

Shiur L'Yom Shishi¹

[Friday's Study]

READINGS: ***Torah Vayalech:*** **Deuteronomy 31:24-30**
 Haftarah: **Isaiah 56:6-8**
 B'rit Chadasha: **Romans 7:13-14**

Ra [i.e. what feels like drama, trauma, and/or calamity to your flesh]
will befall you in coming days – because you will bring forth/make ra
[i.e. what feels like trauma, drama, and/or calamity your flesh].

[Deuteronomy 30:29]

Today's Meditation is Ezekiel 33:17-20;

This Week's Amidah Prayer Focus is the 6th Petition, ***B'racha*** [The Prayer for Blessing]

Vayehi kechalot Moshe lichtov et-divrei ha-torah-hazot al-sefer – Then Moshe completed the writing of the book/scroll of Torah ... ***ad tumam*** – to its fullness. Deuteronomy 31:24.

Moshe's mortality is finally catching up with him. The Hebrew eyes that gazed in wonder at the burning bush, and have seen so many miracles since, have witnessed their last sunrise. Before the assigned portion of light that this day has been commissioned to cast upon the earth fades to black, Moshe will reach the quintessential 'vanishing point'. His eternal spirit will separate from the earthly vessel in which it was assigned to reside for twelve decades. The familiar used-up vessel of corporeal earth-dust we know of as Moshe Rabbeinu will return to the *terra firma* from whence it came; ah, but the spirit of 'Moshe, *Ish Ha-Elohim*' [see Psalm 90] will be *free at last*.

On this, Moshe's last day to experience mundane corporeality and suffer the consequences of limited visibility, what will he make the focus of his activity? He will focus on *preserving for posterity by far the most precious gift any man - indeed the species of humanity - has ever received*. I am talking about the revelation stream of Torah. Moshe has been the 'point man' of Torah revelation for 40 years; this will not cease upon his death. Instead of using his organs of speech to transmit the wondrous things He has received from the Holy One to the world, he will now use his stylus and a scroll.

Write the Vision, and Make it Plain, That He May Run Who Reads It

Moshe kicks off the last day of bodily life on earth meticulously pouring over every line of the Torah narrative he has written. He must submit everything his has

¹ All rights with respect to this publication, including copyright, are reserved to the author, William G. Bullock, Sr. Reproduction of material from any *Rabbi's son* lesson or communication without written permission from the author is prohibited. Copyright © 2021, *William G. Bullock, Sr.*

inscribed over the years to a final edit by the *Ruach HaQodesh* – i.e. ‘Holy Spirit’. What he leaves behind must be as worded exactly as, and presented in the precise order, that it was revealed to him. Lovingly he will review each *alef* and *tav on the scroll*. Joyfully he will review each *yod, shin, vav, and ayin*. With zeal he will complete the most important, invigorating, and demanding task any man was ever assigned. In retrospect, you see, Moshe now understands the primary reason he was born. It wasn’t, as he had previously supposed, primarily to serve as the point man of the Holy One’s deliverance of his generation from bondage in Egypt. Neither was it to lead B’nei Yisrael through the Sea of Reeds – or to get them through the twists or turns of the great wilderness. It wasn’t even to lead them up to, or serve as Friend of the Bridegroom at, the Sinaitic chuppah. The most important task for which he was born was to *write the vision, and make it plain, that he may run who reads it*. The primary reason he was born was to inscribe all the words of Torah, as dictated to him by the Holy One Himself, on scrolls – scrolls that would be read, studied, delighted in, marveled at, and lived out in real ways and real time day after day, Sabbath after Sabbath, season after season, year after year, initially by Moshe’s fellow Hebrews, but ultimately by God-fearers among the gentiles as well, for a thousand generations. This became Moshe’s consuming passion – and he rushed to finish this, the most important of all tasks, before his time ran out.

Vayehi kechalot Moshe lichtov et-divrei ha-torah-hazot al-sefer

And then Moshe completed the writing of the book/scroll of Torah

ad tumam

unto its fullness.

Vayetzav Moshe et-ha-Levi'im nos'ei aron brit-Adonai

And then Moshe enjoined the Levi'im, who bore the ark of the covenant of the Holy One

lemor Lakoach et sefer ha-torah hazeh

saying: take this Sefer of the Torah,

v'samtem oto mitzad aron brit-Adonai Eloheichem

and make a place for it in/at the side of the ark of the covenant of the Holy One your God

v'hayah-sham becha l'ed

and it will be a testimony to/witness unto you.

