

## ספר תהילים יא | Tehillim / Psalms 11

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### Does God Hate the Wicked?

This week's study is from *Tehillim / Psalms 11:1-7*. The Psalm begins saying “*For the choir director a Psalm of David, in the Lord I take refuge; how can you say to my soul flee as a bird to your mountain*” (א) לְמַנְצִיחַ לְדָוִד בֵּיהֲנֶה | חֲסִיתִי אֵיךְ תֹּאמְרוּ לְנַפְשִׁי נוּדוּ [נוֹדִי] הֲרָכֶם צְפוּרִי: Who was it David was asking the question “*how can you say to my soul to be a ‘nomad/wanderer/vagabond’ upon your mountain as a bird?*” David’s hope is in the refuge that God provides in His salvation and deliverance. The place of refuge that God provides is protection from his enemies בְּמוֹ-אֶפֶל לְיִשְׂרָאֵל-יָבִיב: *11:2 For, behold, the wicked bend the bow, They make ready their arrow upon the string To shoot in darkness at the upright in heart. (NASB)* Here we find a parallel to *Tehillim / Psalms 7* that states - יָגֵאֵם: *7:12 If a man does not repent, He will sharpen His sword; He has bent His bow and made it ready. (NASB)* He continues saying: *11:3 If the foundations are destroyed, What can the righteous do?* (NASB) What is the foundation that David is referring to? The Psalm then states הֲיִהְיֶה הַיְהוָה אֲדָם: *11:4 The Lord is in His holy temple; the Lord’s throne is in heaven; His eyes behold, His eyelids test the sons of men. 11:5 The Lord tests the righteous and the wicked, And the one who loves violence His soul hates. (NASB)* The Lord sees the works of men, He tests the righteous and hates the wicked. Verse *11:5* parallels the wicked with the one who “*loves violence*” (וְאֹהֵב חַמָּס). Note that the root word *Hamas* (חַמָּס) meaning “*violence, rob, destroy*” is the Hebrew name for Hamas, the Islamic Resistance Movement (militant Islamic group) started in 1976 with the aim of creating an Islamic Palestinian state. Because of the violence of the wicked the Scriptures say *11:6 Upon the wicked He will rain snares; Fire and brimstone and burning wind will be the portion of their cup. (NASB)* David concludes saying: *11:7 For the Lord is righteous, He loves righteousness; The upright will behold His face. (NASB)*

**עברית Hebrew      ארמי Aramaic      ελληνικός Greek**

עברית Hebrew	ארמי Aramaic	ελληνικός Greek
<b>ספר תהילים פרק יא</b>	<b>ספר טוביה פרק יא</b>	<b>ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 11</b>
א לְמַנְצִיחַ לְדָוִד בֵּיהֲנֶה   חֲסִיתִי אֵיךְ תֹּאמְרוּ לְנַפְשִׁי נוּדוּ [נוֹדִי] הֲרָכֶם צְפוּרִי: ב כִּי הִנֵּה הַרְשָׁעִים יִדְרְכוּן קִשְׁת פּוֹנְנֵוּ חֲצָם עַל-יְתֵר לִירוֹת בְּמוֹ-אֶפֶל לְיִשְׂרָאֵל-יָבִיב: ג כִּי-הִשְׁתּוֹת יִהְרָסוּן צְדִיק מֵה-פְּעֵל: ד הַיְהוָה   בְּהִיכַל קִדְשׁוֹ יִהְיֶה בְּשָׁמַיִם כְּסֹאוֹ עֵינָיו יִחְזוּ עֲפַעְפִּיּוֹ יִבְחֲנוּ בְּנֵי אָדָם:	א תושבחתא לשבחא לדוד במימרא דיהוה סברית הכדין אתון אמרין לנפשי אטלטלי לטורא לטוריוון היך צפורא: ב ארום הא רשיי עי נגדין קשתא מתקנין גיריהון גירריהון על נימא למירמי בקב לא עילוי תקיני לתריצי לבא: ג מטול ארום דאין אשייתא אושייתא יתרעון זכאה מטול מה עבד טובא צדיקא זכותא:	11:1 εις τὸ τέλος ψαλμὸς τῷ δαυιδ ἐπὶ τῷ κυρίῳ πέποιθα πᾶς ἐρεῖτε τῇ ψυχῇ μου μεταναστεύου ἐπὶ τὰ ὄρη ὡς στρουθίον 11:2 ὅτι ἰδοὺ οἱ ἁμαρτωλοὶ ἐνέτειναν τόξον ἠτοιμάσαν βέλη εἰς φαρέτραν τοῦ κατατοξεύσαι ἐν σκοτομήνῃ τοὺς εὐθεῖς τῇ καρδίᾳ 11:3 ὅτι ἁ κατηρτίσω καθεῖλον ὁ δὲ δίκαιος τί ἐποίησεν

<p>ה יהוה צדיק יבְחַן וְרָשָׁע נֶאֱהָב  חֲמַס שְׂנֵאָה נִפְשׁוֹ: ו יִמָּטֵר עַל-  רָשָׁעִים פָּחִים אֵשׁ וְגִפְרִית נֹרֶה  זְלַעְפוֹת מְנַת כּוֹסֶם: ז כִּי-צָדִיק  יִהְיֶה צְדָקוֹת אֶהָב יִשָּׂר יִחְזוּ פְּנֵימוֹ:</p>	<p>ד יהוה בהיכלא דקודשיה אלהא ייי בשמי  מרומא כורסיה עינוי חמיין ימרוי מבחנן  בני נשא: ה אלהא מימרא דיי צדיקיא  בחין ורשיעיא ורחמי חטופין סנאת נפשיה:  ו יחית מטרין דפורענו על רשיעי מפחין  דאשתא וכופריתא וכבריתא וזעפא עלעולא  יהבת מוהבות כלידהון: ז מטול דצדיקא  יהוה צדקותא זכותא רחים תקניא יחמינו  חמיין סבר אפוי:</p>	<p>11:4 κύριος ἐν ναῶ ἀγίῳ αὐτοῦ  κύριος ἐν οὐρανῶ ὁ θρόνος αὐτοῦ  οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ αὐτοῦ εἰς τὸν πένητα  ἀποβλέπουσιν τὰ βλέφαρα αὐτοῦ  ἐξετάζει τοὺς υἱοὺς τῶν ἀνθρώπων  11:5 κύριος ἐξετάζει τὸν δίκαιον καὶ  τὸν ἀσεβῆ ὁ δὲ ἀγαπῶν ἀδικίαν μισεῖ  τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ψυχὴν 11:6 ἐπιβρέξει ἐπὶ  ἀμαρτωλοὺς παγίδας πῦρ καὶ θεῖον  καὶ πνεῦμα καταγίδος ἢ μερίς τοῦ  ποτηρίου αὐτῶν 11:7 ὅτι δίκαιος  κύριος καὶ δικαιοσύνας ἠγάπησεν  εὐθύτητα εἶδεν τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ</p>
<p><b>Tehillim / Psalms 11</b>  The Lord a Refuge and Defense. For the  choir director. A Psalm of David. 11:1  In the Lord I take refuge; How can you  say to my soul, ‘Flee as a bird to your  mountain; 11:2 For, behold, the wicked  bend the bow, They make ready their  arrow upon the string To shoot in dark-  ness at the upright in heart. 11:3 If the  foundations are destroyed, What can the  righteous do?’ 11:4 The Lord is in  His holy temple; the Lord’s throne is in  heaven; His eyes behold, His eyelids test  the sons of men. 11:5 The Lord tests the  righteous and the wicked, And the one  who loves violence His soul hates. 11:6  Upon the wicked He will rain snares;  Fire and brimstone and burning wind  will be the portion of their cup. 11:7  For the Lord is righteous, He loves right-  eousness; The upright will behold His  face. (NASB)</p>	<p><b>Toviyah / Psalms Chapter 11</b>  11:1 A hymn of David. In the word of the  Lord I have hoped; how do you say to  my soul, wander to the mountain like a  bird? 11:2 For behold, the wicked bend  the bow, fixing their arrows on the string  to shoot in darkness at the firm of heart.  11:3 For if the foundations are shattered,  why did the virtuous do good? 11:4 The  Lord is in his holy temple; God’s throne  is in the highest heavens; his eyes see, his  eyelids examine, the sons of men. 11:5  God examines the righteous, but his soul  hates the wicked and those who love rap-  acity. 11:6 He will bring down rains of  retribution on the wicked, coals of fire  and brimstone; a violent storm-wind is  the portion of their cup. 11:7 For the  Lord is righteous, he loves righteousness,  the honest man will look upon his coun-  tenance. (EMC)</p>	<p><b>Tehillim / Psalms 11</b>  For the end, a Psalm of David. 11:1 In  the Lord I have put my trust: how will ye  say to my soul, Flee to the mountains as  a sparrow? 11:2 For behold the sinners  have bent their bow, they have prepared  their arrows for the quiver, to shoot  privily at the upright in heart. 11:3 For  they have pulled down what thou didst  frame, but what has the righteous done?  11:4 The Lord is in his holy temple, as  for the Lord, his throne is in heaven: his  eyes look upon the poor, his eyelids try  the sons of men. 11:5 The Lord tries the  righteous and the ungodly: and he that  loves unrighteousness hates his own  soul. 11:6 He shall rain upon sinners  snares, fire, and brimstone, and a stormy  blast shall be the portion of their cup.  11:7 For the Lord is righteous, and  loves righteousness; his face beholds  uprightness. (LXX)</p>

The opening verse in *Tehillim / Psalms 11* states “For the choir director a Psalm of David, in the Lord I take refuge; how can you say to my soul flee as a bird to your mountain” (א לְמַנְצֵחַ לְדָוִד בִּיהִנֵּה | חֲסִיתִי) א: (אֵיךְ תֹאמְרוּ לְנַפְשִׁי נִדְוּ [נִדְוִי] הֲרַכְם צְפוּר: In *Tehillim / Psalms 34* verses 8 and 22 states that a person is blessed (or happy) who take refuge in Him, and that whoever takes refuge in Him will not be condemned. The phrase to take refuge in God is a rather common biblical image or theme, but just what does it mean?

*Tehillim / Psalms 34:8 O taste and see that the Lord is good; How blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him! David’s hope is in the refuge that God provides in His salvation and deliverance. (NASB)*

*Tehillim / Psalms 34:22 The Lord redeems the soul of His servants, And none of those who take refuge in Him will be condemned. (NASB)*

According to the Scriptures, the Lord provides a refuge through His abiding presence in our lives. In Parashat Ki Tisa (*Shemot / Exodus 30:11-34:35*) the Lord makes this point in the promise He gives in *Exodus 33:14* saying “*My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest*” (יִדְּוֹ אִמַּר פָּנַי יִלְכוּ וְהִנַּחְתִּי לָךְ). Taking refuge in the Lord is connected to our relationship with Him. This Scripture suggests that to take refuge in Him does not mean only to seek his protection or help; but to rely and trust in Him for everything. Yeshua also taught saying “*Come to Me ... and your souls will find rest*” (*Matthew 11:28-30*, <sup>28</sup> Δεῦτε πρός με πάντες οἱ κοπιῶντες καὶ πεφορτισμένοι, κἀγὼ ἀναπαύσω ὑμᾶς. <sup>29</sup> ἄρατε τὸν ζυγὸν μου ἐφ’ ὑμᾶς καὶ μάθετε ἀπ’ ἐμοῦ, ὅτι πραῦς εἰμι καὶ ταπεινὸς τῇ καρδίᾳ, καὶ εὐρήσετε ἀνάπαυσιν ταῖς ψυχαῖς ὑμῶν: <sup>30</sup> ὁ γὰρ ζυγὸς μου χρηστὸς καὶ τὸ φορτίον μου ἕλαφρόν ἐστιν. *11:28 ‘Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. 11:29 ‘Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 11:30 ‘For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.’ NASB*). To believe in Him, to trust in Him, and to love Him is the meaning of taking refuge that best expresses the last line of *Tehillim / Psalm 11, 11:7 For the Lord is righteous, He loves righteousness; The upright will behold His face. (NASB)*. David’s words in *Psalm 11* and *34* implies a relationship through which we receive God’s salvation (יְשׁוּעָה). This salvation of God is the thing which we cling to realizing our need for his deliverance in our lives from our sins and from our enemies. Note how the Septuagint agrees with this interpretation, the rabbis translated *Tehillim / Psalms 11:1* to say εἰς τὸ τέλος ψαλμὸς τῷ δαυιδ ἐπὶ τῷ κυρίῳ πέποιθα πᾶς ἐρεῖτε τῇ ψυχῇ μου μεταναστεύου ἐπὶ τὰ ὄρη ὡς στρουθίον *11:1 A Psalm of David. In the Lord I have put my trust: how will ye say to my soul, Flee to the mountains as a sparrow? (LXX)* that David “yielded” or “trusted” (πέποιθα) in the Lord God Almighty. The Aramaic text states that א תושבחתא לשבחה לדוד במימרא דיהוה *1:1 A hymn of David. In the word of the Lord I have hoped; how do you say to my soul, wander to the mountain like a bird? (EMC)* David placed his “Hope” (סברית), in the Word of God, his future expectation and thoughts are in the Word of the Lord, and this is exactly how we are to live our lives each day trusting, hoping, believing in the Word of Lord God Almighty and His promises.

