

much, *better for the ordeal*. I do not know if it is true what they say, that ‘time heals all things’; but these things I *do* know – the Creativity of the Eternal One makes all things beautiful, each in its time [Ecclesiastes 3:11] and the Eternal One works all things together for good for those who love Him, who are called according to His purpose [Romans 8:28].

We Have Been Provided a Fresh Canvas – What Will We Draw?

Mankind – indeed all Creation – has been given a *second chance*. Adam’s progeny has a *blank slate* upon which to write the next chapter of history. Now there are *choices to make*. It all starts with how we are going to choose to think and speak of the events we had experienced. We could declare ourselves *traumatized victims*, consider the world ‘destroyed’, and sit down in sackcloth and ashes to die; or we can declare ourselves *blessed*, clothe ourselves in garments of praise, and embark humbly, reverently and joyfully on the process of starting over. We can poison our assigned spheres of influence with complaint, offense, woundedness, and outrage from our past – or we can take a deep breath, praise the Holy One Who has faithfully brought us through the storm, tune our ears to His Voice alone, take His Hand, and get on with doing what we were created to do. Choose this day which approach you will take.

A Fresh Revelation, A Fresh Relational Paradigm, and A Fresh Empowerment!

The earth has received the Holy One’s Grand ‘*Seedtime and Harvest, Cold and Heat, Winter and Summer, and Day and Night*’ promise. Genesis 8:22. Humanity has received a fresh, new ‘*Be fruitful, expand in influence, and bring fullness to the earth*’, empowerment. Genesis 9:1. Noah and his family have been given a set of special instructions for the upcoming critical season of replenishing. Genesis 9:3-4, 7. And we have all been reminded once again how precious the Holy One considers the lifeblood of the Creatures He has designed. Genesis 9:5-6.

So what is next on the Holy One’s agenda? In today’s aliyah the Holy One inaugurates anew season of productivity with a *fresh God-encounter*, a *renewed blessing/empowerment*, and a *totally new paradigm that is destined to change the nature and dynamics of God-man relations forever*. The Holy One calls the ‘new’ paradigm *et-b’riti* – *i.e.* ‘My *b’rit*. Hold onto your hats, folks - God-man relations are about to elevate to a radical new phase! The introduction of *chayei b’rit* – *i.e.* covenant-centered life - is going to change virtually everything! More on that later. For now let’s eavesdrop a little bit on the paradigm-shifting encounter between the Holy One and His Beloved Remnant. The Holy One declares:

Va'ani hineini mekim et-b’riti iteichem

As for Me, behold! I am raising up et-b’riti [English, My covenant] with you,

v'et-zar'achem achareichem

and with your zerah [i.e. seed; offspring] after you,

V'et kol-nefesh hachayah asher itchem ba'of babehemah

and with every nefesh ha-chayah that is with you: with the birds, the cattle,

uv'chol-chayat ha-aretz itchem mikol yotzei ha-tevah l'chol chayot ha-aretz

and every living thing of the eretz with you, all of the teivah - every living thing of the eretz.

[Genesis 9:9-10]

We will get to the substance of the Covenant in a few moments. First, let us consider its scope and applicability. This covenant is not just with Noach, but is with all human beings alive or that will ever live - all bloodlines forever. The covenant also extends to every living creature of earth – every species of mammal, of reptile, of amphibian, of invertebrate, and of fowl; every genus and genome; every specimen; every pedigree; every DNA strand; in every generation – and even to the earth itself. For the Holy One said:

V'ha-kimoti et-b'riti itchem v'lo-yikaret kol-basar od mimei ha-mabul

I am raising up My covenant with you; never again will all flesh be cut off by floodwaters

v'lo-yihyeh od mabul l'shachet ha-aretz

neither will there anymore be a flood to destroy the eretz.

[Genesis 9:10-11]

Before this pronouncement, the Holy One could do all things; now He can only do all things *minus one*. He cannot – will not – cause or allow a flood to destroy the earth. Ever. Under any circumstances. Even if men behave badly. Even if humanity corrupts itself, sins horribly, and deserves death every bit as much as it did before the flood. Even if all animal life once again becomes intermixed, hybridized, perverted, and rabidly radicalized to the extent that the earth could desperately use another good cleansing. Why would He make such a commitment? Why would handcuff Himself in this way? It is pure *kindness*. It is pure *grace*. It is pure *love*. Are you listening, Beloved? Now would be a really good time to perk up your ears.

The Sons of Noach – From Whom All Races and Ethnicities Will Devolve

The first two God/man encounters we have read about this week only involved the Holy One and Noach. This encounter is different; it directly involves – indeed focuses upon - ***Noach's sons***. It is from these three sons that all human beings alive today - of whatever race, ethnicity, and nationality- have descended. These three men and their respective wives are *the Holy One's chosen seed – the vessels through which the Holy One intends to redeem Creation and repopulate the world*. They can no longer draft off of their father's revelation. Each of them must now meet and come to know the Holy One and His Ways *for himself*. *Come to the*

bimah, **Shem**, **Cham** (Ham), and **Yafet** (Japheth)! Your tour of duty is officially about to begin!

Whose Covenant Is it? Whose Purposes Is It Designed to Serve?

Perhaps we need to take the Holy One's words seriously. Perhaps we need to consider His choices of vocabulary and verbiage as being important. Perhaps we need to understand that when the Creator makes a *b'rit* with man, it is always about His Will being done on earth – never about our ego being stroked, about our fleshly 'happiness' level being enhanced, or about our physical bodies being made more comfortable. While He is willing to honor us with the privilege of playing a small part in His Grand Plan, His Covenant is never about our *getting what we want*, but about us *doing what He wants* – for the sake of His Greater Plan for Creation. He is about making *all things beautiful* – and *fruitful*, and *fully useful* - in their time. And that is what His Covenants are always about. A *b'rit* means we become His servants; not the other way around. He is always faithful to take excellent care of His Own, of course – but that is just because He is good, and His mercy endures forever, and because He has invested His Character, His Reputation, and an incredible quantity of Kingdom Assets in us. The Holy One has Big Plans for the renewed *terra firma* of earth, you see. His covenant with mankind – i.e. His specially designed *Shadow Species* - is merely part of His strategy for implementing those Big Plans.

His Covenant, for His Sake, for His Plan, for His World

The Flood – i.e. the Holy One's supernatural part of the Grand Redemption Protocol - has now been fully effectuated; now it is man's turn to do his part. Because the Holy One was with them, Noah and his family have been redeemed – and they live. The world is now theirs to mold, shape, form, and fill – and that is where Covenant comes in. Covenants are not pathways *to* redemption – they define the pathways that the Holy One wants those He has already redeemed to walk in AFTER their redemption is assured. Covenants are about making Creation as beautiful as possible, and the earth as fruitful as possible, by having at least a few men create and maintain a Kingdom-consistent ecosystem and environment wherever they go – continent by continent, nation by nation, region by region, marketplace by marketplace, neighborhood by neighborhood, and sphere of social and economic influence by sphere of social and economic influence. We are to bring an empowerment of *shalom*, an inspiring message of *hope* and of *love*, and healing, nurturing words of wisdom, understanding, counsel, might, intimate knowledge, and reverence for the Creator.

