

ספר תהילים צה | Tehillim / Psalms 95

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Having the Strength of Faith and Devotion to God's Word

א לכו גִּרְנָנָה לַיהוָה נְרִיעֵה, In this week's study from *Tehillim / Psalms 95:1-11*, the Psalm opens saying, *O come, let us sing for joy to the Lord, Let us shout joyfully to the rock of our salvation.* (NASB) The Lord is described as the rock of our salvation. What is it about the rock that saves? The Psalm continues saying, ב נְקַדְמָה פָּנָיו בַּתּוֹדָה בְּזִמְרוֹת נְרִיעֵ לּוֹ: ג פִּי אֶל גְּדוֹל יְהוָה וּמְלֶךְ גְּדוֹל עַל-כָּל-אֱלֹהִים: ד אֲשֶׁר בְּיָדוֹ מַחְקְרֵי-אָרֶץ וְתוֹעֲפוֹת הָרִים לּוֹ: 95:2 *Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving, Let us shout joyfully to Him with psalms.* 95:3 *For the Lord is a great God And a great King above all gods,* 95:4 *In whose hand are the depths of the earth, The peaks of the mountains are His also.* (NASB) The psalmist calls for us to come before the Lord and give thanks for all that He has done. His power as Lord over all is described as King who is above all gods. Does this statement give credence to the existence of other gods? The Lord is all powerful, drawing a parallel to His creation having power over all the earth, even to its depths. The psalmist draws this parallel saying, ה אֲשֶׁר-לוֹ הַיָּם וְהוּא עָשָׂהוּ וַיִּבְּשֵׂת יַדָּיו יַצְרוּ: ו בָּאוּ נִשְׁתַּחֲוּהוּ, 95:5 *The sea is His, for it was He who made it, And His hands formed the dry land.* 95:6 *Come, let us worship and bow down, Let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.* (NASB) We kneel before the Lord because we recognize the power of God and His ability to save us and to overcome anything, absolutely anything! The psalm continues saying, ז פִּי הוּא אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֶנְחָנוּ עִם מְרַעֲיָתוֹ וְצֹאן יָדוֹ, 95:7 *For He is our God, And we are the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand. Today, if you would hear His voice,* (NASB) This psalm is quoted in *Hebrews 3:15* while it is said, **“TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE, DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS, AS WHEN THEY PROVOKED ME.”** (NASB) The Psalm concludes saying, ח אֶל-תִּקְשׁוּ לְבַבְכֶם כַּמְרִיבָה כִּיּוֹם מָסָה בְּמִדְבָּר: ט אֲשֶׁר נִסּוּנִי, אָבוֹתֵיכֶם בְּחַגְנוּנִי גַם-רָאוּ פְעֹלֵי: י אַרְבָּעִים שָׁנָה | אָקוּט בְּדוֹר וְאָמַר עִם תַּעֲי לְכַב הֵם וְהֵם לֹא-יִדְעוּ דְרָכַי: יא אֲשֶׁר-נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי בְּאֶפֶי אֶם-יִבְאוּ אֶל-מִנְוֹתַי: 95:8 *Do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah, As in the day of Massah in the wilderness,* 95:9 *‘When your fathers tested Me, They tried Me, though they had seen My work.* 95:10 *‘For forty years I loathed that generation, And said they are a people who err in their heart, And they do not know My ways.* 95:11 *‘Therefore I swore in My anger, Truly they shall not enter into My rest.’* (NASB) The key to the psalm is to have a willing heart, and the desire to seek the Lord all the days of our lives.

עברית	Hebrew	ארמי	Aramaic	ελληνικός	Greek
ספר תהלים פרק צה	ספר טוביה פרק צה	א איתון נשבח קדם יהוה ניבב	א איתון נשבח קדם יהוה ניבב	ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 95	95:1 αἶνος ᾠδῆς τῷ Δαυὶδ δεῦτε ἀγαλλιασώμεθα τῷ κυρίῳ ἀλαλάζωμεν τῷ θεῷ τῷ σωτῆρι ἡμῶν 95:2 προφθάσωμεν τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ ἐν ἔξομολογήσει καὶ ἐν ψαλμοῖς ἀλαλάζωμεν αὐτῷ 95:3 ὅτι θεὸς μέγας κύριος καὶ βασιλεὺς μέγας ἐπὶ πάντα τοὺς θεοὺς 95:4 ὅτι ἐν τῇ χειρὶ αὐτοῦ τὰ πέρατα τῆς γῆς καὶ τὰ ὕψη τῶν ὀρέων αὐτοῦ εἰσιν
א לכו גִּרְנָנָה לַיהוָה נְרִיעֵה לְצוֹר יִשְׁעֵנוּ: ב נְקַדְמָה פָּנָיו בַּתּוֹדָה בְּזִמְרוֹת נְרִיעֵ לּוֹ: ג פִּי אֶל גְּדוֹל יְהוָה וּמְלֶךְ גְּדוֹל עַל-כָּל-אֱלֹהִים: ד אֲשֶׁר בְּיָדוֹ מַחְקְרֵי-אָרֶץ וְתוֹעֲפוֹת הָרִים לּוֹ:	א איתון נשבח קדם יהוה ניבב קדם תקיף פורקננא: ב נקדים אפוי בתודתא בתושבחיא ניבב קדמוי: ג ארום אלהא רבא יהוה ומלכא רבא על כל אלהא אלהין: ד די בידיה מתליין תליין פישפושין דארעא ותוקפי רום טוריא די ליה:				

<p>ה אֲשֶׁר-לוֹ הַיָּם וְהוּא עָשָׂהוּ וַיִּבְרָא שֶׁת יָדָיו יִצְרוּ: ו באוּ נִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה וְנִכְרָעָה נִבְרָכָה לְפָנֵי-יְהוָה עֲשֵׂנוּ: ז כִּי הוּא אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֲנַחְנוּ עִם מַרְ- עֵיתוֹ וְצֹאן יָדוֹ הַיּוֹם אִם-בְּקִלּוֹ תִ- שְׁמָעוּ: ח אֶל-תִּקְשׁוּ לְבַבְכֶם כְּמִ- רִיבָה כְּיוֹם מִסָּה בַּמִּדְבָּר: ט אֲשֶׁר נִסּוּנֵי אַבְוֹתֵיכֶם בְּחַגְנוּנֵי גַם-רְאוּ פְעָלָי: י אַרְבַּעִים שָׁנָה אָקוּט בְּדוֹר וְאֶמַר עִם תְּלַעִי לְבַב הֵם וְהֵם לֹא-יִדְעוּ דְרָכָי: יא אֲשֶׁר-נִשְׁבַּב- עֲתִי בְּאֶפְי אִם-יִבְאוּ אֶל-מְנוּחָתִי:</p>	<p>ה די ליה ימא והוא עבד יתיה ויביי- שתא אידוי בריאו: ו איתון ניס- גוד ונגחן נחמיט קדם יהוה דעביד יתנא: ז ארום הוא אלהנא ואנחנא עמיה ועאן רעית אידיה יומא דין אם אין במימריה תקבלון: ח לא תקשון לבכון היך במצותא היך יומא דנסיתון אלהא במדברא: ט די נסיונו יתי אבהתכון בחנו יתי לחוד חמון עובדי: י ארבעין שנין מאסית בדרא דמדברא ואמרית עמא דטעותא בלבהון הינון ואינון לא ידעו אורח: יא דקיימית בת- קוף רוגזי אם אין יעלון לנייה בית מקדשי:</p>	<p>95:5 ὅτι αὐτοῦ ἐστὶν ἡ θάλασσα καὶ αὐτὸς ἐποίησεν αὐτήν καὶ τὴν ξηρὰν αἱ χεῖρες αὐτοῦ ἔπλασαν 95:6 δεῦτε προσκυνήσωμεν καὶ προσπέσωμεν αὐτῷ καὶ κλαύσωμεν ἐναντίον κυρίου τοῦ ποιήσαντος ἡμᾶς 95:7 ὅτι αὐτός ἐστιν ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν καὶ ἡμεῖς λαὸς νομῆς αὐτοῦ καὶ πρόβατα χειρὸς αὐτοῦ σήμερον ἐὰν τῆς φωνῆς αὐτοῦ ἀκούσητε 95:8 μὴ σκληρύνητε τὰς καρδίας ὑμῶν ὡς ἐν τῷ παραπικρασμῷ κατὰ τὴν ἡμέραν τοῦ πειρασμοῦ ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ 95:9 οὐ ἐπείρασαν οἱ πατέρες ὑμῶν ἐδοκίμασαν καὶ εἶδον τὰ ἔργα μου 95:10 τεσσαράκοντα ἔτη προσώχθισα τῇ γενεᾷ ἐκείνῃ καὶ εἶπα ἀεὶ πλανῶνται τῇ καρδίᾳ καὶ αὐτοὶ οὐκ ἔγνωσαν τὰς ὁδοὺς μου 95:11 ὡς ὤμοσα ἐν τῇ ὀργῇ μου εἰ εἰσελεύσονται εἰς τὴν κατάπαυσίν μου</p>
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<p>Tehillim / Psalms 95 95:1 O come, let us sing for joy to the Lord, Let us shout joyfully to the rock of our salvation. 95:2 Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving, Let us shout joyfully to Him with psalms. 95:3 For the Lord is a great God And a great King above all gods, 95:4 In whose hand are the depths of the earth, The peaks of the mountains are His also. 95:5 The sea is His, for it was He who made it, And His hands formed the dry land. 95:6 Come, let us worship and bow down, Let us kneel before the Lord our Maker. 95:7 For He is our God, And we are the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand. Today, if you would hear His voice, 95:8 Do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah, As in the day of Massah in the wilderness, 95:9 'When your fathers tested Me, They tried Me, though they had seen My work. 95:10 'For forty years I loathed that generation, And said they are a people who err in their heart, And they do not know My ways. 95:11 'Therefore I swore in My anger, Truly they shall not enter into My rest.' (NASB)</p>	<p>Toviyah / Psalms 95 95:1 Come, let us sing praise before the Lord, let us shout aloud before the Mighty One of our redemption. 95:2 Let us come before his face with thanksgiving, with hymns let us shout aloud before him. 95:3 For the Lord is the great God, and the great king over every god. 95:4 From whose hand the depths of the earth are suspended, and the strongholds of the mountain height are his. 95:5 His is the sea, and he made it; and his hands created the dry land. 95:6 Come, let us bow down and prostrate ourselves; let us kneel in the presence of the Lord who makes us. 95:7 For he is our God and we are his people and the flock of his hand's pasturing; today, if you accept his word 95:8 Do not harden your heart as in the dispute, as on the day you tested God in the wilderness. 95:9 For your fathers tempted me, they tried me; yet they saw my works. 95:10 Forty years I rejected the generation of the wilderness, and I said, "They are a people with error in their heart, and they do not know my ways." 95:11 For I swore in the harshness of my wrath, "They will not enter the repose of my sanctuary." (EMC)</p>	<p>Psalmoi / Psalms 95 The praise of a Song by David. 95:1 Come, let us exult in the Lord; let us make a joyful noise to God our Saviour. 95:2 Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise to him with psalms. 95:3 For the Lord is a great God, and a great king over all gods: for the Lord will not cast off his people. 95:4 For the ends of the earth are in his hands; and the heights of the mountains are his. 95:5 For the sea is his, and he made it: and is hands formed the dry land. 95:6 Come, let us worship and fall down before him; and weep before the Lord that made us. 95:7 For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. 95:8 To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, according to the day of irritation in the wilderness: 95:9 where your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works. 95:10 Forty years was I grieved with this generation, and said, They do always err in their heart, and they have not known my ways. 95:11 So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest. (LXX)</p>
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In this week's study from *Tehillim / Psalms 95:1-11*, the Psalm opens saying, אֲלֹהֵינוּ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ לְיְהוָה נִרְיָעָה, *95:1 O come, let us sing for joy to the Lord, Let us shout joyfully to the rock of our salvation. (NASB)* The Lord is described as the rock of our salvation. What is it about the Rock that saves that we find throughout the Scriptures? Rabbi Yaakov comments upon salvation (ישועה) in the following way:

מעניי הישועה - רב יעקב משה חרל"פ - ערכה של הצפיה לישועה עמ' י"א
הצפיה לישועה איננה רק על העתיד, אלא גם בהווה- לצפות לכל שעה שאפשר שתופיע בה הגאולה, לזאת, גם זה בכלל הצפיה לישועה, להכיר ולהאמין כי ראויים המה ישראל להגאל בכל שעה ושעה, שאף אם רבים הם הלקויים מצד החוץ, טהורים ונקיים הם מצד הפנים.

The yearning for salvation isn't only about the future, but also in the present - to scout each hour that the redemption could come. Thus, this is also included in the yearning for salvation: to recognize and to believe that Israel is worthy of being redeemed at any and every moment, that even if the defects are numerous on the outside, they are pure and clean on the inside.

Rabbi Yaakov states that salvation isn't only about the future, it is also about the present. This is the perspective with regard to the Rock that saves, the Rock is unmoving which brings with it both a present day and future expectation of security. In a similar manner, the Lord God in heaven is our Rock, He is unmoving, and we have the security of both a present day and future hope because of the Lord's unmoving and unchanging nature. Rabbi Yaakov believes that Israel is worthy of salvation from her enemies regardless of the number of sins she has on the outside, saying that she is clean on the inside. This draws in the Torah concept of the "circumcision of the heart" such as what the Apostle Paul wrote in *Romans 2:29. (Romans 2:27 And he who is physically uncircumcised, if he keeps the Law, will he not judge you who though having the letter of the Law and circumcision are a transgressor of the Law? 2:28 For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh. 2:29 But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God. NASB)* Paul is calling upon a very Torah centric teaching referring to having a pure heart that is separated unto God. These words of Paul to the Romans may be confusing to the person who does not study the Torah and the Tanach annually regarding circumcision. Paul relates circumcision to not just an outward sign of being set apart unto God. If the heart is sinful, then physical circumcision is of no avail. His conclusion is that a circumcised body and a sinful heart are at odds with one another. Paul goes on to discuss how the Holy Spirit of God is able to purify the heart, to work in our lives drawing us back to God's ways according to His Torah and thereby setting us apart unto the Lord God in heaven. Ultimately, a person's heart must change. Paul calls this change "circumcision of the heart" just as the Torah describes the circumcised heart as it is related to the context of obedience and/or disobedience to the command. The Lord has always wanted His people to have a newness of life that is centered in a way of living that is governed by one's love for Him, to know Him and to follow Him, just as Jeremiah said, "Circumcise yourselves to the LORD, circumcise your hearts, you men of Judah and people of Jerusalem, or my wrath will break out and burn like fire because of the evil you have done" (*Jeremiah 4:4*). This is then related to repentance and the inward change to be right with the Lord. These are the things Yeshua the Messiah taught us to do by example (*Matthew 5:17*) and the manner in which we are made right with the Lord, beginning with the changed of our hearts by our faith in the Messiah (*John 3:16, Ephesians 2:8-9*). It is in these things that we are made joyful, in the manner in which the Lord works in our lives to save us. This is why our salvation is not simply a future thing to be attained, but is also a present day reality. In *Vayikra / Leviticus 23*, we are given reason for celebrating the salvation of God.

ויקרא כ"ג:ל"ט-מ"ג

(לט) אך בחמשה עשר יום לחודש השביעי באספכם את תבואת הארץ תחגו את חג יהוה שבועת ימים ביום הראשון שבתון וביום השמיני שבתון. (מ) ולקחתם לכם ביום הראשון פרי עץ הדר כפת תמרים וענף עץ עבת וערבי נחל ושמתם לפני יהוה אלהיכם שבועת ימים. (מא) וחגתם אתו חג ליהוה שבועת ימים בשנה חקת עולם לדרתיכם בחודש השביעי תחגו אתו. (מב) בפסח תשבבו שבועת ימים כל האזרח בישראל ישבו בפסח. (מג) למען ידעו דרתיכם כי בפסח הושבתי את בני ישראל בהוציאי אותם מארץ מצרים אני יהוה אלהיכם.

Vayikra / Leviticus 23:39-43

23:39 Mark, on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered-in the yield of your land, you shall observe the festival of the Eternal [to last] seven days; a complete rest on the first day, and a complete rest on the eighth day. 23:40 On the first day you shall take the product of the hadar trees, branches of palm trees, boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook, and you shall rejoice before the Eternal your God seven days. 23:41 You shall observe it as a festival of the Eternal for seven days in the year; you shall observe it in the seventh months a law for all time, throughout the ages. 23:42 You shall dwell in booths seven days; all citizens in Israel shall dwell in booths; 23:43 in order that future generations may know that I made the Israelite people dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am the Eternal your God.

The salvation of the Lord, as it is understood in the present day reality of salvation according to Judaism, is found in the mitzvah on the in-gathering of the grain, and the festival of Succot. The Lord is the One who brings the rains and causes our crops to grow. He is the One who works in our hearts to draw us back to Himself, in worship, adoration, and praise. He is the One who protects us from our enemies, and this is the reason the psalm opens saying, *לכו נרננה ליהוה נריעה לצור ישענו: 95:1 O come, let us sing for joy to the Lord, Let us shout joyfully to the rock of our salvation. (NASB)*

Maimonides has the following to say according to his Mishneh Torah.

משנה תורה, הלכות שביתת יום טוב ו'כ

(כ) כשאדם אוכל ושותה ושמח ברגל לא ימשך ביין ובשחוק וקלות ראש ויאמר שכל מי שיוסיף בזה ירבה במצות שמחה. שהשכרות והשחוק הרבה וקלות הראש אינה שמחה אלא הוללות וסכנות ולא נצטוינו על ההוללות והסכלות אלא על השמחה שיש בה עבודת יוצר הכל שנאמר תחת אשר לא עבדת את ה' אלהיך בשמחה ובטוב לבב מרב כל. הא למדת שהעבודה בשמחה. ואי אפשר לעבוד את השם לא מתוך שחוק ולא מתוך קלות ראש ולא מתוך שכרות.

Mishneh Torah, Rest on a Holiday 6:20

When a person eats, drinks, and celebrates on a festival, he should not let himself become overly drawn to drinking wine, mirth, and levity, saying "whoever indulges in these activities more is increasing his observance of the mitzvah of rejoicing." For drunkenness, profuse mirth, and levity are not rejoicing; they are frivolity and foolishness. And we were not commanded to indulge in frivolity or foolishness, but rather in rejoicing that involves the service of the Creator of all existence. Thus [Deuteronomy 28:47] states, "Because you did not serve the Eternal, your God, with happiness and a glad heart, and with an abundance of prosperity." This teaches us that service [of God] involves joy. And it is impossible to truly serve God while in the midst of levity, frivolity, or drunkenness.

Maimonides warns about the kind of celebration we should be involved in before the Lord, to limit food and drink, and to focus upon our service before the Lord, to study God's Word, and to be happy in the abundance

that He has provided for us. It is impossible to truly serve the Lord God in Joy while living in the midst of levity, frivolity, or drunkenness.

Rashbam states that God's strength is in the mountains.

Rashbam on Numbers 24:8, Part 1

ותועפות הרים לו 95:4, *strength, as in Psalms 95:4*, “*He possesses the strength of mountains.*”

What does it mean that God's strength is that of the mountains, as it pertains to our shouting for joy to the Rock of our salvation? The reasonable conclusion is the mountains are unmovable and therefore by similarity, the strength of God is also unmovable. A solid foundation and a solid wall has the capability of saving lives during war. The parallel is that the Lord God in heaven is our solid foundation and unmoving wall.