In *Tehillim / Psalms 11:1*, who was David asking the question “*how can you say to my soul to be a ‘nomad/wanderer/vagabond’ upon your mountain as a bird?*” (אֵיךְ תֹאמְרוּ לְנַפְשִׁי נוֹדוּ [נוֹדִי] הַרְכֶם צְפוּרָה) Some believe that David composed this Psalm while he was in the court of Saul at a time when the king’s hostility was growing and beginning to show itself. Whoever it was, the person speaking to him was telling him to flee to his mountain; David’s reaction to the statement of what someone said to him was of surprise and shock that one would suggest such a thing. “*How can you say to my soul?*” (אֵיךְ תֹאמְרוּ לְנַפְשִׁי) is equivalent today to saying “*how can you suggest such a thing?*” David recognized that a strong enemy (the wicked) seek to destroy him and knows that true deliverance comes only by the hand of God. When we allow God to work judging wickedness we prevent ourselves for the possibility of doing unrighteousness in God’s eyes, therefore it is safer to allow God the time to work and deal with the unrighteous rather than to take action into our own hands. The place of refuge that God provides is protection from our enemies בְּכִי הִנֵּה *11:2 For, behold, the wicked bend the bow, They make ready their arrow upon the string To shoot in darkness at the upright in heart. (NASB)* Here we find a parallel to *Tehillim / Psalms 7* that states: אִם-לֹא יִשׁוּב חַרְבּוֹ יִלְטוּשׁ קִשְׁתּוֹ דָּרָךְ וַיִּכּוֹנְנֶהָ: *7:12 If a man does not repent, He will sharpen His sword; He has bent His bow and made it ready. (NASB)* With regard to the wicked, the Apostle Paul wrote in *2 Timothy 3:13* <sup>13</sup> πονηροὶ δὲ ἄνθρωποι καὶ γόητες προκόψουσιν ἐπὶ τὸ χεῖρον, πλανῶντες καὶ πλανώμενοι. *3:13 But evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. (NASB)* the nature of the wicked will proceed from bad to worse saying also <sup>3</sup> ἔσται γὰρ καιρὸς ὅτε τῆς ὑγίαινούσης διδασκαλίας οὐκ ἀνέξονται, ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὰς ἰδίας ἐπιθυμίας ἑαυτοῖς ἐπισωρεύουσιν διδασκάλους κνηθόμενοι τὴν ἀκοήν, <sup>4</sup> καὶ ἀπὸ μὲν τῆς ἀληθείας τὴν ἀκοήν ἀποστρέψουσιν,



ἐπὶ δὲ τοὺς μύθους ἐκτραπήσονται. 4:3 *For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, 4:4 and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths.* (NASB) The Apostle Paul is not preparing Timothy for defeat by these statements and he is not telling him to “flee as a bird to his mountain” like these men seem to be telling David. Paul was warning Timothy so that he could overcome, with God’s help, such situations in the knowledge that these things are coming. David recognized the devices of the wicked, they come to kill and destroy with their bow and arrow (*Tehillim / Psalms 11:2*). Paul speaks about these men in the future saying ἄλλ’ οὐ προκόψουσιν ἐπὶ πλεῖον, ἢ γὰρ ἄνοια αὐτῶν ἔκδηλος ἔσται πᾶσιν, ὡς καὶ ἡ ἐκείνων ἐγένετο. 3:9 *But they will not make further progress; for their folly will be obvious to all, just as Jannes’ and Jambres’ folly was also.* (NASB) and giving examples of two men whose foolish teaching was recognized. A parallel can be drawn here to *Tehillim / Psalms 7:15 and 9:15* that the wicked fall into the pit that they have dug and have been trapped in the snare they have made. Paul exhorts Timothy to hold fast to the doctrines that he has learned and has been assured of according to *2 Timothy 3:14* <sup>14</sup>σὺ δὲ μένε ἐν οἷς ἔμαθες καὶ ἐπιστώθης, εἰδὼς παρὰ τίνων ἔμαθες, 3:14 *You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them* (NASB) This is very similar to what the Apostle John taught in his epistle, *1 John 3:11-12* <sup>11</sup>Ὅτι αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ ἀγγελία ἣν ἠκούσατε ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς, ἵνα ἀγαπῶμεν ἀλλήλους: <sup>12</sup>οὐ καθὼς Κάϊν ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ ἦν καὶ ἔσφαξεν τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ: καὶ χάριν τίνος ἔσφαξεν αὐτόν; ὅτι τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ πονηρὰ ἦν, τὰ δὲ τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ αὐτοῦ δίκαια. 3:11 *For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another; 3:12 not as Cain, who was of the evil one and slew his brother. And for what reason did he slay him? Because his deeds were evil, and his brother’s were righteous.* (NASB) John makes a reference to the message that was learned from the beginning, and Paul tells to continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of these things that are the foundation upon which we stand, the foundation of the Scriptures, of truth, of justice, of the Messiah.

David says כִּי-הִשְׁתּוֹת יִהְרָסוּן צְדִיק מִה-פָּעֵל: 11:3 *If the foundations are destroyed, What can the righteous do?* (NASB) What is the foundation that David is referring to? The foundation is the Torah, the foundation upon which to build faith, for discipleship, to learn about sin, repentance from dead works, about faith, and about a new relationship with the Lord God Almighty. The five books of Moshe detail how to live in righteousness and justice. If the foundation of righteousness and justice are eroded (destroyed, יִהְרָסוּן) what can the righteous do? The Torah is the foundational revelation of the nature of God and His redemptive dealings with mankind. Take for example, the Torah goes into great detail on the significance of substitutionary blood atonement in the Sacrificial system. According to *Vayikra / Leviticus 10:16-18, Vayikra / Leviticus 6:24-26, Shemot / Exodus 28:38, and Bamidbar / Numbers 18:1* we read the importance of the requirement of the priest having to consume a portion of the sacrifice for the purpose of bearing away our sins and making atonement before God in the Tabernacle. Yeshua, our High Priest, bore our sin (on the cross) and brought the sacrifice of His own body and blood to make atonement on our behalf before God; this is the reason why Yeshua had to go to the cross, to be cursed, so that He could bear our sins as it is written in the Torah commandment. The Scriptures states that the Messiah would be kingly being found after the order of Melchizedek according to Parashat Lech Lecha in *Bereshit / Genesis 14:18* which states יֵה וּמֶלְכִי-צָדֵק מֶלֶךְ: יֵה וּמֶלְכִי-צָדֵק מֶלֶךְ meaning “*And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; now he was a priest of God Most High.*” (NASB) The Messiah would attain royal status and come from the tribe of Judah according to Parashat Vayechi, Jacob blesses Judah saying לֹא-יִסּוּר שֵׁבֶט מִיְהוּדָה 49:10 *The scepter shall not depart from Judah, Nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet, Until Shiloh comes, And to him shall be the obedience of the peoples.* (NASB) When reading the Apostolic Writings we learn that the new covenant God has made with us fulfills the Torah requirement (Foundation) and the sinless Son of God become a substitutionary blood atonement.

The Torah also becomes the standard upon which we can properly understand Scripture and prophecy and the standard for living life before God. It is in the Torah, in the book of Leviticus and the commandments regarding the festival of Pesach (Passover) that gives meaning to John the Baptist's statement concerning Yeshua being the "*Lamb of God*" who takes away the sins of the world. All of Scripture, the prophets, and the writings, and the New Covenant Scriptures find their authority and significance in the authority that is given through the words of Moshe recorded in the Torah. If the foundation is destroyed, what can the righteous do? If the foundation is destroyed, wickedness and unrighteousness will run unchecked and everyone, the world, all of creation will suffer.

David says **ד יהנה | בהיכל קדשו יהנה בשמים כסאו עיניו יחזו עפעפיו יבחנו בני אדם: ה יהנה צדיק**: *11:4 The Lord is in His holy temple; the Lord's throne is in heaven; His eyes behold, His eyelids test the sons of men. 11:5 The Lord tests the righteous and the wicked, And the one who loves violence His soul hates. (NASB)* The Lord sees the works of men, He tests the righteous and hates the wicked. Verse 11:5 parallels the wicked with the one who "*loves violence*" (**ואהב המס**). (*Personal reflection*) In today's entertainment industry (television) we see a lot of violence, do you think, based on this verse, loving a movie or television show because of the violence depicted is something God hates? Can that affect our relationship with God? It is interesting to note that the root word Hamas (**המס**) meaning "*violence, rob, destroy*" is the Hebrew name for the Islamic Resistance Movement (militant Islamic group) that appeared in 1976 with the aim of creating an Islamic Palestinian state and today commits many acts of violence and hatred in an attempt to destroy Israel.

Looking at this verse from *Tehillim / Psalms 11:4-5*, the Scriptures speak unambiguously that God hates the one who loves violence, He hates the wicked. A motto of modern American evangelism today is "*God hates the sin, but loves the sinner.*" Based on Scripture God certainly hates sin, however does the Scripture say that God loves the sinner? How do we classify the before he or she is saved? Is the sinner before he or she is saved considered "the wicked?" Are those who sin and sin itself two separate entities? If a person sins are they called the wicked in whom God hates? Do sinners live in righteousness and justice? The Scriptures state that He will laugh at the wicked when their calamity comes like a whirlwind, and that He rejoices over the wicked to destroy them. Is this concept of God incompatible with the tenets of your faith? Let's look at a few Scriptures to see what the Word of God has to say concerning this question.

