian languages. The customs and religious rites of the Italian-rite Jews can be seen as a bridge between the Ashkenazi and Sephardic traditions, showing similarities to both; they are closer still to the customs of the Romaniote Jews from Greece. The term ‘Ashkenazim’ refers to Jews from Central and Eastern Europe and comes from the medieval Hebrew word for Germany (Ashkenaz – אשכנז). In Hebrew, the singular is ‘Ashkenazi’ and the plural is Ashkenazim. Today, the term Ashkenazi refers to the descendants of those early Eastern European Jews, scattered throughout the world after the Holocaust.



11) Mezuzah

Mezuzah is closely related to Tefillin. It is a small piece of parchment inscribed in black ink with the biblical passages from Deut. 6: 4-9; Deut. 11: 13-21 (verses 18; 20) and Num. 15: 37-41, part of the Sh'ma Yisrael, and which is rolled up and placed in a decorative case and affixed on the doorposts of houses and marked with the word Shaddai (or Shadday), ‘Almighty.’

The Sh'ma Yisrael begins with the phrase: “Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the only one God. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might.” The mezuzah should be placed on the right doorframe of a Jewish home, synagogue or establishment as a reminder of the Creator, except for bathrooms, laundry rooms and closets, which are too small to qualify as bedrooms.

The parchment (klaf) is prepared by a qualified scribe (‘sofer tam’) and trained

both in studying of the relevant religious laws, and in the art of carving the quill and practicing writing. The parchment contains verses written in indelible black ink with a special quill pen made either from a feather or, in what are now rare cases, a reed. The parchment is then rolled up and placed inside the case on the right side of the door. The cases made of several materials, such as silver and precious metals, wood, stone, ceramics, pewter (a gray alloy of tin with copper and antimony; formerly, tin and lead), and even polymer clay. Over it, people recite a blessing.

The word Mezuzah (מְזֻזָּה – Strong #4201) is the singular feminine noun of Mezuzoth, which means jambs, doorposts. It is written in the bible:

- Deut. 6: 9: “and write them on the doorposts (mezuzoth) of your house and on your gates.”

- Deut. 11: 20: “Write them on the doorposts (mezuzoth) of your house and on your gates.”

There are instructions in Jewish law also regarding its conservation every seven years.

The Mezuzah is usually placed seven spans (1 span = 9 inches) above the ground, in angle, pointing into the establishment with the top end (in the case of Ashkenazi Jews, from Central and Eastern Europe), while the Sephardic Jews (Jews from the Iberian Peninsula) position their mezuzoth vertically. They kiss it as they walk through the door to remind them of the prayers that are contained within and the principles of Judaism they carry.

Let’s read again Deut. 6: 4-6; 8-9: “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts... Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates” (NIV).

Although it was initially given by God as a reminder of His laws, in the same way as the tefillin, its form and later interpretation given by rabbis in the ages that followed ended up giving the Mezuzah the connotation of an amulet, including through other written words on the back, in order to ward off evil; or else as a protective device against divine wrath.

The belief in the protective power of mezuzah also prevails in the modern times as well. Approximately three-quarters of adults in Israel believe that the mezuzah literally guards their homes.

On the back of the parchment are written the Hebrew letters שׁ (Shin), ד (Dalet) and י (Yod), which form the acrostic of the Hebrew words ‘Shomer Daltot Israel’, ‘Guardian of the houses of Israel.’ Many mezuzah cases are also marked in front with the Hebrew letter שׁ (Shin), for Shaddai.

The procedure is to hold the mezuzah against the spot upon which it will be affixed, then recite a blessing: “Blessed are you, our God, King of the Universe, who sanctified us by His commandments and commanded us to affix a mezuzah.” After the blessing, the mezuzah is attached to the doorpost.

For us Christians, Mezuzah has a meaning:

Our house (both our body, as the sanctuary of the Spirit, as our physical dwelling) is already under the will and dominion of the Lord, as well as the protection of His blood and His word. It is like the mark of the lamb’s blood on the doors of the houses to protect the Hebrews from the Destroyer who came to kill the firstborn of Egypt. When the enemy sees the mark of Jesus’ blood over our lives, he cannot touch us.

Left image below: Mezuzah of metal – The large letter ש (Shin) stands for Shaddai, one of the names of God in Antiquity: El-Shaddai, the Almighty God. In the lower part is written the word ‘Jerusalem’ (ירושלים) – photo – Derekcohen – wikipedia.org.

Right image: A Sephardic Macedonian mezuzah, as accepted in Rabbinical Judaism; the mezuzah case is vertical and features the Hebrew letter ש (Shin). In the lower part is written the word Israel (ישראל) – Photo – Pretoria Travel – wikipedia.org.



12) Megillot

The Five Scrolls or The Five Megillot (Hebrew: חמש מגילות – Hamesh Megillot; plural of Megillah) are parts of the Ketuvim (‘Writings’) of the Tanakh (Hebrew Bible, namely, the OT). The Five Scrolls are the Song of Songs, the Book of Ruth, the Book of Lamentations, Ecclesiastes and the Book of Esther. The feminine noun ‘megillah’ (מְגִלָּה – Strong #4039) means roll, volume, scroll, and comes from the Hebrew word ‘galal’, meaning a roll (that is, a book of parchment). The word Megillah is written in some verses of the OT such as, Ps. 40: 7; Jer. 36: 2; 4; 6; 14; 20; 21; 23; 25; 27; 28; 29; 32; Ezek. 2: 9 (roll = megillah; book = sepher – סֵפֶר – Strong #5612); Ezek. 3: 1; 2; 3; Zc 5: 1; 2.

- **The Song of Songs** (Hebrew: Shir ha-Shirim; שִׁיר הַשִּׁירִים) is read publicly in some communities, especially by Ashkenazim, on the Sabbath of Passover [in the month of Nisan or Aviv – March-April]. Italian Jews read it at the Maariv (Evening Prayer) of the first and second day of Passover. The Jews of Greece (Romaniotes) and the Jews of the Iberian Peninsula (Sephardim) probably follow Italian customs. In most Mizrahi Jewish communities (Jews in the Islamic world) it is read publicly each week at the onset of the Shabbat (Sabbath) and at Passover. It is read on the occasion of Passover,

for it celebrates the deliverance of the Jewish people from Egypt and symbolizes the love between God and Israel, taking them to Sinai to meet Him, hear His voice and 'marry' Him (in the same way that the book of songs describes the love between a couple).

- The Book of **Ruth** (Hebrew: Rut; רֹוּת) is read in some communities, especially by Ashkenazim, before the reading of the Torah on the morning of Shavuot (May-June, the month of Sivan). Others read it in the Tikkun at night, or not at all. For Jews, Shavuot celebrates the giving of the Torah and its voluntary acceptance by Israel in the desert. This book shows: 1) how a non-Jew becomes part of the Jewish community, voluntarily accepting God's Covenant with His people through the Torah; 2) the partially non-Jewish ancestry of David's dynasty because of Ruth, his great-grandmother, who changed from a Moabite to a Jew. 3) Leave the concrete example of the social legislation of the Torah being applied in Israel, through the levirate law, the social security system for the poorest (we can say this, in relation to 'gleaning the ears' left by the reapers) and the treatment towards the foreigners.

- The Book of **Lamentations** (Hebrew: Eikhah אֵיכָה or Kinnot (2 Chr. 35: 25) קִינּוֹת – plural of Qinah, קִינָה, Ezek. 2: 10; 17; 32; Am. 8: 10) is read on the 9th day of Av (July-August), the fast day of the 5th month, in all Jewish communities. This fast instituted after the Babylonian exile referred to the month when the temple was burned (2 Kin. 25: 8). This book, which was a song of lamentation for the destruction of the First Temple, also became a book of lamentation for the destruction of the Second Temple, and the rabbinical date set for mourning that destruction was called Tisha B'Av (the 9th day of Av). For them, the destruction of the Temple involves the abandonment of the divine presence with them. 'Lamentations' reflects this feeling of abandonment for the loss of the security of their homeland and the approval of God.

- The Book of **Ecclesiastes** (Hebrew: Kohelet; קֹהֶלֶת) is read publicly in some communities, especially by Ashkenazim, on the Sabbath of Sukkot, the Feast of the Tabernacles (Sept-Oct; month of Tishri). In other communities it is not read at all. Ecclesiastes is almost an inversion of the books of wisdom, with a somewhat skeptical and pessimistic view of human existence in the world, when Solomon, already old, sees the futility and vanity of the life of pleasures he had. The apparently ironic choice of this book to be read on the Feast of the Tabernacles, in which God asks for a special and intense joy, helps to value and enjoy life in this world with great joy.

- The Book of **Esther** (Hebrew: Ester, אֶסְתֵּר) is read in all Jewish communities on Purim (Feb-March; month of Adar). The public reading is done twice, on the evening of Purim and once again the next morning. Purim celebrates the salvation of the Jewish people from slaughter by the Persians. The book tells the story of Esther and her uncle Mordecai in the Diaspora, managing to overcome an existential threat aimed at all Jews living far from their land. Although God's name is not mentioned directly in the book, even under adverse conditions His people must hope for deliverance from all oppression.

1st image below: A Scroll of Esther (Megillah). Photo: Göttiguen – wikipedia.org.

2nd Image below: A scroll from the 13th-14th centuries of the Book of Esther in the town of Fez, Morocco, held at the Musée du quai Branly (The Quai Branly Museum) in Paris. Traditionally, a scroll of Esther is given only one roller, fixed to its left side, rather than the two used for a Torah scroll. Photo: Deror avi – wikipedia.org.



13) Mikveh or Mikvah

A word that **is not found in the bible** in relation to wash the body in order to be clean of ritual impurity is Mikveh (מִקְוֶה) or mikvah (מִקְוָה), pl. mikva'ot, mikvoth, mikvot, or mikves (Yiddish). It is a ritual immersion in water used in Judaism.

Several biblical standards specify that the full immersion in water was needed to regain ritual purity after a person come into contact with something considered unclean, and this way, to be able to enter the temple again. In case of touching a corpse it was necessary that the person was cleansed by the water of cleansing (with the ashes of the red heifer – Num. 19: 9).

Thus, the bible uses some expressions: ‘bathe his whole body in water’ (Lev. 15: 13; 16 – impurities of men and women: semen and menstruation), ‘shall bathe in water’ (Lev. 15: 5; 8 – impurities of men and women: semen and menstruation), ‘When the days of her purification are completed’ (Lev. 12: 6 – purification of women after childbirth), or else, ‘shall bathe his body in water’ (Lev. 14: 9 – purification of the leper).

Washing with water was also used and still is today:

- By Jewish women to achieve ritual purity after menstruation or childbirth;
- By Jewish men, in order to achieve ritual purity.
- As part of a traditional procedure for conversion to Judaism.
- To immerse utensils recently acquired and used to serve and eat.

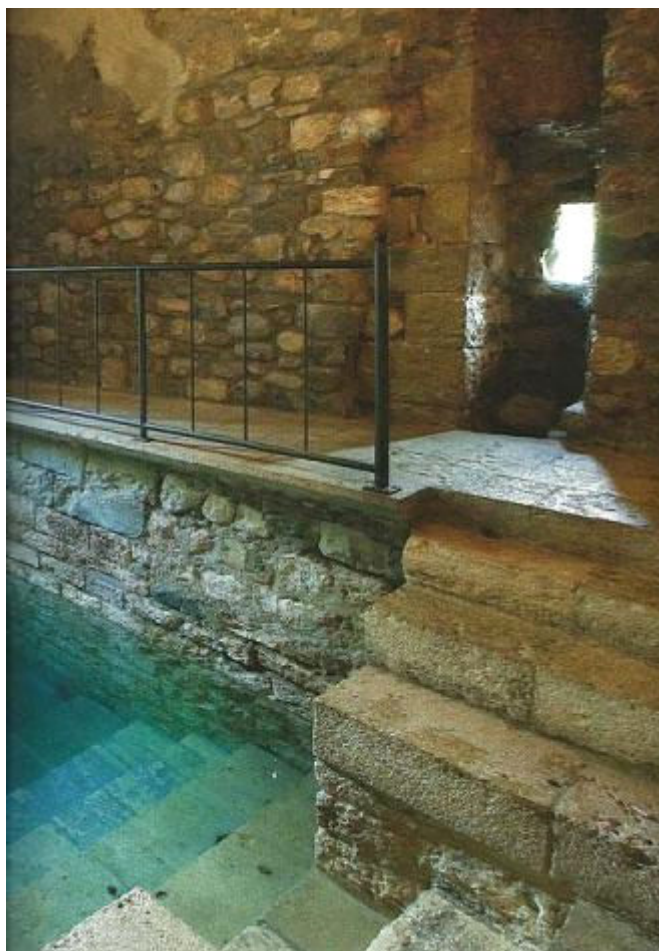
In Lev. 12: 6, the word used for ‘purification’ is not Mikveh but thohor or tãhōr (טהור), which means ‘pure’, and gives origin to the words ‘purification’, purity, cleansing’: “When the days of her purification are completed, whether for a son or for a daughter, she shall bring to the priest at the entrance of the tent of meeting a lamb in its first year for a burnt offering, and a pigeon or a turtledove for a sin offering.”



A pool of medieval mikveh in Speyern (West of Germany), dating back to 1128 –
Photo: Chris 73 (wikipedia.org).

The word Mikveh or Mikvah (miqvah, feminine form of miqveh, Strong #4724, מִקְוֶה) appears only once in the Bible in Isa. 22:11: “You made a reservoir [miqvah; in KJV: a ditch] between the two walls for the water of the old pool. But you did not look to him who did it, or have regard for him who planned it long ago” and literally means ‘a collection of water’ in a general sense, that is, a reservoir, ditch. It is formed from the Semitic root ק-ו-ה (q-w-h, ‘to collect’).

In the Hebrew Bible, the word Mikveh or Mikvah is used in the sense of ‘collection’, including in the expression ‘miqêh hammayim’, in our Bible (NRSV / KJV / NIV) translated as ‘the waters that were gathered together’ or ‘the gathering together’ or ‘the gathered waters’ (Gen 1: 10); ‘pools of water’ or ‘reservoirs’ (Ex 7: 19; miqvêh); and ‘fountain’ (Lev. 11: 36; the word used is maya, מַיָּא; Strong #4599; derived from ayin, meaning: fountain, spring, well). The Mishnah (‘The Oral Law’) is the oldest text to use it in the sense of ‘ritual bath.’



A medieval mikveh in Besalú, Catalonia, Spain (wikipedia.org – photo: Arie Darzi).

It was not until the early 1st century BC that archaeological or written evidence of the existence of specific facilities used for ritual purification was found; before that they didn't exist. Such mikvot were found both in Israel (Jerusalem, Hebron, Masada) and in the Diaspora. One reason for their absence before the 1st century BC is that Jews could have used natural springs of water for ritual purification immersion, rather than building mikvot for that purpose; or they could have used basins placed on the ground or on rooftops as part of buildings, which were filled with water manually. In modern times Mikveh can be found in most communities in the Orthodox Judaism.

Mikveh, probably, is related with the word ‘Miklachat’ – מקלחת, which means ‘bath’, ‘shower’, but was given later by the Mishnah, the compilation of the ‘Oral Law’ written on the 2nd century of the CE in Jerusalem.

Below, a mikveh was excavated in Qumran (wikipedia.org – photo: Saintjennifer).



In the image below, the Mikvah Mei Chaya Mushka in Crown Heights, Brooklyn, NY of a community of Hasidic Judaism or Lubavitch or Chabad-Lubavitch, belonging to the Haredi (ultra-Orthodox) branch of Orthodox Judaism. Hasidism or Judaism emerged in the 18th century in Western Ukraine and spread to Eastern Europe, Kfar Chabad (Israel) and Crown Heights (a neighboring district of the borough of Brooklyn in central New York City). Hasidism (חסידים), or Chassidic or Hasidic Judaism (Chasidut: ‘pietism’; chassid: ‘pious’), is a movement that emphasizes religious joy; it is organized into groups called Chassidic dynasties, governed by rabbis (‘rebbe’ or ‘admor’) whose leadership is inherited in families. An AdMoR is an abbreviation for Adoneinu, Moreinu, veRabbenu (‘Our Master, our Teacher, and our Rabbi’). The meaning of Mei (in Hebrew) is linked to water. Water in Hebrew is מַיִם mayim (Strong #4325), in plural form, with the stress on the first syllable. It’s constructed from מֵי mei, which is not often used. Chaya means ‘living.’ The word Mikvah means ‘a gathering of water’, natural water, that in Hebrew is called ‘Living Water.’ With its clear waters, the Mikvah is a powerful symbol of life and rebirth. According to Jewish tradition, building a mikvah takes precedence over building a synagogue or purchasing a Torah scroll. A Mikvah serves as the sacred space where the foundation of the Jewish family is created and nurtured. This Mikvah for women was named after Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Schneerson (1901-1988), whose father was a Rebbe or Admor.

Photo: Chris 73 (wikipedia.org).



7

Mazel tou and luck**What does luck mean? Does it exist, from the biblical standpoint?**

An interesting comment is about luck. Everyone wants to get luck. But what is luck? Does it exist?

First, it's necessary to make a difference between 'lot' and 'luck', for in other languages besides English (like Portuguese, for example) people may use the same word for lot and luck.

Let's begin with '**Lot**'.

In the English dictionary the word 'lot' has the following meanings:

- A collection of objects, items, or people
- Destiny, fate, fortune
- Any object drawn from others randomly to make a selection or choice (draw or cast lots); a similar word for this is lottery (raffle)
- The use of lots in making a selection or choice (by lot, as everyone says)
- An assigned or apportioned share
- An item or set of items for sale in an auction
- Be cast with someone in lot, in order to share the fortune of a person
- The entire amount or number
- As a verb: lot, allotted, allot; to cast lots for (something); to divide (land, etc.) into lots; to distribute, to part.

In the OT it is common to see the expression 'they cast lots' or the word 'lot' (usually plural). Also are common the expressions: 'to apportion by lot' or 'to cast lots for.' Generally, the vehicle to cast lots was small smooth stones, determining a portion or destiny. The most used Hebrew words for the verb 'to cast' are: **1)** naphal, usually with the sense of dividing, to cast in lot, to take into inheritance, to throw down, or **2)** nathan, which means: to give, add, apply, appoint, ascribe, assign, bestow, grant, give, avenge, launch, distribute, among other things. There is also the verb 'to divide' (the clothes, in Psalm 22: 18, for example) and whose word in Hebrew is 'chalaq', in the sense of to apportion or separate, to distribute, to part, to divide, to give, to take away a portion.

In the case of **lot** (or **lots**), the Hebrew word used is **gowral**, from a root, which means: to be rough as stone, stone, that is, small stones being used for this purpose; a portion or destiny (as if determined by lot), lot.

In Est. 3: 7 and Est. 9: 24 it's mentioned the **Pur, the lot**, which Haman used to crush and destroy the Jews. The word 'Pur' (in Hebrew: Puwr; plural: Puriym) means: 'the lot through a broken piece'. In other words, Puwr comes from a primitive root, which means: to crush, to break, bring to naught, utterly take away. But even in these two verses is used the word above (gowral = lots, or the lot) beside the word 'Pur.'

Thus, based on ASV, there are 75 verses in the OT with the word 'lots' ('lot', 'the lot'), or the expressions: 'by lot', or 'to cast lots' (usually the 2 words are found together), or 'apportioned by lot' or else 'apportion the land by lot': Lev. 16: 8; Num. 26: 55-56; Num. 33: 54; Num. 34: 13; Num. 36: 2-3; Deut. 4: 19; Deut. 32: 9; Josh. 13: 6; Josh. 14: 2; Josh. 15: 1; Josh. 16: 1; Josh. 17: 1-2; Josh. 17: 14; Josh. 17: 17; Josh. 18: 6; Josh. 18: 8; Josh. 18: 10; Josh. 18: 11; Josh. 19: 1; Josh. 19: 10; Josh. 19: 17; Josh. 19: 24; Josh. 19: 32; Josh. 19: 40; Josh. 19: 51; Josh. 21: 4; Josh. 21: 5; Josh. 21: 6; Josh. 21: 8; Josh. 21: 10; Josh. 21: 20; Josh. 21: 40; Josh. 23: 4; Jdg. 1: 3; Jdg. 20: 9; 1 Sam. 14: 41-42; 1 Chr. 6: 54; 1 Chr. 6: 61; 1 Chr. 6: 63; 1 Chr. 6: 65; 1 Chr. 16: 18; 1 Chr. 24: 5; 1 Chr. 24: 31; 1 Chr. 25: 8-9; 1 Chr. 26: 13-14; Neh. 10: 34; Neh. 11: 1; Est. 3: 7; Est. 9: 24; Job 6: 27; Ps 16: 5; Ps 22: 18; Ps 78: 55; Ps 105: 11; Ps 125: 3; Prov. 1: 14; Prov. 16: 33; Prov. 18: 18; Isa. 34: 17; Isa. 57: 6; Jer. 13: 25; Ezek. 45: 1; Ezek. 48: 29; Dan. 12: 13; Jl. 3: 3; Obad. 1: 11; Jon. 1: 7; Mic. 2: 5; Nah. 3: 10.

In all biblical references mentioned above, casting small stones in lot or bits of wood had the purpose of separating people for certain duties, to separate animals for sacrifice, to divide the land by inheritance, finally, to divide or share possessions, properties or positions, and even to exterminate lives (in the case of Pur). In none of the passages above, the bible speaks of casting of lots as a means of obtaining wealth (fortune), happiness, luck, or positive energy, as was later distorted by idolatry (an undue use of the word 'lot' as something by chance'). Nor it was used as a means of divination and prediction of the future. When this happened, it was by the action of false gods:

- Isa. 65: 11-12: "But you who forsake the Lord, who forget my holy mountain, who set a table for **Fortune** [*Fortune was a Babylonian deity*] and fill cups of mixed wine for **Destiny** [*in Hebrew, the word used is Mniy, transliterated as Minni, a pagan god, responsible by the fate, and acted through numbers, like a game of chance or a numbers game*]; I will destine you to the sword, and all of you shall bow down to the slaughter; because, when I called, you did not answer, when I spoke, you did not listen, but you did what was evil in my sight, and chose what I did not delight in."

'The goddess Fortune' or 'The god of Fortune' was worshipped by a great number of Hebrews during the Babylonian captivity, for Fortune was a Babylonian deity. But the Semites, since the time of Abraham or well before, already worshiped him, according to the ancient records of Aram, Babylon and Arabia, under the name of Gad. The meaning of the name of the ancient pagan god Gad is something like 'luck' or 'lucky'. It was the name of the Semitic god of fortune, usually depicted as a male god but sometimes as a female god. Perhaps that is why it is written in the Bible in Is 65, 'Fortune.' It is the same entity, 'The goddess Fortune' responsible for luck, and the god Destiny [*in Hebrew, Mniy, transliterated as Minni*], responsible by the fate, and acted through numbers, like a game of chance. A glass containing a mixture of wine and honey was placed for him, especially in Egypt, on the last day of the year.

- Isa. 57: 6: "Among the smooth stones of the valley is your portion; they, they, are your lot; to them you have poured out a drink offering, you have brought a grain offering. Shall I be appeased for these things?" God was angry because of idolatry.

That's why the Lord warned His people about not following any practice of occultism.

In the NT, **to cast lots** is mentioned several times (Matt. 27: 35; Mk. 15: 24; Lk. 23: 34, Jn. 19: 24, Lk. 1: 8; Acts 1: 26; Acts 8: 21 – the first four times in reference to the Roman soldiers who divided Jesus' clothes; and in the others: when Zechariah was chosen to enter the sanctuary; when Mathias was chosen to apostle by means of lots; and when Peter said to Simon the magician that he had no part or portion in the apostles' ministry).

In all texts, **the Greek word** for 'lot' is **kleros** (klêrous), which brings the idea to use pieces of wood or dice etc. for this purpose; thrown randomly, but most often suggesting this was being done in order to separate a portion, and therefore, an acquisition, especially a patrimony: heritage, inheritance, lot, part. Kleros comes from the verb klao, which means: to divide, to break (the bread, for example).

Therefore, we can see that in the bible, the meaning of 'lot' is restricted to some kind of prize drawing to divide something, like the divisions of the priests; in most cases, a portion of land as an inheritance, or any material good, or else to decide an important situation (the choice of Matthias or the destiny of Jonah).

As for the word '**luck**', the meanings are:

- Events that are **beyond control** and seem **subject to chance**; fortune; opportunity; destiny, fate
- Success or good fortune
- Something considered able to bring good or bad luck (to the point of bringing suffering or hardships); in other words: chance is considered as a force that causes good or bad things to happen; the force that seems to operate for good or ill in a person's life, as in shaping circumstances, events, or opportunities.
- In Portuguese, the word 'luck' can refer to:
- **Something that depends on chance** and can bring good or evil, or as a **superstitious thing** that is already predestined to happen (destiny, fate), whether by action of an unknown force, whether by action of a work (trick) of witchcraft.
- 'Luck' may also be used in the sense of succeeding at something, not necessarily by the effort of the person, but as a 'positive energy' that takes on responsibility for the prosperity of an undertaking.

There is no verse in the bible with the word 'luck'; only two mentions the words 'misfortune' (NIV; NRSV in Job 12: 5) or 'fortune' (Isa. 65: 11).

Here is where comes in our comment about **luck**, in the way we understand it and as wrote above and that, unfortunately, many people seek, in order to make money, success etc., and usually connected to the occultism or to superstition, because this kind of thing has no biblical support.

The Hebrew word for 'luck' is 'mazel', generally doing part of a well-known expression, 'mazel tov.' The expression '**mazel tov**' or '**mazel tov**' (Yiddish – an old dialect from the medieval German) is used in Modern Hebrew to express congratulations for any occasion or significant or festive event (since the obtainment of a driver's license or a birthday till the conclusion of engagement in the military). It can also be said after a very difficult test being overcome.

The origin of the expression 'mazel tov' is in the Mishnah and Talmud, where 'mazâl' means 'constellation' or 'destiny' or else 'a droplet from the top', that is, the literal translation is: 'a good and favorable zodiacal constellation.' Mazal comes from the primitive root 'nazal' (Strong #5140), which means constellation, to drip, shed by dripping, to distil, drop, flood, flow, flowing, gush out, to melt, to pour, running water, stream. In Hebrew, the word for '**planets**' is 'mmazzâlôth', or 'Mazzaroth' for 'constellations.'

In the bible the word *mmazzâloth* is written only once in 2 Kin. 23: 5 [cf. 2 Kin. 21: 3; 2 Kin. 23: 4; 2 Chr. 33: 3 (host of heaven; starry hosts – NIV)]:

KJV: “And he [*king Josiah*] put down the idolatrous priests, whom the kings of Judah had ordained to burn incense in the high places in the cities of Judah, and in the places round about Jerusalem; them also that burned incense unto Baal, to the sun, and to the moon, and to **the planets**, and to all **the host of heaven** [Host, in Hebrew: *tsebhâ*; of heaven: *hashâmâyim*].”