[Deuteronomy 31:24-26]

We have had *a story for the ages*; now we have a *Sefer to record it for the ages!* Now have a permanent, abiding *Witness of the wonderful works of Adonai!* Now we have *the Covenant promises and stipulations immortalized in written form!* Now we have a *Testimony to all generations of the Creator’s Grand Plan of Redemption of mankind as a species, household-by-household, family-by-family, and bloodline-by-bloodline, and for the restoration of Creation, watershed-by-watershed and continent-by-continent, to its original intended state of beauty,*

fruitfulness, and shalom! Selah! Do you realize how marvelous and world-changing that is?

O How Marvelous! O How Wonderful!

The Creator of the Heavens and the earth has *a Grand Plan for redemption and restoration of all His Creation*. That alone is worthy of a *Selah!* But what is even more amazing, He has actually enlisted mere mortals in the implementation of that Grand Plan. He has stepped out of His cloak of Invisibility, Eternality, and Incorporeality, and has patiently dictated to one of these mortals – Moshe, son of Amram and Yochebed His wise and loving instructions as to how life on earth was designed to be lived. He has provided mankind the *Creator's Detailed Directions* on how all the most significant challenges that arise in the course of human life on a fallen earth can – and should - be faced, approached, dealt with, and overcome. And now He has caused Moshe to write down this great revelation download for *whosoever will* to read, study, and put into practice!

The Torah is a precious gift from the Creator to all mankind. It is, however, designed to be a gift that keeps on giving. It is not for one man alone. It is for all men. Hence it is not enough that the Holy One once, many generations ago, gave the Torah to Moshe. It is not even enough that Moshe, as the prophet of the Holy One, taught the Torah to our forefathers. In order for the gift of Torah to have the effect on the world intended for it by the Holy One it absolutely must be *recorded, preserved for, made accessible to, and studied by*, all generations of B'nei Yisrael. That is what Moshe has on his mind on the last day of his physical life. He wants to find the safest depository for his most precious possession – so the Divine Light of the wisdom download he had been chosen to receive would never go out. And because this was his focus, and he completed the task assigned, you and I today have, and our children and children's children after us will have, ***divrei ha-Torah*** – i.e. the words of Torah, ***becha l'eyd*** – i.e. *for a testimony to and witness unto us*. ***How sweet are your words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth! Psalm 119:103. Let him kiss me with the kisses of His Mouth! Song of Songs 1:2. More to be desired are they than gold – yea, than much fine gold! Psalm 19:10a.***

He Who Holds the Seals of the Scrolls of Torah Holds the Future of the World In His Hands

Ever since he entered the Holy One's revelation stream at Horeb, Moshe has been the sole custodian of the oracles of the Great King. That is a heavy responsibility. Who will be responsible for the safekeeping and dissemination of the scrolls when Moshe dies? Today we find out that, at least for the generation of the Conquest of Eretz Yisrael, the responsibility for the safekeeping of the scrolls and the dissemination of the wisdom of Torah is going to fall upon Moshe's fellow

tribesmen, *the Levi'im*. From one man the responsibility of safekeeping the oracles of Divine Wisdom will pass to a tribe. But the Holy One will not stop there. As He arranges to broaden the circle of dissemination of the Torah He will simultaneously expand the responsibility to extend to all men. Foreshadowing this, Moshe says:

*Gather to me all the elders of your tribes, and your officers,
that I may speak these words [Hebrew, d'varim] in their ears
and call the heavens [Hebrew et-ha-shamayim] and earth [Hebrew et-ha-aretz]
to witness unto them.*

*Then Moshe spoke into the ears of all the called-ones of Israel
the words of this song [Hebrew shirah]
until they were ended
[Deuteronomy 31:28, 30]*