## Survey on the Scriptures: Does God hate the wicked?

### **Vayikra / Leviticus 20:23**

**20:23** כג וְלֹא תִלְכוּ בְּחֻקֹת הַגּוֹי אֲשֶׁר-אֲנִי מְשַׁלַּח מִפְּנֵיכֶם כִּי אֶת-כָּל-אֲלֹהֵי עֲשׂוֹ וְאֶקְצָב בָּם: *More-over; you shall not follow the customs of the nation which I will drive out before you, for they did all these things, and therefore I have abhorred them. (NASB)*

### **Vayikra / Leviticus 26:14-30**

**26:14** *'But if you do not obey Me and do not carry out all these commandments, 26:15 if, instead, you reject My statutes, and if your soul abhors My ordinances so as not to carry out all My commandments, and so break My covenant, 26:16 I, in turn, will do this to you: I will appoint over you a sudden terror, consumption and fever that will waste away the eyes and cause the soul to pine away; also, you will sow your seed uselessly, for your enemies will eat it up. 26:17 'I will set My face against you so that you will be struck down before your enemies; and those who hate you will rule over you, and you will flee when no one is pursuing you. 26:18 'If also after these things you do not obey Me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins. 26:19 'I will also break down your pride of power; I will also make your*

sky like iron and your earth like bronze. 26:20 'Your strength will be spent uselessly, for your land will not yield its produce and the trees of the land will not yield their fruit. 26:21 'If then, you act with hostility against Me and are unwilling to obey Me, I will increase the plague on you seven times according to your sins. 26:22 'I will let loose among you the beasts of the field, which will bereave you of your children and destroy your cattle and reduce your number so that your roads lie deserted. 26:23 'And if by these things you are not turned to Me, but act with hostility against Me, 26:24 then I will act with hostility against you; and I, even I, will strike you seven times for your sins. 26:25 'I will also bring upon you a sword which will execute vengeance for the covenant; and when you gather together into your cities, I will send pestilence among you, so that you shall be delivered into enemy hands. 26:26 'When I break your staff of bread, ten women will bake your bread in one oven, and they will bring back your bread in rationed amounts, so that you will eat and not be satisfied. 26:27 'Yet if in spite of this you do not obey Me, but act with hostility against Me, 26:28 then I will act with wrathful hostility against you, and I, even I, will punish you seven times for your sins. 26:29 'Further, you will eat the flesh of your sons and the flesh of your daughters you will eat. 26:30 'I then will destroy your high places, and cut down your incense altars, and heap your remains on the remains of your idols, for My soul shall abhor you. (NASB)

#### **Devarim / Deuteronomy 18:12**

18:12 יב פי-תועבת יהוה כל-עשה אלה ובגלל התועבת האלה יהוה אלהיה מוריש אותם מפניהם: 'For whoever does these things is detestable to the Lord; and because of these detestable things the Lord your God will drive them out before you. (NASB)

#### **Devarim / Deuteronomy 25:16**

25:16 טז פי תועבת יהוה אלהיה כל-עשה אלה כל עשה ענול: 'For everyone who does these things, everyone who acts unjustly is an abomination to the Lord your God. (NASB)

#### **Devarim / Deuteronomy 28:62-63**

סב ונשארתם במתי מעט תחת אשר הייתם ככוכבי השמים לרב פי-לא שמעת בקול יהוה אלהיה: סג והיה כאשר-שש יהוה עליכם להיטיב אתכם ולהרבות אתכם פן ישיש יהוה עליכם להאביד אתכם ולהשמיד אתכם ונסחתם מעל האדמה אשר-אתה בא-שמה לרשתה: 28:62 'Then you shall be left few in number; whereas you were as numerous as the stars of heaven, because you did not obey the Lord your God. 28:63 'It shall come about that as the Lord delighted over you to prosper you, and multiply you, so the Lord will delight over you to make you perish and destroy you; and you will be torn from the land where you are entering to possess it. (NASB)

#### **Devarim / Deuteronomy 32:16-20**

טו וישמן ישרון ויבעט שמנת עבית כשית וישש אלוה עשהו ויגבל צור ישעתו: טז יקנאהו בזרים בתועבת כעיסהו: יז יזבחו לשדים לא אלה אלהים לא ידעום חדשים מקרב באו לא שפרוים אבותיכם: יח צור ילדה תשי ותשכח אל מחלף: [רביעי] יט וירא יהוה וינאץ מפעם בניו ובנותיו: כ ויאמר אסתירה פני מהם אראה מה אחריתם כי דור תהפכת המה בניים לא-אמן בם: 32:16 'They made Him jealous with strange gods; With abominations they provoked Him to anger. 32:17 'They sacrificed to demons who were not God, To gods whom they have not known, New gods who came lately, Whom your fathers did not dread. 32:18 'You neglected the Rock who begot you, And forgot the God who gave you birth. 32:19 'The Lord saw this, and spurned them Because of the provocation of His sons and daughters. 32:20 'Then He

said, 'I will hide My face from them, I will see what their end shall be; For they are a perverse generation, Sons in whom is no faithfulness. (NASB)

**Tehillim / Psalm 5:5-6**

ו לא-יתַיַצְבוּ הוֹלְלִים לְנֶגֶד עֵינַיִךָ שְׁנֵאתָ כָּל-פְּעֻלֵי אָנוּן: ז תִּאֲבֹד דְּבַרִי כְזָב אִישׁ-דְּמַיִם וּמְרֵמָה יִתְעַב ה' יְהוָה: | 5:5 The boastful shall not stand before Your eyes; You hate all who do iniquity. 5:6 You destroy those who speak falsehood; The Lord abhors the man of bloodshed and deceit. (NASB)

**Tehillim / Psalm 11:5-7**

ה יְהוָה צַדִּיק יִבְחֹן וְרָשָׁע וְאָהֵב חָמָס שְׂנֵאתָ נַפְשׁוֹ: ו יִמָּטֵר עַל-רָשָׁעִים פָּחִים אֲשֶׁר וְגִפְרִית וְרוּחַ 11:5 The Lord tests the righteous and the wicked, And the one who loves violence His soul hates. 11:6 Upon the wicked He will rain snares; Fire and brimstone and burning wind will be the portion of their cup. 11:7 For the Lord is righteous, He loves righteousness; The upright will behold His face. (NASB)

**Tehillim / Psalm 50:22**

כב 50:22 'Now consider this, you who forget God, Or I will tear you in pieces, and there will be none to deliver. (NASB)

**Tehillim / Psalm 106:40**

מ 106:40 Therefore the anger of the Lord was kindled against His people And He abhorred His inheritance. (NASB)

**Mishley / Proverbs 3:32-33**

לב 3:32 כִּי תוֹעֵבֶת יְהוָה נִלוֹז וְאֶת-יִשְׁרָיִם סוּדוֹ: לג מְאֵרַת יְהוָה בְּבַיִת רָשָׁע וּבֵגֶת צַדִּיקִים יִבְרָךְ: 3:33 For the devious are an abomination to the Lord; But He is intimate with the upright. 3:33 The curse of the Lord is on the house of the wicked, But He blesses the dwelling of the righteous. (NASB)

**Mishley / Proverbs 6:16-19**

טז אִישׁ-הַגָּבֹהַ שְׂנֵאתָ יְהוָה וְשִׁבְעַת תוֹעֵבוֹת [תוֹעֵבֹת] נַפְשׁוֹ: יז עֵינַיִם רְמוֹת לְשׁוֹן שֶׁקֶר וְיַדַּיִם שֹׁפְכוֹת דָּם-נֶגְקִי: יח לֵב חָרַשׁ מַחְשְׁבוֹת אָנוּן רַגְלִים מְמַהְרֹת לְרוּץ לְרָעָה: יט יַפְיֵחַ כְּזָבִים עַד שֶׁקֶר וּמְשַׁלַּח: 6:16 There are six things which the Lord hates, Yes, seven which are an abomination to Him: 6:17 Haughty eyes, a lying tongue, And hands that shed innocent blood, 6:18 A heart that devises wicked plans, Feet that run rapidly to evil, 6:19 A false witness who utters lies, And one who spreads strife among brothers. (NASB)

**Mishley / Proverbs 16:5**

ה 16:5 Everyone who is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord; Assuredly, he will not be unpunished. (NASB)

**Hosea 9:15**

9:15 All their evil is at Gilgal; Indeed, I came to hate them there! Because of the wickedness of their deeds I will drive them out of My house! I will love them no more; All their princes



are rebels. (NASB)

### **Malachi 1:3-4**

1:3 *but I have hated Esau, and I have made his mountains a desolation and appointed his inheritance for the jackals of the wilderness.* 1:4 *Though Edom says, 'We have been beaten down, but we will return and build up the ruins'; thus says the Lord of hosts, 'They may build, but I will tear down; and men will call them the wicked territory, and the people toward whom the Lord is indignant forever.'* (NASB)

### **Romans 9:13**

<sup>13</sup>καθὼς γέγραπται, Τὸν Ἰακώβ ἠγάπησα, τὸν δὲ Ἡσαῦ ἐμίσησα. 9:13 *Just as it is written, 'Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.'* (NASB)

### **1 Corinthians 16:22**

<sup>22</sup>εἴ τις οὐ φιλεῖ τὸν κύριον, ἦτω ἀνάθεμα. Μαράνα θα. 16:22 *If anyone does not love the Lord, he is to be accursed. Maranatha.* (NASB)

### **James 4:4**

<sup>4</sup>μοιχαλίδες, οὐκ οἴδατε ὅτι ἡ φιλία τοῦ κόσμου ἔχθρα τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστίν; ὃς ἐὰν οὖν βουλευθῆ φίλος εἶναι τοῦ κόσμου, ἐχθρὸς τοῦ θεοῦ καθίσταται. 4:4 *You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.* (NASB)

### **1 Peter 3:12**

<sup>12</sup>ὅτι ὀφθαλμοὶ κυρίου ἐπὶ δικαίους καὶ ἄτα αὐτοῦ εἰς δέησιν αὐτῶν, πρόσωπον δὲ κυρίου ἐπὶ ποιοῦντας κακά. 3:12 *For the eyes of the Lord are toward the righteous, And His ears attend to their prayer; But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.* (NASB)

### **Revelation 14:10-11**

<sup>10</sup>καὶ αὐτὸς πίεται ἐκ τοῦ οἴνου τοῦ θυμοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ κεκερασμένου ἀκράτου ἐν τῷ ποτηρίῳ τῆς ὀργῆς αὐτοῦ, καὶ βασανισθήσεται ἐν πυρὶ καὶ θείῳ ἐνώπιον ἀγγέλων ἁγίων καὶ ἐνώπιον τοῦ ἀρνίου. <sup>11</sup>καὶ ὁ καπνὸς τοῦ βασανισμοῦ αὐτῶν εἰς αἰῶνας αἰώνων ἀναβαίνει, καὶ οὐκ ἔχουσιν ἀνάπαυσιν ἡμέρας καὶ νυκτός, οἱ προσκυνοῦντες τὸ θηρίον καὶ τὴν εἰκόνα αὐτοῦ, καὶ εἴ τις λαμβάνει τὸ χάραγμα τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ. 14:10 *he also will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mixed in full strength in the cup of His anger; and he will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. 14:11 'And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever; they have no rest day and night, those who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.'* (NASB)

Throughout the Scriptures we read that God hates both the sin and the one who commits sin. The Lord's kindness to sinners is not emotionally driven or based upon sentimental feelings. He does not accept sinners "just the way they are;" they absolutely must repent (turn from sin) and believe in God and in His Messiah Yeshua in order to be accepted by Him (Acts 10:34 *Opening his mouth, Peter said: 'I most certainly understand now that God is not one to show partiality, 10:35 but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right is welcome to Him. 10:36 'The word which He sent to the sons of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ, He is Lord of all. NASB).* Does coming to the Lord "just the way you are" the same



as coming to the Lord as a repentant, broken person in faith and trust in Yeshua the Messiah? According to these Scriptures, the Lord does not love sinners the way that “they” want Him to, and He does not give them unconditional approval, unconditional acceptance, unconditional forgiveness, or unconditional friendship until one repents, turns from sin, and believes in Him and the Salvation He has provided, Yeshua the Messiah. What did Yeshua and the Apostles say concerning this topic?