NRSV: “He [*king Josiah*] deposed the idolatrous priests whom the kings of Judah had ordained to make offerings in the high places at the cities of Judah and around Jerusalem; those also who made offerings to Baal, to the sun, the moon, the **constellations**, and all the host of the heavens [NIV, starry hosts; in Hebrew: *tsebhâ hashâmâyim*].”

In Hebrew it is written:

vehishbiyth 'eth-hakkemâriym 'ashernâthnu malkhêy yehudhâh vayqathêr babbâmoth be'ârêy yehudhâhumesibbêy yerushâlâim ve'eth-hamqatheriym labba'al lashemeshvelayyârêach velammazzâloth ulekhôl **tsebhâ' hashâmâyim**

Although ‘mazel’ means ‘luck’ or ‘destiny’ or else ‘a droplet from the top’ (‘a good and favorable zodiacal constellation’), for Jews the expression ‘mazel tov’ indicates that a good event occurred. The best way to translate it would be this: ‘Congratulations’, ‘I am glad for this good thing that happened to you’, because for them this word is different than ‘good luck’ (‘may you have success’), as we use in English. The expression ‘good luck’, in the sense of ‘may you have success’, in Hebrew is *B'hatzlacha*.

For Jews, according to the Mishnah and the Talmud, the constellations in the sky guide the destinies of individuals and nations, so the literal meaning of ‘mazel tov’ is ‘a droplet from the top’, because, according to this reasoning, the stars ‘drip’ their influence over men, hence its original meaning as ‘destiny’, ‘luck’ (good or bad). Later, the destiny (fate) and the luck of someone, determined by the stars, were linked with fortune (money). This has always been a god and people did everything to have it, associating it with happiness. That’s why God condemned certain pagan practices among His people (Isa. 65: 11-12, as I wrote before).

It’s written in the bible: “And when you look up to the heavens and see the sun, the moon, and the stars, all **the host of heaven**, do not be led astray and bow down to them and serve them, things that the Lord your God has allotted to all the peoples everywhere under heaven” (Deut. 4: 19). Although in the Hebrew text the word for ‘hosts’ is *tsebhâ*, not *mazzal* or *mmazzâloth* (‘planets’) or *Mazzaroth* (‘constellations’), the meaning is the same: the heavenly bodies as a great army grouped together, and which were revered and worshiped by the Israelites in all ages. God had already forbidden to worshiping them, because this attitude was pagan.

Due to the idolatrous influence over the meaning of the word ‘mazzal’, it should be better that other words were used to wish congratulations to someone.

Thus, there is no fate or luck, success or prosperity this way: mystical and without effort as humanity is accustomed; blessing is not a coincidence or something dependent on chance, much less dependent on the stars. What exists is the will of God united with the free will of man. Therefore, the amulets to bring luck are unnecessary.

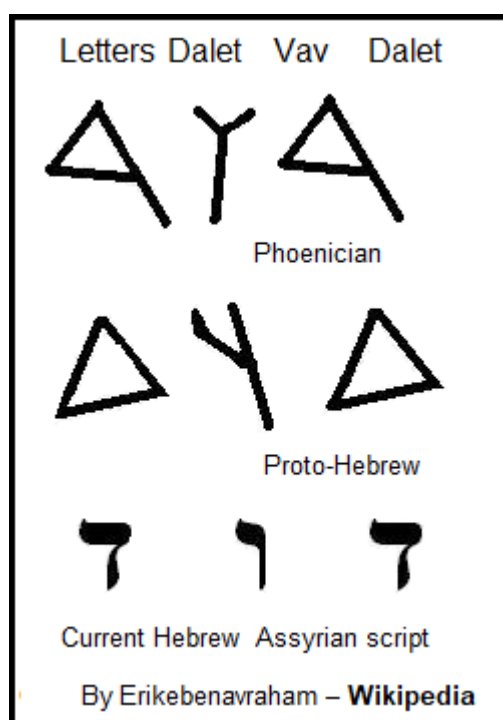
Jewish Amulets: Star of David, Chay, Hamsa

Star of David – The Star of David (Hebrew: מִגְן דָּוִד, transl. Magen David, lit. ‘Shield of David’) is a star-shaped symbol, a hexagram composed of two overlapping equilateral triangles, with one point facing upwards and the other facing downwards (✡).

Despite the rabbinic legends and traditions about the hexagram, there is no archaeological evidence to confirm them. One of them says that the symbol was drawn on the shields of the warriors of King David’s army, for the name ‘David’ was written at the time with three letters (Dalet, Vav and Dalet) of the Phoenician alphabet and the Proto-Hebrew (the ancient Hebrew language pre-exile), which had a triangular shape; it soon became a Davidic symbol. Other rabbinic stories tell that the star came to be used after a curious circumstance in one of David’s fights. The sun hit his shield and reflected its light in the shape of a six-pointed star, scaring the enemy, who ended up fleeing and, thus, the soldiers began to draw the star on their shields to go to battle.



The Star of David – author: Zscout370 – wikipedia.org



In the image above: The name of King David written in Hebrew letters: Dalet, Vav and Dalet. You can see the evolution of the letters that make up the Hebrew name of King David from the Phoenician alphabet, through the pre-exilic ancient Hebrew script (Proto-Hebrew), to the current Hebrew letters (called 'quadratic letters' or 'Assyrian script').

In fact, the hexagram was not initially an exclusively Jewish symbol. It is interesting that some research sources say that the Star of David has existed since Sumerian times and has always been present in various religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, New Age, Freemasonry and all arts of witchcraft and occultism; also in the Bahá'í Faith, a monotheistic religion founded by Bahá'u'lláh, a Persian nobleman who lived in the 19th century. His teachings assert that there is only one God and that all major world religions have the same divine origin.

The hexagram, however, being a simple geometric construction, was used throughout human history for purposes that were not exclusively religious, but as a decorative motif in ancient synagogues in the land of Israel dating from the time of the Second Temple and in some synagogues, after the destruction of the nation by the Romans, until the fourth century AD, and in the Christian churches of the Galilee region.

The hexagram was also found on a Jewish seal found in the city of Sidon in the 4th century BC, as well as many 'Stars of David' were found next to 'Shields of Solomon' (with five-pointed stars or pentagrams). Apparently, it was not given such a special or mystical meaning, but ornamental. An example is the Capernaum synagogue frieze and tombstone (both from the 2nd or 3rd century AD), found in southern Italy. The 'Star of David' does not appear among the most important Jewish symbols of the Hellenistic period.

The term 'seal of Solomon' was adopted by Jewish alchemists and the Talmud (5th century CE) and later by Islamic mystics and Christian alchemists. However, the hexagram only became widespread in magical texts and Jewish amulets (*) at the beginning of the Middle Ages by medieval Spanish Kabbalists. Other commentators say that it also came to have a connotation of a protective amulet among rabbis and the Sephardic Jewish people, especially in the 15th century with the beginning of the Spanish Inquisition, from which they sought to flee.

(*) I want to make a parenthesis here, because it's about something important. The amulets I mention above are the 'segulot', which have a powerful healing, cleansing and protective force for the Jews.

The 'segulot', סגולות, the plural of segula (Hebrew: סגולה), literally 'talisman', is also a word meaning 'remedy', 'spiritual remedy' or 'protection.' It is actually a protective or benevolent charm or ritual in Kabbalistic and Talmudic tradition.

They are phrases, acts or rituals and superstitions that favor fertility and childbirth, give protection against serious damage, help to find a mate, give long life, cure jaundice (Placing a pigeon on a person's navel), bring prosperity, as help for finding a lost object and even identify a thief (for example, by hanging a special note around a chicken's neck and using it to identify him).

Practices range from simpler acts like praying 40 consecutive days at the Wailing Wall for finding one's mate, eating citron or citron jam, wearing a ruby (or eating ground rubies) or using a red string cut from a longer length that was wrapped around the tomb of Rachel (Jacob's wife) to those who demand more obedience to Mishnaic, Talmudic and Kabbalistic laws such as the ethical obligation of Tzedakah (or Sedaqah – צדקה, commonly used to mean 'charity', but which means 'righteousness', 'rectitude')

or showing a greater reverence than is due to the Jewish sages of the past and perform certain acts, such as praying or pouring drinks over the tombs of rabbis important in the elaboration of the Mishnah of the second century of the Common Era. Or repeat the phrase “Ein Od Milvado” (Hebrew: מלבדו עוד אין, “There is none but Him [God]”) to protect a person from harm. Many of these 16th and 17th-century Talmudist and Kabbalist sages and rabbis literally used the word ‘charm’ (enchantment) in their writings, which makes them seem more sorcerers than sages in the word of God.

Within these acts and rituals, it is worth mentioning something that was very common in the Middle Ages, which was the ‘sigil’. A sigil (pl. sigilla or sigils; the term derives from the Latin, ‘sigillum’, meaning ‘seal’) is a type of symbol used in magic. In medieval magic, it consisted of occult signs painted on ‘seals’ representing various angels and demons that the practitioner might summon. Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon, also known as Rambam or Maimonides, who compiled the 316 laws of the Torah, between 1170 and 1180 CE, urged the Jews against writing sigils on the back of a mezuzah (Deut. 6: 9; Deut. 11: 20: “doorframes” = mezuzoth”), turning it into an amulet.

It is interesting to notice that many biblical Hebrew words are mixed with the mysticism of Judaism, and this is one reason to be well informed about all the words they usually pronounce, for they can have a double meaning or be used in another spiritual context. I say this because when I read about this subject, a biblical Hebrew word immediately came to my mind, written in several OT verses and with its Greek counterpart in the NT, which is segula (Hebrew: סְגֻלָּה), often written as Seghullâ or Cgullah (Strong #5459), which means: treasure, wealth (as closely shut up, strictly guarded); jewel, peculiar treasure, one’s own possession, a special possession), proper good, special. This word (Seghullâ) is in the Torah with the meaning of peculiar treasure in Mal. 3: 17 (“They shall be mine, says the Lord of hosts, my **special possession**” or “They will be mine, ... in the day when I make up my **treasured possession**”); 1 Chr. 29: 3 (“I have a **treasure** of my own of gold and silver, and because of my devotion to the house of my God I give it to the house of my God”).

It also has the sense of personal property, the possession of kings: Ex. 19: 5: “you shall be my **treasured possession** out of all the peoples”; Ecc. 2: 8: “I also gathered for myself silver and gold and the **treasure of kings** and of the provinces”; Psalm 135: 4: “For the Lord has chosen Jacob for himself, Israel as his own **possession**.”

Seghullâ can also refer to personal property, with regard to persons: Deut. 7: 6 (“the Lord your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on earth to be his people, his **treasured possession**.”); Deut. 14: 2 (“it is you the Lord has chosen out of all the peoples on earth to be his people, his **treasured possession**.”)

Finally, the word Seghullâ can also be understood as **the people of God**: Tit. 2: 14 (“a people of his own”) – the Greek word used here is ‘periousios’ περιούσιος – Strong #4041, which means: costly, treasured, select, specially chosen; being beyond usual, i.e. special (one’s own); peculiar. In 1 Pet. 2: 9 the word is ‘peripoiesis’ περιποίησις – Strong #4047, which means: acquiring, obtaining, possessing, possession, ownership; acquisition (the act or the thing); by extension, preservation; obtain, obtaining, peculiar, purchased, possession, saving: “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.” This same word is repeated in Eph. 1: 14: “this is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God’s own people, to the praise of his glory”: acquisition (an acquired thing), the act of acquiring; preservation: obtain, obtaining, peculiar, purchased, possession.

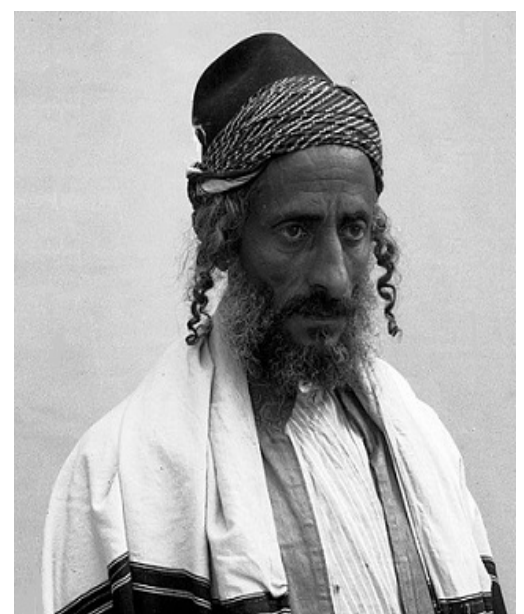
In short, Seghullâ refers to a possession of kings and a private property, not only material, but of people.

Returning to our subject of ‘the hexagram’, the Karaite Jewish sage Yehudah ben Eliahu Hadasi, who lived in the 12th century, wrote in one of his books that the common people gradually changed the symbol of the “Shield of David” from a simple seal to a type of mystical symbol, even engraving it on the mezuzah placed on the doors as a form of protective amulet.

Karaite Judaism is a current of the Jewish religion that exclusively defends the authority of the Hebrew Scriptures (the Torah given to Moses) as a source of Divine Revelation, the unique and absolute belief in God and the OT prophets, therefore rejecting rabbinical Judaism and the ‘Oral Law’ such as the Talmud and Mishnah, and customs such as tefillin (boxes with Torah passages on the head and in the hand. According to Karaites, the Biblical passages cited for this practice are metaphorical, and mean to ‘remember the Torah always and treasure it.’), like the mezuzah (a box or scroll with Torah passages on the doors of houses. Karaites interpret the Scripture that mandates inscribing the Law on doorposts and city gates as a metaphorical admonition, specifically, to keep the Law at home and away). They also reject the peyot. Pe’ot, anglicized as payot or peyot (Hebrew: פאות, romanized: pē’ōt, ‘corners’, plural of pe’a) or payes (in Yiddish), is the Hebrew term for sidelocks or sideburns. Payot are worn by some men and boys in the Orthodox Jewish community based on an interpretation of the law of the OT (Lev. 19: 27; Lev. 21: 5) against shaving the ‘sides’ of one’s head. Literally, pe’a means ‘corner, side, edge’.

The law forbade the hair to be cut at the temples (Temple = the flat part of either side of the head between the forehead and the ear – Lev. 19: 27; Lev. 21: 5), for this part of the head was regarded as the source of life for the Jews, and only the heathen shaved the sideburns. In Jer. 49: 32; Jer. 25: 23 and Jer. 49: 32, where it is written ‘those who have shaven temples’ or ‘all who have shaven temples’ (NRSV) it may be read, in Hebrew, ‘cut off into corners, or, that have the corners of their hair pulled’, that is, to have a beard on the cheek narrowed or cut, which was a Canaanite custom, forbidden to the Israelites. The Mosaic Law forbade to cut the beard in the manner of the Egyptians (Lev. 19: 27; Lev. 21: 5). Unlike the surrounding nations, the Egyptians shaved, except for the chin, where they allowed themselves to have a bundle of hair, which was kept well-cared. Sometimes, instead of their own hair, they wore a braided false beard with different shapes, depending on the category of the individual; just as they wore their wigs. Lepers, by Jewish law, should shave their beards, hair and eyebrows on the seventh day of their purification (Lev. 14: 9). Shaving the sidelocks was a heathen practice (According to Maimonides). A Jew could not cut his hair on his forehead too, for it was characteristic of certain idolatrous cults (Lev. 19: 27; Lev. 21: 5; Deut. 14: 1). Regarding the priests, God speaks to Ezekiel (Ezek. 44: 20): “They shall not shave their heads or let their locks grow long; they shall only trim the hair of their heads.”

There are different styles of payot among several branches of Judaism, such as curls, braids or locks of hair. Some Jews place their peyot rolled behind their ears. Traditional groups such as Hasidic, Haredi and Ashkenazi Jews have a custom of using peyot.



The Karaites still await the coming of the Messiah and believe in the resurrection of the dead. The word ‘karaite’, in Hebrew, קראים, qaraim or bnei mikra, means: ‘Followers of the Scriptures.’ Their ancestors, from the Second Temple period, were called Benei Şedeq (‘Sons of Zadok’, the first high priest of Solomon’s temple, and who is also connected with the party of the Sadducees, which emerged around the 2nd century BCE). Probably Karaite Judaism or Karaism emerged during the reign of Alexander Jannaeus (King Jannai), Hasmonean king of Judaea (103 to 76 BCE).

Karaites accept only the observance of Shabbat, the use of the Tallit (the prayer shawl) and the Tzitzit (the fringes on the four corners of the Tallit), and the dietary and slaughtering (Kosher) laws.

In the 1st line above: a Young Hasidic (Traditional Jewish Branch) man with payot (or peyot) – Photo: Mgarten; and Pre-bar mitzvah age boy with payot – wikipedia.org.

In the 2nd line: An Orthodox man with payot in Jerusalem, by David Shankbone / Orthodox Jew with long payot, from Kotel (city in Bulgaria), at the West Wall, old city of Jerusalem – by Boaz Gabriel Canhoto – wikipedia.org.

In the 3rd line: Religious Jew with beard and payot tucked behind the ear (photo: Gila Brand) and Teimani (Yemenite) Jew with payot (American Colony, Jerusalem) – wikipedia.org.

The adoption of the Star of David as a distinctive symbol for the Jewish people and Judaism began in the Middle Ages. In 1354, King of Bohemia Charles IV allowed the Jewish community of Prague to have its own flag. The Jews then made the Star of David in gold on a red background. The flag began to be used both in synagogues and on the official seal of the community and in printed books. But the biblical symbol of Israel given by God has always been the Menorah (the seven lampstand).



Close up of the Jewish Flag with the ‘Jewish Hat’ in the Old-New Synagogue in Prague (2014) – photo: Øyvind Holmstad – wikipedia.



The Old-New Synagogue in Prague (2014) – photo: Øyvind Holmstad – wikipedia.

After the Battle of Prague in 1648 against the siege of the city by Swedish Protestant troops (during the 30 Years' War – 1618-1648), some Viennese Jesuits at the request of Ferdinand III, Holy Roman Emperor and Archduke of Austria (1637-1657), offered a flag of honor with the same symbol to the Jews of Prague (capital of the Czech Republic), in recognition of their contribution to the defense of the city. This flag showed a golden hexagram on a red background.

The 'Old New Synagogue' in Prague is the oldest synagogue in Europe still in operation. The name initially was 'Neu Shul', 'New Synagogue' in Yiddish; but with the appearance of others, it came to be known as the 'Old New Synagogue.' This religious Gothic architecture building was completed in 1270. The banner now on display is a modern reproduction of what was done in the 17th century. The synagogue follows orthodox custom, with separate seating for men and women during prayer services. The women sit in an outer room with small windows looking into the main sanctuary. The large red flag is on the west pillar and the text of the Shema Israel is stitched in gold. In the center of the Star of David is a 'Jewish hat.' Both the hat and the star are also stitched in gold. The Bimah (Torah reading pulpit) stands between the two columns. The Holy Ark (Aron Kodesh ארון קודש) is traditionally located on the east wall.

The symbol ('The Star of David') began to be widely used among Jewish communities in Eastern Europe in the 19th century. The hexagram (without the circle) was adopted by the Zionist Organization as a symbol for the flag of Israel in 1897, prior to its use in Freemasonry. At the end of World War I, it became an internationally accepted symbol for Israel, even used on the tombstones of the dead Jewish soldiers. Today, the star is used as the central symbol on the national flag of the State of Israel. The blue stripes at the top and bottom of the flag are linked to the blue stripes on the tallit.

Some occultists claim that the symbol with the two interlocking triangles is one of the most powerful in the practice of magic. The hexagram when encircled increases its power and meaning. It is also known as the ‘Seal of Solomon’ in Kabbalistic mysticism.

In short: the Star of David may or may not be a cause for “spiritual concern”, depending on how you use it. Better to get rid of it if it is used as an amulet.



Chai (Chay) – The word ‘chai’ or ‘chay’ (חַי) is made up of two letters of the Hebrew alphabet – Chet (ח) and Yod (י), meaning ‘life’, ‘alive’, or ‘living’. The most common spelling in the Latin script is ‘Chai’, but the word is occasionally also written as ‘Hai’. The usual modern pronunciation of this word is [χai], while a transcription of the Biblical and Mishnaic pronunciation would have likely been [hai] (with a pharyngeal consonant). Chay (חַי – Strong #2416) means life, alive, age; fresh (plant, water, year), strong; lively, living creature, living thing, among other meanings. It is related to the word Chaya (Strong #2421 – חַיָּה), meaning ‘living thing’ or ‘animal’, ‘living being’; to live, whether literally or figuratively; causatively, to revive, keep live, make alive, give or promise life, nourish up, preserve alive; recover, repair or restore to life, revive, (God) save (alive, life, lives), to be whole, complete among other meanings.



The Greek word corresponding to Chai is ‘zóé’ (ζωή – Strong #2222), that is the mere vitality of a creature or living being, even plants (although the original definition is: life, both of physical (present) and of spiritual (particularly future) existence that is, eternal life), in contrast with ‘Psychê’ or ‘psuché’ (ψυχή – Strong #5590) = soul, that is,

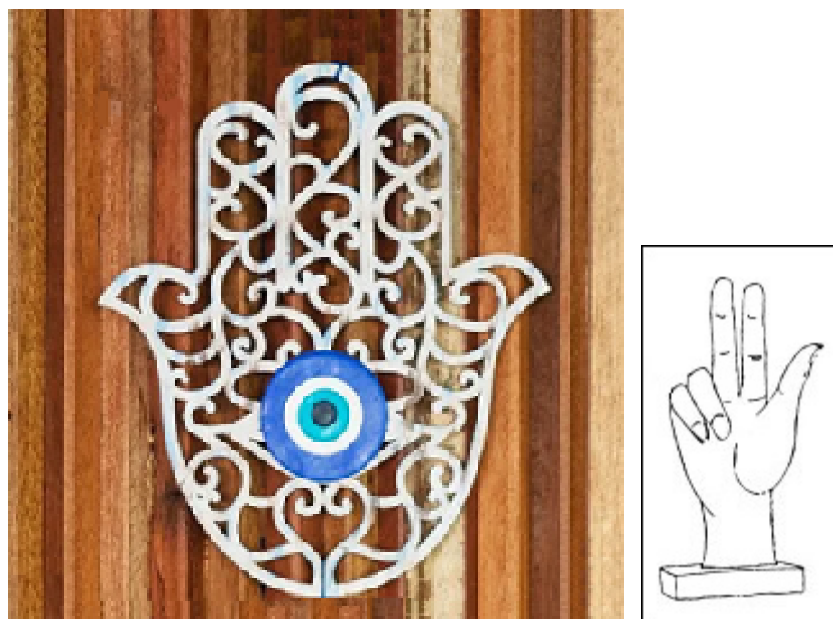
the whole personality of man, indicating its most elevated aspects (thoughts, feelings and will); in Hebrew, ‘nephesh’; and in contrast also with ‘pneuma’ (πνεῦμα or πνευμα – Strong #4151) = spirit, wind, breath, spirit (the part that survives death); in Hebrew, ‘ruwach.’

From the simplicity of this explanation comes the Jewish explanation, which turned it into a symbol, a visual symbol, and then into mysticism, as an amulet that brings life and brings people closer to God. These two letters of the Hebrew alphabet – Chet (ח) and Yod (י), as symbols in Jewish culture, go back to medieval Spain and Talmud, written around 500 CE, and states that the world was created from Hebrew letters which form certain verses of the Torah: Lev. 18: 5, Deut. 30: 15-16 and Deut. 30: 1-20, where obedience to God and His commandments brings His blessing, in particular, the physical and spiritual life; otherwise, death and curse come. But for lack of understanding of spiritual things, and for understanding divine realities only from a material perspective, they turned the law of God into something obligatory, forced, like a threat, that is, heaven and earth are described as witnesses of the fact that there is life and death, blessing and curse and that human beings must choose Life (God) in order to live. On a spiritual (and historical) level, ‘chai’ means being alive before God, as opposed to being (spiritually) dead. It was the weight that the curse of the Law brought, making a person trapped in rituals and religious obligations to get closer to God and, consequently, to have life. The Shema prayer also speaks to the importance of Chai for living and walking in the Jewish cultural lifestyle.

In medieval Kabbalah, Chai is the lowest emanation of God (closer to the physical level). According to a 16th century Greek rabbi, the Chai as a symbol has its link in Kabbalah texts with God’s attribute of ‘Ratzon’, or motivation, will.

Its use as an amulet originated in Eastern Europe in the 18th century and the ‘chai’ came to be worn by Jews as a medallion around the neck, in the same way as the Star of David and the Hamsa, in order to give life and as a protective shield against evil eye.

Hamsa –



Hamsa (in Hebrew: חמסה, which means ‘five’, referring to the five fingers of the hand) is an amulet against the evil eye, to ward off negative energies and bring happiness, luck and fortune. It is a symbol of the Jewish and Islamic faith. It is very popular in the Middle East, especially in Egypt. There is a theory about the connection between the Hamsa and the ‘Mano Pantea’ (or ‘Hand-of-All-Goddess’), an amulet known to the ancient Egyptians as the ‘Two Fingers’, which represented Isis and Osiris; the thumb represented their son Horus and was used to invoke the protective spirits of parents over their children. Another meaning of this symbol is related to Horus himself, god of the sky. That is why it is possible to notice in most Hamsas the ‘Eye of Horus’, meaning that humans could not escape the eye of consciousness. The sun and moon were the eyes of Horus. The Hamsa is also widely seen in Carthage (now Tunisia) and in ancient North Africa and in the Phoenician colonies of the Iberian Peninsula (Spain and Portugal) and can be found in the form of jewelry, tiles and key chains.

The Qur’an vetoes the use of amulets, but the Hamsa or Chamsa (in Arabic) is easily found among Muslims, who also call it the hand of God, the hand of Fatima, the eye of Fatima or the hand of Hamesh. Fatima (Fātimah: 605–632) was Muhammad’s favorite daughter (Fātimah bint Muhammad). The amulet, in this case of Fatima, represents femininity. The Hamsa is also popular with Jews, especially Sephardic (from the Iberian Peninsula) and is linked to Kabbalah (Jewish mystical and esoteric doctrine). They were the first to use this amulet due to their beliefs about the evil eye. They write texts like the Shema Israel (Deut. 6: 4-9; Deut. 11: 13-21; Num. 15: 37-41) on the Hamsa and also call them the hand of Miriam (the sister of Moses and Aaron). Among the Christians of the Levant (Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Jordan, Palestine and parts of Turkey) it is also known as the hand of the Virgin Mary, for they probably made a religious syncretism between Christianity and paganism in the region, since the initial use of the Hamsa can be attributed to ancient Mesopotamian artifacts in the amulets of the goddess Inanna (another way of writing the Assyrian name Nina) or Istar (Ishtar), also called Isis in Egypt, later being named after Mary, to attract Egyptians to the Roman Catholicism. Hamesh (חמש – means ‘five’) refers to the Hebrew term ‘Hamesh Megillot or Chomeish Megillos’ (the five scrolls of Jewish Writings).

