

פרשת  
בא  
Parashat Bo

*Shemot / Exodus 10:1-13:16, Jer. 46:13-28  
Mark 3:7-19*

### The False Doctrine of Grace

The opening sentence in this week's Torah Portion (Parashat Bo) is very significant and in many ways overlooked according to the church today, - וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה בֹּא אֶל-פַּרְעֹה כִּי-אֲנִי הִקְבַּדְתִּי אֶת-לְבוֹ וְאֶת- לְבַב עֲבָדָיו לְמַעַן שְׁתִּי אֶתְתִּי אֵלֶּה בְּקִרְבָּו: *10:1 Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Go to Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart and the heart of his servants, that I may perform these signs of Mine among them, (NASB)* Notice how the Lord God of Israel speaks to Moshe saying הִקְבַּדְתִּי אֶת-לְבוֹ *"I have glorified (hardened) his heart"* using the word הִקְבַּדְתִּי. This is very important because today, we are living in an age where man is taught to think good, high, and wonderful thoughts about himself. Within Christianity in America today, there is a *"watered down"* form of teaching where all one has to do is *"say"* one believes in Jesus in one's heart, where repentance and turning from sin are de-emphasized and seldom mentioned. This is what has and is being taught in the grace movement today. The result of this teaching that is coupled to the absence of repentance, has created an unholy theology which has produced children which do not exhibit the characteristics of God as we know according to the history in the pages of the Scriptures. The children of this new teaching permits and promotes a warped form

of godliness, and preaches deceiving, dangerous, and damnable false doctrines. The watered down grace movement is sweeping through churches today rather than the biblical teaching to seek the righteousness of God through repentance. This new grace doctrine leads one to a self-seeking desire to worship at the altar of self. The apostle Paul warned us that one of the characteristics of the last days would be that *“men will be lovers of their own selves” (2 Timothy 3:2)*. In addition to this, there is a de-emphasis on the importance of reading and rereading the Scriptures each year (and daily). What has happened is most today have been taught a theology and are unable to read the scriptures outside of the theologies they have been taught. Theology is all that is being taught in churches today and the outcome of this is all one needs to do is believe the theology and thus reading and rereading the scriptures goes to the wayside in leu of Sunday morning preaching. The context of the Lord hardening the heart of Pharaoh and his people is very significant as it is related to these things, and paralleled to *Matthew 22* where Yeshua speaks and teaches on the kingdom of God illustrated as a wedding banquet saying *“22:11 ‘But when the king came in to look over the dinner guests, he saw a man there who was not dressed in wedding clothes, 22:12 and he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you come in here without wedding clothes?’ And the man was speechless. 22:13 ‘Then the king said to the servants, ‘Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ 22:14 ‘For many are called, but few are chosen.’ (NASB)”* The most significant passage here is *22:14* saying *“many are called but few are chosen.”* We are called to seek His righteousness which is related to the cloths that we are to wear as God’s People (see *Revelation 19:8*) but few choose today to actually do so. Many so-called fundamental or evangelical churches and preachers today have fallen into the trap of teaching this mushy grace movement stuff where Churches and preachers alike are abandoning their God called purpose of upholding the Word of God as a way of life for God’s people (*Romans 3:31*) His ways that are revealed to us in the commandments according to the Torah. In the sight of a holy God, we are called to seek His holiness. The missing message in modern-day preaching is the Biblical doctrine of repentance, where a sinner is convinced and convicted of his exceeding sinfulness and lost condition. This was the attitude which was missing

from Pharaoh and his people. As a result, we are told the Lord God of Israel *הִקְבִּידְתִּי אֶת-לְבָבוֹ* “*glorified (hardened) his heart,*” suggesting that the Lord God Almighty helped to facilitate the strengthening of pride in Pharaoh’s life. Do you think the Lord still does this today and possibly with his people? Note that the hardening in part was to show forth the power of God. The neglect (absence) of a repentant heart is connected to the self glorification of our own hearts. This week’s Torah portion causes us to consider the attitudes of our hearts in relation to the themes of the power of God (the right hand), and the future expectation of the Lord sending His deliverer (Mashiach) and of redemption. Is there forgiveness of sins and salvation without repentance? Let’s discuss this further in this week’s study.