It is extremely important to Moshe that the Torah be both preserved in writing and regularly read aloud in the ears of the Holy One's people. Why? It is sometimes said that *'the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world.'* It could also be said: *"Whoever holds the seals and sounds of the scrolls of Torah holds the future of the world in his hands."* Torah needs to be in writing to have permanency; but it also needs to be spoken aloud – *sung as a love song even* - by humble, unselfish, wise, caring, peaceful men who live the lifestyle Torah pictures, and whose pleasant voices, kindly expressions, wise life-decisions, and gentle natures inspire others to the aspire to and level of beauty and societal impact that Torah describes. There is, in fact, absolutely nothing more important to the future of our planet – and its inhabitants – than the safekeeping, dissemination, and transmission from generation to generation of the wisdom of Torah. The biggest threats to mankind's welfare and Creation's healing are not carbon emissions; or bad government; or wars and rumors of wars; or pestilence; or plague; or inequality; or oppression; or asteroids; or aliens; or the Anti-Messiah; or his false prophet; or his mark; or the rise – or the fall – of Mystery Babylon. The greatest threat to mankind and Creation is Torahlessness. Torah is the Holy One's antidote for the ingestion by human beings of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Any time you take away the Torah from the world; or stop its dissemination and implementation; or misappropriate it to use it as a tool of judgment - the world is thrown back into the pre-Flood cataclysm in which *every intent of the heart of man is only evil continually*. **Genesis 6:5.**

Marbeh Torah, marbeh chayah – *i.e. more Torah, more life!*² So, Moshe spent

² *Pirkei Avot [Ethics of the Fathers], Mishna 8, Part 2*, famously cites Hillel as saying: More [i.e. *marbeh*] meat, more worms. More possessions, more worry. More wives, more witchcraft/manipulation. More maidservants, more promiscuity. More servants, more thievery. **More Torah, more life.** More "yeshiva" – i.e. studying Torah with others, more wisdom. More "eitzah" - i.e. advice and insights gleaned from

part of his last day on earth making sure the precious Torah that the Holy One entrusted to him is entrusted to faithful men who will honor and protect it as he did. He wrote the whole of Torah on scrolls, and delivered them to the safekeeping of his brethren, the Levi'im. He instructed them to *'Take this Torah scroll and place it mitzad aron brit-Adonai Eloheichem - i.e. to the side of the ark of the covenant of the Holy One your God*³. Deuteronomy 31:26. By the Holy One's instructions the two tablets of testimony Moshe had received inscribed from the Holy One were kept inside the ark [Exodus 25:21 and 34:1, 28; see also Deuteronomy 10:3-5]; but the scrolls Moshe wrote were kept 'to the side' of the ark, in a vessel that sat *mitzad* – i.e. *alongside*, or in the side of – the ark.

Of course, the Levi'im did a lot more than store the scrolls, as the Holy One knew they would. They appointed faithful scribes to steward them - scribes who developed and adhered to meticulous rules of scroll reproduction to assure complete faithfulness of each copy to Moshe's original. On the hides of *tahor* animals these scribes scrupulously copied the scrolls Moshe had inscribed in order to facilitate dissemination. All this was necessary in order that we today, upon whom the end of days have come, could have access to the exact words of Divine Speech that Moshe received.

Moshe's Circumcision-of-the-Lips-and-
Sanctification-of-the-Gift-of-Speech Legacy:
He Who Holds the Scrolls of Torah in His Heart and Keeps Them
On His Tongue Holds the Future of Mankind and Creation In His Hands

It is extremely important to Moshe that the Torah be preserved. Why? It is sometimes said that *'the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world.'* It could also be said: *"Whoever holds the scrolls of Torah in his heart, and keeps the words of Torah on his tongue, holds the future of mankind and Creation in his hands."* There is nothing more important to our species - or the future of the universe as we know it – than the safekeeping, dissemination, and transmission from generation to generation of the wisdom of Torah. Not carbon emissions. Not war. Not the Anti-Messiah; not his false prophet; not his mark. Torah is the Holy One's antidote for the ingestion by human beings of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Take away the Torah from the world – or stop its dissemination and implementation – and the world is thrown back once again into the pre-Flood cataclysm in which *every intent of the heart of man is only evil continually.* Genesis 6:5. So, Moshe spent part of his last day on earth making sure the precious Torah that the Holy One entrusted to him is

people who are wiser, more understanding. More acts of charity/benevolence; more peace. One . . . who acquires words of Torah for himself has acquired the World to Come for himself.