The Psalm continues saying, ב נְקַדְמָה פָּנָיו בְּתוֹדָה בְּזִמְרוֹת נְרִיעַ לוֹ: ג כִּי אֵל גָּדוֹל יְהוָה וּמֶלֶךְ גָּדוֹל עַל-כָּל-,
:לוֹ: ד אֲשֶׁר בְּיָדוֹ מְהַקְרִי-אֶרֶץ וְתוֹעֲפוֹת הָרִים לוֹ: 95:2 אֱלֹהִים: ד
Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving, Let us shout joyfully to Him with psalms. 95:3 For the Lord is a great God And a great King above all gods, 95:4 In whose hand are the depths of the earth, The peaks of the mountains are His also. (NASB) The psalmist calls for us to come before the Lord and give thanks for all that He has done. His power, as Lord over all, is described as “*King who is above all gods.*” Does this statement give credence to the existence of other gods? Similarly, this draws to memory the Scripture from *Devarim / Deuteronomy 10:17*.

Devarim / Deuteronomy 10:17

10:17 *‘For the Lord your God is the God of gods and the Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God who does not show partiality nor take a bribe. (NASB, יז כִּי יְהוָה*
אֱלֹהֵיכֶם הוּא אֱלֹהֵי הָאֱלֹהִים וְאֲדֹנֵי הָאֲדֹנִים הָאֵל הַגָּדֹל הַגִּבֹּר וְהַנּוֹרָא אֲשֶׁר לֹא-יִשָּׂא פָנִים וְלֹא יִקַּח
:שָׂחָד)

The question then is, “*What does it mean that God is the God of gods and Lord of lords?*” Does this give credence to the existence of other gods? We know there is only one Lord and God over all, the Scriptures clearly describe the Lord God in heaven as the one true God. Sometimes however, the Scriptures reference other gods and lords. For example, in *Devarim / Deuteronomy 10:17* the Lord is described as above the other gods and lords. The emphasis is on Lord God's supremacy and His greatness and might, as being strong and unmovable as the mountains. When we read the Scriptures that say the Lord is God of gods, this is in reference to the Lord God of Israel who is more powerful and greater than any of the so called gods of the nations. The verse does not teach the existence of other gods, but that the gods of the nations are only wood and stone, and cannot speak, hear, or see. Rather, the Lord God of Israel says, “*I am the LORD, and there is no other; apart from me there is no God*” (*Isaiah 45:5*). The prophet Isaiah also says in *Isaiah 43:11* ‘*I, even I, am the Lord, And there is no savior besides Me. 43:12 ‘It is I who have declared and saved and proclaimed, And there was no strange god among you; So you are My witnesses,’ declares the Lord, ‘And I am God. 43:13 ‘Even from eternity I am He, And there is none who can deliver out of My hand; I act and who can reverse it?’ (NASB)* The Lord alone is worthy of worship (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 10:21*), idols have no power, “*All the gods of the nations are worthless*” (*1 Chronicles 16:26, Tehillim / Psalm 96:5*). *Tehillim / Psalm 97:7* adds, “*All who worship images are put to shame, those who boast in idols.*” These and many other passages note that there is only one God where to worship any other god is an exercise in futility. The term “*Lord of lords*” is a reference to God's greatness over and above all other leaders or anyone who holds a place of authority and power. In the Apostolic Writings, the phrase “*Lord of lords*” is used also in reference to Yeshua the Messiah. Paul teaches about Yeshua to Timothy in *1 Timothy 6:15* saying “*he who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords.*” (*ESV*) *Revelation 17:14* also speaks of Yeshua's return, saying, “*He is Lord of lords and King of kings.*” *Revelation 19:16* also adds, “*On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: king of kings and lord of lords.*” It is interesting in the title “*Lord*

of lords” we are given a description of the unique power of God which provides insight into the nature of His Messiah as well. The Lord God of Israel, our Father in heaven is the One called “*Lord of lords*” in *Devarim / Deuteronomy 10:17* and the Apostolic Writings title the Son of God (Yeshua the Messiah) as the one having authority and power over all speaking of him also as the King of kings and Lord of lords. The Lord God in heaven is powerful, and so is His Messiah Yeshua. This is why in the Acts of the Apostles, we are told in *Acts 4:12* ‘*And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.*’ (NASB)

Saying the Lord is all powerful draws a parallel to His creation and His having power over all the earth, even to its depths. The psalmist draws in this context saying, ה אֲשֶׁר-לוֹ הַיָּם וְהוּא עָשָׂהוּ וַיִּבְרָא יְדֵיו יִצְרוּ: 1, 95:5 *The sea is His, for it was He who made it, And His hands formed the dry land. 95:6 Come, let us worship and bow down, Let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.* (NASB) We kneel before the Lord because we recognize the power of God and His ability to save us and to overcome anything, absolutely anything! Note how the rabbis relate the Lord, His power to create and form the dry lands, to our worship and adoration of the Lord, our bowing down and kneeling before Him, our Maker.

Ein Yaakov on the Talmud Bavli Ketubot 1:1

KETHUBOTH (Fol. 5) Bar Kapara expounded: “Great are the acts of the righteous, even more so than the act of creating heavens and earth, for concerning the act of [creating] heavens and earth it is written (Is. 48, 13) My hand also hath laid the foundation of the earth, and My right hand spanned the heavens; but concerning the acts of the righteous it is written (Ex. 15:17) The place, O Lord, which Thou hast wrought for Thy residence, the sanctuary, O Lord, which Thy hands have established.” An objection was raised by a certain Babylonian whose name was R. Chiya (Ps. 95:5) And whose hands (in plural) have formed the dry land. [Hence also in creation both hands were employed ?] “However, it is written Yado (his hand),” came the reply. But it is written Yatzaru (they formed). Whereupon R. Nachman b. Isaac explained that this refers to the fingers, as it is written (Ib. 8, 4) When I behold the heavens, the work of Thy fingers. Another objection was raised (Ib. 19, 2) The heavens relate the story of God; and the expanse telleth of the works of His hands. The passage means thus : What tells the important work of the righteous? The expanse. And by what means? Through the rains.

Akeidat Yitzchak 15:2

Bar Kapparah, in Ketuvot 5 explained that the deeds of the righteous are greater than the creation of heaven and Earth. It is written “Also My hand set the foundations of the earth, and My right hand spanned the heavens.” Concerning the deeds of the righteous however, it is written “the sanctuary of G’d which Your hands (pl) have established.” (Exodus 15:17) A Babylonian by the name of Rabbi Chiyah objected, saying that it is written in Psalms 95:5 “His hands have fashioned the land masses.” Rabbi Nachman explained that this refers to His fingers, since it says “when I behold the heavens, the work of Your fingers.” (Psalms 8:4) Another objection was raised; it says “the heavens proclaim the glory of G’d and the expanse of the sky, the work of His hands. (Psalms 19:2) The passage means “what tells the important work of the righteous? the skies. By what means? By means of the rainfall.”

Ein Yaakov opens with the works of righteousness and states that the work of righteousness is greater than the act of creating the heavens and the earth. The rabbis argue over this interpretation, and conclude that the creation directs us to the works of righteousness in the expanse, through the rains. This is the logical conclusion based upon Parashat Bekhukotai (*Vayikra / Leviticus 26*). Living our lives for the Lord God in heaven, to walk in His statutes and commandments brings forth his blessing and that blessing is found in the way of rainfall. Akeidat Yitzchak follows with the same interpretation on the creation directing us to

understand from the beginning the Lord sought for us to walk righteously before Him. This draws with it a very important concept found in Paul's letter to the Ephesians, according to *Ephesians 2:1-16*.

Ephesians 2:1-16

2:1 And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, 2:2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. 2:3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. 2:4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 2:5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 2:6 and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 2:7 so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. 2:8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; 2:9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. 2:10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them. 2:11 Therefore remember that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called 'Uncircumcision' by the so-called 'Circumcision,' which is performed in the flesh by human hands 2:12 remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. 2:13 But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. 2:14 For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, 2:15 by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace, 2:16 and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity. (NASB)

Note how Paul speaks of being dead in trespasses and sin being described as our former ways that following the way of the world, which is the spirit of disobedience that is paralleled to the evil spirits which are said to be working in the sons of disobedience. Paul is describing those who do not seek the Lord God in heaven or His Messiah Yeshua. They are sons of the evil one who was disobedient from the beginning, and such persons have a spirit within them that walks in the ways of disobedience, ungodliness, and wickedness. He describes this as the lust of the flesh, the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and that those who live in this way are the children of wrath. Paul then says that God through His mercy and because of His great love, saved us in the Messiah (Christ) and raised us up with Him and seated us in heavenly places. The idea is that our Father has raised us up out of the world, He has separated us from the deadness of living according to the flesh. This raising up was not based upon our works, so that we might boast. Paul's point is that in this new position the Lord has placed us in the Messiah, is to cause us to leave our former ways. He clarifies this saying *2:10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works (maasim tovim), which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them. (NASB)* The Lord has worked in our lives, raising us up, we are His craftsmanship, we are created in the image of the Messiah for good works (maasim tovim). Paul parallels the creation of God with maasim tovim, the works of righteousness. He goes on to say that the non-Jewish person was formerly separate, but now in the blood of the Messiah has been drawn near. Paul concludes in *Ephesians 2:13-16* of this enmity of the flesh with the Torah. The flesh does not want to obey God's Word, as Paul describes previously as trespasses and sin, the lust of the flesh, the desires of the flesh and of the mind. The enmity between the flesh and the Torah is related to this spirit of disobedience Paul is speaking of, and our desire to live for ourselves as opposed to living for the Lord in heaven. Paul then describes the amazing thing that God has done in our lives, that is paralleled to the creative process He is working in our lives in the Messiah Yeshua. He says, *2:15 by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is*

the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace, (NASB) The Lord has caused the flesh which was once at enmity with the Torah, to become at peace with the Torah command. The Lord has enabled and empowered His people to live what we were created for maasim tovim (good works). Paul is teaching a Torah centric theology here. He describes this as 2:16 and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity. (NASB) Note in Ephesians 2:15, Paul says making the two into one new man. He is speaking of the individual, and of the community of believers. The Lord has empowered us to overcome sin and to live a victorious life, to find Joy in the Torah of God, and to be joined with Israel in our service to God. Therefore, Paul is writing in a very rabbinic fashion, paralleling the creation of God and works of righteousness, the very thing we were created for from since the beginning, of the power of God which enables us to live for the Lord according to His Torah, and the Joy of being a part of the family of God as adopted sons of Israel.