It Always Comes Back to Covenant

Absolutely everything beautiful and lasting in God-Man relations is based upon - and flows from - covenant. That is why there is not – and never has been – any

such thing as ‘works justification’. Covenant commitment - and the trust relationship that emanates from covenant commitment – has always had to, and always must come first. Indeed, redemption has to come first. When a person looks at the covenant as a means of getting ‘salvation’ or ‘redemption’, he becomes totally self-focused. Only when ‘salvation’ and ‘redemption’ issues are settled can a person become a self-denying servant – which is the only possible lifestyle for one truly in covenant with the Creator. If self-denying commitment is absent, all the ‘works’ a person does tend to be aimed at trying to impress, manipulate, and earn, rather than *serve*. When covenant commitment is present, however, it is the most natural thing in the world for amazing, intimate, passionate, joyful works in furtherance of the covenant relationship to come forth from willing hearts – works so selfless that they stun the world. The works of Torah are never the seed of relationship with the Creator; they are always the fruit of that relationship.

A covenant [b’rit], you see, is not just a promise – it is a spiritual union, like a marriage. It is something eternal, unchanging, and absolutely trustworthy. It is one hundred per cent certain and sure. It is binding in every conceivable way – not just legally, morally, or ethically - but SPIRITUALLY. A b’rit with the Holy One therefore changes everything about us and our lives. It is *attitude altering*. It is *perspective changing*. It is *behavior modifying*. And it is *purpose- and priority-reshaping*. It gives *substance* and *predictability* to all our relationships - with God, with man, and with Creation. Our *brit* with the Holy One is therefore far more valuable than anything else we could ever have this side of Heaven.

The Covenant the Holy One Raised Up/Established With Noach and His Seed

We are all sons of Noach. Because the Flood wiped out every other bloodline, we can all – of whatever nationality, race, and ethnic group – share Noach’s genetics – and are subject to the terms and conditions of the covenant the Holy One made with Noach’s sons. It behooves us therefore to *know what the terms of that covenant are*. The specific terms of the covenant are:

1. Noach and his seed will step into the place of Adam and his seed, and will be responsible for bearing Covenant-consistent fruit, multiplying/expanding/increasing in territory and influence; and bringing fullness and fulfillment of potential to the earth;
2. To facilitate the foregoing, the Holy One will cause the fear of Noach and his seed to fall upon every beast, bird, and creature of the earth, and all creatures of the sea;
3. Every moving thing will - for a time of replenishing plant life after the Flood, at least - be consumable by Noach and his seed; but, even yet, he and his seed are forever to refrain from ingesting the flesh of any living

- creature having its blood/life force in it;
4. An accounting of blood will be required of every man or animal regarding every other human life that enters his sphere of influence;
 5. Never again will a flood cut off all flesh or destroy all life on earth; and
 6. The rainbow in the cloud will serve as a Covenant Sign.

Let's discuss these provisions one by one.

1. *Stepping Into Adam's Shoes – Stewardship over Earth and Creation*

The original plan of the Holy One for mankind has not changed. Man – now represented by the seed of Noach – is here on earth to [a] bear fruit consistent with His 'seed donor' – *i.e.* the Holy One Himself; [b] expand and increase in territory and influence, to as to [c] bring fullness of beauty and fruitfulness and fulfillment of Divine plan and potential to all areas of earth' geography and every species and genus of life thereon.

2. *The Fear of Man*

In order to assist us in harnessing the potential for goodness and fruitfulness of the living creatures the Holy One has put within man's area of responsibility, the Holy One has committed to cause those creatures to 'fear' Noach and his sons. This will prove essential for herding, husbandry, and management. But it will necessitate that mankind learn to use this 'empowerment' wisely, kindly, gently, and unselfishly. Animals and other living creatures are not here for our exploitation or enjoyment; we are here to serve their species, as good managers, to bring out the best in them – in order that all the ecosystems of earth – on land and at sea - function well and bear much fruit.

3. *Control Over the Food Chain – and the Future of the Ecosystem*

Noach and his sons were to start over with no edible plants, grains, orchards, or vines yet available for harvest. These things were coming, but would take time to develop. So, the initial proscription against mankind eating the flesh of living creatures was lifted. But that presented Noach and his sons with some challenges. First of all, with regard to the 'clean' animals, there were at most 14 – *i.e.* seven male/female pairs. Every creature that they killed and ate was one less available to breed and propagate. They would need to restrain their appetites, and eat only the minimum they needed. Secondly, with regard to 'unclean' animals, the stakes were even higher. There were only two of each species – one male and one female. If either the male or the female of an unclean species was killed for food, the species was doomed. Since each of these species was designed to serve part of the 'garbage disposal' function for earth, eating even one unclean creature would result not only in species genocide, but also corruption/pollution of the earth.

The ability to eat animal flesh of all kinds, at least pending replenishing the earth

and rebuilding the species' needed numbers - might seem like a wide-open invitation to Noah and his sons eat the unclean as well as the unclean - but it was nothing of the sort. This, too, calls for patience, and the wisdom of the saints.

4. Accountability for the Spilling of Life Blood

Adam and Chava were not specifically told not to attack, tear apart, or kill each other or their kids. That was a no brainer, right? They were not predators. They were not wild animals who had to kill for food, nor hunters who got a thrill from killing for sport. They had a *nishmat chayim* – a spark of Divinity – and its testimony in favor of life was too strong for human self-will to overcome. This love of life did not, however, pass down to Kayin. Kayin over-reacted narcissistically to a perceived slight – and took his outrage out on Hevel. Which would it be with Noah and his sons – love and respect for life, or self-promotion at any cost? The Holy One wanted to make it clear to Noah and his sons exactly how important every human life He has created is – both to Him Personally and to His Beautiful Plans for Creation. He wanted no doubt about this – not a single drop blood was to be shed – by man or beast - without an accounting to the Holy One. Every thought and intent of the heart, every motive, every word, and every action – would be tried before HIS *bimah* of judgment. Men might enact laws and establish legal systems – but He insisted on making the final determination.