³ According to tradition the tablets of the Testimony, but not necessarily all the scrolls that Moshe wrote, were kept inside the ark rather than beside it. See Hebrews 9:4.

entrusted to faithful men who will honor and protect it as he did. He wrote the whole of Torah on scrolls, and delivered them to the safekeeping of his brethren, the Levi'im. He instructed them to ***'Take this Torah scroll and place it mitzad aron brit-Adonai Eloheichem - i.e. to the side of the ark of the covenant of the Holy One your God'***⁴. Deuteronomy 31:26. By the Holy One's instructions the two tablets of testimony Moshe had received inscribed from the Holy One were kept inside the ark [Exodus 25:21 and 34:1, 28; see also Deuteronomy 10:3-5]; but the scrolls Moshe wrote were kept 'to the side' of the ark, in a vessel that sat *mitzad* – i.e. *alongside* – the ark, in the Holy of Holies.

Of course, the Levi'im did not merely store the scrolls. They appointed scribes, who, by tradition, had to adhere to meticulous rules of scroll reproduction to assure complete faithfulness of each copy to Moshe's original. On the hides of *tahor* animals these scribes scrupulously copied the scrolls Moshe had inscribed in order to facilitate dissemination. All this was necessary in order that we could have the Torah today, and that the scrolls we have would be true and faithful copies of the exact words of Divine Download that Moshe received.

Why Torah is So Important – the Dire, Endangered Condition of Fallen Man

Moshe does not want anyone to think that just because the Holy One chose Avraham's descendants to be His ambassadors to the nations that they would be exempt from the plague upon mankind brought about by the ingestion of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. All mankind is infected by the rebellion virus. The calling of the children of Avraham is to overcome the toxic effects of that virus, day-by-day, year-by-year, episode of exacerbation by episode of exacerbation. Even having been exposed to the Holy One from birth, redeemed by Him from bondage, and betrothed to Him at Sinai, we are at best flawed vessels of hope and redemption. We are no worse than any other ethnic group – but without embracing and walking in the Torah we are certainly no better than any other ethnic group either. The golden calf episode, all the whining and complaining in the wilderness, the sin of the spies, the rebellion of Korach, and the *descent into idolatrous debauchery at Ba'al Peor* are provided to us by Moshe as undeniable examples of that fact. Even with the Torah, we are imperfect healers. But despite all that, we are the vessels the Holy One has chosen to use. That alone should keep us humble. But in case it doesn't, Moshe reminds us:

***I know your rebellion and your stiff neck.
If today, while I am yet alive with you, you have been rebellious against the Holy One,***

⁴ According to tradition the tablets of the Testimony, but not necessarily all the scrolls that Moshe wrote, were kept inside the ark rather than beside it. See Hebrews 9:4.

then how much more after my death?

*For I know that after my death you will become utterly corrupt [Hebrew shachat],
and turn aside from the way which I have commanded you.*

*And evil [Hebrew ra] will befall you in the latter days,
because you will do [Hebrew asah] evil [Hebrew ra] in the sight of the Holy One,
to provoke Him [Hebrew ka'as] through the work of your hands.”*

[Deuteronomy 31:24-29]

What is it in us that we still need to let the Holy One work on? Moshe describes the fallen state of man as consisting of *five primary symptoms*: 1. ‘rebellion’, 2. a ‘stiff neck’, 3. ‘corruption’, 4. ‘doing evil’, and 5. ‘provoking’ the Holy One.

Rebellious? Riotous? Ra? Are You Talking to ME?

The first symptom universal among fallen men that Moshe points out is *rebellion*. In the Hebrew that Moshe wrote the term used is *meri* – *mem, resh, yod*. This is the same word that Moshe used in Numbers 20:10 right before he *lo sh'ma*-ed the Holy One’s instructions and struck the rock instead of speaking to it. Interestingly, *meri* is a form of the ancient verb root *marah*, meaning to *strike* or to *smite in anger or other selfish motive*. Be careful, now - what you sow, you reap. Or as Messiah taught it: ***Judge not, that you not be judged. For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.*** Matthew 7:1-2. The fallen human condition is to over-react, to lash out, and to smite. Some do it with icy stares. Others do it with harsh words. Some do it with bare hands; some with the power of the pen or computer keyboard. Others do it with sticks, stones, knives, or guns. But at the root of it all is *marah*. Flowing from the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, *meri* is the natural reaction of man’s flesh to anything that does not please it. It over-reacts. It lashes out. Do not ask for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for *me* and *for thee*! We are not to judge the *meri* in others; we are to recognize and deal with it *in us*. We are to *know the enemy within*, and anticipate his strategies. We are to learn to recognize the ‘tells’ of the *meri* in us. And we are to stay in humble submission to the Holy One and His Words in order to keep the *meri* in us in check. There is absolutely no *meri* in the Holy One. There is no *meri* in the life instructions of Torah. If we are to overcome the *meri* that thrives in our flesh, we absolutely must cling to the Holy One and walk humbly in the instructions of Torah.