The rabbis go on to describe these things in the following way:

Pesikta Rabbati 6:1

Another explanation. “And all the work that king Solomon had wrought in the house of the Lord was finished.” (Melachim I 7:51) What does ‘all the work’ mean? It was built by itself, rising and floating up – thus it does not say when the house was built, but rather “And the house, when it was in building...” (Melachim I 6:7) “...was built of stone finished at the quarry (masa)...” (ibid.) What does ‘finished at the quarry’ (masa nivne) mean? R’ Brechia said: the stone picked itself up (nosah atzma), rose up and was built by itself. This is what Shlomo said in his song “I have surely built You a house to dwell in...” (Melachim I 8:13) He says ‘I have surely built’, meaning ‘I built a building and the stones rose up and flew into place themselves’. If you are shocked that the Holy One would do such a thing for a single righteous person, “And a stone was brought and placed on the mouth of the pit...” (Daniel 6:18) And where did they get a rock in Bavel? Our Rabbis said that it rolled all the way from the land of Israel and came in an instant. So if the Holy One did such a thing for flesh and blood, are you surprised that He would do so for the building of a house to the Holy One?

Shney Luchot HaBrit Terumah, Torah Ohr 109

This is similar to the reply Elijah is quoted to have given the person who questioned him about the date of the redemption. He told his questioner: היום, אם בקולו תשמעו, “This very day, if you will hearken to His voice” (Psalms 95:6). This is the sentiment G’d expresses through Jeremiah 31:8 when He describes Himself as הייתי לישראל לאב, “I am always prepared to be a true father of Israel, just as I used to be.” This is the reason the Midrash quotes only the half of the verse which speaks about Israel building a Sanctuary for G’d, i.e. hearkening to His voice. The remaining difficulty is that since this verse speaks about the construction of the Tabernacle, why does the Torah not describe it as such and prefers to call it מקדש?

Chofetz Chaim Preface 4

And, in truth, not against Him (Gd forbid) is our plaint, but against ourselves; for it [the redemption] is not beyond His powers, viz. (Isaiah 59:1-2): “Behold, the L-rd’s hand is not too short to save, and His ear is not too heavy to hear. But your sins have made a separation between you and your G-d, and your transgressions have hid [His] face from you, from hearing.” And we find (viz. Sanhedrin 98a) that in the days of R. Yehoshua ben Levi he was told (viz. Tehillim 95:6) that the Messiah would come “today, if you hearkened to His voice” — even though the time of the exile decreed for Israel (one thousand years, corresponding to the one thousand year “day” of the Holy One Blessed be He, had not yet passed [viz. Chida, Petach Einyayim, Sanhedrin, Ibid.]) In spite of this, the power of repentance would have

annulled the decree. How much more so, more than eight hundred years after the end of that [one-thousand-year] “day”, [should the Messiah come if we repented]! The fault is ours alone — that with our many sins we do not allow Him to repose His Shechinah in our midst.

The Peskita Rabbati 6:1 speaks of the building of the Solomon’s Temple as it is connected to the Psalm which says, באו נִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה וְנִכְרָעָה וְנִבְרָכָה לְפָנֵי-יְהוָה עַשְׂנוּ: 95:6 *Come, let us worship and bow down, Let us kneel before the Lord our Maker. (NASB)* The idea is that the Temple was built by itself in the sense that the Lord God has created the foundation stone, where the stone miraculously picked itself up and was built by itself from the quarry. The rabbis say that the stones picked themselves up and flow into place, all for the sake of one righteous person. A parallel to Daniel and the rock that covered the pit, the rabbis say the stone rolled all the way from Israel, drawing us consistently back to the Land and to the people. This sounds a lot like what Paul was describing to the Ephesians. Through the mercy of God, He has done something miraculous, building up within us upon the foundation stone of Yeshua the Messiah which the Lord God in heaven sent in a miraculous event. When we place our faith in God’s Messiah, these foundation stones fly into place and assemble themselves, all by the power of God, and both our lives and our bodies become a sanctuary, a place of worship to bring glory to God, and to function as both the rabbis and Paul writes that from the beginning we were created for maasim tovim (good works), the good works of righteousness.

Sheny Lichot Habrit speaks of the day of redemption, which is connected to listening and hearing the voice of God, which is synonymous to being obedient to His word. They conclude with a question on the Mikdash (mikdash) masculine (plural indefinite מִקְדָּשִׁים, singular construct מִקְדָּשׁ, plural construct מִקְדָּשִׁים) meaning a consecrated thing or place, especially, a palace, sanctuary, the hallowed part, holy place, or sanctuary. The rabbis question why the Temple is called “*This very day, if you will hearken to His voice*” and yet it is referred to as the Mikdash? The reason may be found in the interpretation on the body becoming a sanctified place in the Messiah Yeshua, to be a sanctuary for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit of God, and a place where many maasim tovim are performed. Note that the body becoming a sanctuary does not do away with the Temple in Jerusalem.

The commentary Chofetz Chaim also speaks of the redemption of God and His ability to save His people and to hear their prayers. The rabbis say our sins separate us from the Lord, and that the Messiah would come today if we would listen to His (God’s) voice. Note the parallel to the teaching found in the Apostolic Writings. If we place our faith in the Messiah Yeshua, he will come to dwell in our hearts, he will come today, immediately, and redemption will be found Today, right now, instantaneously! These concepts found in the Apostolic Writings are very rabbinic, and may easily be derived from a Jewish and rabbinic context. Again the rabbis are drawing upon the concept of “*today, if you hearkened to His voice*” and the power of repentance which annuls the spiritual consequence of violating the Torah command. Our sins cause his Shechinah glory to leave, and so we are called to repentance and obedience, turning our lives back to the Lord God and His ways. This is exactly what the psalmist is trying to say as he continues in his Psalm saying, כִּי הוּא אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאַנְחָנוּ עִם מְרִעִיתוֹ וְצֹאן יָדוֹ הַיּוֹם אִם-בְּקִלּוֹ תִשְׁמָעוּ: 95:7 *For He is our God, And we are the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand. Today, if you would hear His voice, (NASB)* This psalm is quoted in *Hebrews 3:15* while it is said, “**TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE, DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS, AS WHEN THEY PROVOKED ME.**” (NASB) The position we find ourselves in with regard to these Scriptures is the hardening of the heart. Have you ever found yourself in a position where you know you should be feeling something, but don’t? You know what the Scriptures say, but maybe your heart doesn’t feel the way Scripture says it should. Similar to how calluses toughen our skin’s exterior to numb physical sensation, we have the ability to build walls around our hearts that prevent us from being in tune with the emotions that are supposed to lead us towards the Lord and which may also hinder the role of the Spirit in our lives to make changes in our lives. The hardness of the heart is a very important question we should be asking ourselves daily because it can have devastating consequences in the long term. *Mishley / Proverbs 4:23* states “*Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life.*” The Scriptures teach us the condition of our heart will determine how our lives will turn out. For example, if a person

has unresolved anger, it is highly likely he or she will become an angry person who does angry things and lashes out at others and hold long term grudges. Therefore, it is very important for us today to search our hearts, and to listen to the voice of God through His word, and change our lives to obey His word. Seek the Lord God our Father in heaven in the name of His Messiah Yeshua, and ask for help and the empowering of the Holy Spirit to move and work in your life in order to bring glory to His Name! This is what the Scriptures speak of concerning who we are, and what God expects from us and our lives.

Tehillim / Psalms 95 concludes saying, אֲשֶׁר נִסּוּנִי ט אֶל-תִּקְשׁוּ לְבַבְכֶם כְּמַרְיָבָה כַּיּוֹם מִסָּה בַּמִּדְבָּר: ז אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם בְּחַגְנוּנִי גַם-רָאוּ פְעָלַי: י אַרְבָּעִים שָׁנָה | אָקוּט בְּדוֹר וְאִמַּר עִם תַּעֲיִ לִבָּב הֵם וְהֵם לֹא-יִדְעוּ דְרָכַי: יא אֲשֶׁר-: 95:8 *Do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah, As in the day of Massah in the wilderness,* 95:9 *‘When your fathers tested Me, They tried Me, though they had seen My work.* 95:10 *‘For forty years I loathed that generation, And said they are a people who err in their heart, And they do not know My ways.* 95:11 *‘Therefore I swore in My anger, Truly they shall not enter into My rest.’ (NASB)* Ein Yaakov commentary on the Talmud Bavli Sanhedrin 11 has the following to say concerning the generation of the wilderness.