The symbols mentioned above:



Chay (Chai)



Star of David



Hamsa

8

Leah and Rachel, the Church of the OT and NT

We can say that Jacob is a figure of God, and Leah and Rachel, His two wives: the wife of the Old Covenant and that of the New Covenant (Church of the OT and NT). Let us explain better:

Leah begot:

- Reuben, 1st – Re’ubhen, in the Masoretic, or Rā’â be’onÿi, in Hebrew, which means: ‘He has seen my misery’, Lord has looked upon my affliction’ or ‘see, a son’, ‘behold a son.’ Biblical text: Gen. 29: 32: “Leah conceived and bore a son, and she named him Reuben; for she said, ‘Because the Lord has looked on my affliction; surely now my husband will love me.’” Leah said.

- Simeon, 2nd – Shim’ôn = hearing, who hears, God heard. Biblical text: Gen. 29: 33b: ““Because the Lord has heard that I am hated, he has given me this son also”; and she (Leah) named him Simeon.” (For God heard the petition of Leah).

- Levi, 3rd – lewi, of the root lāwâ = to join, so, Levi = attached, joined, united, connected, adhered. Biblical text: Gen. 29: 34b: “Now this time my husband will be joined to me, because I have borne him three sons; therefore he was named Levi.” Leah said.

- Judah, 4th – Yehüdâ = praised, celebrated, commemorated in praise (ydh) to the Lord. Biblical text: Gen. 29: 35b: ““This time I will praise the Lord”; therefore she (Leah) named him Judah; then she ceased bearing.”

- Issachar, 9th – ’ish = man and sâkhâr = reward, wage, hired worker, for Leah bought from Rachel the right to lie down with Jacob for a handful of mandrakes (Gen. 30: 14-18). Biblical text: Gen. 30: 18: “Leah said, ‘God has given me my hire because I gave my maid [*in the case of the former son, Asher, for Issachar was legitimate son of Leah*] to my husband’; so she named him Issachar.”

- Zebulun, 10th from the Akkadian, Zabalu = to honor, to exalt (Akkad was one of the names given to the northern half of Iraq, more or less from Baghdad to the north, in contrast to the south, which was known as Sumer). Biblical text: Gen. 30: 20: “Then

Leah said, ‘God has endowed me with a good dowry; now my husband will honor me, because I have borne him six sons’; so she named him Zebulun.”

•• Dinah (dīnâ) was only daughter of Leah. Biblical text: Gen. 30: 21: “Afterwards she bore a daughter, and named her Dinah.” Dinah means, innocent, acquitted, judged.

Rachel begot:

•• Joseph, 11th son of Jacob – originated from the verb Yāsaph = to add; so ‘yôseph’ = may be added, may God add (children), because Rachel asked God to give her another child. Biblical text: Gen. 30: 23-24: “She (Rachel) conceived and bore a son, and said, ‘God has taken away my reproach’; and she named him Joseph, saying, ‘May the Lord add to me another son!’”

•• Benjamin, 12th, Binyāmīn = son of my right hand or son of happiness. Biblical text: Gen. 35: 18: “As her soul was departing (for she died), she (*Rachel*) named him Ben-Oni (*son of my affliction or son of my trouble*); but his father called him Benjamin.”

The other sons of Jacob were born from the servants of Leah and Rachel:

•• Dan, 5th – He has vindicated, God judged me, God is judge. Biblical text: Gen. 30: 6: “Then Rachel said, ‘God has judged me, and has also heard my voice and given me a son’; therefore she named him Dan.” Dan was son of Bilhah, Rachel’s servant.

•• Naphtali, 6th – from Hebrew, Naphtālī = fighter, my struggle. Biblical text: Gen. 30: 8: “Then Rachel said, ‘With mighty wrestling I have wrestled with my sister, and have prevailed’; so she named him Naphtali [NIV: Then Rachel said, ‘I have had a great struggle with my sister, and I have won.’ So she named him Naphtali.]” Naphtali was son of Bilhah, Rachel’s servant.

•• Gad, 7th – good luck, fortunate or a troop is coming. Biblical text: Gen. 30: 11: “And Leah said, ‘Good fortune!’ so she named him Gad.” Gad was son of Zilpah, Leah’s servant.

•• Asher, 8th = ‘āsher, happy, blissful, treasure. Biblical text: Gen. 30: 13: “And Leah said, ‘Happy am I! For the women will call me happy’; so she named him Asher.” Asher was son of Zilpah, Leah’s servant.

Now, let’s explain what was said above.

Although there is still some controversy on the subject, the most accepted opinion is that (in relation to the progeny of the person) ‘Jew’ is everyone who is born of a Jewish mother, that is, the progeny comes from the mother, not from the father (just relate this with the rights of the firstborn – Deut. 21: 17 – which concerned to his mother and not his father, because if the father had his first son by a prostitute, and not by the lawful wife, and this son was his firstborn, he could not claim this right: Jephthah, for example – Judg. 11: 1-2). Thus, the law was applied to the firstborn of the legal wife, not those of the concubines.

Rachel and Leah were from the seed of Abraham (the ‘father’ of the Jews), for they were the daughters of Laban, Rebekah’s brother, and son of Bethuel, who was the son of Nahor, Abraham’s brother. Therefore, the children of Leah and Rachel were considered Jews, with the right to claim the blessing of the firstborn. Several children were born from their servants too, and although called ‘children of Israel’ (Jacob), could not be considered candidates to the birthright, for they were sons of the concubines and not of the patriarch’s legal wives.

The firstborn son received the double portion of his father, and the leadership of the family and its descendants, that is, the authority over his brothers (he carried the name

of the lineage; just see the case of Ruth and the other kinsman-redeemer besides Boaz). Hence, in the blessing of Isaac on Jacob, the father says: “Let peoples serve you, and nations bow down to you. Be lord over your brothers, and may your mother’s sons bow down to you. Cursed be everyone who curses you, and blessed be everyone who blesses you!” (Gen. 27: 29). Therefore, among the sons of Jacob who were entitled to the birthright one could only choose among the sons of Leah: Reuben (1st), Simeon (2nd) Levi (3rd) Judah (4th), Issachar (9th son of Jacob) and Zebulun (10th son of Jacob). The sons of Rachel (Joseph and Benjamin) would be in the second level of choice. The first three were ruled out by Jacob himself, for they disappointed him, so he wanted to put Joseph as his firstborn. He even came to consider Benjamin as lord of his brothers when he thought that Joseph had died. However, by the sovereign will of God, Ephraim received the birthright (that is, the double portion of the father), and Judah, the right of governmental leadership (Ps. 78: 68-69).

In other words, it is as if God divided the birthright blessing into two parts to favor the two wives of Jacob. God chose the tribe of Judah (Ps. 78: 68-69) to keep His election on the Jews (the authority over his brothers, because the name ‘Jew’ originates from the name ‘Judah’). And He chose Ephraim (as a representative of Joseph, the firstborn of Rachel) to inherit the birthright blessing – Gen. 48: 14-20, especially the verses 14; 19-20 – i.e., to give him the double portion of his father (Ephraim received a great material blessing, Gen. 49: 22-26), and to ensure that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles also (Gen. 12: 3b). The bible says that it came to us through our faith in Jesus, born of the tribe of Judah (Gal. 3: 14), but Ephraim and his descendants (married to Egyptian women) mingled too much with the Gentiles, and also gave them the knowledge of the God of Israel. Remember that Joseph married Asenath, an Egyptian; therefore, a Gentile. She was not of the seed of Abraham. Centuries later, the tribe of Ephraim mingled too much with the Gentiles because of the idolatry of Jeroboam, first king of Israel after the division of the nation into two kingdoms. From the two Gentile maidservants of Jacob (Bilhah and Zilpah), in a way, the Gentiles came, in addition to the descendants from the other two sons of Noah, Ham and Japheth; therefore, non-Semitic peoples. However, by the sovereign will of God (as I said above), Ephraim received the birthright of the clan, instead of Reuben; and Judah, the right of governmental leadership:

- 1 Chr. 5: 1-2: “The sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel. (He was the firstborn, but because he defiled his father’s bed his birthright was given to the sons of Joseph son of Israel, so that he is not enrolled in the genealogy according to the birthright; though Judah became prominent among his brothers and a ruler came from him, yet the birthright belonged to Joseph).”

- Jer. 31: 9 b: “for I have become a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn.”

In Amos 9: 11-12 it is written: “On that day I will raise up the booth of David (*) [NIV, ‘David’s fallen tent’] that is fallen, and repair its breaches, and raise up its ruins, and rebuild it as in the days of old; in order that they may possess the remnant of Edom and all the nations who are called by my name, says the Lord who does this” – cf. Acts 15: 14-18: “Simon [*Peter*] has related how God first looked favorably on the Gentiles, to take from among them a people for his name. This agrees with the words of the prophets, as it is written, ‘After this I will return, and I will rebuild the dwelling of David, which has fallen; from its ruins I will rebuild it, and I will set it up, so that all other peoples may seek the Lord – even all the Gentiles over whom my name has been called. Thus says the Lord, who has been making these things known from long ago.’”

(*) To raise the booth of David [David's fallen tent] is a prophetic reference about the spiritual reign of Jesus, where Israel and Judah would be together and could live free before the Lord, worshipping Him without unnecessary and empty rituals, and a reign in which the Gentiles could also have the right to participate, for Jesus would be the shepherd of all. 'David's fallen tent' meant the humiliation of the House of David, with no reliable ruler, in order that God might keep His promise of a Davidic descendant on the throne. And this had happened because of Israel's idolatry and rebellion, which defiled the house of Judah, provoking likewise the wrath of God upon it. Jesus came to bring a spiritual kingdom for all who accepted Him as Lord and Savior. We the Gentiles are the spiritual Israel of God. What in the past (OT) was physical (material), now is spiritual (Eph. 6: 12; 2 Cor. 10: 3-6).

GENTILES

Goy is the shortened form of gowy (from Hebrew, gentile, גוי, plural goyim, גויים) and means a foreign nation; therefore, a gentile nation; figuratively: a troop of animals or flock of locusts. The word refers to Gentiles, heathen, nations (הגוים), countries (מדינות) people, and often used by the Jewish community to refer to the Gentiles. It is wrongly used in a pejoratively way to refer to non-Jews and unbelievers (ethnos or ethnôn, Greek). The word 'gentile' means a non-Israelite person:

- Lev. 25: 44 – 'nations' (NRSV), 'pagans' (KJV) – transliterated to goyim;
- 1 Chr. 16: 24 – 'nations' (NRSV), 'pagans' (KJV) – In Strong's Concordance, the Hebrew word used for 'nations' is 'am = a people (as a congregated unit); a tribe (as those of Israel); therefore (in a collective way): troops or attendants; figuratively, a flock: folk, men, nation, people.
- 2 Kin. 21: 2: "And he (*king Manasseh of Judah*) did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, after the abominations of the heathen, whom the Lord cast out before the children of Israel" (KJV); "He did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, following the abominable practices of the nations that the Lord drove out before the people of Israel" (NRSV). In Strong's Concordance, the word used for 'nations' (or 'gentiles' in other versions) is 'heathen', gowy.
- Jer. 10: 25: "Pour out your wrath on the nations that do not know you, and on the peoples that do not call on your name; for they have devoured Jacob; they have devoured him and consumed him, and have laid waste his habitation." – 'nations' and 'peoples' (NRSV), heathen (KJV). 'Nations' in this verse, in Strong's Concordance, receive the word 'gowy' (goyim); and the word 'peoples', mishpachah or mishpâchoth (plural) = a family, i.e., circle of relatives; figuratively, a class (of persons), a species (of animals) or sort (of things); therefore, a tribe of people: family, kindred.

The word 'gentile' derives from the Latin 'gens' (meaning 'clan' or a 'family group') and is often used in the plural. The Christian Bible translators have used this word to designate, collectively, peoples and distinct nations from the Israelite people. The word is especially important in accounts of the story of Christianity to designate the European peoples gradually converted to the new religion, under the influence of the Apostle Paul of Tarsus and others. Paul himself was born as a Roman citizen in modern Turkey (Tarsus, in Cilicia), but had been educated in Judaism. God had already announced that in the seed of Abraham all nations would be blessed – that people would join the Savior, and would be the people of God (Gen. 12: 13; Gen. 22: 18 cf. Acts 3: 25; Gen. 49: 10; Ps. 2: 8; Ps. 72: 11; 17 (in our translation is used the word 'nations') for the two verses, and the Hebrew word used is gowy (transliteration: goyim).

- In Isa. 42: 6 (“I am the Lord, I have called you in righteousness, I have taken you by the hand and kept you; I have given you as a covenant to the people, a light to the nations”), the Hebrew word for ‘people’ is *‘am*; and for ‘nations’ (‘gentiles’, in other versions) is *goyim*).

- In Isa. 60: 2-3 the two words are repeated (peoples, nations): “For darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the Lord will arise upon you, and his glory will appear over you. Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn.” The Hebrew word for ‘peoples’ is *lom* or *lowm* (pronounced: *leh-ome*’), and comes from an unused root meaning to gather; a community: nation, people, peoples. The word used for ‘nations’ is *gwoy*, Gentiles.

When Jesus Christ came, His answer to the Greek (‘Hellen’) implied that large crowds of Gentiles would enter the church (Jn. 12: 20-21).

Both in the old and the new dispensation, the Jewish people could not be united by marriage to the Gentiles. In their early days the Jews essentially constituted a separate nation from others (Lev. 20: 23), not to be confused with the other peoples, and not to assimilate their moral, political and religious character, under penalty of harsh sentences (Lev. 26: 14-38 and Deut. 28 – curses for disobedience). They were forbidden to marry the remaining part of inhabitants of Canaan not yet conquered when the people arrived to Palestine (Josh. 23: 7), so they were not punished as had happened to their predecessors (Lev. 18: 24-25). Ammonites or Moabites were excluded from the congregation of the Lord, and this measure was taken to the tenth generation (Deut. 23: 3), although an Idumean (Edomite) or Egyptian has been admitted in the third (Deut. 23: 7). The tendency that was noticed in the Israelites to fall into idolatry shows the necessity of the severity that had been used.

From the seventeenth century the term is most commonly used to refer to non-Jews. In recent times, both terms (*goy* and *Gentile*) no longer were well regarded, often preferring to use the term ‘non-Jew’ as a substitute.

In the NT, we see the word ‘Gentiles’ in Greek, in the following verse:

- 1 Tim. 2: 7 – “For this I was appointed a herald (*kêrux* = *preacher*) and an apostle (*apostolos*) (I am telling the truth, I am not lying), a teacher (*didaskalos*) of the Gentiles (*ethnos* or *ethnôn*) in faith and truth.” The Greek word *εθνων* (*ethnos* or *ethnôn* – transliterated) means a race (as of the same habit), that is, a tribe; especially a foreign one (non-Jewish), consequently, pagan, heathen, Gentile, nation, people; (*εθνων* = nations, countries).

9

The sacrifices of the Old Testament

In this study we'll try to understand the meaning of the sacrifices and offerings of the Old Testament and how Jesus' sacrifice was sufficient to meet and abolish all these ordinances once for all. Understanding what happened on the cross enables us to understand and accept the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. I will describe first the several kinds of offerings (their names in Hebrew). Here you will also know the meaning of consecration, korbam, terumah, tenuphah and the sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross, among other subjects.

Let's begin by putting a summarized table about the sacrifices in the Old Testament:

Sacrifice	Biblical reference	Elements	Purpose
Burnt Offering	Leviticus 1: 1-17	A male animal: bull, lamb or bird (turtledove or pigeon), in the case of poor person. Totally consumed. Without blemish.	Voluntary act of worship. Atonement for unintentional sin. Expresses devotion, commitment and complete surrender to God.
Grain Offering	Leviticus 2: 1-16	Choice flour (Fine flour), olive oil, incense, cakes or wafers (boiled, baked or fried) with salt. No yeast or honey. It accompanied the burnt offerings and peace offerings	Voluntary act of worship. Recognition of the goodness and providence of God. Dedication to God. The oil symbolizes joy.

		(along with a libation). Note: Wafer: mass of which is made the unleavened bread.	
Fellowship Offering or peace offering (symbolizes the supper with the Lord)	Leviticus 3: 1-17	Any animal without flaw from the flock. Variety of bread.	Voluntary act of worship. Thanksgiving and Communion (it was accompanied by a communal meal).
Guilt Offering	Leviticus 7: 1-10	Sheep or Lamb	Obligatory atonement for unintentional sins that required restitution. Purification of taints. Restitution in full, adding a fifth of the value of what made him guilty.
Sin Offering	Leviticus 4; 5; 6; Leviticus 16: 1-34	1. Young bull: in the case of the high priest and the congregation. 2. Goat: for the prince. 3. Female goat or lamb: for ordinary people. 4. Turtledove or pigeon: the case of the poor. Tenth of an Ephah of fine flour: the case of the very poor.	Obligatory atonement for certain unintentional sins. Confession of sin. Forgiveness of sin. Purification of taints. 1 Ephah = 22 liters = 3/5 bushels

Comments of interest:

- Unintentional sins are also known as sins of ignorance. The original word translated as ignorance means: to wander, like a sheep that strays from the flock. It refers to the sin originated from the weakness of human character, not an ill-disguised rebellion or a premeditated evil. We associate guilt with intention, but the ancients associated it to its effects.
- Leaven (Yeast) was not used for cooking not to remember the pagan cult. Leaven symbolizes the flesh, human wickedness and malice in opposition to the holiness of the Spirit (1 Cor. 5: 6-8).
- When more than one type of offering was presented (Num. 7: 13-17), the procedure was usually the following: 1) the sin offering, 2) the burnt offering, 3) peace (or fellowship) offering and grain offering (along with a libation). This sequence shows part of the spiritual importance of the sacrificial system. First, sin had to be treated (sin

offering or guilt offering). Second, the worshiper was fully committed to God (burnt offering and grain offering). Third, it was established the fellowship or friendship between the Lord, the priest and the worshiper (peace offering or fellowship offering). In the peace offering, the breast and right thigh were the priest's portion determined by God (Lev. 7: 29-34).

- Lev. 3: 14-16; Lev. 4: 8-9; Lev. 7: 4; Lev. 9: 10: The Lord commanded that the fat, the kidneys and the lobe of the liver were separated to be burned on the altar. They were not burned along with the rest of the animal, what makes us think there were an interest and a higher purpose in this. Fat symbolizes the tastiest part of the meat, what tastes better, what rises like a sweet aroma to God. For Jews, the kidneys were the center of emotions and consciousness and this means that our offering should be what is most pleasant to the Lord and all our soul must be involved in this process, i.e., our emotions must also be placed on His altar, mainly the joy of being offering. Thus, our financial offering in the House of the Lord rises as sweet incense to Him. Delivering the emotions and consciousness to the Lord frees us from guilt. Our emotions and consciousness must be sanctified, consecrated to the Lord (Lev. 7: 5: guilt offering). In other words, just as the animal fat in the guilt offering was burned on the altar to make atonement, the spiritual parallel is also true. When we give our 'fat' and 'our kidneys' (our emotions, consciousness, our 'tasty', the best we have) to Jesus, He pours His blood on our sins, freeing us of our guilt, for He knows that what we are doing is from the heart.

- Lev. 22: 17-33: The offering must be flawless (without blemish). Defective animals were not accepted, so our offering before the Lord should be with the best we have, with the firstfruits, not with what's left, with the remains. Verse 19 says: "to be acceptable in your behalf it shall be a male without blemish, of the cattle or the sheep or the goats." Like the tithe should be given before using our money for anything else, the offering should be given liberally and with integrity of heart.

- Salt in the grain offering instead of honey, for salt symbolizes the covenant (Lev. 2: 13; Num. 18: 19), the fidelity of the promise, non-perishable nature of the covenant, God's unchanging love, a sign of purification and holiness. It melts the ice. This means that God's true word melts hearts that are cold and hardened by sin and human barriers.

- The priest stood before God in favor of the people, but also represented God to the people. As a representative of God, he ate the offerings that were brought to him. But he could not, in the same way, represent God to himself. His grain offerings had to be completely burned, to be true sacrifice, completely dedicated to God (Lev. 6: 23). However, he could eat the part that was reserved for him of the grain offerings given to God by the people: Lev. 2: 9-10; Lev. 6: 14-18.

- Aaron and his sons were consecrated priests. The Hebrew word translated as consecration or ordination (millu) or consecrations or ordinations (millu'iym – Strong #4394 – Lev 7: 37; Lev 8: 22; 28-29; 31; 33; Ex 29: 22; Ex 29: 26-27; Ex 29: 34) means, literally, to 'fill the hand'; 'hands full', and perhaps it referred to the offerings that were put on the priest's hands or to the oil that was spilled on them in some cases (the leper after being healed – Lev. 14: 15). The ritual of consecration of the priests (Lev. 8: 1-36) symbolized the responsibilities and the privileges of the priesthood, notifying the Levites that they were set apart for God's service. According to Lexicon

Strong's Concordance, the word millu'iyim, מְלֵאִים, comes from mālê' – מָלֵא (Strong #4390), a primitive root that means: to fill or to be full of, to accomplish, to confirm, to fulfill, to be or to become full, to overflow, fullness, furnish (evidence or a house), to gather (alone or together), to replenish, to satisfy, to take with a hand full, to presume, to dare, as in Esther 7: 5 ('who has dared' – NIV; 'who has presumed' – NRSV; 'where is he, that durst presume' – KJV).

- The Lord also forbade to eat the animal with its blood (Lev. 17: 11; 14 cf. Heb. 9: 22), because the blood had a sacrificial nature. Blood, in the OT, is the symbol of life usually ended by violent means. It also means what sustains the physical life of a being, as well as its spirit, that is, its character, its nature (think of the genetic transmissions). Remembering Gen. 4: 10-11, the blood was a means of atonement provided by God Himself, for His love of man lest to keep him away from Him. The purpose of the blood would be a spiritual act, sacrificial, of worship to God and atonement for sin, using animals such as lamb and others. Complementing the reasoning: the life of the flesh (Lev. 17: 11; 14) was the life sacrificed in death, because the purpose of the animal's blood would be a spiritual act to cleanse man of his sin (death) and restore his life (communion with God). The animal's blood was the substitute of human blood; instead of killing the sinner for his sin, God would use a substitute, in case the animals considered pure, set apart for this purpose.

- Thus, the sacrifice of the cross replaced all these sacrifices, having Jesus given of Himself as a lamb without blemish in our place to redeem us from sin and the curse of the Law.

- KORBAM, offering; in Hebrew, qorbân or qrbh = 'that which is brought near', 'to draw near to God.' Qorbân is practically a generic term, while others are specifically used for burnt offering, offering for sin and guilt etc. Now we'll see this.

The **wave offering** or **elevation offering** ('othâm tenuphâh or ath-m thnuphe – Lev. 7: 30; Lev. 14: 12) of meat or grain received this name, perhaps, to be moved before the Lord before being presented to Him. In Hebrew, the verb 'eniph' means 'to move the offering, to wave the offering, to elevate the offering.'

- Lev. 7: 30: "Your own hands shall bring the Lord's offering by fire ('ishêy); you shall bring the fat with the breast, so that the breast may be raised (lehâniyph) as an elevation offering ('otho tenuphâh) before the Lord (NIV – wave offering)."

- Lev. 14: 12: "The priest shall take one of the lambs, and offer it as a guilt offering, along with the log of oil, and raise them as an elevation offering ('othâm tenuphâh) before the Lord (NIV – wave offering)."

In the text above, the expression commonly used ('burnt offering') is written as 'offering by fire', whose word in Hebrew is 'ishêy; or ashi – Concordant Version of the Old Testament – CVOT – 'made by fire').

There are other words used for different types of offerings:

- 'ôlâ qorbân or oleh qorbân = burnt offerings. The word 'ôlâ or oleh means 'something that ascends.' We can see that in Lev. 1: 3: "If the offering is a burnt offering ('olâh qorbân) from the herd, you shall offer a male without blemish; you shall bring it to the entrance of the tent of meeting, for acceptance in your behalf before the Lord."

- The first fruits (NVI: firstfruits) are called 'rashith or rê'shiyth (ראשית – Strong #7725) or rê'shith bikkûrim (בכורים – Strong #1061) = offerings of firstfruits, the sheaf of wave offering on 16th of Nisan (on Saturday after the beginning of Passover, on 14th of Nisan).

- Lev. 23: 10: "Speak to the people of Israel and say to them: When you enter the land that I am giving you and you reap its harvest, you shall bring the sheaf of the first fruits (rê'shiyth – Strong #7725) of your harvest to the priest."

- Ex. 34: 26: "The best of the first fruits (rê'shiyth – Strong #7725) of your ground you shall bring to the house of the Lord your God. You shall not boil a kid in its mother's milk."

- Ex. 23: 19: "The choicest of the first fruits (rê'shiyth – Strong #7725) of your ground you shall bring into the house of the Lord your God. You shall not boil a kid in its mother's milk."

- The Fellowship Offering or peace offering are called zebhah (zābhah) = 'that which is slaughtered.' We can see that in Lev. 3: 1: "If the offering is a sacrifice of well-being (zebhach), if you offer an animal of the herd, whether male or female, you shall offer one without blemish before the Lord."

- Hattā'th or chtath = offerings for unintentional sins. The text is in Lev. 4: 24: "He shall lay his hand on the head of the goat; it shall be slaughtered at the spot where the burnt offering is slaughtered before the Lord; it is a sin offering (chathâ'th)."

- Minchâh = Grain offerings. The text is in Lev. 2: 1: "When anyone presents a grain offering (minchâh) to the Lord, the offering shall be of choice flour; the worshiper shall pour oil on it, and put frankincense on it."

Guilt Offering is called 'āsham or 'ashm' – Concordant Version of the Old Testament (CVOT).

As we saw before, the name given for unintentional sins is hattā'th or chtath (Lev. 4: 24). The word used for burnt offerings is 'ôlâ or oleh, because the offering was burnt (Lev. 1: 3).

- Lev. 5: 17-18: "¹⁷ If any of you sin without knowing it, doing any of the things that by the Lord's commandments ought not to be done, you have incurred guilt ('āshêm), and are subject to punishment.¹⁸ You shall bring to the priest a ram without blemish from the flock, or the equivalent, as a guilt offering ('āshâm); and the priest shall make atonement on your behalf for the error that you committed unintentionally, and you shall be forgiven."

- Lev. 5: 4-5: "⁴ Or when any of you utter aloud a rash oath for a bad or a good purpose, whatever people utter in an oath, and are unaware of it, when you come to know it, you shall in any of these be guilty (le'achath).⁵ When you realize your guilt (ye'sham le'achath) in any of these, you shall confess the sin (châthâ') that you have committed"

- Lev. 5: 7; 9; 11: "⁷ But if you cannot afford a sheep, you shall bring to the Lord, as your penalty ('ashâm) for the sin (châthâ') that you have committed, two turtledoves or two pigeons, one for a sin offering (hathâ'th) and the other for a burnt offering

(‘olâh)...⁹ He shall sprinkle some of the blood of the sin offering on the side of the altar, while the rest of the blood shall be drained out at the base of the altar; it is a sin offering (chathâ'th)...¹¹ But if you cannot afford two turtledoves or two pigeons, you shall bring as your offering for the sin that you have committed one-tenth of an ephah of choice flour for a sin offering (châthâ'); you shall not put oil on it or lay frankincense on it, for it is a sin offering (chathâ'th).”