The struggle against the inclination of our flesh to move toward *meri* – and lash out against others - is a continuing, daily, situation-by-situation power struggle. The campaign against the *meri* in us is part of our calling. How are you coming with the *meri* challenge, Dear One?

Stiff Necked? Is it THAT OBVIOUS?

The second symptom universal among fallen men pointed out by Moshe is the tendency to exhibit a *stiff neck*. The Hebrew phrase we translate as ‘stiff neck’ is *oref*

qasheh. *Oref* means neck; *qasheh* is an adjective meaning hardened, firm, and difficult to work with. Picture a sheep that will not turn its head toward – or turns away from – its shepherd. Not only will it not *sh'ma* the shepherd's voice, it resists closeness and subordination. It is *unresponsive* and *independent* – even when it would be in its best interest to respond and cooperate. It is a state of self-obsession and self-will, and of loyalty to one's personal agenda rather than the Kingdom's agenda. That is the default state of the human race since the Fall. Jew, Gentile; man, woman; white, black, Hispanic, Asian, Arab, it does not matter.

Exactly how flexible is your neck, Dear One? When the Holy One speaks, do you turn your head and incline your ear? Or is your neck too stiff?

Corrupted? REALLY?

The third universal symptom of fallen man is that he is 'utterly corrupt'. In the Hebrew text the operative phrase used by Moshe to describe this condition is *sh'chet tash'chitun*. It is a doubled form of the Hebrew verb *shachat*. What is *shachat*? The first usage of this word in Torah is found in Genesis 6:11-12, when the Holy One describes the state of men of earth prior to the Flood. It means '*infected with and spreading a highly-contagious and extremely toxic form of tumah [i.e. uncleanness]*'. With what are men infected? The disease takes many forms, and has many symptoms. It can take the form of violence. It can take the form of rage. It can take the form of hate. It can take the form of self-righteousness. It can take the form of out-of-control appetites – sensuality, sexuality, gluttony, wanderlust, entertainment-obsession, etc. It can take the form of isolationism and suspicion and/or hard-heartedness toward others. It can take the form of apathy and boredom. It can take the form of fatalism, materialism, legalism, or relativism. But whatever form it takes, if not held in check – or rooted out – it will infect others. Are you getting a handle on the *shachat* fountain in your flesh, Dear One?

Making Calamity?

So That is What I and People Like Me Have Been Doing!

The fourth universal symptom that Moshe identifies with fallen man is that he '*does evil*'. In the Hebrew text the operative phrase used by Moshe to describe this condition is *asu et-ha-ra*. It means to build/make/construct a state of calamity. It means to lay the groundwork for epic failure, disaster, and ruin. In Hebrew thought, you see, *ra* – which English speakers call 'evil' – is not a matter of morality at all. It is just a matter of *attitude, thought, speech, or behavior that contains the seeds of calamity*. If left unchecked, *ra* will destroy whatever – and whoever - it touches. The natural state of man – in the flesh – is to mess up everything. It is the opposite of the 'Midas touch' or the 'healing touch'; it is the 'Serpent's touch' – a kind of bull-in-the-china-shop touch that puts everything and everyone with whom the person comes in contact on a road

that – if not course-corrected by Torah – will careen toward destruction, calamity, disaster, and ruin.

Provoking the Holy One? Surely You Have the Wrong Guy!