Ein Yaakov on Sanhedrin 11:129

The generation of the desert has no share, etc. Our Rabbis were taught: The generation of the desert had no share in the world to come, as it is written (Num. 14) In the wilderness shall they be spent, etc., i.e., in the wilderness, refers to this world ; and therein shall they die, refers to the world to come, and it is also written (Ps. 95:11) So that I swore in My wrath, that they should not enter into My rest. Thus says R. Akiba. R. Eliezer, however, says: “They have a share in the world to come, as it is said (Ib. 50, 5) Gather unto Me My pious servants. But how shall the verse I swore in My wrath be explained? I retract from it because it was sworn while I was in anger.” R. Joshua b. Karcha says: “The verse cited by R. Eliezer was said only concerning the future generations. Gather together unto Me My pious servants, refers to the righteous who are to be found in every generation. Who make a covenant, refers to Chaniah, Mishael, and Azariah, who delivered themselves to [be thrown into] the kiln. Sacrifice, refers to R. Akiba and his colleagues, who had delivered themselves to be slain because of the words of the Torah.” R. Simon b. Menasia says: “They (the generation of the desert), will have a share in the world to come, as it is said (Isa. 35:10) And come to Zion with song.” Rabba b. Chana said in the name of R. Jochanan : “R. Akiba has departed from his [usual] kindness (i.e., his harsh opinion does not agree with hirality shown elsewhere), for it is said (Jer. 2:2) I remember unto thee the kindness of thy youth, the love of thy espousals, thy going after Me in the wilderness, through a land that is not sown. Now since we see that even their descendants will benefit from their reward, how much more so they themselves!”

Ein Yaakov states that the generation of the wilderness has no share in the Olam Haba, and that the wilderness refers to this world and its desires. The Scriptures call the people stiff necked (*Shemot / Exodus 32:9, Acts 7:51*) hard, and rebellious. The pious ones are referred to those who offer their lives up in service to the Lord, as “*Chananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, who delivered themselves to [be thrown into] the kiln.*” Note the rabbis say they delivered themselves, where Scripture states it was the Lord God in heaven who delivered them. Why do they say they delivered themselves? The concept here is that they were willing to deliver themselves up to be killed for the sake of God’s word. They humbled themselves, they stood for truth and life with God’s help. So in essence, by their faith they were delivered. There is a truth to the statement that “*Chananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, who delivered themselves to [be thrown into] the kiln.*” Do you have that kind of faith and devotion to God’s Word in your life today? I hope and pray that all of God’s people would lay down their lives for the sake of truth, and life in the Messiah Yeshua and faith and devotion to God’s word.

The Mishnah Megillah is the tenth Tractate of Mishnah in the Order Moed. It and its Gemara deal with

the laws of Purim and offers exegetical understandings to the Book of Esther. The Megillah also includes laws concerning the public reading of the Torah and other communal synagogue practices. The Megillah also has the following to say concerning the righteous and the wicked.

Mishnah Megillah 17b:52

And when the transgressors have disappeared, the horn of the righteous will be exalted, as it is written, “All the horns of the wicked also will I cut off, but the horns of the righteous shall be exalted” (Psalms 95:11). And “righteous converts” are included with the righteous, as it says, “Before the hoary head rise up, and honor the face of the elder”, and the text goes on, “And if a stranger sojourns with you” (Leviticus 19:32).

The Mishnah Megillah speaks of when the Lord causes the wicked to perish, the righteous will flourish or raise up. The Mishnah also speaks of “righteous converts” who are included with the righteous, indicating that the Lord is actively seeking those who formerly were unrighteous to turn from their unrighteousness and towards Him for salvation from their sins. The key to the psalm is to have a willing heart, and the desire to seek the Lord all the days of our lives.

Devarim / Deuteronomy 4:29

4:29 But from there you will seek the LORD your God, and you will find Him if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul. (NKJV)

1 Chronicles 16:10-11

16:10 Glory in His holy name; Let the hearts of those rejoice who seek the LORD! 16:11 Seek the LORD and His strength; Seek His face evermore! (NKJV)

1 Chronicles 28:9

28:9 As for you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve Him with a loyal heart and with a willing mind; for the LORD searches all hearts and understands all the intent of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will cast you off forever. (NKJV)

Hebrews 11:6

11:6 But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. (NKJV)

Again, the key to the psalm and a major theme found throughout Scripture is to have a willing heart, and the desire to seek the Lord all the days of our lives. Let's Pray!

Rabbinic Commentary

The Rabbinic Commentary (Midrash) on *Tehillim / Psalms 95* has 3 parts. Reading through the Midrash we will be looking at Part 1, 2, and 3. Let's begin by outlining *Midrash Tehillim Chapter 95, Parts 1, 2, and 3*.

Outline of Midrash Tehillim / Psalms, Chapter 95, Part 1, 2, and 3

Part 1

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the **דיבור המתהיל** (Dibur Hamathil) saying, “*O come, let us sing unto the Lord; let us shout for joy to the Rock of our salvation (Tehillim / Psalms 95:1).*”

- The פתיחתא (Petihta) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “Elsewhere, this is what Scriptures says, Sing, O daughter of Zion, shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem (Zephaniah 3:14).”
- The משל (mashal) “the parable,” goes on to explain the פתיחתא (Petihta), the rabbis open with a question about what will cause Jerusalem to shout for joy?
- The נמשל (Nimshal) “expansion on the parable” expands upon the משל (mashal), the rabbis say rejoicing will come with the downfall of the wicked.
- The Concluding phrase says, “Let us come before His presence with avowal (Tehillim / Psalms 95:2). Avowal of faith is greater than offerings. So Jonah said, But I will sacrifice unto You and the voice of avowal (Jonah 2:10).”

Part 2

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) saying, “For the Lord is a great God, and a great king above all gods (Tehillim / Psalms 95:3).”
- The פתיחתא (Petihta) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “Are there other gods then? Is it not written, See now that I, even I, am He, and there is no god with Me (Devarim / Deuteronomy 32:39)?”
- The משל (mashal) “the parable,” goes on to explain the פתיחתא (Petihta), the rabbis open with a statement that there is no god beside the Lord God in heaven.
- The נמשל (Nimshal) “expansion on the parable” expands upon the משל (mashal), the rabbis expand upon the mashal with examples on how the Lord is all powerful and how there is none like Him.
- The Concluding phrase says, “Rabbi Levi taught, if the children of Israel kept but one shabat as it out to be kept, they would be redeemed forthwith, for it is said, Today, if you would listen to His voice, the day of which it is written, Observe the Shabbat day, to keep it holy (Devarim / Deuteronomy 5:12).”

Part 3

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) saying, “Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness; when your fathers tempted Me, put Me to proof, even though they saw My work (Tehillim / Psalms 95:8-9).”
- The פתיחתא (Petihta) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “You will find that the children of Israel put the Holy One blessed be He, to proof ten times, as is said, All those men that have seen My glory, and My miracles which I wrought in Egypt and in the wilderness have put Me to proof these ten times (Bamidbar / Numbers 14:22)”
- The משל (mashal) “the parable,” goes on to explain the פתיחתא (Petihta), the rabbis speak of proofs the Children of Israel requested of the miracles, etc the Lord provided for the people in the wilderness.
- The נמשל (Nimshal) “expansion on the parable” expands upon the משל (mashal), providing examples of the miracles the Lord worked in the wilderness.
- The Concluding phrase says, “Wherefore I swore in My wrath that they should not enter into MY rest (Tehillim / Psalms 95:11) that is, into the Land of Israel, of which it is said, For you are not as yet come to the rest and to the inheritance (Devarim / Deuteronomy 12:9); and also Zion is My rest forever (Tehillim / Psalms 132:13-14).”

Midrash Tehillim 95, Part 1 opens with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) saying, “O come, let us sing unto the Lord; let us shout for joy to the Rock of our salvation (Tehillim / Psalms 95:1).” The homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “Elsewhere, this is what Scriptures says, Sing, O daughter of Zion, shout,

O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem (Zephaniah 3:14).” The context of the reference to Zephaniah is the following:

Zephaniah 3:1-14

3:1 Woe to her who is rebellious and defiled, The tyrannical city! 3:2 She heeded no voice, She accepted no instruction. She did not trust in the Lord, She did not draw near to her God. 3:3 Her princes within her are roaring lions, Her judges are wolves at evening; They leave nothing for the morning. 3:4 Her prophets are reckless, treacherous men; Her priests have profaned the sanctuary. They have done violence to the law. 3:5 The Lord is righteous within her; He will do no injustice. Every morning He brings His justice to light; He does not fail. But the unjust knows no shame. 3:6 ‘I have cut off nations; Their corner towers are in ruins. I have made their streets desolate, With no one passing by; Their cities are laid waste, Without a man, without an inhabitant. 3:7 ‘I said, ‘Surely you will revere Me, Accept instruction.’ So her dwelling will not be cut off According to all that I have appointed concerning her. But they were eager to corrupt all their deeds. 3:8 ‘Therefore wait for Me,’ declares the Lord, ‘For the day when I rise up as a witness. Indeed, My decision is to gather nations, To assemble kingdoms, To pour out on them My indignation, All My burning anger; For all the earth will be devoured By the fire of My zeal. 3:9 ‘For then I will give to the peoples purified lips, That all of them may call on the name of the Lord, To serve Him shoulder to shoulder. 3:10 ‘From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia My worshipers, My dispersed ones, Will bring My offerings. 3:11 ‘In that day you will feel no shame Because of all your deeds By which you have rebelled against Me; For then I will remove from your midst Your proud, exulting ones, And you will never again be haughty On My holy mountain. 3:12 ‘But I will leave among you A humble and lowly people, And they will take refuge in the name of the Lord. 3:13 ‘The remnant of Israel will do no wrong And tell no lies, Nor will a deceitful tongue Be found in their mouths; For they will feed and lie down With no one to make them tremble.’ 3:14 Shout for joy, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem! (NASB)

Zephaniah speaks of the rebelliousness of Jerusalem and of her sin of not trusting in the Lord God in heaven, and of the lack of desire to draw near to her God. The people are described as wolves and lions who devour the innocent. Jerusalem’s prophets were reckless, treacherous, and the priests profaned the sanctuary. The rabbis say in the midrash however, through all of these things, the Lord remained in the midst of His people and Zephaniah said that there is no injustice in the Lord, He will do no injustice (*Zephaniah 3:5*). The Lord is the destroyer of nations, he lays waste those who stand against His name, and who stand against justice and truth. The Lord states, *3:7 ‘I said, ‘Surely you will revere Me, Accept instruction.’ So her dwelling will not be cut off According to all that I have appointed concerning her. But they were eager to corrupt all their deeds. (NASB)* Accepting the instruction of God will facilitate the restoration of the people. Seeking the Lord and walking in His ways has the effect of staying off destruction that was already spoken. Notice what Zephaniah states of the Lord God in heaven, he says, *3:8 ‘Therefore wait for Me,’ declares the Lord, ‘For the day when I rise up as a witness. Indeed, My decision is to gather nations, To assemble kingdoms, To pour out on them My indignation, All My burning anger; For all the earth will be devoured By the fire of My zeal. (NASB)* The Lord is working to draw together the nations for the purpose of pouring out His wrath upon them. And in doing so, the Lord is working in the lives of His people, to give them purified lips which will call upon His name and have a zeal to live for Him, to obey His instructions, and to know that they have been forgiven for their sins (e.g. *“In that day you will feel no shame Because of all your deeds By which you have rebelled against Me”*). These people are referred to as a humble and lowly people who take refuge in the name of the Lord, no one will be afraid, and no one will have a deceitful tongue. And then the rabbis quote in the midrash saying, *3:14 Shout for joy, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem! (NASB)* The entire midrash states the following.