5. No More World-Wide Floods To Supernaturally Fix What Men Mess Up

The Holy One effectively 'bailed' Adam and Chava and their progeny out with the Flood. Their destructive brand of 'knowledge of good and evil' obsessed humanity had so polluted the earth and all its creatures that the Holy One had intervened on dramatically, visibly, and radically on the earth's behalf. That specific kind of intervention was not going to happen again. From this point forward, humankind is going to have to be somewhat responsible for cleaning up its own messes. While the Holy One has established the cycles and ecosystems of earth and the Heavens to be 'self-cleaning', Noah, his sons, and all men after them are charged with the responsibility to not let any area within their sphere of influence go down the 'corrupt' and 'violent' road of the Days of Noah ever again. We are now responsible – and will be held accountable - for all our spheres of influence. The Holy One will give us all we need, and more, to help us take care of this responsibility. But He wants us to team up with Him, not rely on Him as a last resort cleanup crew.

7. The Eye-Catching, Awe Inspiring, and Confidence Building Bow in the Cloud

Every covenant has a 'sign' [in Hebrew, an 'ot'] that functions as a confidence-inspiring down payment. Think of the earnest money a buyer of real estate gives to the seller or his agent at the signing of the contract to show his good faith intention

to carry through on the transaction until it is complete. A covenant ‘sign’ – *ot* - is a preview of the unseen that engenders trust in that which is coming. The ‘*ot*’ testifies that He who *began* a good work will be faithful to complete it. The sign/token is *a down payment, as it were, on the ultimate fulfillment of the covenant*. If there is no sign/token, there is no *brit* [covenant] – only words. The sign/token is what SEALS the *b’rit*, and makes it legally binding. The “sign” of the marriage covenant is the *wedding ring*. The sign of the social covenant of peoples who voluntarily unite under a government is that nation’s *flag*. And so on.

Ot is ‘spelled’ *alef, vav, tav*². This word, like all ancient Hebrew words, is a hieroglyphic. In its purest form depicts that which is at the beginning [*alef*] being connected/joined [*vav*] to that which is at the end or conclusion [*tav*].

The sign of the Holy One’s covenant with the sons of Noach is the awe inspiring and confidence building bow in the Cloud³. Just looking at a rainbow does therapeutic things to a person. It inspires awe. It generates hope for the future. It awakens hunger/thirst for the Holy One and all things pertaining to Him. It triggers our innate ‘longing for Eden’. It lifts the spirit. It inspires confidence regarding things to come. Why? Because the Holy One made it so – and spoke it into reality by saying to Noach, his sons, and all their seed:

***I will set qash’ti⁴ [My bow] in the cloud,
and it will be for an ot [sign] of a covenant between me and the eretz.
It will come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the eretz,
ha qashet [the bow] will be seen in the cloud,
and I will bring to the forefront of my mind, and focus intently upon,
the brit between Me, you, and every living creature of all flesh,
and the waters will no more become a flood to destroy all flesh.***

***Ha-qashet [the bow] will be in the cloud.
I will look at it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant
between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the eretz.”***

***Elohim said to Noach, “Zot ot ha-B’rit [This is the token of the covenant]
which I have established between me and all flesh that is on the eretz.”***

This *ot* [sign, token] is filled with beautiful imagery. The rainbow [Hebrew *qashet*] is the Holy One’s *bow*, the weapon of death. The Holy One extends the bow to mankind, as a man offers another a knife, *dangerous end toward himself*. What the

² *Ot* is Strong’s Hebrew word #226. It is pronounced almost like the English word *oat*.

³ A rainbow results when rays of sunlight pass through water droplets suspended in the atmosphere of earth. The droplets of water refract the ray of light, revealing it not as a single ray of white light, but as 7 distinct bands of light displayed in a multidimensional arc across the sky.

⁴ The Hebrew word our English Bibles translate as ‘bow’ or rainbow is *qeshet, quf, shin, tav*, Strong’s Hebrew word #7198, pronounced *keh’-shet*. This noun is derived from the Hebrew verb root *qashah, qof, shin, hey*, Strong’s Hebrew word #7185, meaning to *bend back*. Its first usages in Torah deal with bending over in the pains of labor. **Genesis 35:16-17.**

Holy One was saying to mankind in connection with this action was, I believe something like the following [please forgive the suggestive paraphrase], “***I will not destroy you, but I will place in your hand the means by which you can bring death to Me.***” Even as the Holy One extended his weapon of death to Noah and his sons, He knew full well – because it was part of His eternal redemptive plan, designed before the foundation of the world – that Noah’s descendants would indeed ultimately use that weapon of death against Him in the days to come - when He physically assumed the form of Messiah and walked in their midst.

The Real-Life Parable of Noah’s Vineyard

No longer being called to focus on shipbuilding and animal husbandry full-time, Noah decided to fulfill the Divine Instruction to ‘replenish’ the earth by trying his hand at horticulture. The soil of the earth was enriched with alluvial deposits and ready to cultivate again. Eager to try out the Holy One’s renewed Empowerment to “be fruitful’ Noah may have planted any number of species of plants and trees. The narrative of Torah, however, focuses on only one thing Noah planted - a vineyard⁵. In due season he harvested its grapes. Perhaps the fermentation process was new to him – something that had not occurred prior to the Flood. But whether knowingly or unknowingly, Noah drank a bit too much of the fermented juice. He wound up badly under the influence. He wisely retired to his tent, ripped off his clothes, and apparently passed out. As Torah puts it:

V’yesh’t min ha-yayin

He drank some of the wine,

V’yish’kar v’yit’gal b’toch aholoh

making himself drunk, and uncovered himself in the tent.

[Genesis 9:21]

No real harm done – yet. But then came Cham. Torah tells us:

Vayar Cham avi Chena'an et er'vat aviv ...

Cham, the father of Kena'an, looked upon his father's nakedness ...

[Genesis 9:22(a)]

We are not told what possessed Cham to make him invade his father’s privacy. All we are told is that he entered Noah’s tent and *saw his father’s nakedness*. Perhaps it was a calculated act on Cham’s part. Perhaps it was totally inadvertent. But Cham’s seeing of Noah’s nakedness was not the problem. The problem was Cham’s reaction. Some of the sages of Israel say that, upon finding his father passed out and naked, he physically castrated him, so he could be assured that Noah would produce no more heirs with which he had to compete for Noah’s inheritance. Torah does not specifically say this. But even if Cham did not do the

⁵ The vine is the symbol of new life, new hope, and regeneration. The fruitful vineyard is both the wellspring of abundant joy and the evidence of abiding in peace.

physical act of emasculation, he accomplished the same result *with words*, after leaving the tent. Torah tells us:

... vayaged l'sh'nei-echav bachutz
... and he told it to his two brothers outside.
[Genesis 9:22(b)]

What would have been a rare moment of private overindulgence (Noach was, after all, alone in his tent when he passed out), a lesson to be learned the hard way, when struck by hangover the next morning, was turned by Cham into a sick public joke. Instead of honoring his father, Cham, at the very least, played Diane Sawyer, describing his father's nakedness to all who would listen, and laughing about his drunkenness, in detail, on *Prime Time*.

Shem and Yafet, on the other hand, took extreme precautions to absolutely assure that they did not dishonor their father any further. They went to his tent for one purpose only – to cover him.