This week we are looking at *Shemot / Exodus 10:1-15*.

### ***Shemot / Exodus 10:1-15***

*10:1 Then the Lord said to Moses, ‘Go to Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart and the heart of his servants, that I may perform these signs of Mine among them, 10:2 and that you may tell in the hearing of your son, and of your grandson, how I made a mockery of the Egyptians and how I performed My signs among them, that you may know that I am the Lord.’ 10:3 Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and said to him, ‘Thus says the Lord, the God of the Hebrews, ‘How long will you refuse to humble yourself before Me? Let My people go, that they may serve Me. 10:4 ‘For if you refuse to let My people go, behold, tomorrow I will bring locusts into your territory. 10:5 ‘They shall cover the surface of the land, so that no one will be able to see the land. They will also eat the rest of what has escaped what is left to you from the hail and they will eat every tree which sprouts for you out of the field. 10:6 ‘Then your houses shall be filled and the houses of all your servants and the houses of all the Egyptians, something which neither your fathers nor your grandfathers have seen, from the day that they came upon the earth until this day.’ ‘And he turned and went out from Pharaoh. 10:7 Pharaoh’s*

*servants said to him, ‘How long will this man be a snare to us? Let the men go, that they may serve the Lord their God. Do you not realize that Egypt is destroyed?’ 10:8 So Moses and Aaron were brought back to Pharaoh, and he said to them, ‘Go, serve the Lord your God! Who are the ones that are going?’ 10:9 Moses said, ‘We shall go with our young and our old; with our sons and our daughters, with our flocks and our herds we shall go, for we must hold a feast to the Lord. 10:10 Then he said to them, ‘Thus may the Lord be with you, if ever I let you and your little ones go! Take heed, for evil is in your mind. 10:11 ‘Not so! Go now, the men among you, and serve the Lord, for that is what you desire.’ So they were driven out from Pharaoh’s presence. 10:12 Then the Lord said to Moses, ‘Stretch out your hand over the land of Egypt for the locusts, that they may come up on the land of Egypt and eat every plant of the land, even all that the hail has left.’ 10:13 So Moses stretched out his staff over the land of Egypt, and the Lord directed an east wind on the land all that day and all that night; and when it was morning, the east wind brought the locusts. 10:14 The locusts came up over all the land of Egypt and settled in all the territory of Egypt; they were very numerous. There had never been so many locusts, nor would there be so many again. 10:15 For they covered the surface of the whole land, so that the land was darkened; and they ate every plant of the land and all the fruit of the trees that the hail had left. Thus nothing green was left on tree or plant of the field through all the land of Egypt. (NASB)*

א וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה בֹּא אֶל-פַּרְעֹה כִּי-אֲנִי הִכְבַּדְתִּי אֶת-  
לְבוֹ וְאֶת-לֵב עֶבְדָּיו לְמַעַן שְׁתִּי אֶתְתִּי אֶלָּה בְּקִרְבּוֹ: ב וְלַמַּעַן  
תִּסְפָּר בְּאָזְנֵי בְנֵה וּבֶן-בְנֵה אֶת אֲשֶׁר הִתְעַלְלִיתִי בְּמִצְרַיִם וְאֶת-  
אֶתְתִּי אֲשֶׁר-שָׁמַתִּי בָּם וַיִּדְעוּתָם כִּי-אֲנִי יְהוָה: ג וַיָּבֹא מֹשֶׁה  
וְאַהֲרֹן אֶל-פַּרְעֹה וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלָיו כֹּה-אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי הָעִבְרָיִם