מדרש תהלים פרק צה סימן א

א לכו נרננה לה' נריעה לצור ישענו. זהו שאמר הכתוב רני בת ציון הריעו ישראל וגו' (צפניה ג יד), על איזה דבר, הסיר ה' (שופטיד) [משפטיד] פנה איבך (שם שם צפניה ג' טו), הכל שמחים במפלתן של רשעים, וכן הוא אומר שבר ה' מטה רשעים שבט מושלים מכה עמים בעברה (ישעיה יד ה ו), מה כתיב נחה שקטה כל הארץ פצחו רנה (שם שם ישעיהו י"ד ז), ואומר כשמח כל הארץ שממה אעשה לך (יחזקאל לה יד), אימתי הארץ שמחה, כשאעשה אותך שממה, וכן הוא אומר וישב עליהם את אונם (תהלים צד כג), מיד לכו נרננה לה', וכן הוא אומר בטוב צדיקים תעלוץ קריה ובאבוד רשעים רנה (משלי יא י). נקדמה פניו בתודה. גדול התודה מן הקרבנות, שנאמר בזמירות נריע לו, וכן יונה אומר ואני בקול תודה אזבחה לך (יונה ב י).

Midrash Tehillim 95, Part 1

1. *O come, let us sing unto the Lord; let us shout for joy to the Rock of our salvation (Tehillim / Psalms 95:1). Elsewhere, this is what Scriptures says, Sing, O daughter of Zion, shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem (Zephaniah 3:14). Why? Because The Lord has taken away your judgments, He has cast out your enemy (Zephaniah 3:15). At the fall of the wicked, every one shouts for joy. Thus it is said, The Lord has broken the staff of the wicked, the scepter of the rulers, that struck the peoples in wrath (Isaiah 14:5-6). And what verse follows? The whole earth is at rest, and is quiet; they break forth into singing (Isaiah 14:7). Again, God said, When the whole earth rejoices, I will make you desolate (Ezekiel 35:14). When will the earth rejoice? When I make you, Edom, desolate. And thus also upon the conclusion of the previous Psalm, and He has brought upon them their own iniquity (Tehillim / Psalms 94:23), the next Psalm begins at once with the words, O come, let us sing unto the Lord (Tehillim / Psalms 95:1). So, too, Scripture says, When it goes well with the righteous, the city rejoices; and when the wicked perish, there is joy (Mishley / Proverbs 11:10). Let us come before His presence with avowal (Tehillim / Psalms 95:2). Avowal of faith is greater than offerings. So Jonah said, But I will sacrifice unto You and the voice of avowal (Jonah 2:10).*

The rabbis ask “why” should Jerusalem shout for joy? The answer is we are commanded to be joyful. David by the inspiration of God’s Holy Spirit according to *Tehillim / Psalm 32:11*, “*be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, O righteous, and shout for joy, all you upright in heart!*” we are admonished to be glad and joyful. *Tehillim / Psalms 33:1* sates, “*shout for joy in the Lord, O you righteous! Praise befits the upright*” The Scriptures do not say to be joyful only in your mind, in your singing, or in your speaking but to “*shout for joy,*” which is no small whisper, but calls us to be joyful in our lives and how we live before others. Our lives should demonstrate that joy the Lord has placed in our hearts no matter the circumstance. The psalmist wrote, “*You have put more joy in my heart than they have when their grain and wine abound,*” according to *Tehillim / Psalm 4:7*. We are also told of reasons for shouting for joy according to *Tehillim / Psalms 20:5*, “*may we shout for joy over your salvation, and in the name of our God set up our banners! May the Lord fulfill all your petitions*” We are given many reasons for joy before the Lord, *Tehillim / Psalms 63:7*, “*You have been my help, and in the shadow of your wings I will sing for joy.*” The psalms speak of the salvation of God, and the midrash gives the reason “*Because The Lord has taken away your judgments, He has cast out your enemy (Zephaniah 3:15).*” The reason the Lord took away our judgments is because as *Tehillim / Psalms 95:2* states, “*Let us come before His presence with avowal*” The Aramaic Targum sates, *95:1 Come, let us sing praise before the Lord, let us shout aloud before the Mighty One of our redemption. 95:2 Let us come before his face with thanksgiving, with hymns let us shout aloud before him. (EMC)* The avowal of faith that is followed through by a life of faithfulness is greater than offerings. It is for this reason Jonah said, “*But I will sacrifice unto You and the voice of avowal*” (*Jonah 2:10*). Making an avowal unto the Lord may be understood according to the Talmud Bavli Gittin 57b in the following way:

Talmud Bavli Gittin 57b

“*He said to them, ‘It is written in the Torah (Deuteronomy 26:17-18), ‘The Lord you have avowed, etc. And the Lord has avowed you today.’ We have already sworn to the Holy One, blessed be He, that we will will not exchange Him for another God and He also has sworn*

to us that He will not exchange us for another people.’ Caesar said to him, ‘I will throw my seal [down] to you and you can bend down to pick it up, so that they will say that he took upon him the authority of the king.’ He said to him, ‘To ruin with you, Caesar, to ruin with you Caesar! With your own honor is it such; with the honor of the Holy One, blessed be He, it is all the more so.’”

The idea of the avowal is that one makes a promise, and takes upon himself something that he swore to the Lord in heaven. In doing so, He has taken upon himself the authority of the king. Note how the avowal is connected to agreeing with the Lord’s Torah and vowing to live by His instructions. This is synonymous to taking upon ourselves the authority of the king. Going in authority of Caesar is paralleled to doing so in the name and honor of the Holy One blessed be He (the Lord God in heaven). There is also a parallel in those who place their faith in Yeshua the Messiah, and the authority that is given in the Messiah over the powers and principalities, over sickness and health, etc.

The midrash continues saying “*At the fall of the wicked, every one shouts for joy. Thus it is said, The Lord has broken the staff of the wicked, the scepter of the rulers, that struck the peoples in wrath (Isaiah 14:5-6). And what verse follows? The whole earth is at rest, and is quiet; they break forth into singing (Isaiah 14:7). Again, God said, When the whole earth rejoices, I will make you desolate (Ezekiel 35:14). When will the earth rejoice? When I make you, Edom, desolate. And thus also upon the conclusion of the previous Psalm, and He has brought upon them their own iniquity (Tehillim / Psalms 94:23), the next Psalm begins at once with the words, O come, let us sing unto the Lord (Tehillim / Psalms 95:1).*” These words from the Midrash stand contrary to King Solomon’s words in *Mishley / Proverbs 24:17 Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, And do not let your heart be glad when he stumbles; (NASB)* How are we to understand the meaning of shouting for joy over the fall of the wicked, as opposed to “*do not rejoice when your enemy falls?*” The point may be that the wicked oppress the righteous and the innocent, and both the people and the Land rest when the wicked fall. The people rest due to not being pursued with hatred by the unrighteous, and the land rests in the sense of innocent blood not being shed. So, we do not rejoice in the downfall of our enemies, but we give praise to the Lord when justice is meted out and God’s people are set free from oppression.

Midrash Tehillim 95, Part 1 concludes saying, “*So, too, Scripture says, When it goes well with the righteous, the city rejoices; and when the wicked perish, there is joy (Mishley / Proverbs 11:10). Let us come before His presence with avowal (Tehillim / Psalms 95:2). Avowal of faith is greater than offerings. So Jonah said, But I will sacrifice unto You and the voice of avowal (Jonah 2:10).*” The going with the avowal is connected to living a life that is worthy of our calling, we do what we say we believe. It seems to be this is the meaning of obedience being more important than sacrifice (*1 Samuel 15:22*).

Midrash Tehillim 95, Part 2 opens with the Dibur Hamathil (דיבור המתהיל) saying, “*For the Lord is a great God, and a great king above all gods (Tehillim / Psalms 95:3).*” The homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “*Are there other gods then? Is it not written, See now that I, even I, am He, and there is no god with Me (Devarim / Deuteronomy 32:39)?*” Do these Scriptures suggest there are many gods? What does the Scriptures say?

Short Survey, Scripture - One God or Many?

1. One God

- (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 6:4*) - “*Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one!*”
- (*Isaiah 43:10*) - “. . . *Before Me [YHWH] there was no God formed, and there will be none after Me.*”
- (*Isaiah 44:6*) - “. . . *there is no God besides Me.*”

- (*Isaiah 44:8*) - “. . . And you are My witnesses. Is there any God besides Me, or is there any other Rock? I know of none.”

2. Many gods

- (*Bereshit / Genesis 1:26*) - “Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness’”
- (*Bereshit / Genesis 3:22*) - “And the LORD God said, “The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil”
- (*Bereshit / Genesis 11:7*) - “Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other.”
- (*1 Corinthians 8:5*) - “For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as indeed there are many “gods” and many “lords”).”
- (*1 John 5:8*) - “For there are three that bear witness, the Spirit and the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement.”