Vayikach Shem v'Yefet et-ha-sim'lah
Shem and Yafet took a cloak
vayasimu al-sh'chem sh'neihem
and placed it on both their shoulders.
v'yel'chu achoranit v'yechasu et er'vat avihem
Walking backwards, they then covered their father's nakedness.
ufneihem achoranit v'er'vat avihem lo ra'u
They faced away from him and did not see their father naked.
[Genesis 9:23]

Part of being in covenant with the Holy One is learning to *humbly cover* – rather than arrogantly expose, or mock, or make fun of, or exploit – the nakedness and the sin sequences of others. It is not a matter of *overlooking* or *condoning* folly or sin – it is just a matter of refusing to allow one's mind, one's eyes, and one's speech to freeze-frame any person at a low moment or season of his or her life. It is a matter of valuing the God-given potential and beauty in a man or woman, even when it is not, at the time in question, evident in that man or woman's behavior. So ... how are you doing at covering others in their moments - or seasons – of weakness and prodigality? Do you still see *intrinsic value* in people who sin? Or do you, like Cham, delight in exposing and gossiping about them?

Who Is Blessed – and Who is Cursed

Noach finally awoke from his night of folly. He discovered what had occurred, and was moved to prophesy. He had walked with the Holy One for over 600 years. Prophecy was much more a part of his identity than drunkenness. And so, looking into the future of his family, Noach declared:

Arur [under limitations and restrictions] *will be Kena'an*
[a son of Cham who had not even been born yet]

A servant of servants will he be to his brothers."

*He said, "Blessed be the Holy One, the Eternal One of Shem; let Kana'an be his servant.
May the Eternal One enlarge Yafet, Let him dwell in the tents of Shem;
let Kana'an be his servant."*

From this prophecy of Noach the history of the peoples of the world developed. Shem (and his descendants, including Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya'akov, and all Hebrew people) was destined to become pre-eminent. Yafet⁶ was destined to be a co-laborer with Shem. Cham, his soon-to-be born son Kena'an, and the descendants of both – *i.e.* the Kena'ani (Canaanites) and the original Egyptians, Ethiopians, Libyans, and Babylonians - were to be in subjection to Shem and Yafet.

Please keep in mind that the idea behind this blessing and curse is going to come more and more into focus in coming parsha – particularly as we proceed from the Holy One's dealings with *Noach and his sons* to the dealings of the Holy One with *one of Shem's descendants – a man named Avram* (Abram). We will, when we examine the words the Holy One speaks to Avram, see how the 'blessing' and the 'curse' of Noach regarding his sons will play out in world history – and perhaps in end-times prophecy as well.

Acknowledging the Common Ancestry of All Men

Torah makes it clear that all men are brothers. We are, one and all, of whatever ethnicity we appear, descended from the same man - Noach. Humans tend to think in terms of race and nationality and clan. Torah confronts those classifications with the essential truth that, whatever we look like, wherever we are born, whatever king or kingdom we serve, we are all part of the same family – and we all have the inherited potential to walk with God, and be blameless in our generation.

Torah tells us that seven sons were born to Noach's line - and the species of humanity as we know it today - through *Yafet* [sometimes called 'Japheth' in the Western world]. These seven were: *Gomer, Magog, Madai, Yavan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras*. From these the coastland *peoples* of the Gentiles were separated into their lands, everyone according to his language, according to their families, into their nations. **Genesis 10:3-5.**

Torah tells us that four sons were born to Noach's line - and the species of humanity as we know it today - through Noach's son Cham. These four were: *Cush* [progenitor of Nimrod and the Nubian tribes], *Mitzrayim* [progenitor of the Egyptian

⁶ It is taught by the sages that Yafet's descendants settled in the area now known as Greece, and were the progenitors of the not only the Greeks but all Europeans.

dynasties], Put [progenitor of the Libyans who populated the Sahara region of North Africa], and Kena'an. **Genesis 10:6-20.**

Torah tells us that five sons were born to Noach's line – and to the species of humanity as we know it – through Noach's son Shem. Torah identifies these as: Elam [progenitor of the Persians], Asshur [progenitor of the Assyrians], Arfaxad [from whom the Patriarchs descended], Lud [progenitor of the Lydians], and Aram [progenitor of the Syrians]. **Genesis 10:21-31.**

It was through one or another of the sixteen grandsons of Noach that all *mishpachot* [i.e. families] of the earth devolved. **Genesis 10:32.** All human beings - whether their skin pigment is white, black, red, orange, tan, or yellow – are brothers. No matter what culture, economic status, or geographical region a human being happened to be raised in or come from, we all share the DNA and genetic code of Noach, the *ish tzadik* [a righteous man], who was *blameless in his generation*, and who *walked with God*. There is therefore neither basis in the Covenant Lifestyle nor room in the Kingdom of Heaven for any hint of racial hatred, prejudice, or animus - much less the indulgence of any theory, ideology, or rhetoric of racial, ethnic, national, or cultural superiority. To have negative emotions or attitudes toward anyone based on their race, ethnicity, culture of origin, or economic class, is patently unBiblical – and, of course, is totally irreconcilable with the Grand Plan of the Holy One for the Redemption of Humanity as a species, bloodline by bloodline, and for the restoration of All the earth and Creation to its intended Edenic state of beauty, fruitfulness, and *shalom*.

Sixteen Candles

The Holy One has ordained that people from all sixteen Noachic lineages will serve important roles in His Grand Redemptive Plan for Creation. Never forget the potential for the Elazars, the Tamars, the Rachavs [Rahabs], the Ruths, the Na'amans, the Cyruses, the Samaritan woman, the Corneliuses, the Ethiopian eunuchs, and the Oscar Schindlers to arise from the nations and be used by the Holy One as vessels to bring good into the world. Never allow yourself to see – or speak of – any descendant of Noach as an 'ape' or a 'pig' or a 'dog'. Never allow yourself to see any descendant of Shem, Cham or Yafet as less than human – or as one whit less important or less valuable to yourself. Never allow yourself to envy – or hate – or speak evil against - any race of men, including your own or that of your current worst enemy. And never allow yourself to give up on any race or nationality – or for that matter any individual. You may, from time to time, have conflicts with – or even be spoken ill of or mistreated by – people of other races or nations. But the issue in such instances is always who can rise above the conflict and stay on course with the Holy One's plan. As much as it is within your power, live at *shalom* with all men.

The World's First - And Prototypical - Anti-Messiah Figure

According to Torah one of the grandsons of Cham, a man named **Nimrod** [meaning *rebellion*], was the first person to function in the capacity of a human *king*.

v'Cush yalad et-Nimrod hu hechel lihyot gibor ba-aretz

Cush was the father of Nimrod, who was the first to amass power in the world.