•• TERUMAH (Terümâh or terumath)

The word ‘Terumah’ was incorrectly translated as ‘wave offering’ (‘othâm tenuphâh), or ‘consecrated food’, that is, the portion of the priest, and means ‘donation’, ‘contribution.’ In most texts that talk about not to eat of the things consecrated to the priest, the bible uses the phrase ‘sacred donation’, ‘sacred donations’ (NRSV) or sacred offerings (NIV) or else ‘holy things’ (ARA) – ‘yo'khal qodhesh’ – Lev. 22: 10; 14.

- In Lev. 22: 10 it is written, “No lay person shall eat of the sacred donations (NIV, holiest part, yo'khal qodhesh). No bound or hired servant of the priest shall eat of the sacred donations.”

- In Deuteronomy 12: 26 it is written, “But the sacred donations (qâdhâsheykha) that are due from you, and your votive gifts, you shall bring to the place that the Lord will choose” (NRSV).

“Only thy holy things (qâdhâsheykha) which thou hast, and thy vows, thou shalt take, and go unto the place which the Lord shall choose” (KJV).

On the other hand, the expression ‘Terumah Gedolah’ or the ‘great offer’ is not a biblical term, but is a rabbinical term that was later created to designate the portion of the priest. This expression originates from Chazalic literature, where it is listed as one of the twenty-four priestly gifts. Chazal or Hazal is an acronym for Hakhameinu Zikhronam Livrakha, that is, ‘our sages, may their memory be blessed.’ It is a general term to refer to all Jewish sages of the time of Mishnah (second century AD), Tosefta (compilation of the oral law from the period of the Mishnah) and the Talmud (which includes comments about Torah and Mishnah, among other issues), especially from the end of the 300 years of the Second Temple of Jerusalem (520–63 BC, with Pompey. Herod the Great began its restoration in 19 BC, finishing in 64 BC (with Agripa), and the temple was finally destroyed in 70 AD by Titus) until the sixth century CE or AD.

According to Lexicon Strong’s Concordance, Terumah (Terümâh or terumath) has its origin in the word truwamah or trumah, and is a present (as offered up), especially in sacrifice or as tribute: gift, ‘heave offering’ (shoulder), oblation, offered, offering. It comes for a primitive root, ruwm, which means: be actively elevated, to rise or raise (in various applications, literally or figuratively): bring up, exalt (self), extol, give, go up, haughty, heave (up), to be lifted up on, make on, set up on, too high, higher, hold up, levy, lift up, lifter up, be lofty, aloud, to mount up, offer (up), presumptuously, be promoted, promotion, proud, set up, tall, taller, take (away, off, up).

Terümâh – heave offering, is what we say today in the figurative sense: ‘to lift up’ an offering, meaning: arouse a contribution in the hearts of people, to awake in the people the will to contribute, present an offering to the Lord. In the verses below, the word ‘offering’ usually follows the verb ‘to present’, which means: to separate, to set apart, to set aside = set apart – KJV.

In Num. 18: 8; 11; 19; 24; 26-29 it is translated as ‘offering’ [NIV: contribution].

⁸ The Lord spoke to Aaron: I have given you charge of the offerings made to me, all the holy gifts of the Israelites (terumothây lekhol-qodhshêy bhenêy-yisrâ'êl); I have given them to you and your sons as a priestly portion due you in perpetuity.

¹¹ This also is yours: I have given to you, together with your sons and daughters, as a perpetual due, whatever is set aside from the gifts (terumath) of all the elevation offerings (tenuphoth) of the Israelites; everyone who is clean in your house may eat them. (NRSV); “This also is yours: whatever is set aside from the gifts (terumath) of all the wave offerings (tenuphoth) of the Israelites. I give this to you and your sons and daughters as your regular share. Everyone in your household who is ceremonially clean may eat it.” (NIV); “And this is thine; the heave offering (terumath) of their gift (mattan), with all the wave offerings (tenuphoth; tenuphah, in singular) of the children of Israel: I have given them unto thee, and to thy sons and to thy daughters with thee, by a statute for ever: every one that is clean in thy house shall eat of it.” (KJV).

¹⁹ All the holy offerings (kol terumoth haqqodhâshiyim) that the Israelites present to the Lord I have given to you, together with your sons and daughters, as a perpetual due; it is a covenant of salt forever before the Lord for you and your descendants as well.

²⁴ Because I have given to the Levites as their portion the tithe (ma'sar) of the Israelites, which they set apart as an offering (terumâh) to the Lord. Therefore I have said of them that they shall have no allotment among the Israelites.

²⁶ You shall speak to the Levites, saying: When you receive from the Israelites the tithe (ma'asêr) that I have given you from them for your portion, you shall set apart an offering (terumath) from it to the Lord, a tithe of the tithe (ma'asêr min-hamma'asêr).

²⁷ It shall be reckoned to you as your gift (terumath), the same as the grain of the threshing floor and the fullness of the wine press.

²⁸ Thus you also shall set apart an offering (terumath) to the Lord from all the tithes that you receive from the Israelites; and from them you shall give the Lord's offering (terumath) to the priest Aaron.

²⁹ Out of all the gifts to you, you shall set apart every offering (terumath) due to the Lord; the best of all of them is the part to be consecrated (NIV, as the Lord's portion the best and holiest part – miqdesho mimmennu → mqdsh-u = hallowed part of him).

Ex 25: 2-3:

² Tell the Israelites to take for me an offering (terumath); from all whose hearts prompt them to give you shall receive the offering for me (terumâthiy).

³ This is the offering (terumâh) that you shall receive from them: gold, silver, and bronze.

Ex 29: 28

These things shall be a perpetual ordinance for Aaron and his sons from the Israelites, for this is an offering (therumâh); and it shall be an offering by the Israelites from their sacrifice of offerings of well-being, their offering (therumâh) to the Lord.

Lev. 7: 34

For I have taken the breast of the elevation offering (tenuphâh), and the thigh that is offered (terumâh), from the people of Israel, from their sacrifices of well-being, and have given them to Aaron the priest and to his sons, as a perpetual due from the people of Israel.

Lev. 7: 14; 32

¹⁴ From this you shall offer one cake from each offering (terumâh), as a gift to the Lord; it shall belong to the priest who dashes the blood of the offering of well-being.

³² And the right thigh from your sacrifices of well-being you shall give to the priest as an offering (therumâh).

Lev. 10: 14-15

¹⁴ But the breast that is elevated (tenuphâh) and the thigh that is raised, you and your sons and daughters as well may eat in any clean place; for they have been assigned to you and your children from the sacrifices of the offerings (terumâh) of well-being of the people of Israel.

¹⁵ The thigh that is raised (terumâh) and the breast that is elevated (tenuphâh) they shall bring, together with the offerings by fire of the fat, to raise for an elevation offering (tenuphâh) before the Lord; they are to be your due and that of your children forever, as the Lord has commanded.

Num. 5: 9

Among all the sacred donations (vekhoh-terumâh lekhol-qodhsh) of the Israelites, every gift that they bring to the priest shall be his.

Num. 15: 19-21

¹⁹ whenever you eat of the bread of the land, you shall present a donation (therumâh) to the Lord.

²⁰ From your first batch of dough you shall present a loaf as a donation (therumâh); you shall present it just as you present a donation (therumâh) from the threshing floor.

²¹ Throughout your generations you shall give to the Lord a donation (therumâh) from the first of your batch of dough.

Num. 31: 29; 41; 52

²⁹ Take it from their half and give it to Eleazar the priest as an offering (terumath) to the Lord.

⁴¹ Moses gave the tribute, the offering (terumath) for the Lord, to Eleazar the priest, as the Lord had commanded Moses.

⁵² And all the gold of the offering (terumâh) that they offered to the Lord, from the commanders of thousands and the commanders of hundreds, was sixteen thousand seven hundred fifty shekels

Deut. 12: 6; 11; 17

⁶ ... bringing there your burnt offerings and your sacrifices, your tithes and your donations (terumath), your votive gifts, your freewill offerings, and the firstlings of your herds and

¹¹ ... then you shall bring everything that I command you to the place that the Lord your God will choose as a dwelling for his name: your burnt offerings and your sacrifices, your tithes and your donations (terumath), and all your choice votive gifts that you vow to the Lord.

¹⁷ Nor may you eat within your towns the tithe of your grain, your wine, and your oil, the firstlings of your herds and your flocks, any of your votive gifts that you vow, your freewill offerings, or your donations (terumath).

TENUPHAH

When the Hebrew Bible uses the word *tenüphâ* (*tenuphâh*; *tenuphoth*, in plural), it refers to the ‘wave offering’, that is, the offering that was presented by the priest to the Lord. In fact, both *tenüphâ* (*tenuphâh*) and *terumah* (*terümâh*; *terumath*) relate to the donations or contributions from the children of Israel to the Levites and to the high priest. The wave offering or elevation offering [*'othâm tenuphâh* or *ath-m thnuphe* (CHES-CVOT) – Lev. 7: 30; Lev. 14: 12] of meat or grain received this name, perhaps, to be moved before the Lord before being presented to Him. In Hebrew, the verb ‘eniph’ means ‘to move the offering, to wave the offering, to elevate the offering.’

According to *Lexicon Strong's Concordance*, *tenüphâ* (*tenuphâh* – wave offering) comes from the word ‘*tnuwphah*’: to brandish (in threat); by implication, tumult; specifically, the official undulation of sacrificial offerings: offering, shaking, wave (offering). The root of *tnuwphah* is *nuwph*: a primitive root; to quiver (i.e. vibrate up and down, or rock to and fro); used in a great variety of applications (including sprinkling, beckoning, rubbing, bastinadoing, sawing, waving, etc.): lift up, move, offer, perfume, send, shake, sift, strike, wave.

Ex 29: 27

You shall consecrate the breast that was raised (*tenuphâh*) as an elevation offering and the thigh that was raised (*terumâh*) as an elevation offering (*hunaph*), from the ram of ordination, from that which belonged to Aaron and his sons.

Hunaph comes from the root *eniph*. In Hebrew, the verb ‘eniph’ means ‘to move the offering.’

Lev. 7: 30

Your own hands shall bring the Lord's offering by fire (*'ishêy*); you shall bring the fat with the breast, so that the breast may be raised as an elevation offering (*'otho tenuphâh*) before the Lord.

Lev. 7: 34

For I have taken the breast of the elevation offering (*tenuphâh*), and the thigh that is offered (*terumâh*), from the people of Israel, from their sacrifices of well-being, and have given them to Aaron the priest and to his sons, as a perpetual due from the people of Israel.

Lev. 10: 14-15

¹⁴ But the breast (*chazêh*) that is elevated (*tenuphâh*) and the thigh (*shoq*) that is raised (*terumâh*), you and your sons and daughters as well may eat in any clean place; for they have been assigned to you and your children from the sacrifices of the offerings of well-being of the people of Israel.

¹⁵ The thigh that is raised and the breast that is elevated (*shoq hatterumâh vachazêh hattenuphâh*) they shall bring, together with the offerings by fire of the fat, to raise for an elevation offering before the Lord; they are to be your due and that of your children forever, as the Lord has commanded.

Lev. 14: 12

The priest shall take one of the lambs, and offer it as a guilt offering, along with the log of oil, and raise them as an elevation offering (*'othâm tenuphâh*) before the Lord.

Num. 8: 11

And Aaron shall present the Levites before the Lord as an elevation offering (tenuphâh) from the Israelites, that they may do the service of the Lord.

As it was said previously, in fact, both tenüphâ (tenuphâh) and terumah (terümâh; terumath) relate to the donations or contributions from the children of Israel to the Levites and to the high priest.

•• **The sacrifice of the cross replaced all these sacrifices**, having Jesus given of Himself as a lamb without blemish in our place to redeem us from sin and the curse of the Law. Let's comment a bit about this matter:

In creating man, God thought for him other purpose than death, but with the disobedience of Adam, death came as divine judgment:

- Gen. 2: 17: "but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die."
- Gen. 3: 19: "By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return."
- Rom. 5: 12-14: "Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death came through sin, and so death spread to all because all have sinned—sin was indeed in the world before the law, but sin is not reckoned when there is no law. Yet death exercised dominion from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sins were not like the transgression of Adam, who is a type of the one who was to come."

Therefore, Jesus suffered the death that our sins deserved.

One of the meanings of the word sin in Greek is hamartia = to err the target. But there are others like: adikia = iniquity, injustice; poneria = evil, of a vicious or degenerate kind; parabasis = transgression, to go beyond a known limit; anomia = lack of law, disrespect or violation of law.

In short, sin is the failure to love God with our whole being; it's the active refusal to recognize Him and obey Him as our Creator and Lord, independence, to claim the position that only God can occupy, hostility toward God (Rom. 8: 7, "For this reason the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law—indeed it cannot"), manifested in active rebellion against Him; to take from God what is His. And the bible says that without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins:

- Lev. 17: 11: "For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you for making atonement for your lives on the altar; for, as life, it is the blood that makes atonement."
- Heb. 9: 22: "Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins."

Blood is the symbol of life usually completed by violent means. It's worth remembering that who started it was the man, and God was not pleased with this act:

- Gen. 4: 10-11: "And the Lord said, 'What have you done? Listen; your brother's blood is crying out to me from the ground! And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand.'"

Thus, the blood was a means of atonement provided by God Himself, for His love of man lest to keep him away from Him:

- Lev. 16: 3: "Thus shall Aaron come into the holy place: with a young bull for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering."

- Lev. 16: 5-6: “He shall take from the congregation of the people of Israel two male goats for a sin offering and one ram for a burnt offering. Aaron shall offer the bull as a sin offering for himself, and shall make atonement for himself and for his house.”

- Lev. 16: 9-10: “Aaron shall present the goat on which the lot fell for the Lord, and offer it as a sin offering; but the goat on which the lot fell for Azazel [NIV, scapegoat] shall be presented alive before the Lord to make atonement over it, that it may be sent away into the wilderness to Azazel [NIV, scapegoat].”

- Ezek. 18: 23; 32: “Have I any pleasure in the death of the wicked, says the Lord God, and not rather that they should turn from their ways and live? For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, says the Lord God. Turn, then, and live.”

- Ezek. 33: 11: “Say to them, As I live, says the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from their ways and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways; for why will you die, O house of Israel?”

But the bible also says it is impossible for the blood of goats and bulls take sins away (Heb. 10: 4: “For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins”); **that’s why Jesus came as innocent blood to make atonement for all our sins and iniquities.** He alone was adequate for this atonement:

- 1 Pe. 1: 19-20: “but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without defect or blemish. He was destined before the foundation of the world, but was revealed at the end of the ages for your sake.”

Our substitute, who took our place and died our death, was **God Himself in Christ** who was truly and fully God and man. His will and the Father’s were always in perfect harmony:

- Jn. 4: 34: “Jesus said to them, ‘My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work.’”

- Jn. 5: 30: “I can do nothing on my own. As I hear, I judge [*as man, He could do nothing, just with the divine action upon Him*]; and my judgment is just, because I seek to do not my own will but the will of him who sent me.”

- Jn. 6: 38-40: “for I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. This is indeed the will of my Father, that all who see the Son and believe in him may have eternal life; and I will raise them up on the last day.”

- Jn. 7: 17: “Anyone who resolves to do the will of God will know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on my own.”

- Jn. 17: 24: “Father, I desire that those also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory, which you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.”

- Matt. 26: 39; 42: “And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed, ‘My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but what you want’... Again he went away for the second time and prayed, ‘My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done.’”

- Mk. 14: 36: “He said, ‘Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want, but what you want.’”

- Lk. 22: 41-42: “Then he withdrew from them about a stone’s throw, knelt down, and prayed, ‘Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me; yet, not my will but yours be done.’”

- Phil. 2: 6-8: “who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being

born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross.”

The Father was acting through the Son:

- Jn. 3: 16: “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.”

- 1 Jn. 1: 8-10: “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.”

- 1 Jn. 2: 1-2: “My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.”

- 1 Jn. 4: 10: “In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins.”

Instead of inflicting upon us the punishment that we deserved, God in Christ endured it in our place for us to be clothed with His righteousness:

- 2 Cor. 5: 21: “For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”

The wrath of God is His steady, constant, continuous and uncommitted antagonism toward sin in all its forms and manifestations:

Rom. 1: 18: “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of those who by their wickedness suppress the truth [NIV: The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness].”

The wrath of God should be propitiated.

It’s interesting what is written in Ps. 2: 12, because it is one more Messianic Psalm (Acts 13: 33; Heb. 1: 5; Heb. 5: 5) where the words ‘Anointed’ (see v. 2) and ‘Son’ (vs. 7 and 12) are written with capital letter (NIV; ARA). Although in the OT, the words ‘anointed’ and ‘son’ refer often to the kings, we can see that in v.2 it is written: “The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and his anointed, saying” [NIV: ‘His Anointed One’, with capital letter]. And in v. 12, the psalmist says: “Kiss the Son, lest he be angry and you be destroyed in your way, for his wrath can flare up in a moment. Blessed are all who take refuge in him.” This means that rejecting the Son of God, Jesus, the Anointed, the Messiah, brings the wrath of God, moreover, death (‘destroyed in your way’ [NIV] or ‘perish in the way’ [NRSV]).

Through His sacrifice we got the redemption of our sins:

- 1 Cor. 1: 30: “He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption.”

- Heb. 9: 15: “For this reason he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, because a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions under the first covenant.”

To redeem is to buy back, either as a commercial transaction or as a ransom. We were redeemed by Christ, not merely freed:

- 1 Cor. 6: 20: “For you were bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body.”

We were redeemed from guilt and judgment, therefore, we are His:

- Rom. 3: 24-25: “are now justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a sacrifice of atonement by his blood, effective through faith. He did this to show his righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over the sins previously committed.”

- 1 Cor. 6: 19-20: “Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you were bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body.”

- 1 Cor. 7: 23: “You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of human masters.”

- Eph. 1: 7: “In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace.”

- 1 Pe. 1: 18-19: “You know that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your ancestors, not with perishable things like silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without defect or blemish.”

- Rev. 5: 9: “They sing a new song: ‘You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slaughtered and by your blood you ransomed for God saints from every tribe and language and people and nation.’”

Through the sacrifice of Jesus, we also have been justified, that is, we were forgiven, accepted, right with God:

- Rom. 3: 26: “It was to prove at the present time that he himself is righteous and that he justifies the one who has faith in Jesus.”

- Rom. 5: 9: “Much more surely then, now that we have been justified by his blood, will we be saved through him from the wrath of God.”

- Rom. 6: 7: “For whoever has died is freed from sin.”

- Rom. 8: 1: “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”

- Rom. 8: 33: “Who will bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies.”

Man is not justified by works of law but through faith:

- Rom. 7: 4-6: “In the same way, my friends, you have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead in order that we may bear fruit for God. While we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death. But now we are discharged from the law, dead to that which held us captive, so that we are slaves not under the old written code but in the new life of the Spirit.”

- Gal. 2: 16: “yet we know that a person is justified not by the works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ. And we have come to believe in Christ Jesus, so that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by doing the works of the law, because no one will be justified by the works of the law.”

- Gal. 3: 6-14: “Just as Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness, so, you see, those who believe are the descendants of Abraham. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, declared the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, ‘All the Gentiles shall be blessed in you.’ For this reason, those who believe are blessed with Abraham who believed. For all who rely on

the works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who does not observe and obey all the things written in the book of the law’ (Deut. 27: 26). Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law; for ‘The one who is righteous will live by faith.’ But the law does not rest on faith; on the contrary, ‘Whoever does the works of the law will live by them’ (Lev. 18: 5). Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree’—in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.”

- Eph. 2: 8-9: “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God—not the result of works, so that no one may boast.”

- Tit. 3: 5: “he saved us, not because of any works of righteousness that we had done, but according to his mercy, through the water of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.”

Through the sacrifice of Jesus that propitiated us, redeemed us and justified us, we were also **reconciled with God** and men. God is the author of reconciliation. The barrier between us and God was constituted both by our disobedience to Him and by His wrath on us because of our attitude. The work of reconciliation is a finished work; it is already done from God’s part. Our part is to accept His sacrifice and repent of sins to be reconciled with Him. God is the author; Christ is the agent and we are ambassadors of His reconciliation:

- Rom. 5: 9-11: “Much more surely then, now that we have been justified by his blood, will we be saved through him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more surely, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life. But more than that, we even boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.”

- Rom. 8: 15-17: “For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, ‘Abba! Father!’ it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ—if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.”

- 2 Cor. 5: 18-20: “All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.”

- Eph. 2: 16: “and might reconcile both groups [*Jews and Gentiles*] to God in one body through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it.”

When we are His, through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, we can bring other lives that are in sin to be reconciled with Him. In 2 Cor. 5: 19 the bible says that He gave us the word of reconciliation. By ministering His word to the needy, to those who are in distress, we are bringing these people back to a state of beatitude.

Thus, the achievement of the cross included the salvation of sinners through the atonement of sin, redemption, justification and reconciliation. In other words, His sacrifice replaced all the ancient sacrifices.

10

Eglah Arufah



In this text we'll study about Eglah Arufah, one of the rituals of the OT described by Moses (Deut. 21: 1-9). Whenever a murder case had no obvious guilty, a heifer (*`eglah*) that had not worked or pulled in the yoke was taken to a valley of flowing streams that was neither plowed nor sown, and there it was sacrificed (To break the neck = *`araph*). The elders of the nearest town to the man who was slain washed their hands over the dead animal as a sign of innocence in face of that murder.

It is worth remembering that the AT was a 'shadow' of the NT (Col. 2: 16-17; Heb. 10: 1), that is, a 'sketch' of the spiritual reality lived in the NT. Both rituals described in the Torah (Eglah Arufah and Para Aduma) symbolize something simple given by God so that man could understand His will. As the vision of that time was worldly and material, God needed to teach through physical things. People needed symbols, tangible things to believe in the Lord. That's why Jeremiah, Isaiah and Ezekiel staged their prophecies. Today, we have an understanding of unseen things.

Eglah Arufah and Para Aduma have a meaning for us Christians.

- Deut. 21: 1-9: "If, in the land that the Lord your God is giving you to possess, a body is found lying in open country, and it is not known who struck the person down, then your elders and your judges shall come out to measure the distances to the towns that are near the body. The elders of the town nearest the body shall take a heifer (*`eglah*) that has never been worked, one that has not pulled in the yoke; the elders of that town shall bring the heifer down to a wadi with running water, which is neither plowed nor sown, and shall break (*`araph*) the heifer's neck there in the wadi. Then the priests, the sons of Levi, shall come forward, for the Lord your God has chosen them to minister to him and to pronounce blessings in the name of the Lord, and by their decision all cases of dispute and assault shall be settled. All the elders of that town nearest the body shall wash their hands over the heifer whose neck was broken in the wadi, and they shall declare: 'Our hands did not shed this blood, nor were we witnesses to it. Absolve, O Lord, your people Israel, whom you redeemed; do not let the guilt of innocent blood remain in the midst of your people Israel.' Then they will be absolved of bloodguilt. So you shall purge the guilt of innocent blood from your midst, because you must do what is right in the sight of the Lord."

Here we can see a parallel with what happened to Jesus. A heifer or young bull without blemish was the animal sacrificed in the case of the sin offering of the high priest, the priests (Lev. 8: 14-15; Lev. 4: 3) or the congregation (Lev. 4: 13-14; Num. 15: 24-25). Jesus is our high priest who offered Himself as a sacrifice for our sin (as kings and priests, as the bible says we are).

A heifer instead of a young bull is a female figure of a congregation, a nation, the people of God, the repentant Church, the children of God as priests and kings on earth ("holy nation of kings and priests" – 1 Pet. 2: 9: "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light").

In the case of the heifer, it was taken to a valley of running waters, for the water symbolizes the purification of men, acquitting them from guilt. The blood would make atonement for sin. Who killed Jesus were not the Jews or the Romans, but the sins of all mankind. So when Jesus had already died and the Jews claimed His body before Pilate, a soldier pierced His side with a spear, and from there came out blood and water. The blood confirmed that the atonement for our sins and our guilt was completed; and the water showed that the stain left by them before God was washed by the Holy Spirit, acquitting men.



- Jn. 19: 31-37: “Since it was the day of Preparation, the Jews did not want the bodies left on the cross during the Sabbath, especially because that Sabbath was a day of great solemnity. So they asked Pilate to have the legs of the crucified men broken and the bodies removed. Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who had been crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once blood and water came out. (He who saw this has testified so that you also may believe. His testimony is true, and he knows that he tells the truth). These things occurred so that the scripture might be fulfilled, ‘None of his bones shall be broken.’ And again, another passage of scripture says, ‘They will look on the one whom they have pierced.’”

Pilate also performed the same ritual when he washed his hands, acquitting himself from the responsibility for Jesus’ death:



- Matt. 27: 24-25: “So when Pilate saw that he could do nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took some water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, ‘I am innocent of this man’s blood; see to it yourselves.’ Then the people as a whole answered, ‘His blood be on us and on our children!’”

In saying this, the people did not know that they were assuming before the Father and the spiritual world the guilt for the death of the Messiah; so, the Jewish people to this day carry the weight of the curse of the law over themselves: for rejecting the Messiah and for having assumed the blame for His death. Only when they repent before God, they will be freed from the yoke.

- Jn. 3: 36: “Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever disobeys the Son will not see life, but must endure God’s wrath.”

- 1 Jn. 2: 22-23: “Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son. No one who denies the Son has the Father; everyone who confesses the Son has the Father also.”

- 1 Jn. 4: 2-3; 6: “By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. And this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming; and now it is already in the world ... We are from God. Whoever

knows God listens to us, and whoever is not from God does not listen to us. From this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.”

- 1 Jn. 5: 11-12: “And this is the testimony: God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.”

- Gal. 3: 10-11; 13-14: “For all who rely on the works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who does not observe and obey all the things written in the book of the law (Deut. 27: 26).’ Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law; for ‘The one who is righteous will live by faith.’... Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree’—in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.”

A comment about the expression ‘bloodstain’ or ‘bloodguilt’ or ‘guilt of blood’ often written in the bible

In the verse of Deuteronomy in the beginning of the text it is written: “‘Absolve, O Lord, your people Israel, whom you redeemed; do not let **the guilt of innocent blood** remain in the midst of your people Israel.’ Then they will be absolved of **bloodguilt**. So you shall purge **the guilt of innocent blood** from your midst, because you must do what is right in the sight of the Lord.” (Deut. 21: 8-9).

When the Bible speaks of ‘bloodstain’ or ‘bloodguilt’; in other versions, ‘the guilt of shedding innocent blood’, ‘the guilt of blood’, ‘hands stained with blood’ or ‘the guilt of innocent blood’, it usually refers to the shedding of innocent blood; a murder where often the culprit was not found, but God knew who had committed it and, in His eyes, it never went unpunished.

When I wrote about the parapets on the roofs of ancient houses in Isa. 22: 1, I mentioned a verse from Deuteronomy where the Lord instructed His people on how to properly build their houses so that no one would die accidentally because of someone else’s negligence and thus not bring ‘bloodguilt’ upon that family. The verse says: “When you build a new house, you shall make a parapet for your roof; otherwise you might have **bloodguilt** on your house, if anyone should fall from it.” (Deut. 22: 8).