According to the Scriptures, there is only one God (see *Isaiah 43:10 and 44:6-8*). However, the Scriptures also mention “others” such as Adrammelech (*2 Kings 17:31*), Asherah (*1 Kings 18:19*), Baal (*Judges 3:7*), Chemosh (*Bamidbar / Numbers 21:29*), Dagon (*1 Samuel 5:2*), and Molech (*Vayikra / Leviticus 18:21 and 20:2-5*), to name a few. How are we to understand the meaning of “many gods?” Based upon the Scriptures, there is no question that there is one and only one God, not two or more “Gods.” The Lord God speaks in the singular, as “I,” saying that he is the only God, and there is no other being that is even like him. This is why the Lord commands us, “You shall have no other gods before me” (*Shemot / Exodus 20:3*). The idea of a family of gods (Greek mythology) is condemned throughout the Scriptures. This is precisely the concept that the polytheistic nations surrounding Israel taught. Polytheism is a word that refers to a belief in more than one god (poly = many; theos = god). The Tanach teaches that there is only one God, a belief called monotheism, from mono (one) and theos (God). The gods and lords according to *1 Corinthians 8:5* are identified equally as idols in *1 Corinthians* chapter 8.

1 Corinthians 8

8:1 Now concerning food offered to idols: we know that “all of us possess knowledge.” This “knowledge” puffs up, but love builds up. 8:2 If anyone imagines that he knows something, he does not yet know as he ought to know. 8:3 But if anyone loves God, he is known by God. 8:4 Therefore, as to the eating of food offered to idols, we know that “an idol has no real existence,” and that “there is no God but one.” 8:5 For although there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth—as indeed there are many “gods” and many “lords”— 8:6 yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist. 8:7 However, not all possess this knowledge. But some, through former association with idols, eat food as really offered to an idol, and their conscience, being weak, is defiled. 8:8 Food will not commend us to God. We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do. 8:9 But take care that this right of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. 8:10 For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol’s temple, will he not be encouraged, if his conscience is weak, to eat food offered to idols? 8:11 And so by your knowledge this weak person is destroyed, the brother for whom Christ died. 8:12 Thus, sinning against your brothers and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ. 8:13 Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble.

Paul defined an idol as having “no real existence” (1 Corinthians 8:4). It is in this way, Paul could say that there exists one God and one Lord while at the same time saying there is the existence of other gods and lords. The Greek word θεοίς (theois) occurs only twice in the Apostolic Writings (1 Corinthians 8:5 and Galatians 4:8). The point is these deities have no real existence since they do not subsist in God’s nature; they are in fact, not gods by nature (Galatians 4:8), they are simply wood and stone with a demonic background.

The entire midrash states the following:

<p style="text-align: center;">מדרש תהלים פרק צה סימן ב</p> <p>ב כי אל גדול ה' ומלך גדול על כל אלהים. וכי יש אלהים אחרים, והכתיב ראו עתה כי אני אני [הוא] ואין אלהים עמדי (דברים לב לט), אלא אוי להם לרשעים שהם יור-דים לגיהנם ואליליהם עמם, וכן הוא אומר כי כל אלהי העמים אלילים (דה"א דברי הימים א' טז כו). אשר בידו מחקרי ארץ ותועפות הרים לו אשר לו הים והוא עשהו ויבשת ידיו יצרו. מלך בשר ודם אם יאמרו לו הארץ שלך, יכול הוא לומר כמה ארכה וכמה רחבה, אבל הקב"ה אינו כן, אשר בידו מחקרי ארץ ותועפות הרים לו אשר לו הים והוא עשהו, מלך בשר ודם אם יאמרו לו הים שלך, יכול הוא לומר כמה מידות מים יש בו, אבל הקב"ה נאה לו לומר אשר לו הים ושהוא עשהו והוא יודע כמה מידות יש בו, וכן הוא אומר מי מדד בשעלו מים (ישעיה מ יב), ומים תיכן במדה (איוב כח כה), הוי אשר לו הים והוא עשהו, ומה הוא מבקש מכם השתחוויות, באו נשתחוה ונ-כרעה [נברכה לפני ה' עשנו] כי הוא (ה') אלהינו ואנחנו (עמו וצאן מרעיתו) [עם מרעיתו וצאן ידו], אימתי אנו עמו כשאנו צאן מרעיתו, שנאמר (ואתנה) [ואתן] צאני צאן מרעיתי אדם אתם (יחזקאל לד לא), אבל כשאנו אריות הוא שונא אותנו, שנא-מר היתה לי נחלתי כאריה ביער וגו' [על כן שנאתיה] [ירמיה יב ח]. היום אם בקלו תשמעו. אמר ר' לוי אם היו משמרים אפילו שבת אחד כתיקנה, מיד היו הן נגאלין, שנא-מר היום אם בקלו תשמעו, וכתיב שמור את יום השבת (דברים ה יב).</p>	<p>Midrash Tehillim 95, Part 2</p> <p>2. For the Lord is a great God, and a great king above all gods (Tehillim / Psalms 95:3). Are there other gods then? Is it not written, See now that I, even I, am He, and there is no god with Me (Devarim / Deuteronomy 32:39)? But what the verse from the Psalm means to say is this, Woe unto the wicked that together with their gods go down below to Gehenna. For, as Scripture says, All the gods of the peoples are things of nought (1 Chronicles 16:26). In His hand are the depths of the earth; the heights of the mountains are His also. The sea is His, and He made it; and His hands formed the dry land (Tehillim / Psalms 95:4-5). Could a mortal king, if it were said to him, the Earth is yours, declare what its length of what its depth is? But the Holy One blessed be He can declare, for In His hand are the depths of the earth; the heights of the mountains are His also. The sea is His, and He made it. Could a mortal king, if it were said to him, The sea is His, declare how many measures of water are in it? But the Holy One blessed be He, of Him it is proper to say, the Sea is His, and to say that He made it, for He knows how many measures of water are in it, as Scripture says, Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand? (Isaiah 40:12). Hence, it is said, The sea is His, and He made it. And what does God require of you? Bowing down in worship, as is said O come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker, for He is our God; and we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand (Tehillim / Psalms 95:6-7). When are we His people? When we are sheep of His pasture, as it is said, When you My sheep are the sheep of My pasture, I am your God, said the Lord God (Ezekiel 31:31). But when we are like lions in the forest, God hates us, for it is said My heritage is unto Me as a lion in the forest, it cries out against Me, therefore have I hated her (Jeremiah 12:8). Today if you would but listen to His voice. (Tehillim / Psalms 95:7). Rabbi Levi taught, if the children of Israel kept but one shabat as it out to be kept, they would be redeemed forthwith, for it is said, Today, if you would listen to His voice, the day of which it is written, Observe the Shabbat day, to keep it holy (Devarim / Deuteronomy 5:12).</p>
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The Scriptures do not contradict itself when speaking of other gods because these descriptions are speaking

of false gods that have no true existence. *Galatians 4:8* states, “Formerly, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those who by nature are not gods.” *Isaiah 37:19* states “37:19 and have cast their gods into the fire, for they were not gods but the work of men’s hands, wood and stone. So they have destroyed them.” and *Jeremiah 2:11* states 2:11 “‘Has a nation changed gods When they were not gods? But My people have changed their glory For that which does not profit.’” The Lord God tells us that He alone is the true God and that all others are the creation of men’s hands and of the imagination of their own minds.

The rabbis in the midrash ask the question of whether there are other gods? The midrash continues saying, “But what the verse from the Psalm means to say is this, Woe unto the wicked that together with their gods go down below to Gehenna. For, as Scripture says, All the gods of the peoples are things of nought (*1 Chronicles 16:26*).” The idea then is if the gods of the nations are of their own creation, and from the imaginations of their own minds, all of these things will go down to Hell with the wicked when the Lord sends them. The midrash describes the Lord as almighty and powerful in the following way.

1. The Lord God is the creator knowing the depths of the earth
2. The Lord God is the only One who is able to provide the dimensions of the earth. (e.g. depths of the sea and heights of the mountains)
3. The Lord God is the only One who is able to provide the number of gallons of water that are contained in the sea.
4. The mortal king does not have the power or capabilities of the Lord God in heaven.

The rabbis compare the power of God in the formation of the heavens and the earth and the breadth of the earth, its dimensions, its length and height, to the power of a mortal king. If all of creation was given into the hands of the mortal king, he would be unable to provide the answers to questions only the Maker, the Creator would be able to answer. The idol gods stand at a level lower than man since they do not have eyes to see, ears to hear, or feet and hands to move themselves by, they are worthless objects having no power. Because of God’s power and authority over all, the rabbis say:

Hence, it is said, The sea is His, and He made it. And what does God require of you? Bowing down in worship, as is said O come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker, for He is our God; and we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand (Tehillim / Psalms 95:6-7). When are we His people? When we are sheep of His pasture, as it is said, When you My sheep are the sheep of My pasture, I am your God, said the Lord God (Ezekiel 31:31). (Midrash Tehillim 95, Part 5)

We give glory to the Lord by reason that He is all powerful. The midrash speaks of our being the sheep of God’s pasture. The point is that the sheep both listen to the voice of the shepherd and seek the direction of the shepherd. Have you sought the counsel of God? Do you seek the counsel of God daily? Do you seek to draw near to the Lord God on a daily basis?

Midrash Tehillim 95, Part 2 concludes saying, “Today if you would but listen to His voice. (*Tehillim / Psalms 95:7*). Rabbi Levi taught, if the children of Israel kept but one shabat as it out to be kept, they would be redeemed forthwith, for it is said, Today, if you would listen to His voice, the day of which it is written, Observe the Shabbat day, to keep it holy (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 5:12*).” We find here in the conclusion to the midrash is the call to listen and obey which are connected to the covenant God was making with Israel. What were the terms of God’s covenant with ancient Israel?