V'tehi reshit mam'lachto Bavel

The shaking out point of his kingdom was Babylon,

v'Erech v'Akad v'Chalneh b'erezt Shin'ar

along with Erekh, Akkad and Calneh, in the land of Shinar.

[Genesis 11:8-10]

Every 'king' crowned by men, such as Nimrod, is the worldly counterfeit of Messiah, the King of Heaven. Nimrod⁷ is, therefore, the prototype of the Anti-Messiah – he who will stand in direct opposition to the 'king' anointed by the Holy One – the Messiah. The kingdom of Nimrod, which began at Bavel [Babylon], was (and is) the epitome and archetype of 'kingdom of this world' – where the self-serving, narcissistic will of man rules. This stands in contradistinction and opposition to the kingdom of the Holy One, where Messiah reigns, and the selfless and benevolent will of God rules.

Rashi concluded that Torah's reference to Nimrod as a 'mighty hunter' is far from a compliment. To Rashi, this reference indicated that Torah was telling us Nimrod was a crafty *hunter of people* whose goal was to ensnare people's minds with his mouth and deceive them into rebelling against the Holy One without even knowing it. Through 'spinning' the truth to suit his own purposes, he was able to lead people to rebel against the instruction and authority of the Holy One and establish himself as the sole ruler of mankind.

The Building A City and A Tower From Which to Make War Against the Holy One

Chapter 11 of Genesis begins with the story of the infamous '*Tower of Bavel*' - the place upon which all the focus of Nimrod's kingdom was centered. This is a very, very important story. I cannot emphasize that statement enough. The seeds of – and the secrets to overcoming - both the 'abomination of desolation' mentioned by Daniel and Yeshua and of the kingdom and mark of 'the beast' mentioned in Revelation, are present in and revealed by this story.

He that has an ear to hear, let him hear. So let's look more closely, shall we? After

⁷ Nimrod is spelled *nun, mem, resh, dalet*.

the death of Noach Torah tells us that Noach's descendants migrated en masse to the 'plain of Shinar'. *Shinar*⁸ means 'place of two rivers', and refers to the so-called *Fertile Crescent*, between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. The area came to be known as Chaldea. It was in this area where 'Ur of the Chaldees' from whence Avram's family migrated. It is the region where Nimrod became the world's first 'king'. It is the physical area occupied by present-day Iraq. Here is how Torah describes the mindset of those who decided to rebel against the Eternal One, congregate on the plain of Shinar, and build a city for their own glory:

Vayehi chol ha-aretz safah echat udevarim achadim
The entire earth had one mouth [safah] with one message [devarim]

Vayehi benos'am mikedem
When [the people] migrated from the east

V'yimtzei'u vik'ah b'ereetz Shinar v'yeshvu sham
they found a valley in the land of Shinar, and they settled there.

Remember that the Holy One gave the explicit instruction and empowerment to Noach and his descendants to ***Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish*** [fill up] ***the earth***. **Genesis 9:1**. Well, they were *fruitful*. They *multiplied*. But the Divine instruction to *replenish the earth* – fill it back up with human beings – was another story. That instruction was not only ignored in the generations that followed Noach's death – it actually became the focal point of the most destructive rebellion sequence in the history of man.

Vayomeiru ish el-rei'eihu
They said to one another,

havah nilbenah levenim v'nisrefah lisrefah
'Come, let us mold bricks and fire them – or for building let us build the ultimate edifice;'

vatehi lahem ha-l'venah l'aven
They then had bricks to use as stone,

V'hachemar hayah lahem l'chomer
and asphalt for mortar.

Vayomeru havah nivneh-lanu ir
They said, 'Come, let us build ourselves a city,

umigdal v'rosho b'shamayim
and a tower from which to take headship over the Heavens.

To our modern ears these words seem harmless. In fact the idealists inside us want to believe that the city these people were building was a unified and peaceful society, a great center of commerce, scholarship, and developing technology. And the same idealists within us want to believe that the tall tower the people were

⁸ Shinar is *shin, nun, ayin, resh*. Strong's Hebrew word #8152, it is pronounced *shin-awr*'.

building was merely designed to serve as a unifying symbol for the society. But the idealist in us is quickly silenced by the realism of Torah.

A *city*? But what kind of a city, with what kind of priorities – and what kind of lifestyles?

A *tower*? But what kind of tower, to what purpose – and with what impact?

And why did these people want to build a city – or a tower – anyway? The Holy One's instruction had been not to build a city or a tower, but to *replenish the earth*⁹. To replenish is *to fill*. And to fill means to *be scattered, like seed*, for a later harvest. Building a city and a tower are the exact opposite of 'replenishing the earth'. So Torah looks behind whatever propaganda and 'spin' was being put out about the building of the city and the tower by its proponents¹⁰, and reveals the cold, ugly truth about it.

What was really motivating the building both the city and the tower was all out rebellion against the Creator, His Plan of Redemption for Mankind and Creation, and His explicit instructions. In their hearts these people said:

V'na'aseh-lanu shem

*Let us make ourselves a name/reputation/self-identify*¹¹,

pen-nafutz al-penei kol ha-aretz

so that we will not be scattered all over the earth.'

The people of that day, like the vast majority of people in all generations since the flood [including today], *did not want to 'replenish the earth', because they did not want to be 'scattered'*. They did not 'go gentle into that good night'. They did not like the *name* [meaning 'purpose, prophetic destiny'] the Holy One had decreed for them. They wanted, instead, to make *their own name* [meaning, to *define their own purpose, and establish their own destiny*].¹² So, they said to themselves: "***v'na'aseh-lanu***

⁹ Hebrew, *milu et ha-aretz*.

¹⁰ Yosef HaLevi quotes 'The Juggler and the King' to explain the reason why a tower was built as follows: "The leaders of the Dispersed Generation wanted their citizenry to assist them in the realization of their goals (amassing power, possession, and glory). But if the people's major interests were eating and drinking, then they would be both unwilling and unable to lend their aid. The government therefore understood that if they wanted to succeed, they would have to wean the populace away from their physical drives: citizens would have to be prepared to sacrifice their personal comfort for the advancement of the goals of the state. The awesome "tower that reaches to the sky" was meant to strike fear into any who would oppose their regime."

¹¹ In other words, the sages say, the people wanted to demonstrate their own power and glory. The goal was "to make a name for themselves" – engage in self-worship. The Talmud thus teaches that the statement "***Let us make a name for ourselves***" refers to idolatry! **Sanhedrin 109a**.

¹² The ancients understood that a name contains within it the essence of the thing itself. Among the peoples of the east, the name of a person was believed to contain his secret, to enshrine the essence of his

shem pen-nafutz [Let us make ourselves a name, so that we will not be scattered].