עד-מתי מאנת לענת מפני שלח עמי ויעבדני: ד כי אם-  
 מאן אתה לשלח את-עמי הנני מביא מחר ארבה בגבלך:  
 ה וכסה את-עין הארץ ולא יוכל לראת את-הארץ ואכל |  
 את-יתר הפלטה הנשארת לכם מן-הפרד ואכל את-כל-העץ  
 הצמח לכם מן-השדה: ו ומלאו בתיך ובתי כל-עבדיך ובתי  
 כל-מצרים אשר לא-ראו אבתיך ואבות אבתיך מיום היותם  
 על-האדמה עד היום הנה ויפן ויצא מעם פרעה: ז ויאמרו  
 עבדי פרעה אליו עד-מתי יהיה זה לנו למוקש שלח את-  
 האנשים ויעבדו את-יהוה אלהיהם הטורם תדע כי אבדה מצ-  
 רים: ח ויושב את-משה ואת-אהרן אל-פרעה ויאמר אלהם  
 לכו עבדו את-יהוה אלהיכם מי ומי ההלכים: ט ויאמר משה  
 בנערינו ובזקנינו גלך בבנינו ובבנותנו בצאננו ובבקרנו גלך  
 כי חג-יהוה לנו: י ויאמר אלהם יהי כן יהוה עמכם פאשר  
 אשלח אתכם ואת-טפכם ראו כי רעה נגד פניכם: יא לא  
 יכן לכו-נא הגברים ועבדו את-יהוה כי אתה אתם מבקשים  
 ויגרש אתם מאת פני פרעה: ס [שני] יב ויאמר יהוה אל-  
 משה נטה ידך על-ארץ מצרים בארבה ויעל על-ארץ מצרים  
 ויאכל את-כל-עשב הארץ את כל-אשר השאיר הפרד: יג  
 ויט משה את-מטהו על-ארץ מצרים ויהוה נהג רוח-קדים  
 בארץ כל-היום והוא וכל-הלילה הבקר הנה ורוח הקדים  
 נשא את-הארבה: יד ויעל הארבה על כל-ארץ מצרים וינח  
 בכל גבול מצרים כבד מאד לפניו לא-היה כן ארבה כמהו  
 ואחריו לא יהיה-כּוּן:

א ויאמר יהוה אל-משה בא אל-פרעה, 10:1  
 Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Go to Pharaoh, for I have hardened his  
 heart and the heart of his servants, that I may perform these signs of  
 Mine among them, (NASB) Notice how the Lord God of Israel speaks  
 to Moshe saying את-לבּוּ הַכְּבִדְתִּי "I have glorified (hardened) his  
 heart" using the word הַכְּבִדְתִּי. The Hebrew text is written using the  
 word כבד referring to the Lord glorifying the heart of Pharaoh and his