Other Bible verses speak about ‘bloodguilt’:

- Lev. 17: 3-4: “If anyone of the house of Israel slaughters an ox or a lamb or a goat in the camp, or slaughters it outside the camp, and does not bring it to the entrance of the tent of meeting, to present it as an offering to the Lord before the tabernacle of the Lord, he shall be held **guilty of bloodshed**; he has shed blood, and he shall be cut off from the people.”

- Deut. 19: 13: “Show no pity [*toward the murderer*]; you shall purge **the guilt of innocent blood** [NIV: ‘**the shedding of innocent blood**’] from Israel, so that it may go well with you.”

- 2 Sam. 21: 1: “Now there was a famine in the days of David for three years, year after year; and David inquired of the Lord. The Lord said, ‘There is **bloodguilt** on Saul and on his house, because he put the Gibeonites to death.’”

- 1 Kin. 2: 31-33: “The king [*Solomon*] replied to him [*Benaia*], ‘Do as he [*Joab, who fled to the tent of the Lord and grasped the horns of the altar*] has said, strike him down and bury him; and thus take away from me and from my father’s house **the guilt for the blood** that Joab shed without cause. The Lord will bring back **his bloody deeds** on his own head, because, without the knowledge of my father David, he attacked and

killed with the sword two men more righteous and better than himself, Abner son of Ner, commander of the army of Israel, and Amasa son of Jether, commander of the army of Judah. So shall **their blood come back on the head of Joab** and on the head of his descendants forever; but to David, and to his descendants, and to his house, and to his throne, there shall be peace from the Lord forevermore.”

- Isa. 59: 3: “For your **hands are stained with blood**, your fingers with guilt. Your lips have spoken falsely, and your tongue mutters wicked things.” (NIV).

“For your **hands are defiled with blood**, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue mutters wickedness.” (NRSV).

- Jer. 26: 15: “Only know for certain that if you put me to death, you will be **bringing innocent blood upon** yourselves and upon this city and its inhabitants, for in truth the Lord sent me to you to speak all these words in your ears.” (NRSV).

“Be assured, however, that if you put me to death, you will bring **the guilt of innocent blood** on yourselves and on this city and on those who live in it, for in truth the LORD has sent me to you to speak all these words in your hearing.” (NIV)

- Ezek. 22: 13: “See, I strike my hands together at the dishonest gain you have made, and at the **blood that has been shed** within you [*He was talking about Jerusalem*].”

- Ezek. 23: 37; 45: “For they [*Oholah = Samaria, and Oholibah = Jerusalem*] have committed adultery, and **blood is on their hands**; with their idols they have committed adultery; and they have even offered up to them for food the children whom they had borne to me... But righteous judges shall declare them **guilty** of adultery and of **bloodshed**; because they are adulteresses and **blood is on their hands**.”

- Ezek. 24: 7: “For **the blood** she [*Jerusalem*] **shed** is inside it; she placed it on a bare rock; she did not pour it out on the ground, to cover it with earth.”

In Lk. 21: 20-24, when Jesus speaks about the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, the bible writes: “²⁰ When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation has come near. ²¹ Then those in Judea must flee to the mountains, and those inside the city must leave it, and those out in the country must not enter it; ²² **for these are days of vengeance, as a fulfillment of all that is written.** ²³ Woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing infants in those days! For there will be great distress on the earth and wrath against this people; ²⁴ they will fall by the edge of the sword and be taken away as captives among all nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled” (cf. Matt. 21: 43; Rom. 11: 25; Rev. 11: 2).

It’s interesting that Luke says, “for these are days of vengeance, as a fulfillment of all that is written.” This was not a coincidence, but rather a consequence of the sin and unbelief of the Jews and an evident rejection of Jesus as the Messiah rejection of Jesus as the Messiah and the Son of God. He had already warned them about this punishment from God:

- Lk. 13: 34-35: “Yet today, tomorrow, and the next day I must be on my way, because it is impossible for a prophet to be killed outside of Jerusalem. ‘Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!’”

- Lk. 19: 41-44: “As he came near and saw the city, he wept over it, saying, ‘If you, even you, had only recognized on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. Indeed, the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up ramparts around you and surround you, and hem you in on every side. They

will crush you to the ground, you and your children within you, and they will not leave within you one stone upon another; because you did not recognize the time of your visitation from God.”

“But when you see the desolating sacrilege set up where it ought not to be” (Mk. 13: 14) or “So when you see the desolating sacrilege standing in the holy place, as was spoken of by the prophet Daniel” (Matt. 24: 15) or “When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation has come near” (Lk. 21: 20) – this refers to Titus entering the Temple, desecrating it, as Antiochus IV Epiphanes did in the past.

And all this was under God’s control because of their rebellion and hardened hearts in the face of the chance for salvation that He had given them through Jesus (“for these are days of vengeance, as a fulfillment of all that is written... For there will be great distress on the earth and wrath against this people”).

Were the Jews aware of what they were saying: “So when Pilate saw that he could do nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took some water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, ‘I am innocent of this man’s blood; see to it yourselves.’ Then the people as a whole answered, ‘His blood be on us and on our children!’” (Matt. 27: 24-25)?

This makes us reflect on what God feels about attitudes of idolatry, rebellion and rejection of Jesus Christ by a person and on the strength of His wrath against evil in all ages of humanity, even more so in the last days!

11

Para Aduma



The ritual of Para Aduma is described in Num. 19: 1-22. From the ashes of a red heifer without blemish and without spot was made the water of cleansing, sprinkled over the unclean by sin, especially for having touched a corpse.

It is worth remembering that the AT was a ‘shadow’ of the NT (Col. 2: 16-17; Heb. 10: 1), that is, a ‘sketch’ of the spiritual reality lived in the NT. Both rituals described in the Torah (Eglah Arufah and Para Aduma) symbolize something simple given by God so that man could understand His will. As the vision of that time was worldly and material, God needed to teach through physical things. People needed symbols, tangible things to believe in the Lord. That’s why Jeremiah, Isaiah and Ezekiel staged their prophecies. Today, we have an understanding of unseen things.

Eglah Arufah and Para Aduma have a meaning for us Christians.

Num. 19: 1-22: “The Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying: This is a statute of the law that the Lord has commanded: Tell the Israelites to bring you a red (adom = rosy, red, ruddy, אָדָם, Strong #122, like Adam, ’adhām = man, ruddy, mankind, Strong #120, which comes from the same Hebrew root: ’adhāmâ, meaning earth) heifer (parah, cow, heifer, kine [cows collectively; archaic], פָּרָה, Strong #6510) without defect, in which there is no blemish and on which no yoke has been laid. You shall give it to the priest Eleazar, and it shall be taken outside the camp and slaughtered in his presence. The priest Eleazar shall take some of its blood with his finger and sprinkle it seven times towards the front of the tent of meeting. Then the heifer shall be burned in his sight; its skin, its flesh, and its blood, with its dung, shall be burned. The priest shall take cedarwood, hyssop, and crimson material, and throw them into the fire in which the heifer is burning. Then the priest shall wash his clothes and bathe his body in water, and afterwards he may come into the camp; but the priest shall remain unclean until evening. The one who burns the heifer shall wash his clothes in water and bathe his body in water; he shall remain unclean until evening. Then someone who is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer, and deposit them outside the camp in a clean place; and they shall be kept for the congregation of the Israelites for the water for cleansing. It is a purification offering. The one who gathers the ashes of the heifer shall wash his clothes and be unclean until evening. This shall be a perpetual statute for the Israelites

and for the alien residing among them. Those who touch the dead body of any human being shall be unclean seven days. They shall purify themselves with the water on the third day and on the seventh day, and so be clean; but if they do not purify themselves on the third day and on the seventh day, they will not become clean. All who touch a corpse, the body of a human being who has died, and do not purify themselves, defile the tabernacle of the Lord; such persons shall be cut off from Israel. Since water for cleansing was not dashed on them, they remain unclean; their uncleanness is still on them. This is the law when someone dies in a tent: everyone who comes into the tent, and everyone who is in the tent, shall be unclean seven days. And every open vessel with no cover fastened on it is unclean. Whoever in the open field touches one who has been killed by a sword, or who has died naturally, or a human bone, or a grave, shall be unclean seven days. For the unclean they shall take some ashes of the burnt purification offering, and running water shall be added in a vessel; then a clean person shall take hyssop, dip it in the water, and sprinkle it on the tent, on all the furnishings, on the persons who were there, and on whoever touched the bone, the slain, the corpse, or the grave. The clean person shall sprinkle the unclean ones on the third day and on the seventh day, thus purifying them on the seventh day. Then they shall wash their clothes and bathe themselves in water, and at evening they shall be clean. Any who are unclean but do not purify themselves, those persons shall be cut off from the assembly, for they have defiled the sanctuary of the Lord. Since the water for cleansing has not been dashed on them, they are unclean. It shall be a perpetual statute for them. The one who sprinkles the water for cleansing shall wash his clothes, and whoever touches the water for cleansing shall be unclean until evening. Whatever the unclean person touches shall be unclean, and anyone who touches it shall be unclean until evening.”

From the ashes of a red heifer without blemish and without spot was made the water of cleansing, sprinkled over the unclean by sin, especially for having touched a corpse.

The young bull was the animal sacrificed as a sin offering of the high priest (Lev. 8: 14-15; Lev. 4: 3), the priests or the congregation (Lev. 4: 13-14; Num. 15: 24-25). The red heifer without blemish and without spot was a sign of the coming of the Messiah. Jesus, Yeshua, the Messiah has already come and has cleansed us through His blood from the death generated for our sins.

A heifer instead of a young bull is a female figure of a congregation, a nation, the people of God, the repentant Church, the children of God as priests and kings on earth (“holy nation of kings and priests” – 1 Pet. 2: 9: “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light”).

God left this commandment so that His people, the Church did the same: for them to learn to sacrifice themselves through repentance (ashes) and were aware of the depth of Jesus’ sacrifice and His forgiveness through His blood as a permanent replacement of the animals for purification of sins (‘dead things’), which leads us to spiritual death (eternal separation from God).

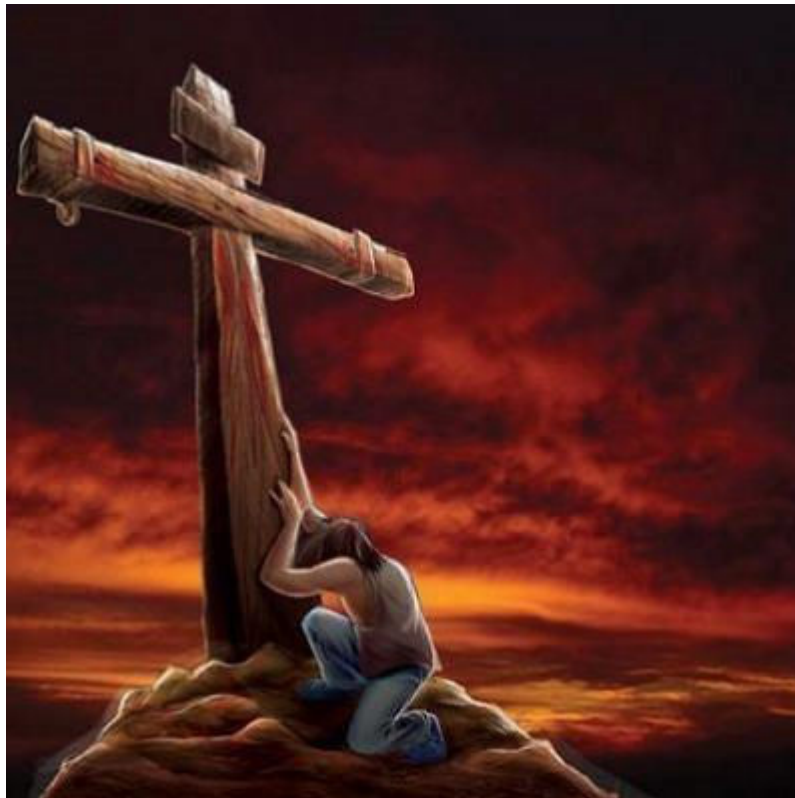
The ashes mean: wreckage of which was destroyed by fire; ruins, remains, memory (of the dead), scraps or memories of extinct things, mortifications, penances (sackcloth and ashes), repentance, what no longer had reason to be within our being and was given to the Lord in prayer (Lev. 6: 11 – To remove the ashes from the altar).

The ashes of the heifer mixed with the water were sprinkled on the unclean person, for having touched a corpse (symbol of sin), and he (she) became clean again.

That’s why Jesus said to Nicodemus (Jn 3: 3; 5) that for him to see the kingdom of God it was necessary to be born again, to be born from the water (repentance) and the

Spirit (a real change and sanctification). He also said on Jn 9: 39: “I came into this world for judgment so that those who do not see may see, and those who do see may become blind.” And then it’s written: “Some of the Pharisees near him heard this and said to him, ‘Surely we are not blind, are we?’ Jesus said to them, ‘If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, ‘We see’, your sin remains”” (Jn. 9: 40-41) – [cf. Rom. 4: 15: For the law brings wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there violation]. Jesus meant that He came for those who are aware of their sin and repent of it; then, under His blood, forgiven and justified, they no longer suffer charges. However, for those who are blinded by pride, arrogance and rebellion, the Lord makes His light shine and their sins become evident before their eyes.

The water is symbol of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God, which cleanses us and performs the new birth in us. In Jn. 19: 30 it is written: “When Jesus had received the wine, he said, ‘It is finished.’ Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit” once again affirming that through Jesus all the prophecies of the OT were fulfilled.



12

The Gates of the Old City of Jerusalem

In this study we will understand a little about the walls and gates of the Old City of Jerusalem and why God spoke about its restoration in Isa. 54: 11-12 (NRSV), “O afflicted one, storm-tossed, and not comforted, I am about to set your stones in antimony [NIV: stones of turquoise], and lay your foundations with sapphires. I will make your pinnacles [NIV: your battlements] of rubies, your gates of jewels, and all your wall of precious stones.”

These verses of Isaiah not only speak of a spiritual restoration soon after the return from captivity in Babylon and after the 1st coming of Jesus but they make it clear that is about the New Jerusalem, the heavenly city where Jews and Gentiles will live together, having Jesus as their eternal Tabernacle (Rev. 21: 2-4; 22; 27).

The verses of Isaiah quoted above (Isa. 54: 11-12) are a description of the walls and doors of the Holy City as it is written in Rev 21: 16; 18-21 (NRSV): “The city lies foursquare, its length the same as its width; and he measured the city with his rod, fifteen hundred miles; its length and width and height are equal [*a perfect cube, as was the Holy of Holies – my comment*]... The wall is built of jasper, while the city is pure gold, clear as glass. The foundations of the wall of the city are adorned with every jewel; the first was jasper, the second sapphire [*the oldest name of ‘lapis lazuli’, not the modern Sapphire*], the third agate [NIV: chalcedony], the fourth emerald, the fifth onyx [NIV: sardonyx], the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, the twelfth amethyst. And the twelve gates are twelve pearls, each of the gates is a single pearl, and the street of the city is pure gold, transparent as glass.”

Some stones have different translations for lack of better knowledge of the subject in Ancient times; so many names used in Hebrew and Greek can bring confusion. For example: sardius (or carnelian, a brown variety of chalcedony), garnet (mistranslated as: sardonyx or emerald), carbuncle (sometimes mistranslated as emerald), diamond (mistranslated as chalcedony, when in fact it was onyx), agate (translated as chrysoprase, a light green chalcedony), chrysolite (actually the ancient name for topaz).

Interestingly, John, in describing the stones of the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21: 18-21), described stones very similar to those used by Moses in Ex 39: 8-14, when he mentioned the stones used in the breastpiece of the robes of the high priest, symbolizing the twelve tribes of Israel, but none of them wrote the word ‘ruby’ or ‘rubies.’ In Isaiah 54: 12, the word ‘ruby’ was thus translated as an alternative when no other Hebrew or Greek word has yet been translated in other ways. The Hebrew word in this text is *kad·kōd* or *kadhkōdh* (Strong #3539, which means: a precious stone, perhaps ruby). The KJV translates as *agate*. The word *kad·kōd* is only seen again in the bible in Ezek. 27: 16. NIV writes: “Aram [NRSV: Edom]) did business with you because of your many products; they exchanged **turquoise** [Strong #5306, *nophek*; from an unused root meaning to glisten; shining; a gem, probably the **garnet** – KJV translates as ‘**emerald**’], purple fabric, embroidered work, fine linen, coral and **rubies** [Strong #3539 *kadkod*, a sparkling gem, probably the ruby; KJV maintains the translation ‘agate.’] for your merchandise.”



It is also written in Isaiah chapter 26 (Isa. 26: 1-2): “On that day this song will be sung in the land of Judah: We have a strong city; he sets up victory like walls and bulwarks. Open the gates, so that the righteous nation that keeps faith may enter in.” – NRSV.

“In that day this song will be sung in the land of Judah: We have a strong city; God makes salvation its walls and ramparts. Open the gates that the righteous nation may enter, the nation that keeps faith.” – NIV.

‘On that day’ (Isa. 26: 1) seems to mean the time of the Gospel, and Jerusalem will be a strong city, for God makes salvation its walls and ramparts (or Bulwarks). Rampart, or bulwark, is a defensive wall, an impregnable fortress, safe place, support. The Messiah is a salvation figure for Israel. Therefore, this verse is not only a song of gratitude to God for the deliverance of His people from the Babylonian yoke, but also a prophecy about Jesus, placed in Jerusalem as a strong wall against the enemies of Christ’s Church: religiosity and hypocrisy, idolatry and false teaching, false prophecies and darkness with the appearance of light. His presence makes the city impregnable as a

fortress. God's word of salvation was already a shield to protect His people. Solomon's temple lasted 380 years (it began construction in 966 BC and fell to the Babylonians in 586 BC). The second temple lasted for 517 years (from 536 BC, when Cyrus II authorized its construction, until Herod the Great began rebuilding it in 19 BC). In 63 BC, the Roman general Pompey invaded the temple built by Zerubbabel, but did not destroy it. Herod's renovation was completed in 64 AD, during the time of Agrippa. This temple lasted until 70 AD with the fall of Jerusalem to Titus; therefore, 89 years. "Second Temple" is a designation used for both the temples of Zerubbabel and Herod. In total, the second temple (Zerubbabel and Herod) lasted 606 years (536 BC to 70 AD).

'Open the gates, so that the righteous nation that keeps faith may enter in' (Isa. 26: 1-2) means that the city gates would remain open to receive a righteous and faithful nation, the God-fearing ones. Let sinners be then encouraged to unite with the Lord.

In this study, we will see that over the centuries Jerusalem suffered successive invasions and its walls were destroyed, hence the hope of a restoration from God for His afflicted people (Isa. 54: 11-12).

This also has to do with the restoration of our soul, because when the bible mentions 'Jerusalem', it is speaking of the 'walls' and the protection of our soul. Making a parallel the walls of Jerusalem, our soul also suffered destruction while we were in the world and away from Jesus, but when He rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son (Col. 1: 13), our reconstruction has begun and nothing and no one else has the right to destroy us. Therefore, we can say that the Jews and Jerusalem, the current material city, also have a promise of rescue and reconstruction on the part of God when they come to seek Him with all their heart.

When we read about the various destruction and reconstructions of the city and its walls by different Gentile empires and rulers, we can understand what the Bible says about the definitive restoration being possible only after the full number of the Gentiles has come in ('until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled' – both in terms of the number of Gentiles saved and the time God gave the wicked to do as they pleased with Jerusalem). The gospel of Christ was preached exclusively to the Jews until 33 AD, completing the sixty nine of Dan. 9: 24-26, when the first martyrs such as James and Stephen appeared (the last week of seven years, which complete the seventy weeks of Dan. 9: 24-26, refers to the period of the Great Tribulation). After Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans (Titus) in 70 AD, the time of God's covenant with the Jews was consummated and the time of God's kingdom for the Gentiles began:

- Matt. 21: 43: "Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that produces the fruits of the kingdom."

- Lk. 21: 24: "They [*The Jews*] will fall by the edge of the sword and be taken away as captives among all nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled."

- Rom. 11: 25: "So that you may not claim to be wiser than you are, brothers and sisters, I want you to understand this mystery: a hardening has come upon part of Israel, until the full number of the Gentiles has come in."

This makes us understand that it is about the total number of all Gentiles who are saved. The 'mystery' that Paul refers to is that Israel was temporarily and partially hardened, but God did not reject them. He temporarily took the kingdom of God out of Israel (for rejecting His Son – Matt. 21: 43; Matt. 27: 25) and gave it to the Gentiles who accepted it, and Israel will only receive it back after they repent and seek the Messiah.

In this way, the covenant with Israel will only be restored at the second coming of Christ, when through repentance, they begin to claim the name of Jesus (Lk. 13: 34-35; Matt. 23: 37-39; Acts 1: 6-7; Rom. 11: 26-27). “Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! See, your house is left to you. And I tell you, you will not see me until the time comes when you say, ‘Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.’” (Lk. 13: 34-35)

So, the meaning of the stones in the Jerusalem promised by God to Isaiah and the comparison that is made with the New Jerusalem (the heavenly city) is a promise of reward for a city that was destroyed for millennia, who knew what outrage and mockery, indignity and shame are. In Ancient times, the city gate was not only a point of honor in a fortified city, but it was the place where judges and elders sat; it was the center of commercial and legal activities (Rut. 4: 1-2; 11-12; Job 29: 7-17; Judg. 16: 3). The gates and walls of the fortified cities were their defense, their protection, and also a symbol of power and authority against the advance of the enemy (Neh. 1: 3; 3-5; 17), opportunity and permission to do something (Isa. 45: 2-3; 1 Cor. 16: 9; Col. 4: 3-4). Gates are also a symbol of divine protection (Ps. 147: 13-14), as well as new opportunities given by Him for us to know more about what is reserved for us, for example, His kingdom (Matt. 25: 34; Ps. 24: 9); or else, to let in the blessings that He bestows on our lives (Isa. 26: 2-3).

Thus, in giving this promise to His people through the prophet Isaiah (Isa. 54: 11-12), God was promising them a restoration of their position as God’s chosen before the nations, a hope that with the coming of the Messiah they would understand much more than they had understood and lived until then. This promise was fulfilled spiritually at Jesus’ first coming, but few Jews realized it because they expected a material kingdom. They are still waiting for this material kingdom with the 2nd coming of the Messiah. However, the Lord may not bring a material kingdom like the one they are imagining, but He may open the eyes of their heart to realize that the New Jerusalem that the Lord promises is spiritual, where all the precious stones, gates, buildings and squares of gold are the symbol of the kingdom of God in all His majesty, and it will be available to all who hear His call and respond positively to Him. Therefore, there is still a chance to be restored; there is still a chance to be avenged because of the injustice we suffered in a world of darkness.

However, there is also something important for us believers today in relation to everything we’ve read and still expect from God in our own lifetimes, here on earth. When we study the book of Nehemiah, we can see that it is a book that talks about restoration of ‘walls’; restoration of our personality, emotional balance, of relationships; in short, of what was already been lost in the soul. Nehemiah means ‘God comforts’ or ‘God consoles.’ Through this book, God calls us to build our souls and our lives where our walls have been destroyed. And here in Isaiah 54 (the whole chapter, but especially verses 11-12), we are also receiving in our present the promise of restoration of everything that our soul has lost. Just remember the definition above about walls and gates. The prophet wrote in figurative language what an afflicted soul and not comforted feels away from the presence of God, but he also speaks of the hope and security that it feels when it sees itself strengthened and justified by God: “O afflicted one, storm-tossed, and not comforted, I am about to set your stones in antimony, and lay your foundations with sapphires. I will make your pinnacles [NIV: your battlements] of rubies, your gates of jewels, and all your wall of precious stones.”

Thus, the precious stones and the walls and gates repaired from all damage represent: dignity and honor, respect, majesty, royalty, glory, wealth, something

precious, ‘ornaments’, that is, spiritual gifts poured out in abundance on all who have experienced the storms, the destruction, weeping and defeat, but kept their faith firm in a God who does not lie and who is able to turn back with mercy to those who repent and begin to seek Him with all their heart. Rev. 21: 27 adds: “But nothing unclean will enter it [*John refers to the New Jerusalem*], nor anyone who practices abomination or falsehood, but only those who are written in the Lamb’s book of life.” Therefore, just as in the Heavenly New Jerusalem there will be purity and holiness, when our souls are restored by God’s forgiveness and by the strength we receive from Him to remake our thoughts, feelings and the way we behave, the impure things of the world will no longer enter our soul. There will be holiness in our lives, for we know the truth and the will of the Lord. Although we are living in an imperfect world and experience some moments of distress, we can be sure that one day it will all end.

The word Jerusalem (in Hebrew: יְרוּשָׁלַיִם Yerushālayim) has an uncertain origin. In the 14th century BC, long before Jerusalem became an Israelite city, being part of Assyria, the city was named Urusalim (Ur-sa-li-im-mu), which in Assyrian means ‘city of peace.’ Some believe it is a combination of the words ‘yerusha’ (legacy) and ‘Shalom’ (peace), meaning a legacy of peace. Others say it is the combination of the prefix Yeru (derived from Yireh, the name Abraham gave to the Temple Mount: YHWH yireh, ‘The Lord will provide’) and Salem, the name of the city where Melchizedek was king and priest; therefore, it means ‘the city of Salem’ or ‘founded by Salem.’ Salem means ‘complete, without defect.’ Therefore, ‘Yerushaláyim’ means ‘perfect city’, or ‘the city of one who is perfect.’