People who want to be independent from the Holy One have some easily identifiable characteristics. First of all, they like to give themselves and their little like-minded group of associates' *names*. Secondly, they like to build *buildings* in which to meet. Thirdly, they like to build *towers* to stick up above the skyline formed by the tops of their buildings. And, finally, their chief identifiable characteristic is that they resist the Divine instruction to scatter and concentrate on living the Torah-based family life that the Holy One calls us to live.

People who want to be independent from the Holy One will not be scattered. Instead, they do the exact opposite - they form groups and elect leaders. They are compulsive about it. They have to be. You see, if there is no 'group' and no 'leader', people actually have to deal with ... *God*. If there is no program, and no meeting schedule, people actually have to ... *teach their own children* [and themselves] *the truth of the Holy One's Torah*.

A Tale of Two Vastly Different Cities, Capitals, Cultures, and Destinies

I like to think of all of Scripture, in its simplest essence, as a 'tale of two [spiritual] cities'. There is a city built with human hands, and human ideas, philosophies and religious notions, and which is human through and through. It is called Bavel [Babylon]. There is, however, another city. It is a city not built with human hands, not built upon human ideas, not built with bricks but with stones, and which is God's through and through. It is called *Y'rushalayim* [Jerusalem].

In which of these cities – and mindsets - do you spend most of your time? The answer matters. It matters because, if you will receive it, what the descendants of Noach built in the plain of Shinar is the very same thing that the 'beast' of Revelation will build. Bavel is a city that is the polar opposite of the Y'rushalayim of God. Bavel is a city built by and for men – instead of a city built by and for God. Bavel is a city built upon alternating currents of flattery and guilt, emphasizing false forms of self-denial and 'community'. Bavel is a city that seduces and deceives man, invoking the name of God, and declaring itself to be 'of God', but which all the while is subtly separating him from God by filling his mind and heart and time on earth with man-centered philosophies, man-focused activities, and man-dominated religious services that *sap his spiritual energy* and *numb his spiritual hunger*. Bavel is a city with increasing hostility for people

character and personality. When it is said therefore that men aimed to make a name for themselves, what is meant is that they conceived the notion of deciding for themselves what their own essential nature and character should be. They said, in other words, "*Let us not be what God created us to be, but what we choose ourselves to be.*"

whose lives are based upon *sh'ma*-ing the Holy One, and who thereby refuse to take the 'mark' of the other city. It is a city that first seeks first to discredit, then to exclude, and eventually to destroy, those who do not take 'the mark'.

How did [will] the Holy One respond to the city on the plain?

V'yered Adonai lir'ot et-ha-ir

And the Holy One descended to see the city

v'et ha-migdal asher banu b'nei ha-adam

and the tower that the sons of man had designed/created.

Vayomer Adonai hen am echad

And the Holy One said, 'They are a single people,

V'safah achat l'chulam

all having one mouth -

v'zeh ha-chilam la'asot

and this is what they asah/build?

v'atah lo-yibatzer mehem kol asher yazmu la'asot

Now nothing they plan to do will be unattainable for them!

One Nation? One Mouth? Ir v'Migdal [i.e. a City and a Tower]?

The serpent would be so pleased. All men walking in unity – in the other way from the Will and Ways of the Holy One. All men working together on a project – that was the antithesis of the Eternal One's Grand Redemptive and Restorative Plan? All men pitching in to build something they all agreed was worthwhile? It was the ultimate Utopian dream. It was the immaculate 'New Age' fantasy. It felt so ... well ... *right!* But that was just the deception. What this *really was* - the Holy One knew - was the height of pseudo-intellectual folly. Fueled by the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life, it was *the ultimate betrayal, the immaculate rebellion, and the epitome of small-minded narcissism.* It was man rejecting who he is and what he was put on earth to do. It was all about man trying to usurp the Throne of the Creator. It was all about the serpent-fed craving to be in control of the cosmos. It was all an illusion; a subtle manipulation; a veiled invitation to oppression.

Human-initiated movements always result in the establishment of a dominant elite – a cadre of arrogant tyrants who force others to succumb to economic and informational bondage to human government. embrace their ideology or die, and Why would anyone buy into such a dark scheme? Because they *never put their cards on the table.* They play *word games* and *mind games* – *just like the serpent in the Garden.* They cloak their manipulation in the emotionally charged rhetoric of 'brotherhood, liberty, and equality'. They hide their oppression under the

serpentine pretense of ‘*enlightenment*’. They tell you they are promoting ‘good’ and ‘freedom’, when what they are selling is the exact opposite. Caveat vendor – let the buyer beware!

Every ‘*city and tower*’ movement [in Hebrew, *ir v’migdal*] conceived or promoted by men is just fruit-of-the-tree-of-knowledge induced narcissism running amok. Some of these movements are clothed in the language of ideology; others pretend to be about political theory and/or moral indignation; still others employ the vernacular of popular psychology, pseudo-science, and/or philosophy. The most dangerous ones use the vocabulary of information, education, and religion. All have one common feature - they substitute themselves for the Creator’s Grand Plan for the Redemption of Mankind, bloodline by bloodline, and for the Restoration of All the earth, and all Creation, to its intended Edenic state of beauty, fruitfulness, and *shalom*.

The Seductiveness of Shinar, Bavel, And Other Man-Conceived, Man-Promoting Construction Projects

Had a prophet arisen and shouted at the top of his lungs: “*Wake up, People!! Congregating at Shinar and building Bavel for Nimrod is not what the Holy One told us to do!*”- or what will make the earth fruitful and whole again - he would have been laughed to scorn. Even though the way of *Ir v’Migdal* is not the Holy One’s will for man – and is in fact a direct contravention of His Divine instructions – you see, the Holy One did not strike the people who rallied under the *Ir v’Migdal* banner dead. In fact, He did the opposite - He provided food there for those who congregated. He made nurturing rain fall in season on the fields and orchards there. He blessed individual people and families abundantly there. He touched many people in many wonderful ways there. His preferred methodology is not judgment; it is redemption.

Why did the Holy One not send fire and brimstone on Babel? Because He had a better plan. And because He knows it is His kindness - not His judgment - that brings people to *teshuvah*. **Romans 2:4**. Note, also, however, that the Holy One has no intention of letting the ‘*Ir v’Migdal*’ new world order system of Shinar – or anywhere - go on forever. At the most advantageous time, in the most effectual way, He arose, laid aside His cloak of invisibility and incorporeality, stepped through the great ‘finitude barrier’, and intervened in a way that no one could dispute Who was responsible.

The First Diaspora – of All People, and All Nations!

Let us eavesdrop on the Holy One’s thought process concerning about the peoples who refused His post-Flood directive to go forth into all the earth and make every

land mass fruitful, and rebelliously decided to congregate on the plain of Shinar. The Holy One revealed His strategy to address this rebellion proactively in Genesis 11:7:

Havah nerdah v'nav'lah sham sefatam

Come, let us descend and confuse their speech,

asher lo yishmei'u ish sfat rei'eihu

so that one person will not understand another's speech.'