The fifth universal symptom that Moshe identifies with fallen man is that he ‘provokes’ the Holy One. The Hebrew word our English Bibles translate as ‘provoke’ is *ka’as* – *kaf, ayin, samech*. Our English Bibles add the phrase ‘to anger’, but no word for ‘anger’ is present in the Hebrew text. The Hebrew text does not present the Holy One – Who is Eternal, Omniscient and totally confident in His ability to bring good out of every situation – as being ‘angry’. What He does get is *ka’as*. That just means *displeased*. The Holy One looks at human lives – which He created and cares about – two ways. On the humble and contrite, He looks with FAVOR. On the rebellious, stiff-necked, calamity-making ones filling the beautiful world He created with corruption He looks with **KA’AS** - displeasure. On which of the two groups – those He looks upon with favor, or those He looks upon with *ka’as* – do you think He will pour out His *blessings*? On which of those groups do you think He will pour out wisdom and revelation? On which group, on the other hand, do you think He will He release a series of disciplinary actions designed to bring them the individuals to *teshuvah*, and give them a chance at redemption?

The Holy One, you see, has a Grand Redemptive Plan for all mankind and for Creation. He has a Redeemer’s Mindset, and a Redeemer’s Heart. He is not a control freak. He is not angry. He is not overwhelmed. He has a plan to open up a way of redemption to all of mankind. Let’s talk about where foreigners fit into that plan, shall we?

The Challenge of the Haftarah

In today’s Haftarah [Isaiah 55:6 - 56:8] the Holy One speaks through *Ha-navi Yeshayahu* [the prophet Isaiah] the mystery of His end-days plan for the restoration of His People - and the inclusion of “foreigners” in His covenant. According to this prophecy in the last days a call will go out to all mankind – to every ‘son of man’ - to “***Maintain justice, and do what is right***”. This of course, simply means to return to the Torah lifestyle. This end-times call will be heeded not only by Jews but by “foreigners” and “eunuchs” as well. Isaiah 56:1-8 therefore says:

*Thus says the Holy One, **Keep [sh’mar] justice, and do [asah] righteousness; for my yeshu`ah is near to come, and my righteousness to be revealed.***

Blessed is the man who does this, and the son of man who holds it fast; who keeps the Shabbat from profaning it, and keeps his hand from doing any evil.

Neither let the foreigner who has joined himself to the Holy One, speak, saying, the Holy One will surely separate me from his people;

Also the foreigners who join themselves to the Holy One, to minister to him, and to love the name of the Holy One, to be his servants,

*everyone who keeps the Shabbat from profaning it,
and holds fast my covenant; even them will I bring to my holy mountain,
and make them joyful in my house of prayer:
their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted on my altar;
for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples.*

*The Holy One GOD, who gathers the outcasts of Yisra'el, says,
'Yet will I gather [others] to him, besides his own who are gathered.'*

This particular passage has a very personal meaning to the writer of these studies. In April 1995 this author happened to be in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma for a conference. If you will recall that is when the truck-bomb destroyed the Murrah Federal Building and swept away hundreds of innocent lives. A shofar blast was sounded that day that many of us will never forget. It was especially the case for me. As emergency crews were still frantically combing the rubble for survivors of that bombing, and as the nation reeled under this first monstrous terror attack, I rose early to pray over the devastated city, over the nation, and over all Creation.

I had been reading and praying through the book of Isaiah for several months at that time. The morning of the bombing I had read and prayed over Isaiah 55. The next morning, in the course of my prayer time, I opened my Bible to Isaiah 56. I can truthfully say that my life was changed by what I read that day. Although I had read the passage many times previously I guess had never really 'caught' it. I had always just read words on a page. This day the words absolutely leapt off the page and accosted me. I could not believe it. Here was an 'end-time prophet', the prophet of 'post-advent' Messiah, speaking of a group of people apparently not originally from - or who had left the fold of - Israel, who in the end-times would do something very strange. These persons, though classified by Yeshayahu as 'foreigners', would:

1. *"bind themselves"* unto the Holy One, the God of Israel;
2. *"serve"* Him out of passionate love for His Name, His revealed character, and His personality;
3. bow and prostrate themselves before His throne, in sincere adoration of Him;
4. keep with joy and delight, as a peculiar treasure, His glorious Sabbath [the 7th day]; and would
5. *"hold fast to His covenant"* – namely, the covenant at Sinai – TORAH.