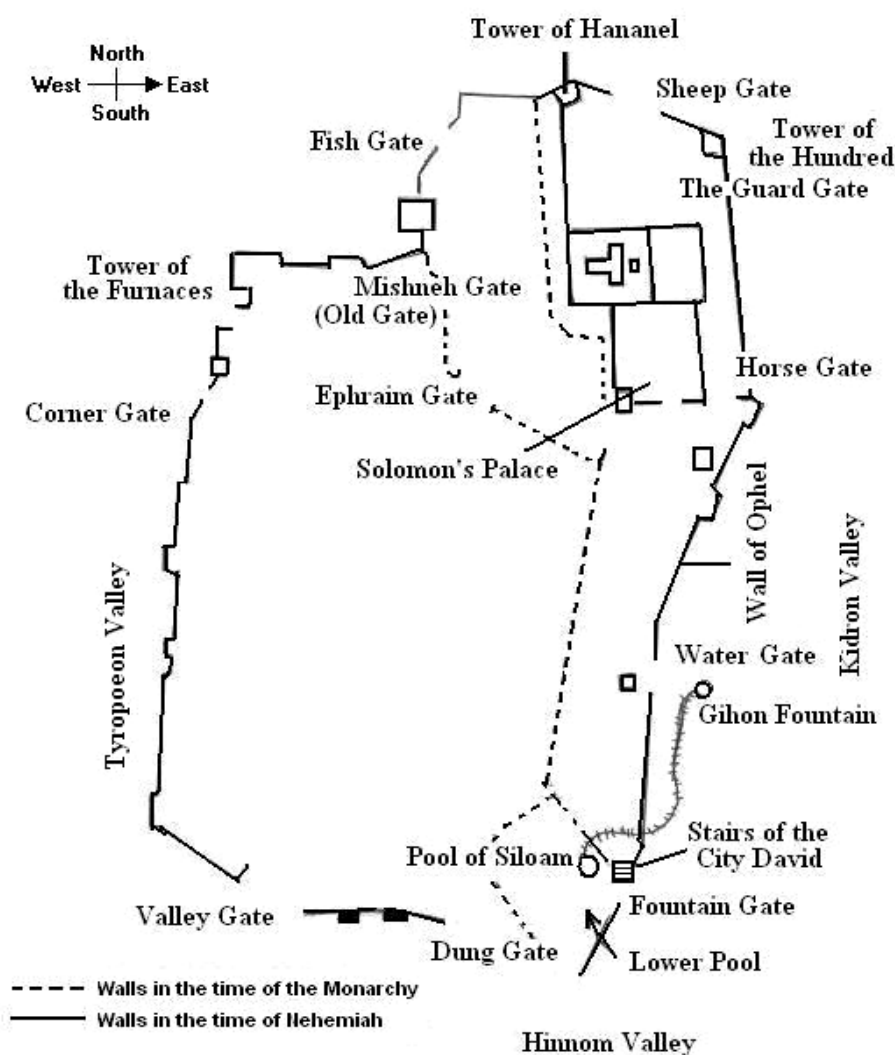
The oldest part of the city of Jerusalem was surrounded by walls built before 3000 BC by the Jebusites, when David took it (1010–970 BC). The so-called city of David was separated from the Temple Mount by the Ofel, an uninhabited area that became the seat of his government. Hezekiah expanded the walls to the west, including a district until then without walls, now known as the Ancient City of Jerusalem, west of the Temple Mount. Jerusalem suffered successive invasions and its walls were destroyed almost completely at least twice, by Nebuchadnezzar and Titus. Scholars say that in addition to these two destructions, Jerusalem was besieged 23 times, attacked 52 times and captured and recaptured 44 times.

The walls that are currently seen in the Old City of Jerusalem were built between 1535 and 1538 by the Ottoman Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent (Süleyman or Kanunî Sultan Süleyman, In Turkish, 1494-1566). The circumference of the wall is approximately 1 Km² and its length is 4.39 yards (4,018 km). It is 13.2 yards high (12 meters) and 9.30 yards thick (8.5 meters). It currently contains 34 watchtowers and 8 entrance gates, one of which, the Golden Gate was closed in the 16th century by the same Sultan.

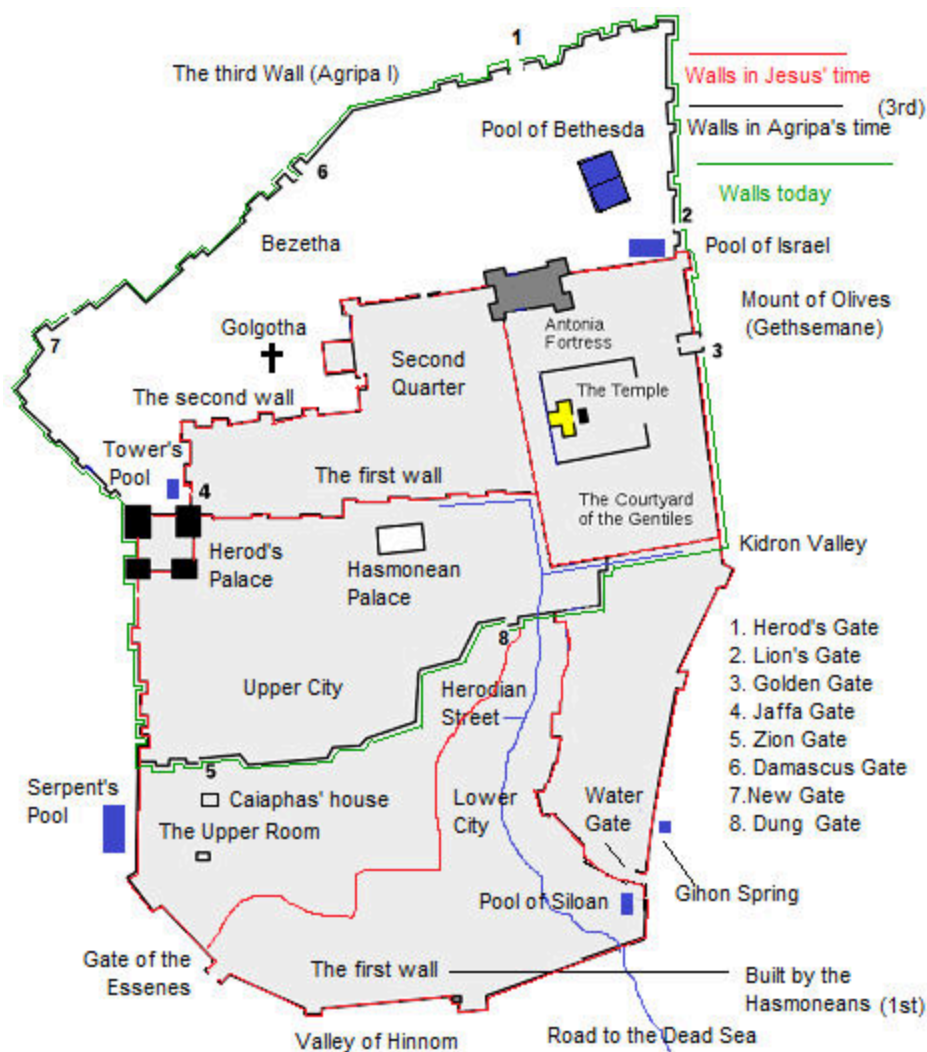
At the time of Nehemiah, the bible describes (Neh. 3: 1-32) 10 doors, 4 towers [Neh. 3: 1; 11; 26: the Tower of the Hundred, the Tower of Hananel, the Tower of the Ovens and the ‘projecting tower’ (NRSV, NIV) or ‘the tower that leith out’ (KJV), probably the tower next to the Horse Gate, the gate that more projected towards the East, southeast of the temple and east of Solomon’s palace; a watchtower by the royal palace] and two great Walls (Neh. 3: 8; 27: the Broad Wall to the west, and the Wall of Ophel to the east, in the City of David, opposite the Kidron Valley). The ‘Broad Wall’ was also called the ‘Double Wall’ because it had two rows of walls, perhaps to protect the northwest area of the city. It extended from the Gate of Ephraim to the Corner Gate, four hundred cubits in length, that is, 196.85 yards (180 meters). In that text (Neh. 3: 1-32), the Gate of Ephraim was omitted, but mentioned in Neh. 12: 39, where it’s also mentioned the Gate of the Guard, probably near the Tower of the Hundred (The Tower

of Meah, in Hebrew), a watchtower near to it, northeast of the Temple; and the Sheep Gate.

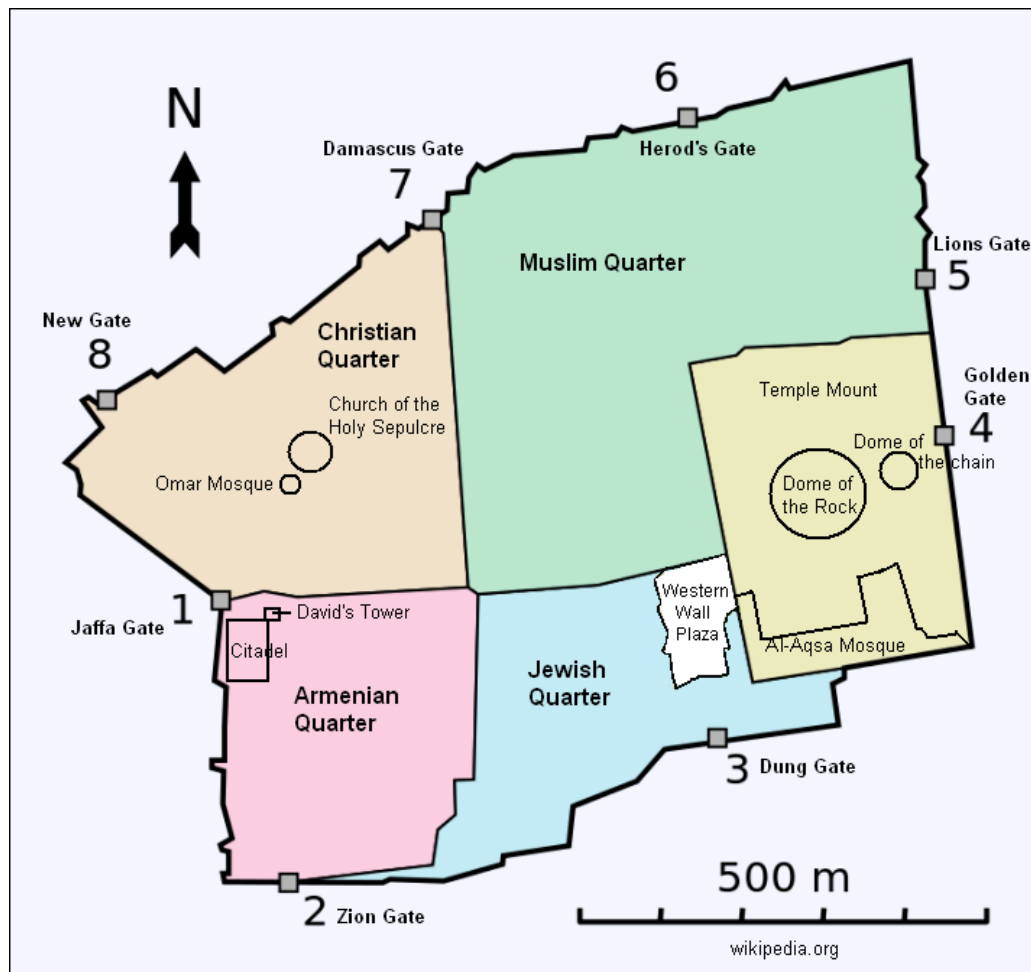
The Sheep Gate in the northern wall of the city of Jerusalem, after the return of the exiles, served as a passage for sheep to the Second Temple. And the Jewish Encyclopedia actually refers to a sheep gate only in the time of Nehemiah, in the northern wall of the city of Jerusalem. It was probably destroyed in the Hellenistic period (especially by Antiochus IV Epiphanes), as were the city walls, so the 'Sheep Gate' described in John 5: 2 was not actually written by the apostle John but rather added later. The New American Bible (Revised Edition) writes: "Now there is in Jerusalem at the Sheep [Gate] a pool called in Hebrew Bethesda, with five porticoes." And he comments: "There is no noun with Sheep. 'Gate' is supplied on the grounds that there must have been a gate in the NE wall of the temple area where animals for sacrifice were brought in; cf. Neh. 3: 1, 32; Neh. 12: 39." In the KJV, the 1611 King James Version, and the 21st Century King James Version, it is written: "Now there was in Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches." In the Stuttgart Bible Greek Textus Receptus (NT), it is written 'sheepfold,' not 'gate': "Now there is in Jerusalem by the sheepfold the chosen Jewish pool called Bethesda, having five porches ('stoas')."



The map below shows the 'Old City' of Jerusalem in the NT period, but also shows the Hasmonean walls (1st wall) and the 2nd wall, which came with the city's later expansion. Around the 40s AD, the city expanded further north, leading to the construction of the 3rd wall (begun by King Herod Agrippa I around 42 AD), protecting the suburb of Bezetha, but its construction was interrupted by Emperor Claudius (41–54 AD) either out of fear of a Jewish revolt or because of Agrippa's death in 44 AD. However, when the Jewish revolt began in 66 AD, the Jewish rebels completed the 3rd wall to fortify the city against the impending Roman attack. Because of its hasty construction, the 3rd wall was weaker than the previous ones, leaving a vulnerable spot in the city's defenses that the Romans would later exploit during the siege. The Romans began their attack on the city precisely through the newly completed third wall. The current walls were rebuilt during the Ottoman period.



Old City of Jerusalem is now divided into four neighborhoods: Armenian, Christian, Jewish and Muslim, since the beginning of the 19th century.



The current gates are:

- The New Gate (Arabic: Bāb ij-Jdīd; Hebrew: השַׁעַר הַחֲדָשׁ HaSha'ar HeChadash) is the newest one of the Gates of the Old City of Jerusalem and the name used by the Ottoman administration. It was built in 1889 to allow Christian pilgrims a quicker access to their holy places within the walls. The arched gate is decorated with crenellated stonework. The Ottoman Sultan Abdul Hamid II (reign: 1876–1909) allowed its construction. It should not be confused with the New Gate of the Second Temple (Jer. 26: 10; Jer. 36: 10) that served as entrance to the Great Sanhedrin's Hall of hewn stones, and was previously called the Benjamin Gate. The Ottoman gate was constructed within the city, and aligned with the facade of the wall, unlike the previous gate built by the Crusaders, which had a tower that protruded from the line of fortifications.



• Damascus Gate (Arabic: Bāb al-‘Āmūd, ‘gate of the column’, and ‘Bab al-Nasr’, gate of victory’; Hebrew: שַׁכֶּם שַׁעַר, Sha’ar Sh’khem) is one of the main Gates of the Old City of Jerusalem, located in the wall on the city’s northwest side and connects to a highway leading out to Nablus, in the Bible called Shechem, and from there to the capital of Syria, Damascus, as it was in past times; hence, its modern name is Damascus Gate (In Hebrew, Sha’ar Sh’khem – שַׁעַר שַׁכֶּם, meaning Shechem Gate or Nablus Gate). It is most imposing gate of Jerusalem, always busy due to the proximity of the markets. The current gate was built in 1537 by Suleiman the Magnificent, the Sultan of the Ottoman Empire. Beneath the current gate, the archaeologists found out the remains of an earlier gate built by the Roman Emperor Hadrian in the 2nd century, when he visited the region in 130–131 CE. In the square behind this gate stood a Roman victory column topped by a statue of Emperor Hadrian, therefore, the Arabic name, Bāb al-‘Āmūd, meaning ‘gate of the column.’ On the lintel of the 2nd century gate, which has been made visible by archaeologists beneath today’s Ottoman gate, is inscribed the city’s Roman name after 130 CE, Aelia Capitolina, the name that Hadrian gave to Jerusalem when he turned it into a Hellenistic city. Hadrian’s Roman gate was built as a free-standing triumphal arch and only sometime later, in the end of the 3rd or in the beginning of the 4th century the protective walls were built around Jerusalem, connecting to the existing gate. The Roman gate remained in use during the early Muslim period and the first period of the Crusaders of Jerusalem (1099-1187), the early Ayyubid period (1187-1192) and the 13th century second phase of Crusader rule over Jerusalem. Damascus Gate is the only Jerusalem gate that preserved the same name since at least the 10th century (Bāb al-‘Āmūd, ‘gate of the column’).



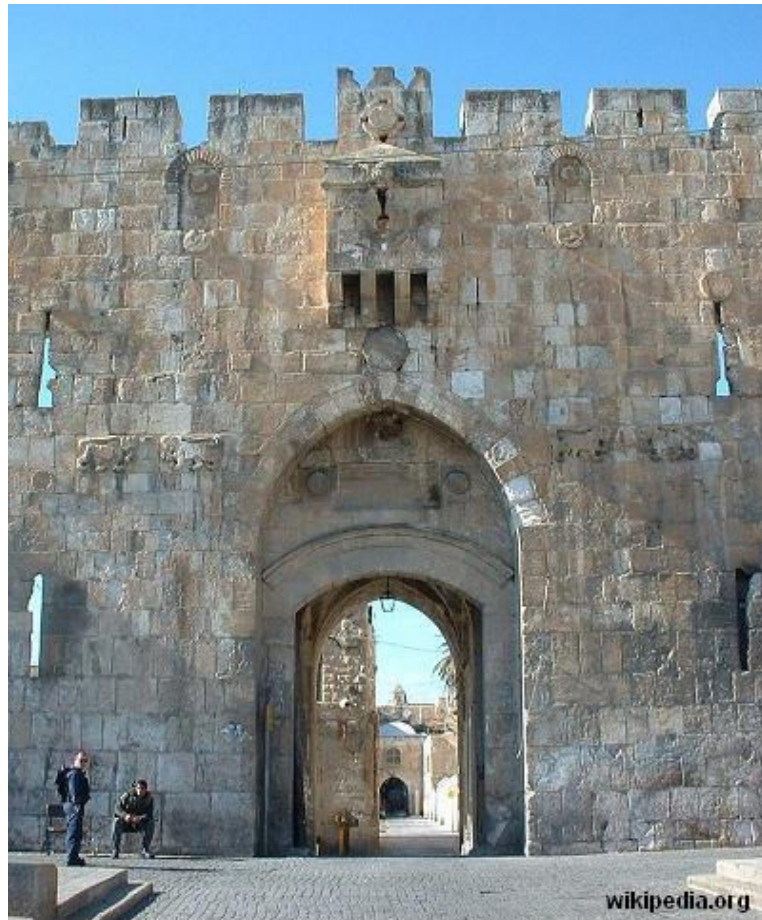
- Herod's Gate (Arabic: Bab az-Zahra; Hebrew: שַׁעַר הַפְּרוּחִים, Sha'ar HaPrakhim, translated as 'Flowers Gate') is also located at the north of the Old City and connects the Muslim Quarter to the Palestinian neighborhood of Bab az-Zahra, situated just outside the walls. This door leads to the markets of the Old City, and is called in Hebrew 'Flowers Gate', because the etymology of the Hebrew name is linked to the stone rosette carved on the tower of the gate. Zahra is the Arabic word for 'flower' or 'blossom.' Herod's Gate is the Christian name of the gate, based on the fact that Jesus was sent to Herod Antipas by Pilate to be judged (Lk. 23: 7), and mistakenly identifying the palace of Herod Antipas with the ancient site of the nearby Greek Orthodox Church of St. Nicodemus.

It is a modest gate, which opens from a wall tower, and is one of the newest gates of Jerusalem. At the time when Suleiman the Magnificent built it there was a small pedestrian gate (a wicket gate) in the eastern lateral wall of the tower, which was rarely opened.

He closed this original gate and opened a new one in the northern frontal wall of the tower. There was a sprawling residential area within this gate, which in the New Testament Period was called Bezetha (translated as 'New City') and ended in the tower of Antonia Fortress, to the north of Herod's Temple. This area was already been built in the final period of the Second Temple.



• Lions' Gate (Hebrew: שַׁעַר הָאֲרִיּוֹת Sha'ar ha-Arayot; also called St. Stephen's Gate or Sheep Gate). Christians believe that the beginning of Via Dolorosa begins at the Lions' Gate. Carved into the wall above the gate are four lions, two on the left and two on the right (in fact, leopards, not lions). Suleiman the Magnificent had the carving made to celebrate the Ottoman defeat of the Mamluks in 1517. The Historian Moshe Sharon noticed the similarity of the sculpted lions (leopards) to similar pairs at two places in Gaza, namely, a bridge built in 1273 (Jisr Jindas – the Arabic name for 'Jindas Bridge' – also known as Baibars Bridge) and an ancient palace (Qasr al-Basha), now a girls' school and museum, situated in the Old City of Gaza, built in the beginning of the 13th century by the Mamluk sultan Zahir Baibars (known as Baibars Bunduqdari, once his complete name is al-Malik al-Zahir Rukn al-Din Baibars al-Bunduqdari – 1223-1277 CE). According to a legend from the 13th century CE he built the first floor of the house for his Gazan wife and children and the two floor girls' school that stands there today (Qasr al-Basha) is what remains of this home. This Historian confirms the authorship of the same Sultan and estimates that the sculptures of the lions in these two places date to approximately 1273 CE. The lions are heraldic symbol of Sultan Baibars. He was a Mamluk sultan of Egypt and Syria (reign: 1260-1277), having the nicknamed Abu al-Futuh ('Father of Conquest'), referring to his victories and feats as incredible as relentless. Lions' Gate is also called Saint Stephen's Gate (In Latin, Porta Sancti Stephani) because of the proximity with the site of martyrdom of Stephen, the first Christian martyr. The Lion's Gate leads to the Pool of Bethesda, to Via Dolorosa and the markets, and became famous during The Six Day War.



Details of Lion's Gate carvings – actually leopards



Baibars' lion on the bridge of Jindas

- The Golden Gate or the Mercy Gate (in Hebrew, שַׁעַר הַרַחֲמִים – Sha'ar Haraḥamim). In Arabic is known as Gate of Eternal Life, Gate of Mercy (Bab al-Rahma – the southern one) and Gate of Repentance (Bab al-Taubah – the northern one). Of all Gates in Jerusalem's Old City walls, it is the oldest of them and used in Ancient times that offered direct access to the Temple. It is located at the north third of the eastern wall of the Old City. The current Golden Gate may have been built by Emperor Justinian I in 520 AD, on the ruins of other buildings in Jerusalem. Some historians believe it was built in the 7th century by the Umayyad Caliphate. However, the Mishnah refers to it as the 'Gate of Shushan' (or Susa in English), since it is related to an eastern gate of the Second Temple in Jerusalem when the exiles returned from Babylon; hence its name. The Jews are said to have carved an image of the city of Susa on the gate as a token of gratitude to the Persians for building the Second Temple [Source: The Temple Institute]. Other sources in Hebrew literature say that it was Cyrus himself who ordered the builders to carve an image of the skyline of Susa over the main entrance, for he was concerned about the possibility of a Jewish rebellion and to remind his Jewish subjects that they were still subjects of the Persian Empire. According to rabbinical sources, including Josephus, the gate of Herod's time was the same as all other gates, measuring twenty cubits high and ten cubits wide (10 meters x 5 meters), with square lintel doors and gold overlays. The current structure has no Herodian characteristics. Rabbis say that a bridge connected it to the Mount of Olives, over the Kidron Valley, and through it the priests entered and left the temple for their rituals, such as releasing the scapegoat into the desert (she'ir l'azazel (שְׁעִיר לַעֲזָאזֵל) as atonement on Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement) [Source: The Temple Institute].

The current Golden Gate was rebuilt over of the ruins of the earlier gate where Jesus entered the city on Sunday before Passover (Palm Sunday) and was destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD. Seeing it from within the Mount we can notice that it has two vaulted halls which lead to the Gate of Mercy (Bab al-Rahma, the southern one) and the Gate of Repentance (Bab al-Taubah, the northern one). This gate has undergone many

interventions: it was closed by Muslims in 810, reopened in 1102 by the Crusaders and walled by Saladin after recovering Jerusalem in 1187.

As Jerusalem was plundered in 1244 by other followers of Islam (the Khwarazmian Tatars) and between 1250 and 1517 the Mamlukes destroyed the sacred places of Christians on Mount Zion, it is assumed that the previous wall was opened again where the gate was. It was rebuilt by the Ottoman Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent (In Turkish, Süleyman or Kanunî Sultan Süleyman – 1494-1566) in the 16th century (1541) together with the city walls but sealed it with great stones and they stay this way until today. This archaeological evidence was found by archaeologist James Fleming in 1969, when he fell into a pit filled of bones at that location and discovered the arch of a door, engraved in the stone of the pit, in the same shape as the door above him, probably from the time of Jesus or Solomon. However, his investigations could not proceed because a Muslim cemetery was built in that place. According to information of some researchers the Sultan blocked the Gate with stones so that the Messiah could not enter the city and thus the prophecy was not accomplished; the prophecy that the Messiah will enter this door at His second coming. The Muslim cemetery built there would also bar His way. There may be also a defensive reason why he did that.



According to Jewish tradition this is the gate through which the Messiah prophesied in the OT would choose to enter Jerusalem, because for them the Divine Presence always appeared by the east, from the side of the sunrise (Ezek. 43: 4: “As the glory of the Lord entered the temple by the gate facing east...”). And will appear again when the Anointed One (Messiah) comes. The east was the side from where salvation would come, the Messiah. In Ezek. 44: 1-2, it is written: “Then he brought me back to the outer gate of the sanctuary, which faces east; and it was shut. The Lord said to me: This gate shall remain shut; it shall not be opened, and no one shall enter by it; for the Lord, the God of Israel, has entered by it; therefore it shall remain shut.” Although they think that a new gate will be open to Him in that place, we Christians can see this prophecy already fulfilled, by the fact of Jesus having entered through it (Lk. 19: 28-40; Ezek. 44:

2) and it's sealed today. We can also affirm this too by the words of Jesus Himself (Lk. 19: 39-40): "Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, 'Teacher, rebuke your disciples!' 'I tell you,' he replied, 'if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out.'" Ezekiel wrote that this gate would remain shut and should not be opened, and indeed it is shut. Jesus said that the stones would shout out if His disciples were silent, and indeed the stones that are there proclaim the veracity of His words; they show there was a gate in that site by which the Messiah entered Jerusalem

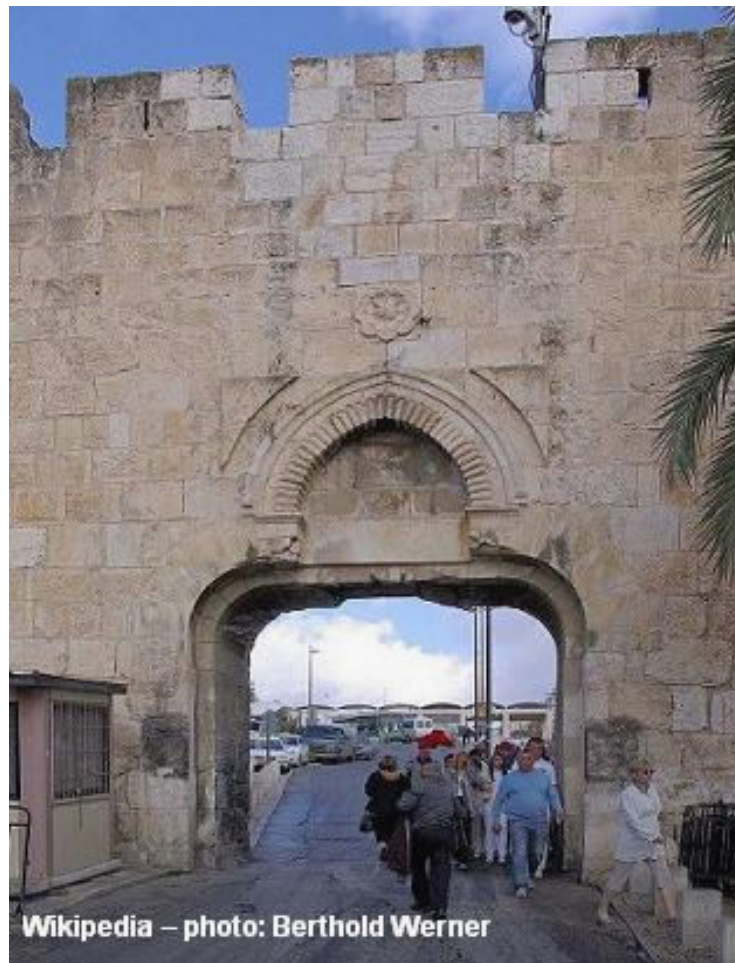
[Source: Rodrigo Silva – Programa: Evidências NT – 033 A Porta Dourada (Série Evidências) – Novo Tempo – YouTube, Feb.1st, 2013].