servants. The Lord is explaining to Moshe that Pharaoh and his people are unrepentant. As a result of this, the Lord is going to show forth His power both in the hearts of men, and by the terrible plagues He is going to bring upon the land. The Lord speaks to Moshe to demonstrate His power by the sending of His plagues over Egypt commanding him to stretch out his staff and his right arm over the land in order to begin the bringing of the plagues upon Egypt. **יב וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה נְטֵה יָדְךָ** על-אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם בְּאֲרָבָה וַיַּעַל עַל-אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם וַיֹּאכֵל אֶת-כָּל-עֵשֶׂב הָאָרֶץ אֶת-כָּל-אֲשֶׁר הִשְׁאִיר הַבְּרָד: יג וַיֵּט מֹשֶׁה אֶת-מִטְּהוֹ עַל-אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם וַיְהִי נֶהַג רוּחַ-קָּדִים בְּאֶרֶץ כָּל-הַיּוֹם הַהוּא וְכָל-הַלַּיְלָה הַבִּקְרָה הָיָה וְרוּחַ הַקָּדִים נֹשָׂא אֶת-הָאֲרָבָה: *10:12 Then the Lord said to Moses, ‘Stretch out your hand over the land of Egypt for the locusts, that they may come up on the land of Egypt and eat every plant of the land, even all that the hail has left.’ 10:13 So Moses stretched out his staff over the land of Egypt, and the Lord directed an east wind on the land all that day and all that night; and when it was morning, the east wind brought the locusts. (NASB)* The position and power of the right hand of God is connected to the Lord bring His Messiah (deliverer) and is deeply rooted in the Torah text as the way in which the Lord works. This is why David said what he did in his psalm, according to *Tehillim / Psalms 110*. *Tehillim Psalms 108:1-13* opens saying, **א לָדוּד מְזִמּוֹר נְאֻם יְהוָה | לְאֹדְנֵי נֶשֶׁב לִי-** *110:1 The Lord says to my Lord: ‘Sit at My right hand Until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet.’ (NASB)* The phrase “*The Lord said to my Lord*” (נְאֻם יְהוָה | לְאֹדְנֵי) is an interesting phrase. This is interesting because Yeshua uses *Tehillim / Psalms 110:1* in *Matthew 22:44* to cause the Pharisees to think about what they believed concerning the deliverer of God (the Messiah). In the context of *Matthew 22*, Yeshua is speaking and teaching on the kingdom of God illustrated as a wedding banquet saying “*22:11 ‘But when the king came in to look over the dinner guests, he saw a man there who was not dressed in wedding clothes, 22:12 and he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you come in here without wedding clothes?’ And the man was speechless. 22:13 ‘Then the king said to the servants, ‘Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ 22:14 ‘For many are called, but few are chosen.’ (NASB)*” Yeshua is teaching us

that we are called to seek God's righteousness which is related to the cloths that we are to wear as God's People (see *Revelation 19:8*). The context of *Matthew 22* also shows us that Yeshua was teaching on the commandments of God. Following these things, he spoke of *Tehillim / Psalms 110:1*:

***Matthew 22:41-23:12***

*22:41 Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question: 22:42 'What do you think about the Christ, whose son is He?' They said to Him, 'The son of David.' 22:43 He said to them, 'Then how does David in the Spirit call Him 'Lord,' saying, 22:44 'The Lord said to my Lord, 'Sit at My right hand, Until I put Your enemies beneath Your feet''? 22:45 'If David then calls Him 'Lord,' how is He his son?' 22:46 No one was able to answer Him a word, nor did anyone dare from that day on to ask Him another question. 23:1 Then Jesus spoke to the crowds and to His disciples, 23:2 saying: 'The scribes and the Pharisees have seated themselves in the chair of Moses; 23:3 therefore all that they tell you, do and observe, but do not do according to their deeds; for they say things and do not do them. 23:4 'They tie up heavy burdens and lay them on men's shoulders, but they themselves are unwilling to move them with so much as a finger. 23:5 'But they do all their deeds to be noticed by men; for they broaden their phylacteries and lengthen the tassels of their garments. 23:6 'They love the place of honor at banquets and the chief seats in the synagogues, 23:7 and respectful greetings in the market places, and being called Rabbi by men. 23:8 'But do not be called Rabbi; for One is your Teacher, and you are all brothers. 23:9 'Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. 23:10 'Do not be called leaders; for One is your Leader, that is, Christ. 23:11 'But the greatest among you shall be your servant. 23:12 'Whoever exalts himself shall be humbled; and whoever humbles*