Shemot / Exodus 19:5

19:5 “Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall

mixed multitude complained about the manna and Lord sent a plague with the quail. Even Miriam, Moshe's sister had rebelled, and then finally there was the complete rebellion after the spies came back (*Bamidbar / Numbers 11:1-4, 12:1, and 14:2*). The people had observed ten miraculous plagues on Egypt and then saw ten marvelous miracles the Lord had performed on their behalf (*the Passover, the pillar of fire, the parting of the Red Sea waters, the destruction of Pharaoh's army, the bitter water of Marah made sweet, the sending of quails, the daily provision of manna, water from the rock, the miraculous defeat of the Amalekites, and the second provision of quails*), yet they rebelled against the Lord ten times, the last of which was the report of the ten fearful spies. Note that these people the Lord delivered out of Egypt did not even circumcise their children in obedience to the command of God. They were utterly abstinent to God's Word. Yet they had unhesitatingly accepted God's covenant of the ten commandments at the mountain of Sinai. It seems they were very emotionally driven. It is no wonder the Lord's patience was stretched to the limit. This should be a warning to us not to be too emotionally driven in our service to the Lord.

The entire Midrash states the following:

<p style="text-align: center;">מדרש תהלים פרק צה סימן ג</p> <p>ג אל תקשו לבבכם כמריבה כיום מסה במדבר [אשר נסוני אבותיכם]. אתה מוצא עשר נסיונות נסו ישראל להקב"ה, שנאמר וינסו אותי זה עשר פעמים (במדבר יד כב), שנים בים סוף, שנאמר על הים ים בים סוף (תהלים קו ז), ושתים בשליו, ואחד במן, ואחד בעגל, ואחד בפארן, (ואחד במרגלים), והוא קשה שבהן. עשר נסיונות אמרת והן אינן אלא שבע, והיכן עוד שלש, ובתבערה ובמסה ובקברות התאוה מקציפים הייתם את ה' (דברים ט כב), ולמה לא סמך אלו לאלו, לפי שאלו שלשה היו קשים יותר משבעה ראשונים, לכך נאמר אשר נסוני אבותיכם במדבר בחנוני גם ראו פעלי. ארבעים שנה אקוט בדור. בדור המבול, אקוט לשון מאיסת, כמו נקטה נפשי בחיי (איוב י א), ר' לוי אמר לשון נידוי הוא, שהיו מנודים מ"ח שנים. אשר נשבעתי באפי אם יבאון אל מנוחתי. זה ארץ ישראל, שנאמר כי לא באתם עד עתה אל המנוחה ואל הנחלה (דברים יב ט), וכתוב זאת מנוחתי עדי עד (תהלים קלב יד)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Midrash Tehillim 95, Part 3</p> <p>3. <i>Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness; when your fathers tempted Me, put Me to proof, even though they saw My work (Tehillim / Psalms 95:8-9). You will find that the children of Israel put the Holy One blessed be He, to proof ten times, as is said, All those men that have seen My glory, and My miracles which I wrought in Egypt and in the wilderness have put Me to proof these ten times (Bamidbar / Numbers 14:22), twice at the Red Sea, as is said Our fathers did not understand the wonders in Egypt; they did not remember the multitude of Your mercies; but provoked Him at the sea, even at the Red Sea (Tehillim / Psalms 106:7); twice with the quail; once with the manna; once with the golden calf; once at Paran this one being the most provoking. You say then proofs, but you provide only seven, What are the other three? The other three are mentioned in the verse, At Taberah, and at Massah, and at Kirbroth hattaavah, you provoked the Lord to wrath (Devarim / Deuteronomy 9:22). And why does not more provoking than the seven preceding ones. Hence, it is said, When your fathers tempted Me, put Me to proof, even though they saw My work (Tehillim / Psalms 95:9). For forty years did I cut off (akut) that generation (Tehillim / Psalms 95:10), the generation which perished in the wilderness; here cut off has a connotation of loathing, as in the verse My soul loaths (noktah) my life (Job 10:1). Rabi Levi said, IT connotes banishment, since the people of that generation were banished for thirty eight years. Wherefore I swore in My wrath that they should not enter into MY rest (Tehillim / Psalms 95:11) that is, into the Land of Israel, of which it is said, For you are not as yet come to the rest and to the inheritance (Devarim / Deuteronomy 12:9); and also Zion is My rest forever (Tehillim / Psalms 132:13-14).</i></p>
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Outline of the Ten Provocations

1. *Twice at the Red Sea, as is said Our fathers did not understand the wonders in Egypt; they did not remember the multitude of Your mercies; but provoked Him at the sea, even at the Red Sea (Tehillim / Psalms 106:7);*

2. *Twice with the quail; once with the manna;*
3. *Once with the golden calf;*
4. *Once at Paran this one being the most provoking.*
5. *At Taberah,*
6. *At Massah,*
7. *At Kirbroth hattaavah, you provoked the Lord to wrath*

The rabbis appear to take these ten things from Moshe's list in *Devarim / Deuteronomy 9*:

Devarim / Deuteronomy 9:20-27

9:20 'The Lord was angry enough with Aaron to destroy him; so I also prayed for Aaron at the same time. 9:21 'I took your sinful thing, the calf which you had made, and burned it with fire and crushed it, grinding it very small until it was as fine as dust; and I threw its dust into the brook that came down from the mountain. 9:22 'Again at Taberah and at Massah and at Kibroth-hattaavah you provoked the Lord to wrath. 9:23 'When the Lord sent you from Kadesh-barnea, saying, 'Go up and possess the land which I have given you,' then you rebelled against the command of the Lord your God; you neither believed Him nor listened to His voice. 9:24 'You have been rebellious against the Lord from the day I knew you. 9:25 'So I fell down before the Lord the forty days and nights, which I did because the Lord had said He would destroy you. 9:26 'I prayed to the Lord and said, 'O Lord God, do not destroy Your people, even Your inheritance, whom You have redeemed through Your greatness, whom You have brought out of Egypt with a mighty hand. 9:27 'Remember Your servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; do not look at the stubbornness of this people or at their wickedness or their sin. (NASB)

In *Devarim / Deuteronomy 9:22*, Moshe speaks of Taberah, Massah, and Kibroth-hattaavah, these places and temptations may be found in the following locations in the Torah.

Shemot / Exodus 17:1-7

17:1 Then all the congregation of the sons of Israel journeyed by stages from the wilderness of Sin, according to the command of the Lord, and camped at Rephidim, and there was no water for the people to drink. 17:2 Therefore the people quarreled with Moses and said, 'Give us water that we may drink.' And Moses said to them, 'Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the Lord?' 17:3 But the people thirsted there for water; and they grumbled against Moses and said, 'Why, now, have you brought us up from Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?' 17:4 So Moses cried out to the Lord, saying, 'What shall I do to this people? A little more and they will stone me.' 17:5 Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Pass before the people and take with you some of the elders of Israel; and take in your hand your staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. 17:6 'Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink.' And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. 17:7 He named the place Massah and Meribah because of the quarrel of the sons of Israel, and because they tested the Lord, saying, 'Is the Lord among us, or not?' (NASB)

Bamidbar / Numbers 11:1-3

11:1 Now the people became like those who complain of adversity in the hearing of the Lord;

and when the Lord heard it, His anger was kindled, and the fire of the Lord burned among them and consumed some of the outskirts of the camp. 11:2 The people therefore cried out to Moses, and Moses prayed to the Lord and the fire died out. 11:3 So the name of that place was called Taberah, because the fire of the Lord burned among them. (NASB)

Bamidbar / Numbers 11:31-34

11:31 Now there went forth a wind from the Lord and it brought quail from the sea, and let them fall beside the camp, about a day's journey on this side and a day's journey on the other side, all around the camp and about two cubits deep on the surface of the ground. 11:32 The people spent all day and all night and all the next day, and gathered the quail (he who gathered least gathered ten homers) and they spread them out for themselves all around the camp. 11:33 While the meat was still between their teeth, before it was chewed, the anger of the Lord was kindled against the people, and the Lord struck the people with a very severe plague. 11:34 So the name of that place was called Kibroth-hattaavah, because there they buried the people who had been greedy. (NASB)

The people were thirsty, they were hungry, and they simply just complained to the Lord, even while eating the food the Lord God had given them. This was why the one location was named Kibroth-hattaavah, because they buried the people who had been greedy. The midrash states that these are the reasons the people were led forty years in the wilderness, so the Lord could cut them off, and so that generation would not see the promises of God due to their sins.

Midrash Tehillim 95, Part 3 concludes saying, “Wherefore I swore in My wrath that they should not enter into MY rest (Tehillim / Psalms 95:11) that is, into the Land of Israel, of which it is said, For you are not as yet come to the rest and to the inheritance (Devarim / Deuteronomy 12:9); and also Zion is My rest forever (Tehillim / Psalms 132:13-14).” What we can learn from these things is that complaint and sin are the restlessness that is found in the world. Rest comes by reason of trusting in the Lord God in heaven, by joining ourselves with Israel and the blessings of Israel by faith in the Messiah Yeshua. When we seek to do what is right, to live for the Lord, with God’s help, and obey the commands of God, there is rest and peace in our souls. The Messiah enables us to draw near, and now we are called to walk in the Spirit, which is synonymous to walking according to God’s Torah (Romans 7-8). Let’s Pray!

Heavenly Father,

We thank You for Your mercy. Lord help us daily to seek and serve You. In the midst of persecution, Lord help us to have the strength to stand for truth and life, to have faith in Yeshua and devotion to Your Word. We thank You Lord for Your continued faithfulness to Your promises. Thank You Lord for giving us the faith to believe in Yeshua the Messiah and for always calling our hearts back to You! Please have mercy on us, forgive us for our sins. Help us to grow in our faith, to walk in the spirit, and apply these truths to our lives. 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 we pray! Amen!

Be Blessed in Yeshua, Christ our Messiah!

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

Notes