The Golden Gate from within the Mount

- The Dung Gate (Hebrew: שַׁעַר הָאֵשְׁפוֹת, Sha'ar Ha'ashpot or sha'ar hâshaphoth – Neh. 3: 13) or Silwan Gate (since medieval times) is situated near the southeast corner of the Old City, southwest of the Temple Mount. It is the main passage for vehicles coming out of the Old City and for buses headed to the Western Wall. The 16th century gate was much smaller.

In 1948 CE the Old City stayed under Jordanian control but Israel recovered it (1967), and in 1952 it was renewed and enlarged. The name Sha'ar Ha'ashpoth appears in the Book of Nehemiah 3: 13-14 and received this name because of the residue that was taken from the Jewish Temple into the Valley of Hinnom to be burned. This ancient 'Dung Gate' may not have been in the same location as the 16th century gate, which only received this name in the 19th century. Some people call it Silwan Gate, referring to the village of Silwan (in Hebrew, Shiloah; or in Arabic, Silwan or Sulwan), an ancient quarter southeast of Jerusalem, to the south of the Old City outside the walls. The Hebrew word ashpoth (Strong #830) means: refuse, an ash heap, refuse heap, dunghill, a heap of rubbish or filth. The word Sha'ar (Strong #8179) means, 'city, door, gate, port, porter or gatekeeper.'



As for the Valley of Hinnom (Hebrew: Geh Ben-Hinom, ‘Valley of the son of Hinnom’) or Geenna (Greek), it is located outside the walls to the south of Jerusalem, and in biblical times it was there where people burned the corpses of criminals. Josiah, for example, burned the bones of the idolatrous priests of the time of Jeroboam (2 Kin. 23: 15-20), because in the same valley were also offered human sacrifices to Moloch, the god of the Ammonites (2 Kin. 23: 10). Later it came to be used as a garbage dump, where the corpses of people who were considered unworthy, animal remains, and all

kinds of filth were dumped. Sulfur was used to keep the fire burning and burn the garbage. Jesus used this valley as a symbol of eternal destruction. Currently he is known as Uádi er-Rababi. The meaning of 'Hinnom' is unknown; some scholars suggest 'ben Hinnom', son of Hinnom [because of the Greek term for the Valley, Geenna – ge (valley of) hinnōm (Hinnom)], hinting that it is a proper name (2 Chr. 28: 3; 2 Kin. 23: 10). In Jer. 7: 32; Jer. 19: 6 the name is changed by the prophet to 'valley of slaughter.' It's also called 'Valley of Topheth or Tophet ('place of fire, burning place' or 'roasting place') by the Canaanites (Jer. 7: 31-32).

- Zion Gate (Hebrew: שַׁעַר צִיּוֹן, Sha'ar Zion, Arabic: Bab Şuhyūn), also known in Arabic as Bab Harat al-Yahud ('Jewish Quarter Gate'), or Bab an-Nabi Dawud ('Prophet David Gate'), leads directly to the Armenian and Jewish Quarters. Zion Gate was built in July 1540, west of the location of the medieval gate. In the second half of the nineteenth century, a leper colony, slaughter house and livestock market were situated nearby of Zion Gate. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, shops were built along the length of the southern wall, and were torn down during the British Mandate.



In 2008, restoration work was carried out on Zion' Gate, marking its 468th birthday

- Jaffa Gate (Hebrew: שַׁעַר יָפוֹ, Sha'ar Yafo; Japho or Joppa; Arabic: Bab al-Khalil, 'Gate of the Friend' or Bab Mihrab Dawud, 'Gate of David's Chamber'; called by the Crusaders, 'David's Gate'): it was the destination of Jewish and Christian pilgrims who

disembarked at the Port of Jaffa, hence its name. It led (and still leads) directly to the neighborhoods: Armenian, Christian and Jewish, as well as to the most popular parts of the market and to the Tower of David Museum, once the citadel of Jerusalem and now a museum of its history. It was also part of the reconstruction of the walls of the Old City by Suleiman I, the Magnificent. The name Jaffa Gate (Yāfā) is used for both the historical Ottoman Gate from 1538, and for the wide gap in the city wall adjacent to it to the south. The breach in the wall was created in 1898 by the Ottoman authorities in order to allow German emperor Wilhelm II to enter the city triumphantly. The breach and the ramp leading up to it are now allowing cars to access the Old City from the west.



The Arabic name for the gate, Bab el-Khalil – literally ‘Gate of the Friend’ – refers to Abraham, ‘the friend of God’ (2 Chr. 20: 7; Isa. 41: 8; Jam. 2: 23). Since the burial site of Abraham (Ibrahim, in Arabic) is in Hebron (Gen. 23: 19; Gen. 25: 9-10), then the Arabic name for the Jaffa Gate translates as ‘Hebron Gate.’

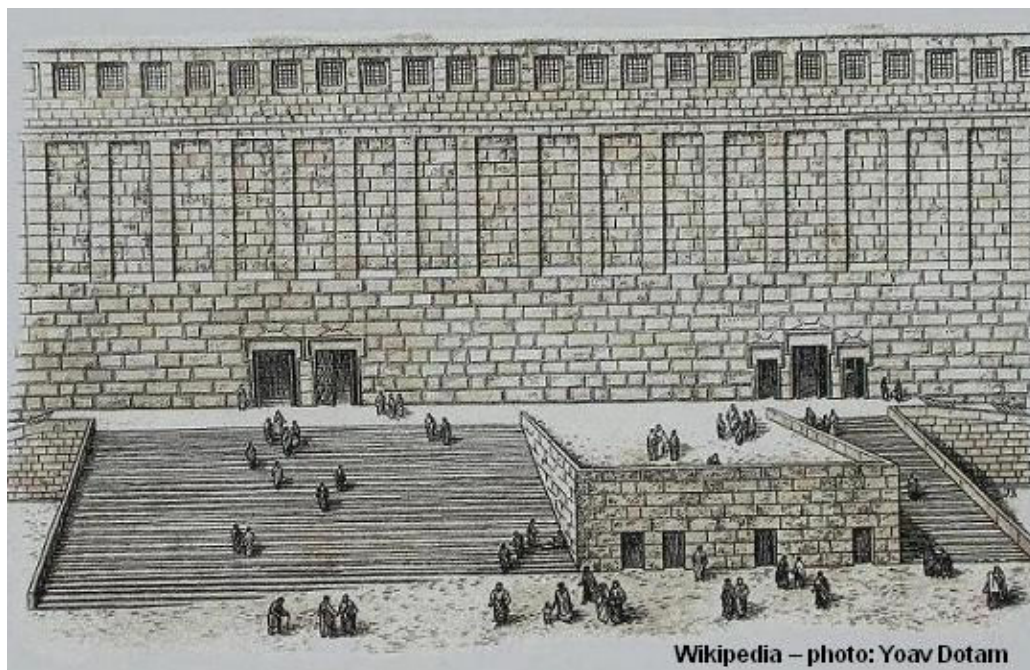
In medieval times the Arabs used to call this gate Bab Mihrab Dawud, or ‘Gate of David’s Chamber or Sanctuary’, believing that the room on the top of the Herodian tower represented the ‘private chamber’ or ‘prayer room’ of David. Prophet Dawud is how King David is known in Islam. The Crusaders, who rebuilt the citadel to the south of Jaffa Gate, also built a gate behind the present location of Jaffa Gate, calling it ‘David’s Gate.’

Inside the Jaffa Gate there is a small square with entrances to the Christian Quarter (on the left), the Muslim Quarter (in front) and the Armenian Quarter (on the right, after the Tower of David). The entrance to the Muslim Quarter is part of the suq (market).

David's Tower is an ancient citadel located near the Jaffa Gate entrance to the Old City of Jerusalem. It was built in the 2nd century to strengthen the defenses of the Old City. It was built and destroyed and rebuilt successively by the Christians, Muslims, Mamluks, and Ottomans who dominated Jerusalem. The strong bulwarks still seen today surrounding the base of the tower are believed to have been built by King Herod the Great, in memorial of his brother. Hence, it was formerly named the Tower of Phasael (Hebrew: מגדל פצאל; Phasael comes from the Latin, Phasaelus; in Hebrew: פצאל – Petsal). Upon the sixteen rows of original square stones at the base of the tower, smaller stones were placed in the periods that followed, giving it a higher height. The Tower of Phasael was preserved during the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus in 70 AD along with two more towers. During the First Jewish-Roman War, Simon bar Giora, a Gerasene leader of one of the main Judean rebel factions made the tower his place of residence. He died in 70 AD in the revolt, in addition to incite a bitter civil war in the whole process. Today it is a separate area for charity events, craft fairs, concerts, and sound and light presentations.



- One of the gates worth mentioning and which forms part of the Temple Mount, within the walls of the Old City, is the Huldah Gate (שער חולדה, Sha'arei Chulda). Huldah Gates comprise two sets of gates on the south wall of the Temple Mount. They were old gates that passed through the Royal Portico and opened in two passages inside the Outer Court of the Temple. The set on the west is a double arch gate, known as a double gate (in Arabic: Bab ath-Thulathe). Only part of the right gate can be seen because of a tower from the time of the Crusaders, which makes it difficult to see the left gate. The gate was blocked by this tower in front of it, probably during the Fatimid Caliphate period (969-1171). The set on the east is a gate with three arches, known as the Triple Gate (Bab an-Nabi, 'Door of the Prophet Muhammad'). Both sets, the double and the triple, were sealed in the 11th – 12th century.



Reconstruction of the Herodian Huldah Gates



Staircase leading to the double Huldah Gate, discovered by the archaeologist Benjamin Mazar



The triple gates as they are today

Huldah Gates are from the Herodian period. But almost everything we see today is work from the Muslim period. Two possible etymologies are given for the name 'Huldah.' Huldah means 'mole' or 'mouse' in Hebrew, and that name may have been given to the gates due to the tunnels behind them, which resemble the holes or tunnels used by these animals. Another possible etymology would be the reference to the prophetess Huldah, from the time of King Josiah (640-609 BC), who may have lived in that area and had her tomb placed there as well. The name 'Huldah Gates' was probably the name given later in the 2nd century by the Mishnah. At the present they are sealed. 'Huldah' is the feminine form of Heled (1 Chr. 11: 30), which means: suffering, transient life.

Jerusalem was in the hands of several empires and rulers:

- Davidic dynasty.
- Assyrian Empire.
- Babylonian Empire, which destroyed the city and its walls.
- Persian Empire – Achaemenid Dynasty.
- Greek Empire – Alexander the Great and, later, his generals – the Ptolemies and the Seleucids. Antiochus IV Epiphanes desecrated the temple, killing a pig, an unclean animal for the Jews, and sprinkling its blood on the sanctuary.
- Hasmonean kingdom, from the Maccabean revolt to the reign of the dynasty of Herod the Great.
- Roman Empire – In 63 BC the Roman general Pompey took the city and entered the temple.
- In 40 BC a Parthian army plundered the city.
- Roman Empire – In 70 CE Titus destroyed the city and the temple. Hadrian (reign: 117-138) rebuilt Jerusalem in 131 CE as a Greek city, with statues, public baths and noisy centers of profane life and it came to be called Aelia Capitolina. The Jews were forbidden to enter it under penalty of death (except at Passover). A temple to Jupiter was built in place of the Jewish temple in Jerusalem. The former province of Judea came to be called Syria Palaestina.

- Byzantine dominion – Constantine I (reign: 306–337) built Catholic churches in Jerusalem. In Constantine's days, Jews were allowed to enter the city but from Constantine until the seventh century, Jews were forbidden again.
- In 614 the city was besieged by the Sassanians (Persians).
- In 629, the Byzantine emperor Heraclius (r. 610–641) managed to recover it.
- In 637, the Rashidun Caliphate (Rāshidah), an Orthodox Caliphate (632-661, or 'Well-Guided Caliphate', in transliterated Arabic: Al-Khilāfatur Ar-Rāshidah) conquered Jerusalem and the Roman province of Palaestina Prima (composed of Judea, Samaria, the coast, Perea and that was the province of the Byzantine Empire in the period 390-630). With the Arab conquest, the Jews were allowed to return to the city. Sultan Omar or Umar (579-644; reign: 634–644) of the Islamic Orthodox Caliphate, even signed a treaty with the Byzantine Christian patriarch Sophronius, protecting the Christian holy places of Jerusalem and the Christian population under the Muslim government. He intended to build a mosque on the Temple Mount on the ruins of the ancient Jewish temple. But Omar Mosque was built elsewhere. Initially it was on the eastern side of the outer courtyard of the church of the Holy Sepulcher, in a place where the caliph assumed that David had prayed. His mosque consisted of a rectangular wooden structure, capable of accommodating 3,000 people. This was the first Mosque of Omar built in Jerusalem. It is currently located in front of the southern courtyard of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher (formerly known as the Constantinian Church of the Resurrection – 4th century) in the Christian quarter. This current mosque was erected in 1193 by the Muslim Turks, the Ayyubids, under Saladin (Al-Afdal ibn Salah ad-Din) to commemorate the visit of Caliph Omar to Jerusalem in 638 when he prayed on the steps of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher instead of praying inside it so that it could remain a Christian holy place. The small tower (minaret) is 49.21 feet high (15 meters), probably built between 1193 and 1465 – between the Ayyubid period (1171–1250) and the Mamluk period (1250-1517) – perhaps after the 1458 earthquake, and was restored by the Ottoman Sultan Abdulmecid I (1839-1860).





Images above:

- 1) The Church of the Holy Sepulcher, is also called the Basilica of the Holy Sepulcher, or the Church of the Resurrection by Eastern Christians.
- 2) Minaret of the Mosque of Omar next to the courtyard of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher

The Temple Mount (in Hebrew: הר הבית, Har HaBáyit, 'Mount of the House of God', meaning the 'Temple in Jerusalem'), known to Muslims as Haram esh-Sharif (in Arabic: al-Haram al-Šarīf, 'the noble sanctuary', or al-Haram al-Qudsī al-Šarīf, 'the Noble Sanctuary of Jerusalem'), where there is Al-Aqsa Compound (Al-Aqsa Mosque Hebrew, מסגד אל אקצא) is a hill located in the Old City of Jerusalem which thousands year ago has been revered as a sacred place by Jews, Christians and Muslims. Al-Aqsa Compound and the Mosque Dome of the Rock (Hebrew: כיפת הסלע), on the Temple Mount, were built by the next Caliphate after the Rashidun Caliphate, the Umayyad Caliphate (661-750; in Arabic: Umawiyy; in Persian: Omaviyân; in Turkish: Emevi), the second of the four main Islam Caliphates established after prophet Muhammad's death (571-632). The Al-Aqsa Mosque ('the distant mosque') got its name because of a night trip by the prophet Muhammad to it from Mecca. The Al-Aqsa Mosque has a gray dome.

Caliph Abdal Malik (Abd al-Malik, reign: 685–705) commissioned the construction of the Dome of the Chain (Arabic: Qubbat al-Silsila) in 685 AD, and served as a model for the construction of the Dome of the Rock, practically besides the Dome of the Chain, at the end of the 7th century (691-692), in the place where Solomon's temple, the second temple and the temple of Herod once stood. The dome collapsed in 1015 and was rebuilt in 1022-1023 in the period of the Ayyubid Caliphate.

The Dome of the Rock (the one with a golden dome) received its name due to the large rock used in sacrifices and currently protected inside the Mosque. Like the Jews, who built the first temple in that place (2 Chr. 3: 1), Muslims also believe that it was there, on the ancient stone, that Abraham placed Isaac for the sacrifice. The Dome of the Rock is wrongly known by the name of Mosque of Omar, which, as we have seen, is located in the Christian quarter, next to the Basilica of the Holy Sepulcher.



Northeast view of Al-Aqsa Mosque on the Temple Mount



Dome of the Rock

- In the 11th century, semi-barbaric Turks replaced Arabs, which led to the Crusades.

- In 1099, Jerusalem was conquered by the Crusaders, who massacred most of the Muslim inhabitants and the remnants of the Jewish inhabitants. The Crusades in the Holy Land took place in the period 1095-1272, and are traditionally counted as nine; the 1st from 1095 to 1099 and the 9th from 1271 to 1272.

- There was an invasion of Jerusalem by the Muslim Turks, the Ayyubids, under Saladin, who besieged the city in 1187 AD. The Ayyubids are a Muslim Dynasty of the 12th – 13th centuries in Syria and Egypt (1171–1250). They created the Mamluk army, an Egyptian army formed by Kurdish (Turkish) slaves, bought between 14 and 18 years of age and trained for military service. Saladin (1138-1193) was a Muslim Kurdish military chief (Sunni Islamic religion, i.e., Orthodox Islam), Sultan of Egypt and Syria, who opposed the European Crusaders in the Levant (a geographical term that comprises Syria, Jordan, Israel, Palestine, Lebanon and Cyprus). He re-conquered Jerusalem from the hands of the Kingdom of Jerusalem, founded by Godfrey of Bouillon, the predecessor and brother of Baldwin I of Jerusalem. Saladin allowed Jews and Muslims to return and live in the city.

- In 1244, Jerusalem was plundered by other partisans of Islam (the Khwarazmian Tatars), who decimated the city's Christian population and moved the Jews away. The Khwarazmian Empire was a Sunni Muslim dynasty (orthodox Islam) of Persian influence formed by Turkmen of Mamluk origin, who reigned in the period from 1077–1231. In other words, they were Mamluk Turks who professed Islam religion but acquired Persian customs. Mamluk [Arabic: mamlūk (singular), mamālīk (plural)] is a term most commonly used referring either to non-Muslim slave soldiers, freed slaves, Muslim converts assigned to military and administrative duties, and Muslim rulers of slave origin. Russia, Ukraine and the surrounding countries are home to most of the Tatars.

- Between 1250 and 1517, Jerusalem was ruled by the Mamluks (an Egyptian army formed by Kurdish, i.e. Turkish, slaves), who imposed a heavy annual tax on Jews and destroyed the Christian holy places on Mount Zion.

- In 1517, Jerusalem fell under Ottoman Turkish rule and they were in control until 1917. In the mid-19th century, the Ottomans built the first paved road from Jaffa to Jerusalem, and in 1892 CE, a railroad. Jaffa was incorporated into Tel-Aviv in 1950. The Ottoman Empire was ruled by a Caliphate that controlled southeastern Europe, West Asia and North Africa between the 14th and 20th centuries. It was founded at the end of 13th century in northwestern Anatolia, Turkey, by leader Osman I or Osman Ghazi. Although of Turkish origin, its customs were Persian. The Ottomans ended the Byzantine Empire (Eastern Roman Empire) in 1453. The apogee of the Ottoman Empire occurred during the reign of Suleiman I, the Magnificent (1494-1566), and controlled most of central, eastern and southeastern Europe, West Asia and the Caucasus, North Africa and the Horn of Africa. The Ottomans were Sunni Islam, that is, Orthodox.

- In 1917, after the Battle of Jerusalem (invaded by the Egyptian expeditionary force), the British army captured the city. And in 1922 the League of Nations (league formed by the winners of the First World War) entrusted the administration of Palestine to the United Kingdom.

- 1948 – the State of Israel was created (14th May 1948).

- 1967 – the Six Day War took place, an Arab-Israeli war involving Syria, Egypt, Jordan and Iraq, where Israel occupied Eastern Jerusalem and claimed sovereignty over the entire city. Access to the Jewish holy sites was restored and the Moroccan Quarter or Mughrabi Quarter west of the Temple Mount was vacated to make way for a square

(Western Wall Plaza), where there is the Wailing Wall. The Temple Mount remained under Islamic jurisdiction.

- The city's sacred sites and their hegemony is still the cause of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, mainly with the Jewish attempt to expand in the eastern part of Jerusalem.



AN EXPLANATION ABOUT ISLAM

In this excerpt, we will explain what Islam is and remove doubts about certain words such as: Ishmaelite, Mohammedan or Muslim, Islam, Sunni, Shiite, Moors, Mauritians and Saracens.

Ishmaelite is the term referring to the confederation of tribes in the Arabian Desert. Muslim is the Arab or any person from any nation who follows the Muslim religion, Islam, the religion of Mohammad. It's the same thing with the Israelites and Judaism. 'Israelite' or 'Israeli' (as they are called today) refers to the inhabitant of Israel, and Jew is the practitioner of Judaism, religion.

Ishmael son of Abraham begat: Nebaioth, Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam, Mishma, Dumah, Massa, Hadad, Tema, Jetur, Naphish and Kedamah (1 Chr. 1: 28-31; Gen. 25: 12-18), the 12 princes of the Arab nations. The Samaritan book Asafir says in chapter 8: "the children of Nebaioth built Mecca". These dwelt in the land from the Euphrates to the Red Sea.

God is called by them Allah (Romanized word as Allāh), the only God, the creator of all things, "All-Powerful, The All-Merciful, All-Compassionate and One."

According to Islamic belief, Allah (الله) is the proper name of God. There is no equivalent in any language. Other scholars, however, say that Allah and the biblical term 'Elohim' (אלהים) or 'Eloah', singular (אלוה) are cognate words, with a common origin in the noun 'Ēl ('god'). Elohim is also used to refer to pagan gods. In Jewish scriptures, Elohim is used as a descriptive title for God, whose personal name is YHWH.



The word 'Allah' in thuluth calligraphy, an Arabic script variety used in Islamic religious texts.

Quran is the holy book of Muslims who follow Islam, a monotheistic religion followed by the children of Abraham. Quran is derived from an Arabic verb that means to declaim or recite. They consider the Quran to be the literal word of God, plus Muhammad's teachings and norms of faith, the so-called 'Sunnah', which is part of the hadith, the laws, legends and stories about Muhammad. He is considered by Muslims to be the last prophet of God. The Arabic word Sunnah means 'trodden path', and therefore, the prophet's sunna means the paths trodden by the prophet. Quran is divided into 114 chapters (suras). The five daily ritual prayers are called salah or ṣalāt.

Islam comes from the Arabic Islām, derived from the primitive root slm, salama meaning 'submission [to Allah]' or 'total surrender [to Allah]'. The Arabs describe Islam as a 'diin' (dīn), which means 'judgment, custom and religion'; 'way of life and/or religion'. It seems that the word 'islam' has an etymological root related to other Arabic words like 'Salaam' or 'Shalam' (Shalaam / Shalom, in Hebrew), which means 'peace.' A follower of Islam is called Muslim (plural, muslimún), which is the active participle of the verb aslama, meaning 'submitter (to God)' or 'one who surrenders (to God).' (Source: Wikipedia).

For Muslims, Muhammad (c. 570–632 CE) is considered to be the last prophet of God. At the age of 40 (610 CE), according to some scholars, Muhammad began to report revelations that he believed to be from God, transmitted to him through the archangel Gabriel (Jibril), revelations known as the Quran. At that time he lived and preached in Mecca, teaching the people to believe in one God, abandoning polytheism. But, pursued by the city authorities, he and his followers migrated to Abyssinia (corresponding to the present-day territories of Ethiopia and Eritrea, in the Horn of Africa) and then to Medina in 622, establishing their political and religious authority. After his death in 632 a great disagreement began about who should succeed him as leader of the Muslim community. Abu Bakr (r. 632–634 CE), one of the prophet's companions (Sahabah) and close friends, was appointed the first caliph and consolidated Islam in the Arabian Peninsula.

Islam is divided into two main denominations: 80-90% Sunni (commonly described as an Orthodox branch, differing from Shia in their understanding of the Sunna and acceptance of the first three caliphs) and 10-20% are Shia. Shia regard Ali, the prophet Muhammad's son-in-law and cousin, as his legitimate successor and regard the three Sunni caliphs who took over the leadership of the Muslim community after

Muhammad's death as illegitimate: 1) Abu Bakr (r. 632–634 CE), one of Muhammad's friends, who consolidated Islam in the Arabian Peninsula and was given the title of Khalifa, from which the word Caliph arose; 2) Umar (r. 634–644), who expanded Islam outside the Arabian Peninsula, starting with Syria (635) and Jerusalem (637); 3) Uthman (r. 644–656), a son-in-law of Muhammad, who continued the work of territorial expansion; 4) Ali ibn Abi Talib, the son-in-law and cousin of the prophet Muhammad, married to Fatima, one of the prophet's daughters, with whom he had had the only descendants of Muhammad. These four caliphs are known as al-khulafā' ar-rāshidūn ('Rightly Guided caliphs' or 'well-guided caliphs') and established the Rashidun Caliphate. Later, these differences between Sunni and Shia Muslims acquired broader political significance, as well as theological and juridical dimensions. The largest percentage of the Shia population is in Iran. The two dynasties, Rashidun (Rāshidah – 632-661) and Umayyad (the next Caliphate after the Rāshidah – 661-750), were the ones that initiated the Islamic expansion in the 7th century (632-732).

BELIEFS

They believe that **God (Allah)** is unique and incomparable, and their purpose is to worship him. For them, Islam represents in a written, universal, complete and unaltered way of an initial faith that was previously revealed by God in many ages and places, including through Abraham, Moses and Jesus, to them considered prophets. Islamic religious practices, which consist of basic and obligatory acts, provide guidance for all areas of life and society, from banking and welfare, to war and the environment. With the exception of one chapter in the Quran, all chapters begin with the phrase: "In the name of Allah, the merciful" Muslims believe they can come to God without intermediaries. As I wrote above, according to Islamic belief, Allah is the proper name of God, contrary to what certain scholars say, that it is just a generic name to refer to God.

Another belief in Islam is **angels**, beings created by God from light. According to them, angels do not have free will and just obey God and praise his name. One of their tasks is to reveal divine truths to the prophets. They also protect human beings and record all their actions. The most famous angel is Gabriel, who was the intermediary between God and the prophet. Muslims also believe in spirits other than angels, the jinnis, who inhabit the natural world and who can influence events, as they have a will of their own. They may be good, but most of the time they are evil spirits, such as Iblis (Azazel), who disobeyed God and dedicated himself to doing evil.