*himself shall be exalted. (NASB)*

Note here Yeshua asks the Pharisees what they think about “*the Christ*” which is Greek for the Hebrew question “*ma hu hamashiach?*” (מה הוא אֲמִשִּׁיחַ) (*Who is the Messiah*). He speaks of the son of David and the Spirit of God calling Him Lord saying, “*the Lord says to my Lord.*” It is important to consider the MT which states נְאֻם יְהוָה | לְאֲדֹנָי, here we have the YHVH saying to Adoni (my Lord), where the word Adonai has been used from a Torah context to refer to both the Lord God in heaven, and to men or rulers on earth. References include: *Joshua 3:11, 3:13, Nehemiah 7:61, Tehillim / Psalms 12:5, 97:5, 105:21, 114:7, Jeremiah 22:18, 34:5; Zechariah 4:14, and 6:5*. The term Adonai is used as a form of respect. Adonai is the plural of Adon, meaning “*LORD, master, or owner*” (the word Adon is derived from a Ugaritic word meaning “*lord*” or “*father*”). In the Tanakh, the word Adon can refer to men and angels as well as to the LORD God of Israel (e.g., *Shemot / Exodus 34:23*). According to the Torah, God is called the “*Lord of lords*” (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 10:17*) and *Tehillim / Psalm 8:1* mentions God as “*YHVH our Lord (Adonanu, יְהוָה אֲדֹנָינוּ).*” The plural form Adonai, like the plural form Elohim, is regularly used with singular verbs and modifiers, so it is best to construe the Name as an “*emphatic plural*” or a “*plural of majesty*” in a similar manner as we find for the word Elohim. When the plural is formed using a singular possessive ending (“*my Lords*”), it always refers to the God of Israel, and occurs over 300 times in the Tanakh in this form. The Masoretes ensured that the sacred Name of the LORD YHVH would not be taken in vain by also putting the vowel marks for Adonai under the letters in the text (ketiv, what is written). They did this to remind the reader to pronounce Adonai regardless of the consonants in the text (qere, what is read). However, Adon and Adonai also appear as the Names of God in the Hebrew Masoretic text, where the word Adonai is also used as a substitute for the Tetragrammaton (see the marginal Masorah on *Isaiah 6:1*). The first use of the word appears in *Bereshit / Genesis 15:2* where Abram addresses God as “*Adonai YHVH.*” Here however, Yeshua uses the word saying, *22:42 ‘What do you think about the Christ, whose son is He?’ They said to Him, ‘The son of David.’ 22:43 He said to them, ‘Then how does David in the Spirit call Him ‘Lord,’ saying,*



22:44 'The Lord said to my Lord, 'Sit at My right hand, Until I put Your enemies beneath Your feet'? 22:45 'If David then calls Him 'Lord,' how is He his son? (NASB) Were the Pharisees unaware of the use of the word from the Ugaritic texts as lord or father? Yeshua uses this to put down further questions since not knowing the answers, nobody asked him questions any further.

The rabbis speak of *Tehillim / Psalms 110:1 The Lord says to my Lord: 'Sit at My right hand Until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet.'* (NASB) in the following way:

### ***Rashi on Tehillim Psalms 110:1***

נאם ה' לאדני . רבותינו דרשוהו באברהם אבינו ואני אפ-  
רשנו כדבריהם נאם ה' לאברהם שקראוהו העולם אדוני  
שמעני אדוני ( בראשית כ"ג ) : שב לימיני . התעכב לת-  
שועתי והתחולל לה' אין ישיבה אלא עכבה וכן הוא אומר  
ותשבו בקדש ( דברים א ) לימיני . לתשועת ימיני : עד  
אשית אויביך . אמרפל וחביריו :

Rashi speaks of the YHVH saying to my Lord (לאדני) as refer-  
ring to the power and position of the right hand in relation to the  
psalm א לְדָוִד מְזִמּוֹר נְאֻם יְהוָה | לְאֲדֹנָי שֵׁב לְיָמֵינִי עַד-אֲשִׁית אִיְבֶיךָ הַדָּם לְרַגְלֶיךָ :  
*110:1 The Lord says to my Lord: 'Sit at My right hand Until I  
make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet.'* (NASB) Rashi makes the  
connection to the right hand of the Lord and the power of God to save.