Rebellion was not met with ‘punishment’ – but with strategic intervention. Men of every bloodline had theretofore been gifted with the ability to understand the Words of the Creator, all of which were spoken in ancient Hebrew. But though they understood His Words, because they shared the language, they did not *sh'ma* them, choosing their own will and ways, and listening to [a] their pseudo-intellec[t]s and [b] their fleshly appetites instead. So, He would change things up, creating a vacuum of language that would draw all who were hungry for Him and His Ways into ‘seeking mode’.

Communication – *i.e.* the capacity for both speech and understanding - is the most visible thing that separates man from animals¹³. It is that upon which congregation-minded people – Shinar/Bavel people - most depend. If people cannot understand each other, they cannot congregate. So, because congregations of people were not the Holy One’s will, He took away their ability to communicate.

People who understood each other stayed together. People who did not understand each other separated. As Torah goes on to tell us in Genesis 11:8:

V'yafetz Adonai otam misham al-penei chol ha-aretz

From that place, the Holy One scattered them all over the face of the earth,

V'yachdeilu livnot ha-ir

and they stopped building the city.

As strange as it seems, the ‘language barrier’ that seems so bothersome to us is nothing short of a marvelous work of the Holy One. The Holy One introduced it, and utilized it - then and now - to cause people to stop congregating and get about the business of ‘replenishing the earth’ and fulfilling the Holy One’s divine purposes. And of course the Holy One can reverse the ‘language barrier’ – and tear down the national and ethnic boundaries - anytime He wishes. Hence what happened on *Shavuot* [Pentecost] in the year of Messiah’s atoning death, resurrection, and Ascension.

¹³ Onkelos [c.35-120 AD] - a Talmudic commentator believed to have been a nephew of the Roman emperor Titus who converted to Judaism - translates "*nefesh haya*" as "*ruach memallela*", the spirit of language. Rashi comments, "*Though beast and animal alike were called "living soul", the soul of man is more alive than them all for he was granted, in addition, knowledge and speech.*"

He Named it Bavel!

Torah tells us the source of the name of the infamous city that has come to be known as ‘Babylon’¹⁴. The Holy One named it. I do not know of any other place on earth the Holy One named. We are not even told He named the garden ‘Eden’, the land of promise ‘Yisrael’ [Israel], or the holy city ‘Y’rushalayim’ [Jerusalem]. That makes the naming of Bavel by the Holy One even the more significant. Here is how Torah reports it:

Al-ken qara shemah Bavel ki-sham balal Adonai s’fat kol ha-aretz

He named it Bavel, because this was the place where God confused the world's language.

umisham hefitzam Adonai al-penei kol ha-aretz

It was from there that God dispersed [humanity] over all the face of the earth.

[Genesis 11:9]

If the Holy One names a city, there is a reason. The name means something. And the name is not just descriptive – it is *prophetic*. So, let us look closely at the name the Holy One chose for the city where man attempted to build a *migdal* to heaven.

Bavel is a derivative form of the Hebrew verb root *balal*¹⁵, meaning *to mix, mingle, confuse, confound or anoint*. In Hosea 7:8 it is used to describe how the exiles from the Northern Kingdom of Israel ‘mixed’ into the nations¹⁶. The Hebraic word picture or mural that is presented by the name is house/home [*beit*] of a family or household [*beit/veit*] of discipline [*lamed*]. Here is a message we cringe to hear. The Holy One is declaring Babylon to be *the location from which He will send forth a people who will discipline His chosen people*. This, of course, was first proven prophetic in the sixth century BCE, when Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon was raised up by the Holy One to bring judgment upon Y’hudah [Judah, the Southern Kingdom], destroy its Temple, and carry its people into captivity.

The captivity that resulted from Nebuchadnezzar’s subjugation of Y’hudah is commonly known as the ‘*Babylonian Captivity*’. And in connection with that captivity, the Holy One did to His chosen witness much the same thing He did to the descendants of Noach at Bavel. Before the captivity, the Holy One’s people were centered in one geographical area, and spoke one language – Hebrew. Afterwards, they were dispersed across the face of the earth [only a very small percentage ever returned to Eretz Yisrael], and took up the languages of the peoples with

¹⁴ According to Babylonian religion Babylon was built by the gods and was the dwelling of Marduk. From there people could meet the gods. This is reflected in the authentic Akkadian name for Babylon. Derived from the Babylonian phrase *bab-ilu*, it literally means "gate of the gods."

¹⁵ Balal is *beit, lamed, lamed*. Strong’s Hebrew word #1101, it is pronounced *baw-lawl’*.

¹⁶ The verse in question reads: ***Efrayim, he has mixed himself among the people; Efrayim is a cake not turned.***

whom they commingled. Hebrew became, for all intents and purposes, a ‘dead language’, preserved only in the sacred texts, and used – for centuries – only by rabbis and sages.

To what location were the treasures of the Temple taken? To Bavel [Babylon]¹⁷. See II Kings 25:13-16 where we are told:

*The pillars of brass that were in the house of the Holy One,
and the bases and the brazen sea that were in the house of the Holy One,
did the Kasdim [Babylonians] break in pieces, and carried the brass of them to Bavel.
The pots, and the shovels, and the snuffers, and the spoons,
and all the vessels of brass with which they ministered, took they away.
The fire pans, and the basins, that which was of gold,
in gold, and that which was of silver, in silver, the captain of the guard took away.
The two pillars, the one sea, and the bases that Shlomo had made for the house of the Holy One,
the brass of all these vessels was without weight.*

He Who Does Not Learn From the Mistakes of the Past Is Doomed To Repeat those Mistakes In the Future

Lest we consider Bavel merely an interesting historical footnote, the writer of Revelation prophesies that she will figure prominently in the ‘last days’. The message of Genesis 11 is very real for the end of times as well as for the beginning of times, Beloved. Just as men congregated in Shinar at the beginning of the Post-Flood era, so will men at the end of times congregate in something very similar – something the Book of Revelation calls ‘Mystery Babylon’.

Chapter 17 of Revelation describes Bavel [some say allegorically, as a metaphor for Rome] as the great city of the Beast – *mother of prostitutes and of the abominations of the eretz*. In the next chapter, Bavel is described in a fallen state, as *the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird*. **Revelation 18:2**. The final casting down of Bavel is described in the rest of the Book of Revelation as one of the greatest triumphs of the Holy One in His end-time deliverance of His People. **Revelation 18:10, 21**. This is very consistent with the prophecy of Micah, in the TaNaKh:

*But you, Beit-Lechem Efratah, though you are small among the clans of Y'hudah,
Out of you one will come forth to me that is to be ruler in Yisra'el;
Whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting.
Therefore he will abandon them until the time that she who is in labor gives birth.
Then the rest of his brothers will return to the children of Yisra'el.*

¹⁷ Ancient Bavel is in present-day Iraq, about 50 miles south of Baghdad. Saddam Hussein, former Dictator of Iraq, spent enormous sums restoring many historical sites of ancient Bavel, such as the Southern Palace of Nebuchadnezzar, the ancient ‘Processional Way’, and the notorious ‘Ishtar Gate’. Hussein planned to restore Babylon as a symbol of the greatness of the people of Mesopotamia, making it the center of all political and economic power – first in the Middle East, and then in the world.