**Mishley / Proverbs 8:17**

אֲנִי אֶהְבֶּיָהּ [אֶהְבֵּי] אֵהָב וּמְשַׁרְרֵי יִמְצְאוּנִי: 8:17 *‘I love those who love me; And those who diligently seek me will find me. (NASB)*

**John 14:21-23**

<sup>21</sup>ὁ ἔχων τὰς ἐντολάς μου καὶ τηρῶν αὐτάς ἐκεῖνός ἐστιν ὁ ἀγαπῶν με· ὁ δὲ ἀγαπῶν με ἀγαπηθήσεται ὑπὸ τοῦ πατρὸς μου, καὶ γὰρ ἀγαπήσω αὐτὸν καὶ ἐμφανίσω αὐτῷ ἑμαυτόν. <sup>22</sup>Λέγει αὐτῷ Ἰούδας, οὐχ ὁ Ἰσκαριώτης, Κύριε, [καὶ] τί γέγονεν ὅτι ἡμῖν μέλλεις ἐμφανίζειν σεαυτὸν καὶ οὐχὶ τῷ κόσμῳ; <sup>23</sup>ἀπεκρίθη Ἰησοῦς καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ, Ἐάν τις ἀγαπᾷ με τὸν λόγον μου τηρήσει, καὶ ὁ πατήρ μου ἀγαπήσει αὐτόν, καὶ πρὸς αὐτὸν ἐλευσόμεθα καὶ μονὴν παρ’ αὐτῷ ποιησόμεθα. 14:21 *‘He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him.’* 14:22 *Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, ‘Lord, what then has happened that You are going to disclose Yourself to us and not to the world?’* 14:23 *Jesus answered and said to him, ‘If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him. (NASB)*

**John 15:10**

<sup>10</sup>ἐάν τὰς ἐντολάς μου τηρήσητε, μενεῖτε ἐν τῇ ἀγάπῃ μου, καθὼς ἐγὼ τὰς ἐντολάς τοῦ πατρὸς μου τετήρηκα καὶ μένω αὐτοῦ ἐν τῇ ἀγάπῃ. 15:10 *‘If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love. (NASB)*

**John 16:27**

<sup>27</sup>αὐτὸς γὰρ ὁ πατήρ φιλεῖ ὑμᾶς, ὅτι ὑμεῖς ἐμὲ πεφιλήκατε καὶ πεπιστεύκατε ὅτι ἐγὼ παρὰ [τοῦ] θεοῦ ἐξῆλθον. 16:27 *for the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me and have believed that I came forth from the Father. (NASB)*

**1 John 2:15**

<sup>15</sup>Μὴ ἀγαπᾶτε τὸν κόσμον μηδὲ τὰ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ. ἐάν τις ἀγαπᾷ τὸν κόσμον, οὐκ ἔστιν ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ πατρὸς ἐν αὐτῷ: 2:15 *Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. (NASB)*

Based upon these Scriptures, is God’s love conditional? Do we find a parallel here in God’s love that is similar to our love for one another being conditional? On the other hand we find Scripture that says “*We love Him because He first loved us*” and also *John 3:16 “for God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son...”* Do these verses stand in contradiction to *Tehillim / Psalms 11:4-5* and other Scripture we have just read shown above? How do we reconcile the difference here? The difference is that because of God’s love (i.e. we serve a loving God) that He provides a way to receive the forgiveness of sin, He sent His Son to die for us. Throughout Scripture we read that God has always provided a way for forgiveness of sin. Therefore, God’s love is for deliverance and salvation, and it is not for those who live in sin as a way

of life (i.e. the wicked). A distinction must be made for those who practice sin and those who are repentant and seek the Lord and desire to live a life free from sin. We cannot know God and His love unless we cease to love sin and the Lord becomes our First Love rather than sin. This is only accomplished with God's help, by faith in Yeshua the Messiah and by the power of the Holy Spirit living within us. (Read *Romans 7*) In addition to this, Yeshua said in *Matthew 5:43-45*:

**Matthew 5:43-45**

<sup>43</sup>Ἠκούσατε ὅτι ἐρρέθη, Ἀγαπήσεις τὸν πλησίον σου καὶ μισήσεις τὸν ἐχθρόν σου. <sup>44</sup>ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω ὑμῖν, ἀγαπᾶτε τοὺς ἐχθροὺς ὑμῶν καὶ προσεύχεσθε ὑπὲρ τῶν διωκόντων ὑμᾶς, <sup>45</sup>ὅπως γένησθε υἱοὶ τοῦ πατρὸς ὑμῶν τοῦ ἐν οὐρανοῖς, ὅτι τὸν ἥλιον αὐτοῦ ἀνατέλλει ἐπὶ πονηροῦς καὶ ἀγαθοῦς καὶ βρέχει ἐπὶ δικαίους καὶ ἀδίκους. 5:43 'You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' 5:44 'But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 5:45 so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. (NASB)

Yeshua said to “love your enemy” and to “pray for those who persecute you,” is this not something only God would say? According to these verses, we are to render blessing for cursing and prayers for persecutions. In the cases of cruel enemies, we are to do good to them, and to pray for them. Because God has changed our hearts, we are no longer enemies to anyone, but friends to all. The point of these Scriptures is to show us that we are to love and pray and let God work and deal with the wicked. We are not merely to cease from hate, and then abide in a cold neutrality; we are to love where hatred seems inevitable. Our sinful nature desires to curse, but the new nature that God gives says we are to bless. We are to be active in doing good to those who deserve to receive evil. In doing this, judgment and punishment is reserved for the Lord and we do not live and act in unrighteousness, we are able to rely upon the Lord as infants in *Tehillim / Psalms 8:2* that states מִפִּי עוֹלָלִים | וַיִּנְקִים יְפֹדֶת עַז לְמַעַן צוֹרְרֵיהֶּ לְהַשְׁבִּית אוֹיֵב וּמַתְנַקֵּם: 8:2 *From the mouth of infants and nursing babes You have established strength Because of Your adversaries, To make the enemy and the revengeful cease.* (NASB) The weak depend upon the Lord God Almighty to exact payment and judgment and it is in this all praise goes to the Lord because it is God who stops and defeats our enemies. The practical aspect of this is that our enemies wonder, men wonder, respect, and admire the followers of Yeshua. The act of loving your enemies is counted so surprising, that men attribute it to the Lord God Almighty and the people say indeed he is a child of God, who else could bless and be thankful against the evil in this world?

וַיִּמְטַר עַל- 11:6 *Upon the wicked He will rain snares; Fire and brimstone and burning wind will be the portion of their cup.* (NASB) The Lord God Almighty will rain judgment upon our enemies, and it is in the Lord's providence (*supervision, protection, care, concern, prudence*) in His saving power that we can give thanks, bless our enemies, and pray for those who persecute us. David says: כִּי-צַדִּיק יִהְיֶה צְדָקוֹת אֱהָב יִשָּׂר יִחְזוּ פְּנֵימוֹ: 11:7 *For the Lord is righteous, He loves righteousness; The upright will behold His face.* (NASB) The judgment of the wicked comes because of the righteousness and justice of God. If we live our lives according to God's ways, according to justice, if we do good to those who persecute us and pray for those who do evil to us, then we are truly the sons of our Father in Heaven. If we leave judgment and punishment to the Lord, then our hope is truly and wholly give to Him who is able to deliver us from all troubles, our hope is truly in Yeshua God's Messiah, and our lives are truly changed purely for the glory of God. Then we can say “Worthy is the lord to be praised!” (*Revelation 4:11*) Worthy indeed is the Lord to be praised for such a wonderful salvation!

**Christian Commentary**

According to the *International Critical Commentary on the Psalms (ICCP), Driver, Plummer, and Briggs, 2005, Tehillim / Psalms 11* is a guest Psalm. The Psalmist takes refuge in the Lord (YHVH) and protests against those who are urging him to flee from his enemies to the mountains (*Tehillim / Psalms 11:1*). The Lord God Almighty is in heaven (*11:4*), He tests the righteous (*11:5*), hates the wicked (*11:5*), and is soon to destroy the unrighteous (wicked) men (*11:6*). Driver, Plummer, and Briggs states that a liturgical couplet gives the general truth that the Lord loves the righteous and they who are righteous will behold (see) His face (*11:7*).

The Psalmist states that “*I have taken refuge in the YHVH*” (בִּיהוָה | הִסִּיתִי) and it is believed that this verse was condensed by a late editor from “in You YHVH” (*Tehillim / Psalms 31:7, 71:1*) to simply “in YHVH.” The Psalmist is not anxious over his advisors and reprimands them stating “*How can you say to me?*” (אֵיךְ תֹּאמְרוּ לְנַפְשִׁי) to flee to the mountains? The commentators believe there is an error in the masoretic text over “flee you” which originated from “your mountain,” which is thought to be a proverbial popular phrase. Birds flee to forests when in peril, and as these in Israel were on mountains the Psalm states to the mountains. Having a close look at Ginsburg’s Masoretic Text (shown below) it is interesting to note that there is a Qere and Ketiv on verse *11:1* (נוֹדוּ) along with a textual variant on the word הַרְכֶם “your mountain.” It is interesting that Ginsburg spells הַרְכֶם rather than the textual variant that is given in only a few manuscripts. The commentators however state that this is an error in the masoretic text?

יֵא	לְמִנְצַח־לְדָוִד בִּיהוָה   חִסִּיתִי אֵיךְ תֹּאמְרוּ לְנַפְשִׁי נֹדוּ הַרְכֶם צְפוּרִי׃
2	כִּי הִנֵּה הַרְשָׁעִים יִדְרֹכֹן קִשְׁתֹּ כּוֹנְנֵי חַצֵּם עַל־יָתֵר לִירוֹת בְּמוֹאֲפָל לְיִשְׂרָאֵל׃
3	כִּי הַשָּׁתוֹת יִהְרָסוּן צְדִיק מִהֲדַפְּעֵל׃

**יהוה**

v. 14 ס"א בְּיָדָהּ וּכְנֵי דוֹד, ת"ע, ת"ס ות"ר. v. 15 כן ב"א, כ"נ תְּדַרְשׁ, נ"א ב"א תְּדַרְשׁ בְּגַעִיָא, ב"נ תְּדַרְשׁ בלא געיא, בס"א תְּדַרְשׁ כתיב, תְּדַרְשׁ קרי וכן ד"ב, ובס"א תְּדַרְשׁ כתיב וקרי וכן ד"ו, v. 16 ס"א לְעוֹלָם וכן תר', ת"ע, ת"ס ות"ר. v. 17 כן ברוב ספרים כ"ו, ד"ב, ד"ג, ד"ו, ד"ט, ד"י, ד"ב ודו"ד, ס"א תֹּאמְרוּ עֲנִיִּים וכן דט"ו. v. 17 ס"א עֲנִיִּים וכן ת"ע, ת"ס ות"ר, ובס"א עֲנִיִּים כתיב, עֲנִיִּים קרי. י"א. v. 1 ס"א לְמִנְצַח מְזֻמָּר כן ת"ע ות"ר. v. 1 נודו כתיב, נודו קרי, בס"א נודו כתיב וקרי וכן ד"א, ד"ו, ד"א, תר', ת"ע, ת"ס ות"ר. v. 1 צ"ל הַר פְּמוֹה, כן תר', ת"ע, ת"ס ות"ר. v. 2 כן ברוב ספרים כ"ו, ד"י ודט"ו, ס"א הִנֵּה וכן ד"ב ודו"ד, וס"א כִּי הִנֵּה וכן ד"ב, ד"ג, ד"ו ודט"ו. v. 3 כן ברוב ספרים כ"ו, ד"ב, ד"ג, ד"ו, ד"ט, ד"י, ד"ב, ד"י ודט"ו.