I was stunned. Passionate, Sabbath-observant, Torah-Covenant submissive non-Hebrews? Blessed by the Holy One in wonderful ways? In the end-times? It absolutely boggled my mind. I had no grid for it. I racked my brain. I had heard of "Jews for Jesus, of course. But I'd never heard of any group of "Gentiles for Torah", or 'Heathens for Sabbath-honoring', or anything of the kind. My friends from the 20th Century Christian world were all 100% convinced the Torah was a 'superseded covenant' and that the Sabbath was of symbolic, typographic relevance only – some

kind of ‘picture’ of spiritual ‘rest’, or of heaven, or something. If there was anything they were fanatic about, it was that. They were all convinced that a relationship with God revolved around signing a decision card and attending and supporting whatever ‘local church’ they attended. Was it possible, in light of what I was reading in Isaiah 56 that very important day, that these ‘good people’ . . . were all wrong? Was it possible that they and those like them had for centuries been completely misreading the writings of the man they called ‘Paul’, and had in so doing completely missing the Divine Bridegroom’s Redemptive plan for the end days?

In all the churches and religious conferences at which I had spoken or which I had attended I had never seen – or even heard any gossip about - any gentiles becoming Torah-submissive or Sabbath-honoring. But on that very special April morning, in that Oklahoma City Hotel Lobby, as I read Isaiah 56 with my spiritual eyes wide open, I became convinced that *such a people would in fact exist – and soon – if they did not already*. And that day, right there in the shadow of the smoldering debris of the Murrah Building, I made a commitment to Creator and to myself that I would locate and bless their company – no matter how much ‘Church-ianity’ – and how many pastor-friends - I had to shed to do so. I desperately wanted, you see, to help these foreigners about whom Yeshayahu was prophesying learn the way to the Holy One’s holy mountain. I desperately wanted to help these foreigners find delight in the Creator of the Universe’s house of prayer. I hungered to have these foreigners grasp what it means to have their ‘burnt offerings’ and ‘sacrifices’ accepted on His Altar – the real one in Heaven, the one after which the one on earth, in the Mish’kan and Temple, had been modeled.

It was largely out of the revelation I received on that April day in Oklahoma City that these studies was born. I began to pour more and more of my time and spiritual energy into the study – and teaching of my family - of the ancient pathways of Torah. And somewhere along those ancient pathways I began the gradual process of finally becoming who I was created to be. So I say to you Beloved - if you have been hearing the shofar blowing in this season, and it is piercing your soul - **arise!** Shake off the dust of religion, and return to the God of Avraham, Yitzchak and Ya’akov, and the ancient pathways of His Torah. Delight in the Sabbath of the Great King. Hold fast to His covenant. Make His Holy Mountain your first priority destination. There is plenty of room on that Mountain. Yes, even for foreigners!

Questions To Consider Regarding Today’s Readings

1. What are the five universal symptoms of fallen man for which Torah is designed to provide the antidote?
2. In today’s Haftarah the Holy One speaks through Yeshayahu the mystery of His end-days plan for the restoration of His People - and the inclusion of “foreigners” in

His covenant and Grand Redemptive/Restorative Plan.

[A] According to Isaiah 56:6, what 5 things will “foreigners” do in the end-times?

[B] To what “covenant” will these “foreigners” “hold fast”?

[C] What will the Holy One do for/with these “foreigners” who keep the Shabbat and who hold fast to the Holy One’s covenant?

[D] Who are these “foreigners”?

3. In Romans 7:13-14 Shaul of Tarsus speaks to us of the goodness of Torah, but the darkness of the flesh of fallen man.

[A] What does Shaul say causes death? Is it the law – or is it sin?

[B] What does Shaul say is ‘spiritual’ – the law, or man without the law?

[C] What does Shaul say is ‘carnal’ – the law, or man without the law?

*May you be inscribed and sealed in His Book of Life for a good and a sweet year.
Shabbat Shalom!*

The Rabbi’s son

Meditation for Today’s Study

Ezekiel 33:17-20

***Yet the children of your people say,
‘The way of Adonai is not fair [Hebrew, takan].’
But it is their way which is not fair [Hebrew, takan].’!
When the righteous turns from his righteousness and commits iniquity,
he will die because of it.
But when the wicked turns from his wickedness
and does what is lawful and right, he will live because of it.
Yet you say, ‘The way of Adonai is not level/even [Hebrew, takan].’
O house of Israel, I will judge every one of you
according to his own ways.***