*He will stand and shall shepherd in the strength of the Holy One,
In the majesty of the name of the Holy One his God:
And they will live, for then he will be great to the ends of the eretz.
He will be our shalom when Ashur invades our land and marches through our fortresses,
Then we will raise against him seven shepherds, and eight leaders of men.
They will rule the land of Ashshur with the sword,
and the land of Nimrod in its gates. He will deliver us from the Ashur,
When he invades our land, and when he marches within our border.*

[Micah 5:2-6]

Some say the ‘New Babylon’ that will ultimately take shape in Iraq [where Babylon is physically located] in the wake of the fall of Saddam Hussein is destined to become the Babylon of Revelation. Some insist the Babylon of Revelation is Rome – perhaps even the Vatican. Some say it is a coming ‘one-world religion’. Some say it is organized religion in all - and each – of its forms. I do not know. Nor do I think anyone else does. If we cling to Messiah instead of governments and ideologies, organizations and doctrines, programs and religious leaders, and if we *sh’ma* the Voice of the Holy One, heeding every word from His mouth, and if we build our lives on His Torah, it really will not matter what the ‘New Babylon’ mentioned in Scripture turns out to be. Bavel, after all, means ‘confusion’. Torah, on the other hand, is the ultimate confusion-*antidote*.

Questions For Today’s Study

1. Here are some questions concerning today’s aliyah:

[A] Which direction from Ararat did generations subsequent to Noach and his family begin to spread out?

[B] What was the name of the region where Noach’s descendants chose to settle?

[C] Go back to chapter 9, verse 1. What was the Holy One’s instruction to post-flood mankind concerning where he was to go? How did the actions of those settling east of Ararat constitute disobedience to this instruction?

[D] What two things did the descendants of Noach decide to build?

[E] What were the elements out of which they determined to build these two things?

[F] What, according to verse 4, were the two motives of the people for the building of these two things?

[G] In Strong’s and Gesenius, look up the word translated “name” in verse 4. Write the Hebrew word, in Hebrew letters with vowel markings, and in English. Then describe the Hebraic word picture that word – in its purest pa’al/qal form – paints for us.

[H] Why was what the people proposed to do sinful?

[I] In verse 7 to whom is the Holy One speaking?

[J] Why is the place where the people sought to build a city and a tower

called Bavel [Babel]? What does that word mean?

[K] On your paper, trace out the genealogy of Avram [Abram] from Shem. How many generations was Avram removed from Shem?

[L] Was Shem still alive when Avram was born? When Avram's father left Ur? When Avram left Haran and went to the land of Kena'an?

2. In today's haftarah Yeshayahu [Isaiah] presents the healing, restorative words of the Holy One to the generation of Jews who returned to Kena'an, and particularly to Jerusalem, after the Babylonian captivity.

Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters, and he who has no money; come, buy, and eat; yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.

*Why do you spend money for that which is not bread?
and your labor for that which doesn't satisfy? Listen [**sh'ma**] diligently to me,
and eat you that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.*

*Turn your ear, and come to me; hear [**sh'ma**] and your soul shall live:
and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.*

Behold, I have given him for a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander to the peoples.

[A] Through Yeshayahu the Holy One calls out to the remnant of His covenant people. What does He say will result if they **sh'ma** [hear, listen, give full attention to, and obey] His words?

[B] The Holy One describes the covenant He promises to make (or renew) with the remnant, and He describes His love [above, it is translated as "mercies"] for them. What kind of covenant does He promise? What kind of love does He say He has for them?

[C] In Strong's and Gesenius, look up the word used in verse 3 of this passage as "love", or "mercies". Write the Hebrew word and its meaning.

[D] What "promise to David" is the Holy One speaking of?

[E] Who is the Holy One saying He has given to the remnant of Israel as a "witness", a leader, and a commander?

[F] In Strong's and Gesenius, look up the words translated as "witness", "leader", and "commander". Write the Hebrew words, and describe the word pictures they portray.

3. In today's reading from I Peter we read a description of the "son of David", Messiah Yeshua, after his resurrection and ascension:

*... Who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven,
angels and authorities and powers being made subject to him¹⁸.*

[A] Who are "angels" and "authorities" made subject to?

[B] In Strong's, look up the Greek words translated as "angels",

¹⁸ In the **Orthodox Jewish Brit Chadasha** this verse is interpreted as follows: "... Who is at the right hand of the Holy One, having gone into **Shomayim**, with **malachim** and **rashuyot** (authorities) and **gevurot** under his feet."

“authorities”, and “powers”. Write each of those Greek words and what you think are appropriate definitions. See if you can find the Hebrew words, and Hebraic concepts, which Kefa, the Hebrew, was thinking when he wrote this letter.

[C] What is the difference between “angels”, “authorities”, and “powers”?

May you see the covenant sign [ot], and know the Holy One’s door is always open to you.

The Rabbi’s son

Meditation for Today’s Study

Ecclesiastes 12:1-14

*Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth,
Before the evil days come, and the years draw near, when you will say,
I have no pleasure in them;" Before the sun, the light, the moon, and the stars are darkened,
and the clouds return after the rain; In the day when the keepers of the house tremble,
and the strong men bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few,
and those who look out of the windows are darkened, and the doors are shut in the street;
When the sound of the grinding is low, and one shall rise up at the voice of a bird,
and all the daughters of music shall be brought low;*

*Yes, they will be afraid of heights, and terrors will be in the way;
and the almond tree will blossom, and the khagav will be a burden,
And desire will fail; because man goes to his everlasting home,
and the mourners go about the streets.*

*Before the silver cord is severed, or the golden bowl is broken,
Or the pitcher is broken at the spring, or the wheel broken at the cistern,
And the dust returns to the eretz as it was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it.
Vanity of vanities, says Kohelet; All is vanity!*

*Further, because Kohelet was wise, he still taught the people knowledge.
Yes, he pondered, sought out, and set in order many proverbs.
Kohelet sought to find out acceptable words,
and that which was written blamelessly, words of truth.*

*The words of the wise are like goads; and like nails well fastened
are words from the masters of assemblies, which are given from one shepherd.
Furthermore, my son, be admonished: of making many books there is no end;
and much study is a weariness of the flesh.*

*This is the end of the matter. All has been heard.
Fear God, and sh’mar his mitzvot; for this is the whole duty of man.
For God will bring every work into judgment,
with every hidden thing, whether it is good, or whether it is evil.*