History tells us that Judah had taken refuge in the mountains on numerous accounts, in caves, steep cliffs, and inaccessible rocks, the mountains therefore have been places of refuge from persecution. The reason for the advice of the Psalmist’s advisors was because the enemy “*threads the bow and prepares the*

arrow.” The archers are ready to shoot to kill, and they shoot in darkness. The enemy is concealed in darkness and not face to face with David. It is unknown what direction the enemy is attacking from, and the purpose is to destroy the righteous. So the Psalmist is in peril because he is righteous. *Tehillim / Psalms 11:3* states: כִּי-הִשָּׁתוֹת יִהְרָסוּן צְדִיק מִה-פֶּעַל: 11:3 *If the foundations are destroyed, What can the righteous do?* (NASB) the commentators state that the foundations are the “established institutions,” the social and civil order of the community rather than that of the Torah, the rule of the Law of God. The commentators state that the Psalmist believes these institutions as divine. Interestingly, if the foundations is a reference to the Torah, it is divine because it is the Word of the Living God. According to Driver, Plummer, and Briggs the institutions protect the right-minded righteous. On the other hand, the Torah being the foundation of Scripture, the Word of God is that which protects the righteous and keeps ones mind on the right path, a path of holiness and righteousness before the Living God. Where do you think we should be placing our emphasis upon, the established institutions or the Word of the Living God?

The advisors state what the enemy is doing, now the Psalmist states what God is doing to justify the weak and humble, for those who seek refuge in the Lord. *Tehillim / Psalms 11:4* states ד יְהוָה | בְּהִיכַל קִדְשׁוֹ 11:4 *The Lord is in His holy temple; the Lord's throne is in heaven; His eyes behold, His eyelids test the sons of men.* (NASB) The Lord is perceived as being a resident in the Temple in Jerusalem and His throne is in heaven. Taking refuge in the Temple in Jerusalem, the Psalmist states that His throne is in heaven and therefore sees all of the sons of men and their deeds. The Lord is not indifferent to what happens here on earth between men. The Psalmist states with this in mind that God tries the righteous and the wicked His soul hates. The evil intentions of the wicked to shoot the righteous are all observed by the Lord God Almighty and He hates the violence in the heart of the unrighteous. If God is trying the righteous and hating the wicked, then the advice to flee to the mountains is poor advice. *Tehillim / Psalms 11:6* the Psalmist states ו יִמָּטֵר עַל-רִשְׁעִים פְּחִים אֵשׁ וְגַפְרִית וְרוּחַ זֶלְעָפוֹת מִנֶּת 11:6 *Upon the wicked He will rain snares; Fire and brimstone and burning wind will be the portion of their cup.* (NASB) the Lord will rain down upon the wicked. Rain is suggestive that the Lord’s throne is in heaven and coals of fire is an image of lightning and fire being sent from heaven. The Lord rains from heaven upon these wicked men and they drink their portion from God’s wrath. Driver, Plummer, and Briggs states that the wicked destroying the foundation of society, the Lord raining fire upon them is His response to the sin of the wicked. The commentary concludes stating that a late editor of the Psalms appends the ending to *Tehillim / Psalms 11:7*, כִּי-צְדִיק יִהְיֶה צְדָקוֹת אֱהָב יִשָּׁר יִחְזוּ פְּנֵימוֹ: 11:7 *For the Lord is righteous, He loves righteousness; The upright will behold His face.* (NASB) The editor enhanced the privileges of the righteous that they will see His face.

## Rabbinic Commentary

The rabbinic commentary (Midrash) on *Tehillim / Psalms 11* has 7 parts. Reading through this week’s Midrash we will be looking at Parts 2, 4, 5, and 6. Let’s begin by outlining Midrash Tehillim Chapter 11 Parts 2, 4, 5, and 6.

### Outline of Midrash Tehillim / Psalms, Chapter 11, Parts 2, 4, 5, and 6

#### Part 2:

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דִּבּוּר הַמַּתְחִיל (Dibur Hamathil) “*The wicked made ready their arrow upon the string (Tehillim / Psalms 11:2).*”
- The פְּתִיחָה (Petihta) “*the homiletic introduction*” to the Midrash says “*Rabbi Berechiah taught in*



*the name of Rabbi Abba son of Kahana, Here the wicked are Shebna and Joah, who wrote a letter, inserted it into a notch in an arrow, and shot the arrow to Sennacherib through a port”*

- The מִשַּׁל (mashal) “*the parable,*” goes on to explain the פְּתִיחָתָא (Petihta), the rabbis taught saying “*Shooting at the upright of heart, Hezekiah and Isaiah.*”
- The נִמְשַׁל (Nimshal) “*expansion on the parable*” expands upon the מִשַּׁל (mashal) speaks on the topic of “*If the foundations be destroyed, what great work, O Righteous One, have You wrought?*” (Tehillim / Psalms 11:3).
- The Concluding phrase says “*Or, if wicked men rising up against the foundation pits of the altar that are more ancient than the great abyss, are to destroy them, the O Righteous One of the world, what Great work have You wrought?*”

#### Part 4:

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דִּבּוּר הַמַּתְחִיל (Dibur Hamathil) “*The Lord tries the righteous (Tehillim / Psalms 11:5).*”
- The פְּתִיחָתָא (Petihta) “*the homiletic introduction*” to the Midrash asks the question “*Who does the Lord try?*”
- The מִשַּׁל (mashal) “*the parable,*” goes on to explain the פְּתִיחָתָא (Petihta), states “*the righteous who stand firm under the trials He imposes,*” and tells a parable of the farmer with two heifers.
- The נִמְשַׁל (Nimshal) “*expansion on the parable*” expands upon the מִשַּׁל (mashal) asking the question of which heifer the farmer will try first, then parallels the wicked with being a heifer not able to plow.
- The Concluding phrase says “*The Lord tries the righteous, but the wicked and him that loves violence His soul hates (Tehillim / Psalms 11:5), the wicked is Ishmael, and him who loves violence is Esau, of whom God said, but Esau I hated (Malachi 1:3).*”

#### Part 5:

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דִּבּוּר הַמַּתְחִיל (Dibur Hamathil) “*Upon the wicked He will rain Pakhim (Tehillim / Psalms 11:6).*”
- The פְּתִיחָתָא (Petihta) “*the homiletic introduction*” to the Midrash says “*That is, quick burning coals, as in the phrase as quick burning coals are to live coals, and wood so fire (Mishley / Proverbs 26:21).*”
- The מִשַּׁל (mashal) “*the parable,*” goes on to explain the פְּתִיחָתָא (Petihta), saying “*The Holy One blessed be He, said, whosoever exalts himself in pride will finally be punished in fire.*”
- The נִמְשַׁל (Nimshal) “*expansion on the parable*” expands upon the מִשַּׁל (mashal) gives examples of those who perish in fire:

1. The generation of the flood.
2. The tower of Babel.
3. The people of Sodom.
4. Pharaoh
5. Sennecherib (Isaiah 10:16).
6. Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 3:22).
7. Edom
8. Gog and Magog (Ezekiel 39:6).
9. The other heathen nations.
10. Hiram (Ezekiel 28:18).

- The Concluding phrase says “*The Lord will give the children of Israel four cups of deliverance to drink ... This verse does not say deliverance but deliverances, thus implying two cups.*”

## Part 6:

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the **דיבור המתחיל** (Dibur Hamathil) “*For the righteous Lord loves a man of righteousness (Tehillim / Psalms 11:7).*”
- The **פתיחתא** (Petihata) “*the homiletic introduction*” to the Midrash says “*Rabbi Judah son of Rabbi Simon said, Every craftsman hates rivals in his craft. Not so the Holy One blessed be He, the righteous Lord loves a man of righteousness.*”
- The **משל** (mashal) “*the parable,*” goes on to explain the **פתיחתא** (Petihata), the parable speaks of the righteous ones, that seven companies will attend the Holy One blessed be He.
- The **נמשל** (Nimshal) “*expansion on the parable*” expands upon the **משל** (mashal) discussing a contrast between the seven companies of righteous ones who attend the Lord and the seven habitations of hell. The rabbis seem to employ symmetry for balance between heaven and hell.
- The Concluding phrase says “*Behold there are seven habitations for the righteous and seven habitations for the wicked, for the wicked according to their works and for the righteous according to their works.*”

While reading through Midrash Tehillim 11, part 2, 4, 5, and 6 are the most interesting to discuss. In part two of Midrash Tehillim 11, the Midrash is introduced with the **דיבור המתחיל** (Dibur Hamathil) quoting the Psalmist saying “*The wicked made ready their arrow upon the string (Tehillim / Psalms 11:2).*” The homiletic introduction (**פתיחתא**, Petihata) begins the discussion on **דיבור המתחיל** saying “*Rabbi Berechiah taught in the name of Rabbi Abba son of Kahana, Here the wicked are Shebna and Joah, who wrote a letter, inserted it into a notch in an arrow, and shot the arrow to Sennacherib through a port.*” Shebna was a man who was steward of the king’s household in Isaiah’s time and was secretary of Hezekiah. On account of his pride he was ejected from his office, and Eliakim was promoted in his place (see *Isaiah 22:15-25*). Shebna appears to have been the leader of the party who favoured an alliance with Egypt against Assyria. It is hypothesized that “*Shebna the scribe,*” was one of those whom the king sent to speak with the Assyrian ambassador (see *2 Kings 18:18, 26, 37, and 19:2, Isaiah 36:3, 36:11, 36:22, and 37:2*). Joah, the son of Asaph, was a “*recorder*” or chronicler to King Hezekiah (see *2 Kings 18:18, 18:26, and 18:37*). The rabbis taught in the **משל** (mashal) “*the parable,*” that the wicked privately shoot at the upright in heart referring specifically to Hezekiah and Isaiah. The **נמשל** (Nimshal), “*expansion on the parable,*” speaks of the foundations, “*If the foundations be destroyed, what great work, O Righteous One, have You wrought?*” (*Tehillim / Psalms 11:3*). The rabbis direct the discussion to the wicked, what works of God do the wicked do in the world? The wicked raise up against the foundation stone of the Temple in Jerusalem. The foundation stone of the Temple is the foundation stone that the world is established upon. The foundation stone is the holiest site in Judaism. Judaism views this place as the spiritual junction between Heaven and Earth. According to the Sages (*Talmud Bavli, Tractate Yoma 54b*) it was from this rock that the world was created. This was the first part of the Earth that had come into existence from the creation of the world. The Zohar (*Vayechi 1:231*) states “*The world was not created until God took a stone called אבן השתייה (Even HaShetiya) and threw it into the depths where it was fixed from above till below, and from it the world expanded. It is the center point of the world and on this spot stood the Holy of Holies.*” According to Judaism, this was the site where God formed Adam and breathed life into him. This was the place where Abraham offered the Sacrifice of His Son Isaac, the mountain is identified as Moriah in *Bereshit / Genesis 22*. This is also the

place where Jacob dreamed of angels ascending and descending upon a ladder. The Mishnah (*Talmud Bavli Tractate Yoma 5:2*) mentions a stone in the Holy of Holies that was called השתייה (HaShetiya) that was revealed by the early prophets David and Samuel (*Talmud Bavli Tractate Sotah 48b*). The *Zohar Vayechi 1:231*, *Midrash Tanchuma Acharei Chapter 3* (*Etz Yosef commentary*, and *Maimonides, Beis HaBechirah 4:1* speak of Jewish attachment to the foundation stone describing a “...perforated stone to which the Jews come every year and anoint it, bewail themselves with groans, rend their garments, and then depart.” So the foundation stone the rabbis are speaking of in Part 2 of Midrash Tehillim is a reference to the stone that is located at the Temple mount in Jerusalem and not to that of the Torah, or to society (according to Driver, Plummer, and Briggs) The Concluding phrase in part 2 states “*Or, if wicked men rising up against the foundation pits of the altar that are more ancient than the great abyss, are to destroy them, the O Righteous One of the world, what Great work have You wrought?*” Concluding asking the question of the Lord God what Great work has the Lord wrought? It is interesting while reading through the Apostolic writings, Yeshua speaks a parable and then of the foundation stone in *Matthew 21:28-44*.