The third belief of Islam is **the holy books**, where God used **prophets** to reveal scriptures to men: the revelation given to Moses was the Tawrat (Torah), to David (Dawud) were given the Psalms (Zabur) and to Jesus (Īsā or Isa Masih or else the al-Masīḥ, the Arabic for messiah), the Gospel (Injīl – source: Wikipedia). According to them, God was revealing His message in increasingly comprehensive scriptures that culminated in the Quran, the last book revealed to Muhammad. Regarding prophets, Islam separates prophets into two types: 1) the anbiya' (singular: nabi), for whom God gave the mission to reveal His will, such as the prophet Jonah (Nabī Yūnus, in Arabic), which has an Arab Muslim shrine dedicated to him on one of the mounds beside Tell Kuyunjik or Kouynjik, the mound of the ancient citadel of Nineveh whose name means 'mound of many sheep'; 2) the prophets to whom a revealed scripture was delivered (rusul = 'messengers'; singular rasūl), 'messenger'). Muslims include some biblical characters as prophets, men guided by God: Adam, Abraham (Ibrahim), Moses (Musa), Jesus (Isa, Īsā) and Muhammad (Muhammad), the 'Last Messenger', bringing God's

final message to all humanity in the Quran. Being ordinary mortal men, Islam does not distinguish between any of them; however, it asserts that prophets are incapable of wrong actions, by the will of God. The twenty-five prophets of the Quran are (listed by Islamic and Biblical name):

'Ādam (Adam)

'Idrīs (Idris, known in the bible as Enoch) – 7th generation after Adam

Nūḥ (Noah)

Hūd (known in the bible as Eber) – born five generations after Noah

Ṣāliḥ (Saleh or Shelah) – born nine generations after Noah and the Flood – Gen. 10: 24

'Ibrāhīm (Abraham)

Lūṭ (Lot)

'Ismā'īl (Ishmael)

'Ishāq (Isaac)

Ya'qūb (Jacob)

Yūsuf (Joseph)

Ayūb (Job)

Dhul-Kifl (the biblical prophet Ezekiel)

Shu'ayb (Jethro, Moses' father-in-law)

Mūsā (Moses)

Hārūn (Aaron)

Dāūd (David)

Sulaymān (Solomon)

Yūnus (Jonah)

'Ilyās (Elijah)

Alyasa' (Elisha)

Zakarīya (the biblical prophet Zechariah)

Yaḥyā (John the Baptist)

'Īsā (Jesus) – they also believe that Jesus is the Jewish Messiah and one day He will return to rescue His people.

Muḥammad (Muhammad)

Another belief of theirs is the '**Day of Resurrection**' or '**Day of Final Judgment**' (Yaum al-Qiyāmah), when men will be resurrected and judged in the presence of God for their actions. Those who have no sin go directly to Paradise, and sinners must remain some time in hell, before they can also enter Paradise. Only religious hypocrites, who were never really Muslims, will remain forever in hell. Before the Last Judgment will appear signs such as the rising of the sun in the setting sun, the sound of a trumpet and the appearance of a beast. According to the Quran, the world will not truly end, but will undergo a profound change (source: Wikipedia).

TITLE OF THE RULERS

Caliph – The caliph (Romanized to khalīfah) was the leader of the Muslim world, meaning 'successor' or 'representative.' The title 'caliph' comes from the Arabic phrase meaning 'successor to the Envoy of Allah.' It was adopted by successors of the Prophet Muhammad after his death in 632. The Caliph is the Head of State in a Caliphate, the title given to the ruler of the Muslim Ummah, meaning the entire Muslim world, which is governed by the religious law, the Sharia, forming part of the Islamic tradition. The caliph has the same status as an emperor in the West. In the final period of the Abbasids

(they ruled in the period 750-1570 in total), the rulers began to use other titles, such as the sultan. The title of caliph ceased to exist when the Republic of Turkey abolished the Ottoman Empire in 1924.

Sultan – The Ottoman Empire (1517-1922; other researchers date 1299 as the beginning) began to reign in the 16th century, and certain Islamic rulers adopted the title of sultan (Romanized as Sultān) in order to claim almost a total sovereignty, but who did not consider themselves caliphs; the position of sultan was also used to refer to a powerful governor of a province within the caliphate, as the realm of a king of kings but not an emperor.

Emir or **amir** (Romanized as 'amīr; sometimes transliterated amir, amier, or ameer, meaning 'prince' or 'chief') – is a title of Arab origin of aristocratic, noble, military, or political nature used in Arab countries. Historically speaking, the title of emir was used in other Muslim countries in North Africa, the Middle East, Central Asia, Afghanistan and the Indian subcontinent. It currently designates, above all, some Muslim heads of state or leaders of Islamic organizations.

MUSLIM DYNASTIES AND THEIR EXPANSION IN THE MIDDLE AGES

Here we have a summary of what was said about the sieges of Jerusalem.

- Rashidun Caliphate (Rāshidah), the Orthodox Caliphate (632-661, 'Rightly Guided Caliphate' or 'Well-Guided Caliphate', in transliterated Arabic: Al-Khilāfatur Ar-Rāshidah), as commented above (about the sieges of Jerusalem and in this excerpt about Islam), and which was the first caliphate after Mohammad's death. Its four Sunni caliphs were: Abu Bakr (r. 632–634 CE), Umar or Omar (r. 634–644), Uthman (r. 644–656) and Ali ibn Abi Talib (r. 656-661).
- Umayyad Caliphate (661–750) in Damascus and Turkey, and later in Islamic Spain between 756 and 1031 (Caliphs and Emirs). It was started by Mu'awiya I (661-680), the brother-in-law of Muhammad.
- Abbasid Caliphate in Baghdad (750-1570 in total); they were Sunnis.
- Tulunid Dynasty (868-905, a Turkish dynasty)
- Ikhshidid Dynasty (935-969, a Turkish dynasty). These last two caliphates were independent states from the Abbasid caliphate of Baghdad and emerged in Egypt.
- Fatimid Caliphate (969-1171), also in the period of the Abbasid dynasty. They were Shiite Ishmaelites, who claimed to be descendants of Fatima, daughter of Muhammad.
- Ayyubids (Muslim Turks – 1171-1270) in Syria and Egypt. The Ayyubids created the Mamluk army, an Egyptian army made up of Kurdish (Turkish) slaves, bought between 14 and 18 years of age and trained for military service. The Ayyubids recaptured Jerusalem in 1187 from the French Christians who occupied the holy land under the command of Saladin, a Sunni Muslim Kurdish military chief (1138-1193).
- Mamluk Empire (1250-1517) replaced the Ayyubids.
- Ottoman Empire (1517-1922; other researchers put the date 1299 for the beginning) – a Caliphate that controlled great part of Southeastern Europe, Central and Eastern Europe and the Caucasus, Western Asia and North Africa, and the Horn of Africa. Here the ruler was already called the sultan, no longer caliph. Founded at the end of the 13th century in northwestern Anatolia (Turkey), in the city of Söğüt (present-day Bilecik province), by leader Osman I or Osman Ghazi. Of Turkish origin, it gradually acquired Persian customs (language, culture, literature and habits). The Ottomans ended the Byzantine Empire (Eastern Roman Empire) with the conquest of Constantinople in 1453 by Mehmed the Conqueror. At the beginning of the 17th century, the empire contained 32 provinces and several vassal states. It was of the Sunni Islamic religion.

OTHER TERMS OF INTEREST TO US

Some terms are familiar to us, but we often don't understand. Let's see:

Saracens (from the Greek σαρακηνοί; transl.: sarakenoi) was one of the forms used by Christians in the Middle Ages to generically designate Arabs or Muslims. In Portuguese the term is usually applied specifically to the Arabs who dominated the Iberian Peninsula. The words 'Islam' and 'Muslim' were only introduced into European languages in the 17th century. Before that, expressions such as 'law of Mohammed' were used, Mohammedans, Hagarenes (descendants of Hagar), Moors, etc.

Moors, Mauritians, Mauri (Μαῦροι) or Saracens are considered, originally, peoples from North Africa, Berbers (people in North Africa who speak languages of Afro-Asiatic origin) and Arabs, practitioners of Islam; they came from Mauretania, Morocco, Algeria and Western Sahara, and invaded the Iberian Peninsula, Sicily, Malta and part of France during the Middle Ages. They were later expelled from the Iberian Peninsula, in a movement that ended up joining a historic crusade between Islam and Catholicism. Most of the Moors in the Iberian Peninsula were descendants of Spanish and Portuguese converts to Islam.

Back to the Gates of the Old City of Jerusalem:

"Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, the New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away.' And the one who was seated on the throne said, 'See, I am making all things new.' Also he said, 'Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true (Rev. 21: 1-5).'"



“Have faith, you who believe in Christ Jesus. Have faith, people of the First Covenant, God’s chosen people. Have faith, the present Jerusalem on earth, which today is insecure and that is suffering attack. Meditate on your past, watch your present and look with hope to what is yet to come, because what you choose now will determine what you will receive in the future.”

“Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God’s wrath remains on him.” (Jn. 3: 36 cf. 1 Jn. 5: 12).

“Lift up your heads, O you gates; be lifted up, you ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in (Ps. 24: 7).”

Source of research for texts and images: wikipedia.org

13

The Jewish Feasts of the Old Testament

Before we enter the subject itself, let's first understand the Jewish calendar. The passage of years was generally marked by reference to the months, the agricultural seasons and the main festivals.

The **year**, in Hebrew, **shānâ**, was composed of twelve lunar months (354 days). The verb shannah means literally, 'repeat [something that was taught]' and was called so because of the change or succession of the seasons. Every three years one month was added (by the repetition of the last month) to take the difference between the twelve lunar months and the solar year. For Jews, the festival that celebrates the beginning of the year is based on the religious and the civil calendar. The civil calendar started when autumn began (seventh month or Tishri – Ex. 23: 16; Ex. 34: 22). While they dwelt Egypt, the Hebrews may have been adapted to the solar year of 12 months, each with thirty days with the addition of five extra days, totaling 365 days. But at the time of their departure from there, the Lord marked the beginning of the year (religious calendar) based in the event of **Passover** (Pesach), when the Destroyer passed over the houses, killing all the firstborn of Egypt (**Pesach** means '**to pass over**' – Ex. 12: 13; 23; 27). Thus, the first month was set in the spring (Nisan or Aviv – Ex. 12: 2) and the Jewish calendar became to have twelve lunar months.

The month started when the **crescent of the new moon** (Num. 28: 14; Isa. 66: 23; 2 Chr. 8: 13; Num. 28: 11) was first seen at sunset. The month (**yerah** or **yare'ach** = **moon**) had twenty-nine days, and since the lunar year was shorter by about eleven days than the solar year, it was necessary to insert periodically, as explained above, a thirteenth month so that the **New Year's Day** did not happen before the spring (March-April).

We can notice two different names for each month: one, pre-Babylonian exile, and other, post-exile. The month of Aviv, appointed by God to start the **New Year**, coinciding with the spring or Passover, also referred to the period of the beginning of the wheat harvest, so the name Aviv (Abib) means: wheat ripening (Ex. 13: 4; Ex. 23: 15). Its name post-exile became to be Nisan = beginning, opening. The other names that remain from the period pre-exile are: Ziv (1 Kin. 6: 1; 37, the second month, which

means: splendor of the flowers), Ethanim (1 Kin. 8: 2, the seventh, which means constant rain) and Bul (1 Kin. 6: 38, the eighth, which means changeable, growth).

Month	Name pre-exile	Name post-exile	Modern Calendar	Season	Feast (day of the month)
1	Aviv (wheat ripening)	Nisan (beginning, opening)	Mar-April	Spring	14° Passover 15°-21° Unleavened bread 16° Firstfruits
2	Ziv (splendor of the flowers)	Iyar	April-May	Beginning of Harvest (Barley and wheat)	
3		Sivan	May-June	Green figs	6° Pentecost (Feast of weeks; Harvest)
4		Tammuz (hidden, son of life)	June-July	Grape harvest	
5		Av	July-August	Olive harvest	
6		Elul (scream or harvest of life)	August-Sep.	Dates and ripened figs of summer	
7	Ethanim (constant rain)	Tishri	Sep.-Oct.	First rains	1° Trumpets 10° Atonement 15°-21°: Tabernacles 22° Closing assembly
8	Bul (changeable, growth)	Heshvan	Oct.-Nov.	Plowing and late figs (Autumn-Winter)	
9		Kislev (confidence, boldness)	Nov.-Dec.	sowing	25° Dedication * (Hanukkah; feast of lights)
10		Tevet	Dec.-Jan.	Rain (snow in high places)	
11		Shevat	Jan.-Feb.	Flower of mulberry and citrus harvest	
12		Adar (amplitude, width, ornament, glory)	Feb.-March	Citrus harvest	14°-15° Purim*

* Not determined by God. Purim: by Mordecai and Esther (Est. 9: 21-22; 26-29). Hanukkah (1 Maccabees 4: 52-53; Jn. 10: 22): by men during “God’s period of silence” (From 400 BC to the Birth of Christ).

The agricultural calendar is divided into the dry season (from April to September) and rainy season (from October to March). This last season could be divided also into 'sowing' (November-December) and 'harvest' (April-June).

Some festivals were described in the NT, keeping the Jewish laws given to Moses: **Passover** (Jn. 2: 13; 23; Jn. 6: 4; Jn. 11: 55; Matt. 26: 2; Mk. 14: 1; Lk. 22: 1; Acts 12: 3; Acts 20: 6), **New Year** (Jn. 5: 1), **Tabernacles** (Jn. 7: 2; 37 cf. Lev. 23: 36; Num. 29: 35; Neh. 8: 18), **Pentecost** (Acts 2: 1; Acts 20: 16; 1 Cor. 16: 8), **Day of Atonement** (Acts 27: 9, here called the **Day of Fasting**).

The **feasts of the Lord** (Hebrew, **mô'ade YHWH**) described in Lev. 23: 2, 4; Num. 15: 3 (where they are called **appointed festivals** – NRSV) express a day or a period of religious joy. Although some coincide with the seasons and harvest events, they are not due to these circumstances but to a powerful move of God in the lives of His people. The feasts were instituted by God so that the people moved closer to Him and remade the covenant with their Creator as an act of gratitude for His benefits. Unfortunately, the Jews over the centuries, left aside the pious aspect of them and began to turn them only into religious observances without their spirit was involved; so, the criticism of the prophets in the OT. Another term used for feasts is **hagh** (Lev. 23: 6; Deut. 16: 16). Although three of them are the main described in the bible (Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles), the Sabbath is also considered in Leviticus as a feast, as well as the Feast of Trumpets [Rosh haShannah (literally "head of the year"), the civil New Year, not the religious one corresponding to Passover] and the Atonement (Yom Kippur). The other two described later (Purim and Hanukkah, see item 8) were not directly established by God, but celebrated by Jewish people for having received an important deliverance from Him. The main feasts described are:

- **Feast of Unleavened Bread**, in Hebrew, **hagh hamaççôth** (Ex. 12: 8; Ex. 23: 15; Lev. 23: 6), or **Passover**, in Hebrew, **Pesach** (= to pass over – Lev. 23: 5), established to commemorate the liberation of the Israelites from the slavery in Egypt (Ex. 12: 1-28). It began on the 14th day of the first month and the unleavened bread was eaten for seven days; no regular (KJV: servile) work was done. The first and last days of the feast were sacred assembly and sacrifices were offered (Num. 28: 16-25; Deut. 16: 1-8).



• **Feast of Weeks**, in Hebrew, **hagh shavuot**, also called the **feast of harvest** and the **feast of firstfruits** (Ex. 23: 16; Ex. 34: 22; 26, Lev. 23: 9-14; Lev. 23: 15-22; Num. 28: 26-31; Deut. 16: 9-12; 26: 1-11). Later, it became known as the **Feast of Pentecost**, since it was celebrated fifty days after Passover Saturday (Lev. 23: 15-16). It was marked by a sacred assembly and by offerings of sacrifices. The first fruits of the land was offered as thanksgiving to the Lord (a sheaf of the first wheat harvest), and no regular (KJV: servile) work was done.

• **Feast of Tabernacles** in Hebrew, **hagh hassukkôth** (or feast of Sukkot; Sukkot = tents, plural of sukkah = tent), or **Feast of ingathering at the end of the year**, in Hebrew, **hagh hă'āsîph** (Ex. 23: 16; Ex. 34: 22; Lev. 23: 34; Num. 29: 12-40; Deut. 16: 13-17). It lasted seven days and on the first and on the last there was sacred assembly. The fruit were harvested and the people lived in huts made of branches and twigs of trees, starting on the 15th day of the seventh month (Lev. 23: 39-43; Num. 29: 12-40; Neh. 8: 15). The fact of living in tents during the festival recalled the Jews on their wanderings in the wilderness after being freed from Pharaoh. Just like in other festivals, rest was kept. Seven types of food are harvested in the time of Sukkot in Israel. Many Jews hang examples of each on the roof of Sukah (Sukkah) to symbolize the harvest. These foods are: wheat, barley, grapes, olives, pomegranates, dates and figs. The Lulav or palm is tied with the willow (NIV: poplar) and the myrtle. The Etrog (citron) is used in prayers and ceremonies of Sukkot.



The plants and fruit are described in Lev. 23: 40: “On the first day you shall take the fruit of majestic trees (etrog – citron), branches of palm trees (lulav), boughs of leafy trees (hadas – myrtle), and willows (aravah) of the brook; and you shall rejoice before the Lord your God for seven days.” The eighth day of Sukkot described in Lev. 23: 36 was a day of sacred assembly instituted by God as a way of consecration to Him and as the closing of the Feast of Tabernacles.

Today, the solemn assembly of the 22nd day of the 7th month (or 8th day of the Feast of Tabernacles) is called Shemini Atzeret (Lev. 23: 36), the “Eighth Day of Assembly” and marks the conclusion of the festival of Sukkot, and Simchat Torah, celebrating happily the end of the annual cycle the Torah reading and the beginning of a new cycle. The essence of the feast is the connection with God obtained through prayer and joy at the meals. In Israel, Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah are celebrated with the same feast, on the same day. In the Diaspora, however, two holidays are granted in order to compensate them for not having the good fortune to live in the Holy Land. The word Atzeret is a paternal expression of affection, as if it was something that a father would speak to say goodbye to his son. Simchat Torah or “the joy of Torah” marks the end of the cycle of readings of Torah for the year because the last part is read and completed at this section of the religious service. The last part of the last chapter is read by the

“Bridegroom of the Torah” (who is honored with the reading of the last book – Deuteronomy) and the cycle begins again with the reading of the first three parts of Genesis, the first book. It is worth making clear that the eighth day of Sukkot described in Lev. 23: 36 was a day of solemn assembly established by God as a form of consecration to Him and as closing of the Feast of Tabernacles. The same way that the Feast of ‘Hanukkah’ to the Jews, the Feast of ‘Simchat Torah’ is not a biblical feast, but instituted by men and not by God, even because He didn’t establish a Feast to celebrate the giving of the Ten Commandments to Moses. This Feast came with the instructions of men by writing the Talmud in 5th-6th centuries. In Lev. 23: 36 it is written: “Seven days you shall present the Lord’s offerings by fire; on the eighth day (shemiyni = eight; Strong #8066, שְׁמִינִי), you shall observe a holy convocation and present the Lord’s offerings by fire; it is a solemn assembly (‘atsereth or atsarah, Strong #6116; עֲצֵרֶת, solemn assembly, solemn meeting); you shall not work at your occupations” (shibh`ath yâmiym taqriybhu 'isheh layhvh bayyom hashemiyniymiqrâ'-qodhesh yihyeh lâkhem vehiqrabhtem 'isheh layhvh `atsereth hiv'kol-mele'kheth `abhodhâh lo' tha`asu).

- **Sabbath** (Shabbat = rest, cessation, interruption). This is considered as a feast in Lev. 23: 2-3, and it is called Sabbath of rest. It was marked by solemn assembly (Isa. 1: 13) and by the cessation of all work. It was also a day of joy (Isa. 58: 13). What God really meant was to rest from the secular work that they performed as a source of survival, so that they might be free to have more fellowship with Him, to worship Him and wait for His help. Something important about the Sabbath of rest it is that it not only related to the people and the fourth commandment of God (Ex. 20: 8-11), but also to the rest of the land (Ex. 23: 10-11, where God talks about the Sabbatical Year or Year of rest, as in Lev. 25: 2-4). Thus, He warned the people to obey His laws so that this blessing was not removed (Lev. 26: 34-35; 43); they didn’t obey the Lord over the centuries and then He removed the days of Saturday all at once; therefore, the seventy years of captivity in Babylon (2 Chr. 36: 21; Jer. 25: 11-12). Other biblical references related to the Sabbath: Ex. 20: 8-11; Ex. 23: 10-13; Ex. 34: 21; Ex. 35: 1-3; Lev. 19: 30; Lev. 23: 3; Lev. 25: 2-4; Lev. 26: 34-35; Lev. 26: 43; Num. 15: 32-36; Deut. 5: 12; 2 Chr. 36: 21; Neh. 13: 17; Isa. 1: 13; Isa. 56: 2; 4-5; Isa. 58: 13-14; Jer. 17: 21-22; Jer. 25: 11-12; Jer. 29: 10; Dan. 9: 2; Heb. 3: 11.

- **Feast of Trumpets** (Num. 29: 1). In Lev. 23: 24 days this is called a “sacred assembly with trumpet blasts”, corresponding to the civil New Year (Rosh haShannah means literally “head of the year”). Sacrifices were offered and the hard work ceased. Practically, it anticipated the after-feast of **Atonement (Yom Kippur)**, for the trumpet is a symbol of the convocation, calling the people to repent and to be in the presence of the Lord. It is customary to blow the trumpet of ram’s horn (shofar) on this day.

- **Day of Atonement** (Yom Kippur, Fasting – Acts 27: 9; Lev. 16: 1-10; 29-34; Lev. 23: 26-32; Num. 29: 7-11). It was kept on the tenth day of the seventh month and was day of convocation during which people afflicted themselves and an annual atonement for sin was made. It was held only once a year (Ex. 30: 10).

- **Feast of Purim**, described in Est. 9: 21-22 and established by Mordecai at the time of Xerxes (Persian king), to commemorate the great deliverance of the Jews of the intrigues of Haman, being days of festivity and rejoicing. It was celebrated on the 14th and 15th of the month of ‘adhar (the last month = February-March).

- **Feast of Hanukkah** is the celebration of the recovery and purification of the temple of Jerusalem by Judas Maccabee around 165 BC, after its desecration by Antiochus Epiphanes (1 Maccabees 4: 52-53 – apocryphal book), also called Antiochus IV. It also received the name of **Feast of Lights**. In Greek, the term used in Jn. 10: 22 is **Enkainia = Dedication**. Unlike the Feast of Purim, where the purpose is to celebrate

with gifts and food, for life (the physical body of the Jews) was requested by the enemy, the Feast of Lights is a celebration of spiritual nature, where one seek the light of the presence of God in the midst of His people. It is celebrated for eight days; on each of them, one of the nine lamps of the lampstand (Hanukiah) is lit, and the middle one, called Shamash (Hebrew = sun), is used to kindle the others. It is the first one to be lit. This Feast was not instituted by God but by men, during “God’s period of silence” (400 BC until the birth of Christ). According to the Jewish tradition, during the consecration of the altar by Judas Macabee the Menorah of the Temple had to be lit, and for this it was necessary olive oil ritually pure. However, there was only one bottle that had not been desecrated by the Greeks, enough for one day only. Even so, the Jews lit the lampstand. It was then that the great miracle occurred and the oil burned for eight days.



First night



Second night



Third night



Fourth night



Fifth night



Sixth night



Seventh night



Eighth night

The most important of all for us, who live under grace, instead of the law, is to be able to interpret through the light of divine wisdom the spiritual meaning of these feasts because our spirit may can rejoice not only with something that was the Lord’s blessing in the past, but continues to be for everyone who believes in Him.

Passover is no longer a ritual to be obeyed as a physical release from captivity in a foreign land, but the spiritual liberation won by Jesus on the cross, freeing us from the eternal captivity of death in the hands of the devil. Living Passover is to live His resurrection and His victory over sin in our lives. It is to conquer the right as children of God through His forgiveness and to have authority over all evil.

The Feast of Firstfruits or **Pentecost** is more than rejoicing in the fruit of our work, offering them as an act of gratitude to the Lord; it means to receive His Spirit that fills

us with gifts and spiritual fruit and with all the power that was in Jesus, giving us the capacity to accomplish here on earth the same miracles He performed.

Celebrating the **Feast of Tabernacles** means to remember everything that He has already done for us until today in our spiritual desert, in search of our ‘promise land,’ and to rejoice by knowing that in our pilgrimage on earth He will be always guiding our steps, giving us victory and deliverance.

Shemini Atzeret means the joy of reading the word of God, each day a new cycle, a new revelation, to be ‘the bridegroom of the Torah’, that is, to feel privileged for being chosen by the Lord to know His teachings and, more than that, what His Testament contains for us, that is, His legacy, His inheritance for us, our rights as children of God.

We should not forget the **Sabbaths** that God puts in our lives, that is, the period in which the only alternative we have is to rest in Him, for He alone is able to direct us and supply our needs. We should give rest to our land, our soul, periodically, as it was prescribed in the Law, after a period of spiritual struggle so that our soul can be restored because of the exhaustion it suffered; it means to give rest to our ‘inner land’ and get away from everything that does not please the Lord, in order to be in the altar in intimacy with His Spirit, receiving His comfort, His guidance and His strength.

Living the **Feast of Trumpets** is to hear His call to be in His presence in praise and prayer, especially when our soul is weakened by so much outrage from Satan and so many obstacles he puts in our path. It’s to summon our brothers to holiness planned by God to His people, leading them to the altar through worship and repentance so that the covenant made with Him is not broken; it means to start all over again (a “New Year”).

The **Day of Atonement** may be every day, for it is the day that we can consecrate ourselves to Jesus and come closer to the cross through fasting and sincere prayer, cleansing ourselves of what bothers us; it is the day of living His forgiveness. It is the day when we can intercede for other brothers who may be in need of divine intervention in their lives.

Celebrating the **Feast of Purim** is to give thanks for the material blessings that the Lord puts in our hands, not only for our own benefit, but to bless His work, sharing what we have with those less fortunate. It is to know that the enemy cannot withhold what belongs to us and all that he tries to steal unfairly of our lives, including our physical health, can be reversed by the power of God. Jesus (in the figure of Mordecai) may determine the deliverance of His children and break the whole decree of the devil on them.

The Feast of Lights is a continuous thing that a Christian has the right to celebrate when he is full with the Holy Spirit. It means to live in the Spirit and not in the flesh, letting the power of the Spirit of God carry out His will in us and through us. It includes understanding, wisdom, might, prudence, knowledge and fear of God in our soul and our spirit, driving away all kind of darkness that tries to prevent us from seeing clearly the divine direction for our lives. It is to be sure that His revelation will always be available to us and that the strength of His Word will not let us slip into the snares of the devil, on the contrary, it will bring us safe to the end.

Sacrifices were offered to the Lord in almost all the feasts: burnt offering, sin offering, guilt offering, grain offering and fellowship offering. This means for us that Jesus has offered Himself as a living sacrifice before the Father, paying the price for our salvation, but it is up to us to offer ourselves as living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to Him, as the Word says, daily, giving Him the best we have. In doing so, we are fulfilling what is written in Lev. 6: 12-13: “The fire on the altar shall be kept burning; it shall not go out. Every morning the priest shall add wood to it, lay out the burnt offering

on it, and turn into smoke the fat pieces of the offerings of well-being. A perpetual fire shall be kept burning on the altar; it shall not go out.” This means that the flame of revival of the Spirit in our hearts will not be quenched because we, as priests, will light the wood of prayer, supplication and thanksgiving; over them we will put not only our lives available to the Lord as well as our sacrifice of praise (‘burnt offering’), our anointing and the most precious we have that is the intimacy with Jesus (‘fat’) so that it is multiplied by Him, coming to strengthen us.