### **Matthew 21:28-44**

21:28 *‘But what do you think? A man had two sons, and he came to the first and said, ‘Son, go work today in the vineyard.’ 21:29 ‘And he answered, ‘I will not’; but afterward he regretted it and went. 21:30 ‘The man came to the second and said the same thing; and he answered, ‘I will sir’; but he did not go. 21:31 ‘Which of the two did the will of his father?’ They said, ‘The first.’ Jesus said to them, ‘Truly I say to you that the tax collectors and prostitutes will get into the kingdom of God before you. 21:32 ‘For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him; but the tax collectors and prostitutes did believe him; and you, seeing this did not even feel remorse afterward so as to believe him. 21:33 ‘Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who planted a vineyard and put a wall around it and dug a wine press in it, and built a tower, and rented it out to vine-growers and went on a journey. 21:34 ‘When the harvest time approached, he sent his slaves to the vine-growers to receive his produce. 21:35 ‘The vine-growers took his slaves and beat one, and killed another, and stoned a third. 21:36 ‘Again he sent another group of slaves larger than the first; and they did the same thing to them. 21:37 ‘But afterward he sent his son to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’ 21:38 ‘But when the vine-growers saw the son, they said among themselves, ‘This is the heir; come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance.’ 21:39 ‘They took him, and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. 21:40 ‘Therefore when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vine-growers?’ 21:41 They said to Him, ‘He will bring those wretches to a wretched end, and will rent out the vineyard to other vine-growers who will pay him the proceeds at the proper seasons.’ 21:42 Jesus said to them, ‘Did you never read in the Scriptures, ‘The stone which the builders rejected, This became the chief corner stone; This came about from the Lord, And it is marvelous in our eyes’? 21:43 ‘Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people, producing the fruit of it. 21:44 ‘And he who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; but on whomever it falls, it will scatter him like dust.’ (NASB)*

Yeshua states in *Matthew 21:42-44* speaking of the foundation stone, He says “*the stone which the builders rejected has become the chief corner stone*” and that “*he who falls upon this stone will be broken to pieces, but whomever it falls, it will scatter him like dust.*” In various places throughout the Scriptures, we read that Yeshua is understood to be this foundation stone, this corner stone upon which the believers are established (*Ephesians 2:20, 1 Corinthians 3:11*), Yeshua is said to be the one through whom the world was created (*Colossians 1:15-19*), and is the first born of all of creation as the Word of God (*John 1:1-14*). According

טז לְכֵן כֹּה אָמַר אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה הַגָּבִיר יִסַּד בְּצִיּוֹן אֶבֶן אֶבֶן בְּחֵן פְּנֵת  
 :יְהִישׁ: 28:16 Therefore thus says the Lord God, ‘Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a tested stone, A costly cornerstone for the foundation, firmly placed. He who believes in it will not be disturbed. (NASB) and the rabbis therefore speak of this foundation stone that is believed to be established at the Temple mount in Jerusalem. Did the rabbis and the people of the first century understand the significance of the “foundation stone” and its place located under the Holy of Holies in the Holy Temple? Was Yeshua using this “foundation stone” imagery in a parable and midrash to illustrate the importance of the foundation upon which all of the world was created and its connection to the sacrificial system and to Himself the living Word of God? Yeshua said in *John 6:29* “This is God’s work: to believe in the one whom he has sent.” (NASB) The one God has sent is Yeshua, the one who laid his life down on our behalf, it is upon this foundation stone, upon the sacrificial system detailed in the Torah that Yeshua establishes us to receive the forgiveness of sins. The rabbis ask the question at the end of Part 2 in *Midrash Tehillim 11* “Or, if wicked men rising up against the foundation pits of the altar that are more ancient than the great abyss, are to destroy them, the O Righteous One of the world, what Great work have You wrought?” The great work that the Righteous God has done is to send His Word, His Son, Yeshua the Messiah into this world to save us from our sins! What an awesome, mighty, and powerful God we serve! Hallelujah!

Midrash Tehillim Part 4 begins introducing the Psalm (the *דיבור המתחיל*, Dibur Hamathil) with “The Lord tries the righteous (*Tehillim / Psalms 11:5*).” The פתיחה (Petihta) “the homiletic introduction” to the Midrash asks the question “Who does the Lord try?” The משל (mashal) “the parable,” goes on to explain the פתיחה (Petihta), saying “the righteous who stand firm under the trials He imposes,” and tells a parable of the farmer with two heifers. The real question is “why doesn’t God try the wicked?” It seems that the wicked are reserved for judgement, for that great day when all men will stand before the Lord. The reason the wicked are not tried, according to Rabbi Jose, is because the wicked cannot stand firm under the Lord’s trials, this is connected to the משל (mashal) of which heifer the farmer will try first. The wicked are like the heifer who is not able to plow. Like the good heifer, our purpose in life is to bring glory to the Lord God Almighty. David said: כִּי-צַדִּיק יִהְיֶה צְדָקוֹת אֱהָב יִשָּׂר יִחְזוּ פְּנֵימוֹ: 11:7 For the Lord is righteous, He loves righteousness; The upright will behold His face. (NASB) We are to live for righteousness and justice. This is the way of the Lord. The judgment of the wicked comes because of the righteousness and justice of God. If we live our lives according to God’s ways, according to His justice, if we do good to those who persecute us and pray for those who do evil to us, then we are truly the sons of our Father in Heaven. Living in righteousness and justice, we will be heifers who are able to plow, who are able to take the yoke of God’s kingdom upon our necks and produced a great amount of fruit for His Glory. The trials of God are to refine us, to make us and mold us into His image. Therefore, “The Lord tries the righteous, but the wicked and him that loves violence His soul hates (*Tehillim / Psalms 11:5*), the wicked is Ishmael, and him who loves violence is Esau, of whom God said, but Esau I hated (*Malachi 1:3*).” Both Ishmael and Esau hated their inheritances and the covenant of God. Both took of from the detestable peoples of the land of Canaan, taking of their gods, their ways, their daughters, etc. As children of the Most High God we live our lives according to God’s ways, and He is glorified. It is only with His help, in His Son Yeshua the Messiah that we are able to live our lives wholly devoted to Him. Ask the Lord right now to help you to live according to His will and purpose for your life!

Midrash Tehillim Part 5 is introduced with the Dibur Hamathil (דיבור המתחיל) “Upon the wicked He will rain Pakhim (*Tehillim / Psalms 11:6*).” This midrash speaks of judgment by fire. The homiletic introduction (פתיחה, Petihta) says “That is, quick burning coals, as in the phrase as quick burning coals are to live coals, and wood so fire (*Mishley / Proverbs 26:21*).” The Lord will rain down fire upon the enemy. “The Holy One blessed be He, said, whosoever exalts himself in pride will finally be punished in fire.” (אמר)



משל (mashal, parable) and provides examples of those who are prideful and perish in fire in the judgment of God. Let's look at the examples that are given in the Midrash on those who perish in fire.

### The generation of the flood

When Noah was four hundred and eighty years old, studying the genealogy in the Torah, all the righteous sons of men were dead, except Methuselah and Noah himself. The Lord, having looked at the wickedness of mankind declared that He was grieved for having made man because their minds and hearts was only evil continually (6:5). The Lord God told Noah that one hundred and twenty years would be given to men for repentance; if in that time they had not mended their evil ways, the earth would be destroyed by a great flood.

### ספר בראשית פרק ו

א וַיְהִי כִּי-הִחַל הָאָדָם לָרֹב עַל-פְּנֵי הָאֲדָמָה וּבָנוֹת יִלְדוּ לָהֶם: ב וַיִּרְאוּ בְנֵי-הָאֱלֹהִים אֶת-בָּנוֹת הָאָדָם כִּי טֹבֹת הֵנָּה וַיִּקְחוּ לָהֶם נָשִׁים מִכָּל אֲשֶׁר בָּחָרוּ: ג וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה לֹא-יִדּוֹן רוּחִי בָאָדָם לְעֹלָם כִּשְׁגָם הוּא כָּשׁוֹר וְהָיוּ יָמָיו מֵאָה וְעֶשְׂרִים שָׁנָה: ד הַנְּפִלִים הָיוּ בְּאַרְצָ בְּיָמֵים הַהֵם וְגַם אַחֲרֵי-כֵן אֲשֶׁר יָבֹאוּ בְנֵי הָאֱלֹהִים אֶל-בָּנוֹת הָאָדָם וַיִּלְדוּ לָהֶם הַמָּה הַגִּבֹּרִים אֲשֶׁר מְעֹלָם אֲנָשֵׁי הַשָּׁמַיִם:

### *Bereshit / Genesis 6:1-7*

*6:1 Now it came about, when men began to multiply on the face of the land, and daughters were born to them, 6:2 that the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves, whomever they chose. 6:3 Then the Lord said, 'My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, because he also is flesh; nevertheless his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.' 6:4 The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men, and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown. 6:5 Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. 6:6 The Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. 6:7 The Lord said, 'I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky; for I am sorry that I have made them.'* (NASB)

It is interesting here in the Scriptural account that the wicked people of this generation, they were prideful but the Torah does not say they perished by fire; that wicked generation perished by water. Midrash Tehillim says “as were the people of the generation of the flood, for it is said What time they are cut off, they vanish, in the fire thereof they are consumed out of their place (Job 6:17)” the rabbinic interpretation of the generation of the flood is drawing in parallel with a consuming fire. The people of the generation of the flood were cut off, when the Lord's judgment comes, the wicked will vanish off of the face of the earth and will be no more as if they are consumed out of their place in the fire.

### The tower of Babel

In *Bereshit / Genesis 11:1-9* we read the story of the building of a city and the Tower of Babel. Following the flood event, all of mankind spoke the same language, and formed one community. This community or clan settled permanently in the land of Shinar, not far from the Euphrates river. Here they built a city and a tower of brick and mortar, the purpose of the city and tower was to prevent their scattering abroad and losing their unity. In addition to this, they declared in pride that they will make a great city and a great tower that would reach into heaven and there they could declare a name for themselves.

## ספר בראשית פרק יא

א וַיְהִי כָל-הָאָרֶץ שְׂפָה אַחַת וּדְבָרִים אַחֲדִים: ב וַיְהִי בְנוֹסְעֵם מִקֶּדֶם וַיִּמָּצְאוּ בְקִעָה בְּאֶרֶץ שִׁנְעָר וַיֵּשְׁבוּ שָׁם: ג וַיֹּאמְרוּ אִישׁ אֶל-רֵעֵהוּ הֲבֵה נִלְבְּנָה לְבָנִים וְנִשְׂרָפָה לְשִׂרְפָה וַתְּהִי לָהֶם הַלְּבָנָה לְאֶבֶן וַתַּחֲמֹר הָיָה לָהֶם לַחֲמֹר: ד וַיֹּאמְרוּ הֲבֵה | נִבְנֶה-לָנוּ עִיר וּמִגְדָּל וְרֹאשׁוֹ בַשָּׁמַיִם וְנַעֲשֶׂה-לָנוּ שֵׁם פֶּן-נִפְּוֶץ עַל-פְּנֵי כָל-הָאָרֶץ: ה וַיֵּרֶד יְהוָה לִרְאוֹת אֶת-הָעִיר וְאֶת-הַמִּגְדָּל אֲשֶׁר בָּנוּ בְנֵי הָאָדָם: ו וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה הֵן עַם אֶחָד וְשָׂפָה אַחַת לְכֻלָּם וְזֶה הַחֲלֹם לַעֲשׂוֹת וְעַתָּה לֹא-יִבָּצֵר מֵהֶם כֹּל אֲשֶׁר יִזְמוּ לַעֲשׂוֹת: ז הֲבֵה נִרְדֶּה וְנִבְלֶה נָשָׁם שְׂפָתָם אֲשֶׁר לֹא יִשְׁמְעוּ אִישׁ שְׂפַת רֵעֵהוּ: ח וַיִּפֹּץ יְהוָה אֹתָם מִשָּׁם עַל-פְּנֵי כָל-הָאָרֶץ וַיִּחְדְּלוּ לְבַנֵּת הָעִיר: ט עַל-כֵּן קָרָא שְׁמָהּ בָּבֶל כִּי-שָׁם בָּלַל יְהוָה שְׂפַת כָּל-הָאָרֶץ וּמִשָּׁם הִפְיָצָם יְהוָה עַל-פְּנֵי כָל-הָאָרֶץ

### **Bereshit / Genesis 11:1-9**

*11:1 Now the whole earth used the same language and the same words. 11:2 It came about as they journeyed east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. 11:3 They said to one another, ‘Come, let us make bricks and burn them thoroughly.’ And they used brick for stone, and they used tar for mortar. 11:4 They said, ‘Come, let us build for ourselves a city, and a tower whose top will reach into heaven, and let us make for ourselves a name, otherwise we will be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth.’ 11:5 The Lord came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. 11:6 The Lord said, ‘Behold, they are one people, and they all have the same language. And this is what they began to do, and now nothing which they purpose to do will be impossible for them. 11:7 ‘Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, so that they will not understand one another’s speech.’ 11:8 So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of the whole earth; and they stopped building the city. 11:9 Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of the whole earth; and from there the Lord scattered them abroad over the face of the whole earth. (NASB)*

Studying this short excerpt of Scripture, we learn that these people did not perish by fire. The Midrash states “the people of the Tower of Babel were punished in fire, for it is said And their abundance the fire has consumed (Job 22:20)” that it was their abundance, their possessions, their city, and their tower that perished from the face of the earth because of their pride. We must take care not to be prideful in our possessions and blessings in which God has poured out upon us. Taking pride in our possessions will cause the Lord to take those things from us for the purpose of humbling and repentance. If we are not careful, what we have may disappear as if it has been consumed in the fire.

### **The people of Sodom**

In Parashat Va'era (*Bereshit / Genesis 18:1-22:24*), God had announced to Abraham His determination to destroy the wicked cities of the valley, but promised Abraham to spare Sodom if as few as ten of its inhabitants should be found righteous. There however, failed to be even ten righteous in Sodom, and the Lord rained fire and brimstone upon the entire valley destroying Sodom, Gomorrah, and the other wicked cities in the valley.

## ספר בראשית פרק יט

כב מהר המַלְט שְׂמָהּ כִּי לֹא אוֹכַל לַעֲשׂוֹת דְּבַר עַד-בְּאֶדָּ שְׂמָהּ עַל-כֵּן קָרָא שֵׁם-הָעִיר צוֹעֵר: כג הַשְּׂמֶשׁ יָצָא עַל-הָאָרֶץ וְלוֹט בָּא צֹעֲרָה: כד וַיְהִי הַמָּטֵר עַל-סֹדֶם וְעַל-עֲמֹרָה גִפְרִית וְאִשׁ מֵאֵת יְהוָה מִן-הַשָּׁמַיִם: כה וַיַּהַפֵּךְ אֶת-הָעָרִים הָאֵל וְאֵת כָּל-הַכְּפָר וְאֵת כָּל-יֹשְׁבֵי הָעָרִים וְצִמַח הָאֲדָמָה:

כּו וַתִּבֹט אֶשְׁתּוֹ מֵאַחֲרָיו וַתִּהְיֶי נֹצִיב מְלַח: כּז וַיִּשְׂכַּם אַבְרָהָם בְּבִקְרֵי אֶל-הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר-עָמַד שָׁם אֶת-פְּנֵי יְהוָה: כח וַיִּשְׁקַף עַל-פְּנֵי סֹדֶם וְעַמּוֹרָה וְעַל כָּל-פְּנֵי אֶרֶץ הַכְּפָר וַיֵּרָא וַהֲגִיד עֲלֶיהָ קִיטָר הָאֶרֶץ כְּקִיטָר הַכְּבָשָׁן: כט וַיְהִי בְשַׁחַת אֱלֹהִים אֶת-עָרֵי הַכְּפָר וַיִּזְכֹּר אֱלֹהִים אֶת-אַבְרָהָם וַיִּשְׁלַח אֶת-לוֹט מֵתוֹךְ הַהֶפְכָּה בְּהִפּוֹךְ אֶת-הָעָרִים אֲשֶׁר-יָשַׁב בָּהֶן לוֹט:

***Bereshit / Genesis 19:22-29***

*19:22 'Hurry, escape there, for I cannot do anything until you arrive there.' Therefore the name of the town was called Zoar. 19:23 The sun had risen over the earth when Lot came to Zoar. 19:24 Then the Lord rained on Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven, 19:25 and He overthrew those cities, and all the valley, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground. 19:26 But his wife, from behind him, looked back, and she became a pillar of salt. 19:27 Now Abraham arose early in the morning and went to the place where he had stood before the Lord; 19:28 and he looked down toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the valley, and he saw, and behold, the smoke of the land ascended like the smoke of a furnace. 19:29 Thus it came about, when God destroyed the cities of the valley, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when He overthrew the cities in which Lot lived. (NASB)*

The biblical account of Sodom and Gomorrah reveal that because of these cities wickedness and pride God rained fire down from heaven destroying the places and wiping them off the face of the earth. These people perished from the face of the earth because of their sin; the wicked vanished off of the face of the earth and were no more literally being consumed out of their place in the fire.

Midrash Tehillim 11, Part 5 continues giving men and nations as examples of being destroyed by fire (i) Pharaoh (*Shemot / Exodus*), (ii) Sennecherib (*Isaiah 10:16*), (iii) Nebuchadnezzar (*Daniel 3:22*), (iv) Edom (descendents of Esau, *Bereshit / Genesis*), (v) Gog and Magog (*Ezekiel 39:6*), (vi) Hiram (*Ezekiel 28:18*), and the other nations. Note that Sennacherib was the son of Sargon the 2<sup>nd</sup>, whom he succeeded on the throne of Assyria in 705 – 681 BC. The Biblical account of Sennacherib's siege of Jerusalem begins with the destruction of the Northern Kingdom of Israel and its capital Samaria. According to the Hebrew Bible, the ten northern tribes came to be known as the Ten Lost Tribes, because as recorded in *2 Kings 17*, they were carried off and assimilated into the people of Assyria. *2 Kings 18-19* (see also *2 Chronicles 32:1-23*) details Sennacherib's attack on Judah and Jerusalem. Hezekiah had rebelled against the Assyrians and so they captured all of the towns in Judah. Hezekiah realized his error and sent great tribute to Sennacherib. But the Assyrians nevertheless marched toward Jerusalem. Sennacherib sent his commander with an army to besiege Jerusalem while he himself went to fight with the Egyptians. The supreme commander met with Hezekiah's officials and threatened them to surrender; while hailing insults so the people of the city could hear, blaspheming Judah and particularly the Lord God Almighty. When King Hezekiah heard of this, he tore his clothes and prayed to the Lord in the Holy Temple. Isaiah the prophet told the king that the Lord would defeat the Assyrian army. That night, the Angel of the Lord killed 185,000 Assyrian troops. Jewish tradition maintains that the angel Gabriel (along with Michael in the Targumim) was the angel sent to destroy the Assyrian troops, and that the destruction occurred on Passover night. Sennacherib then returned to Nineveh in disgrace. Some years later, while Sennacherib was worshiping in the temple of his god Nisroch, two of his sons killed him and fled to Armenia. Scholars suggest that *Tehillim / Psalm 46* was composed as a Song of Deliverance that was led by Levite singers and accompanied by the Alamothe (maidens with tambourines) and sung by the inhabitants of Jerusalem after their successful defense of the city from the siege. And so in the biblical account on Sannacherib, he was not destroyed by fire. The Midrash states "for it is said And under his magnificence He will kindle a burning like the burning of a fire (*Isaiah 10:16*). The phrase under his magnificence shows that God consumed Sennacherib with fire from within, but left the magnificence of his outer ap-

parel unburnt because Sennacherib belonged to the family of Shem, as it is said *The sons of Shem, Elam, and Asshur (Bereshit / Genesis 10:22)*, and so, to, was Sisera, for it is said *They fought from heaven, the stars which are fire fought in their paths against Sisera (Judges 5:20)*,” the consuming fire according to the rabbis was that Sennacherib was consumed with fire from within. The Lord burned in the heart of Sennacherib and he was defeated, the Lord come to the rescue of His people, and save them from destruction.

In Midrash Tehillim 11, Part 5 we also read of Hiram. According to the Tanach, Hiram was one of the sons of Bela (see *1 Chronicles 8:5*) and also “Hiram” and “Horam,” king of Tyre. He entered into an alliance with David, and assisted him in building his palace by sending him able workmen, and also gave cedar-trees and fir-trees from Lebanon (*2 Samuel 5:11 and 1 Chronicles 14:1*). After the death of David he entered into a similar alliance with Solomon, and assisted him greatly in building the temple (*1 Kings 5:1, 9:11, and 2 Chronicles 2:3*). He also took part in Solomon’s traffic to the Eastern Seas (*1 Kings 9:27, 10:11, 2 Chronicles 8:18, and 9:10*). He cast the brazen works for Solomon’s temple in clay beds in the valley of Jordan, between Succoth and Zarthan. Here in the Midrash the Rabbis quote from *Ezekiel 28:18*, יח מֶרֶב, 28:18 עֲוֹנֶיךָ בְּעֵינַי רְבִיבִים חֲלָלִים מִקְדָּשֶׁיךָ נֹאֲמָצָא-אֵשׁ מִתּוֹכָךְ הִיא אֲכָלְתָּךְ וְנֹאֲתָנָךְ לְאֵפֶר עַל-הָאָרֶץ לְעֵינַי כָּל-רָאִיִּי: *‘By the multitude of your iniquities, In the unrighteousness of your trade You profaned your sanctuaries. Therefore I have brought fire from the midst of you; It has consumed you, And I have turned you to ashes on the earth In the eyes of all who see you. (NASB)* The Lord provides his deliverances by fire, consuming in the hearts of men, in their possessions, and in all of who they are causing the wicked to perish from the face of the earth. Before we placed our faith in Yeshua the Messiah, we lived in wickedness, in sin. The Lord, in the cleansing blood of the Messiah, redeemed us, transformed us, makes us new creatures, and new creation, and the former self, the works of the flesh, sin, unrighteousness, all of those things that were related to the former life of wickedness have perished from the face of this earth. Just as it says in *Hebrews 8:12*, <sup>12</sup>ἔτι ἴλεως ἔσομαι ταῖς ἀδικίαις αὐτῶν, καὶ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν αὐτῶν οὐ μὴ μνησθῶ ἔτι. 8:12 *‘For I will be merciful to their iniquities, And I will remember their sins no more.’ (NASB)* The Midrash concludes saying “*The Lord will give the children of Israel four cups of deliverance to drink ... This verse does not say deliverance but deliverances, thus implying two cups.*” The Lord indeed will give His children deliverance, the Scriptures reveal the great deliverance God has provided to all peoples, His only Son Yeshua the Messiah.

Midrash Tehillim 11, Part 6 is introduced (the דִּבּוּר הַמְתַּחִּיל, Dibur Hamathil) with the verse “*For the righteous Lord loves a man of righteousness (Tehillim / Psalms 11:7).*” “*Rabbi Judah son of Rabbi Simon said, Every craftsman hates rivals in his craft. Not so the Holy One blessed be He, the righteous Lord loves a man of righteousness.*” In this midrash, the rabbis speak of the righteous ones and that seven companies will attend the Holy One blessed be He. The נִמְשָׁל (Nimshal) expands upon the מִשָּׁל (mashal, parable) discussing a contrast between the seven companies of the righteous ones who attend the Lord and the seven habitations of hell. The rabbis seem to employ symmetry for balance between heaven and hell.

*The first company of the upright will dwell in the presence of the King and behold the face of the King, for it is said The upright will dwell in Your presence (Tehillim / Psalms 140:14), and also the upright will behold His face (Tehillim / Psalms 11:7). The second company will dwell in the house of the King, for it is said Who will ascend into the mountain of the Lord? (Tehillim / Psalms 24:3). The fourth company will dwell in the court of the King, for it is said Happy is the man whom You choose, and bring near, that he may dwell in Your courts (Tehillim / Psalms 65:5). The fifth company will sojourn in the tent of the King, for it is said Lord, who will sojourn in Your tent? (Tehillim / Psalms 15:1). The fifth company will sojourn in the tent of the King, for it is said Who will dwell upon Your holy mountain? (Tehillim / Psalms 24:3). Thus each company will have a dwelling place of its own in the Garden of Eden. (Midrash Tehillim 11, Part 6)*



Over against the righteous, the wicked will have seven habitations in Gehenna (Hell). The book *“Jewish Views of the Afterlife”* by Simcha Paull Raphael, pg. 141, states in the apocryphal literature both Sheol and Gehenna appear interchangeable, in the rabbinic literature Gehenna is the term used most frequently to describe the afterlife realm of punitive retribution. In midrash Tehillim 11, Part 6, similarly to the *Talmud Bavli, Tractate Erubin*, Rabbi Joshua son of Levi lists seven of the original names of Gehenna each of which is based upon a biblical passage. Sheol (שְׂאוֹל, nether-world, *Jonah 2:2*), Abaddon (אַבְדּוֹן, Destruction, *Tehillim / Psalms 88:12*), Tselmavet (צֶלְמוֹת, shadow of death, *Tehillim / Psalms 107:10*), Erets Takhtit (אֶרֶץ תַּחְתִּית, Underworld, *Talmud Bavli, tractate Erubin 19a*), Erets Nesiya (אֶרֶץ נִשְׂיָה, realm of forgetfulness), Gehinnom (גֵּיהֵנוֹם), and Dumah (דּוּמָה, realm of silence, *Midrash Tehillim 11, Part 6*). Note that these seven names are not fixed, other names used are Beer Shakhat (Corruption, *Tehillim / Psalms 16:10*), Bor Shaon (Horrible Pit) or Tit HaYaven (Miry Clay, *Tehillim / Psalms 40:3*). The tradition on Gehenna states that the seven different names come to represent seven different regions within Gehenna, to which the wicked are judiciously dispatched. *“Behold! There are seven habitations for the wicked ... according to their works ...”* (*Midrash Tehillim 11, Part 6*).

The synoptic gospels uses the word “Gehenna” eleven times to describe life reserved for those who are not in the Kingdom of God (*Mark 9:43-48*). Gehenna is a place where both the soul and the body are destroyed (*Matthew 10:28*) in “unquenchable fire” (*Mark 9:43*). Gehenna is also mentioned in the Epistle of James 3:6, (καὶ ἡ γλῶσσα πῦρ, ὁ κόσμος τῆς ἀδικίας, ἡ γλῶσσα καθίσταται ἐν τοῖς μέλεσιν ἡμῶν, ἡ σπιλοῦσα ὄλον τὸ σῶμα καὶ φλογίζουσα τὸν τροχὸν τῆς γενέσεως καὶ φλογιζομένη ὑπὸ τῆς **γεέννης**, 3:6 *And the tongue is a fire, the very world of iniquity; the tongue is set among our members as that which defiles the entire body, and sets on fire the course of our life, and is set on fire by hell. NASB*) It is said that Hell (Gehenna γεέννης) sets the tongue on fire, and the tongue in turn sets on fire the entire “course” of life. The following are a list of references on Gehenna from the Apostolic Gospels.

### List of references is as follows:

- **Matthew 5:22:** “...whoever shall say, “You fool,” shall be guilty enough to go into the, ‘Gehenna.’”
- **Matthew 5:29:** “...it is better for you that one of the parts of your body perish, than for your whole body to be thrown into, ‘Gehenna.’”
- **Matthew 5:30:** “...better for you that one of the parts of your body perish, than for your whole body to go into, ‘Gehenna.’”
- **Matthew 10:28:** “...rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in, ‘Gehenna.’”
- **Matthew 18:9:** “It is better for you to enter life with one eye, than with two eyes to be thrown into the, ‘Gehenna.’”
- **Matthew 23:15:** “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you... make one proselyte...twice as much a child of ‘Gehenna’ as yourselves.”
- **Matthew 23:33:** to the Pharisees, “You serpents, you brood of vipers, how shall you to escape the sentence of, ‘Gehenna’?”
- **Mark 9:43:** “It is better for you to enter life crippled, than having your two hands, to go into, ‘Gehenna,’ into the unquenchable fire.”
- **Mark 9:45:** “It is better for you to enter life lame, than having your two feet, to be cast into, ‘Gehenna.’”
- **Mark 9:47:** “It is better for you to enter the Kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes, to be cast into, ‘Gehenna.’”
- **Luke 12:5:** “...fear the One who, after He has killed has authority to cast into, ‘Gehenna;’”

yes, I tell you, fear Him.”

The meaning and concept of Gehenna come from the Tanach, and it is specifically from *Isaiah 66:23-24* that we learn of Gehenna’s future role for the wicked. The book of Isaiah closes with words on the eternal punishment of the wicked. Yeshua used this text on the eternal punishment of the wicked and identifies Gehenna as the place of suffering in Matthew, Mark, and Luke.

### ספר ישעיה פרק סו

כג וְהָיָה מַדֵּי-חֲדָשׁ בְּחֲדָשׁוֹ וּמַדֵּי שַׁבַּת בְּשַׁבְּתוֹ יָבֹוא כָּל-בְּשָׂר לְהִשְׁתַּחֲוֹת לְפָנַי אָמַר יְהוָה: כד וַיֵּצְאוּ וַיֵּרְאוּ בְּפִגְרֵי הָאֲנָשִׁים הַפְּשָׁעִים בֵּי כִי תוֹלַעְתָּם לֹא תָמוּת וְאֲשָׁם לֹא תִכָּבֵה וְהָיוּ דְרָאוֹן לְכָל-בְּשָׂר:

### *Isaiah 66:23-24*

*66:23 ‘And it shall be from new moon to new moon And from sabbath to sabbath, All mankind will come to bow down before Me,’ says the Lord. 66:24 ‘Then they will go forth and look On the corpses of the men Who have transgressed against Me. For their worm will not die And their fire will not be quenched; And they will be an abhorrence to all mankind.’ (NASB)*

Here, *Isaiah 66:23-24* is clear, in the era of Israel’s restoration, on the “judging of Gehenna” will Be Instituted (*Matthew 23:33 ‘You serpents, you brood of vipers, how will you escape the sentence of hell?’*) In this time the representatives of the nations who will come to Jerusalem, will go forth and see the corpses of the mortals who transgressed the Torah in such a way so as to be subjected to death. Based on Isaiah it may be surmised that the bodies of the wicked will remain unburied, worms will prey upon the corrupting flesh, and fires will always be burning. Mentioned earlier, “Gehenna” appears in the Greek Scriptures twelve times, and Yeshua explicitly identifies Gehenna with *Isaiah 66:23-24* by speaking of it as the place of “unextinguished fire, where their worm is not deceasing and the fire is not going out” (*Mark 9:46*). All whose bodies are destroyed in Gehenna will be raised to be judged at the great white throne, and go into the lake of fire. Gehenna is the capital punishment of the kingdom of God where in *Matthew 10:28* Yeshua declares “*And do not fear those who are killing the body, yet are not able to kill the soul. Yet be fearing Him, rather, Who is able to destroy the soul as well as the body in Gehenna.*”

In Parashat Beshalach, Moshe’s response to the people being afraid of the approaching Egyptian army at the Red Sea was יג וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל-הָעָם אֶל-תִּירְאוּ הַתֵּיִצְבוּ וַיֵּרְאוּ אֶת-יְשׁוּעַת יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר-יַעֲשֶׂה לָכֶם: *14:13 But Moses said to the people, ‘Do not fear! Stand by and see the salvation of the Lord which He will accomplish for you today; for the Egyptians whom you have seen today, you will never see them again forever. (NASB)* Also, in *Tehillim / Psalms 50:23*, we read כג זָבַח תוֹדָה יִכְבְּדֵנִי וְשֵׁם דְּרָךְ אַרְאֶנּוּ בִישַׁע אֱלֹהִים: *50:23 ‘He who offers a sacrifice of thanksgiving honors Me; And to him who orders his way aright I shall show the salvation of God.’ (NASB)* The Scriptures explain to us why it is important to believe in the Lord and His Salvation. The Lord God Almighty sent His Salvation into this world, to save us from sin and the punishment for sin. Yeshua taught His disciples saying <sup>31</sup>Ἐλεγεν οὖν ὁ Ἰησοῦς πρὸς τοὺς πεπιστευκότας αὐτῷ Ἰουδαίους, Ἐὰν ὑμεῖς μείνητε ἐν τῷ λόγῳ τῷ ἐμῷ, ἀληθῶς μαθηταὶ μου ἐστε, <sup>32</sup>καὶ γνώσεσθε τὴν ἀλήθειαν, καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια ἐλευθερώσει ὑμᾶς. “*If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free*” (*John 8:31–32*). We who abide in the Word of God, abide in Yeshua, abide in the truth of the Word, abide in righteousness and justice, the Lord will enable us to not walk in sin and unrighteousness. The Lord will set us free from sin to serve Yeshua, free to be His true disciples, free to accomplish the work He has given us to do. We must commit ourselves to the Lord and to the disciplined study and

application of the inspired Scriptures. Studying the Scriptures, we know that we must place our faith in the Yeshua, God’s Messiah, the living Word of God. This is not simply fire insurance to get out of Gehenna, this is about having a relationship with the Lord. “*Is God walking and has God established his dwelling place in your life so that Vayikra / Leviticus 26:12 (וְהָיִיתִי לָהֶם לְאֱלֹהִים וְהָמָּה יְהוָה-לִּי לְעֵם) has been fulfilled?*” If your answer is not an emphatic “YES” invite the Lord God Almighty into your heart in the Name of Yeshua the Messiah. Come let us pray together.

Heavenly Father,

The Scriptures are clear showing us how faith in You and in Your Messiah Yeshua brings about change in our lives. The Scriptures say that the wicked pursue the poor and afflicted, just like the Saul did before he met Yeshua on the road to Damascus. I ask Lord that You would meet us right here, right now, change everything about our lives that does not bring glory to Your Name. Thank You for Your mercy You show us each day. Lord, help us to search out and destroy the wickedness that may be hidden somewhere in our lives. In Your Son, we have the hope of eternal life. Please write Your Holy Word in our hearts so that we never forget the hope that we have in You and in the blood of Yeshua. Thank You Lord for the words of this Psalm from David’s life. Help us to trust in Yeshua and the work that He did upon the cross to make atonement for our sins. As we continue to live and dedicated our lives to You, help us to walk in righteousness and justice and help us to walk in freedom from sin. Fill us with Your presence Lord and thank You for revealing these truths to our hearts. We praise Your Holy Name and give You all of the honor, and the glory, and the praise forever and ever.

In Yeshua’s (Jesus’) Name I pray! Amen!

Be Blessed in Yeshua, Christ our Messiah!

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הללויה לאדוננו מורנו ורבינו ישוע מלך המשיח לעולם ועד  
Hallelujah for our Lord, our Teacher, our Rabbi,  
“Yeshua” King Messiah forever and ever