### ***Ein Yaakov (Glick Edition), Sanhedrin 11:119***

R. Chana b. Levi said : "Shem the Senior questioned  
Eliezer, the servant of Abraham: 'When the kings of the  
West and East came to fight you, what have you done?'  
And he answered: 'The Holy One, praised be He! took  
Abraham, sat him down to His right, and we, however,  
took earth, threw it, and it became swords; straw and  
they became arrows; as it is said (Ps. 110:1) Sit thou at  
My right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool,  
and it is written (Isa. 41:2) Who hath raised up one from

*the east, at whose steps victory attendeth? He giveth nations before him, and maketh him rule over kings; his sword maketh them as the dust, his bow as driven stubble’.*”

Ein Yaakov says that when the kings of the East and West come to fight, Abraham sat to the right of the Lord, and the Lord won the battle. The Lord put down Abraham’s enemies, and the Lord working is connected to the power and position of the right hand. Note how the Rabbis say this victory of the Lord, the deliverance of Israel in the land, that this land has a spiritual equivalent according to Shney Luchot HaBrit, Lech Lecha, Torah Ohr 105.

While studying the Hebrew text, we do not obtain a straight forward analysis of the statement *“The Lord said to my lord”* (נאם ה’ (לאדני) in the sense that two different words are used in the MT, the YHVH and the word Adonai. The One to whom the Lord (YHVH) is speaking is to sit at the right hand of God, a position of power and authority. These words draw in a significant Torah context for the One to whom the Lord is speaking to. But just as we read according to *Ein Yaakov (Glick Edition), Sanhedrin 11:119*, the Lord is the One who sets us along side Abraham’s right hand.

***Shney Luchot HaBrit, Lech Lecha, Torah Ohr 105***

*Abraham hinted to Lot later that there is an ארץ ישראל העליונה, a spiritual equivalent to the terrestrial land of Israel, as we know from Sanhedrin 90 based on Isaiah 60:21 “Your people are all righteous, they will inherit an eternal land.” Abraham hinted to Lot that both he and Lot would qualify for that future and that they would both reside in Heaven close to G’d.*

This commentary comes to the opinion that one day we will be with the Lord and our residence will be in Heaven, close to the Lord God of Israel. This draws in the idea that living in the presence of God necessitates the need for the removal of our sins. This is only accomplished by the forgiveness and power of God to deliver. The commentary continues saying the following:

***Shney Luchot HaBrit, Lech Lecha, Torah Ohr 106***

*Yalkut Shimoni on Psalms 110:1 The Lord said to my lord “sit on my right side while I make your enemies your footstool,” quotes Rabbi Yudon saying that in the future G’d will seat the Messiah on His Right and Abraham on His Left, and that Abraham will feel aggrieved at being assigned the left saying “how can my grandson be assigned the right side while I have to be content with the left side?” G’d will placate him saying: “Your grandson sits on My right, whereas I sit on your right side, וענוותך תרבני, “and Your providence has made me great” (based on Samuel II 22:36). Thus far the Yalkut. Here we have Abraham prophesying that both he and Lot would sit next to G’d, but he did not know who would sit on which side of G’d until the time came. This is the deeper meaning of Abraham saying to Lot that one of them would find himself on the Left whereas the other would find himself on the Right.*

According to Shney Luchot HaBrit, Lech Lecha, Torah Ohr 106, Rabbi Yudon’s interpretation of *Tehillim / Psalms 110:1 The Lord said to my lord “sit on my right side while I make your enemies your footstool,”* that *“in the future G’d will seat the Messiah on His Right and Abraham on His Left.”* Notice the importance of the Lord’s deliverer who is being set on the right, because it is through him the Lord is working to deliver His people. This moving of Abraham to the left side is a matter of perspective, where the interpretation is, *“Your grandson sits on My right, whereas I sit on your right side,” וענוותך תרבני, “and Your providence has made me great” (based on Samuel II 22:36).* The significance of this interpretation is that Abraham being moved to the left, has the Lord God of Israel on his right. This is very important, since it relates to the one who lives his life for the Lord in righteousness, justice, and truth. The position of the left, where God is on your right, indicates Abraham has allowed the Lord to be His power and position of authority, as opposed to his having taken matters into his own hands. He allowed the Lord to take the foremost position allowing the Lord to

work on his behalf and waiting upon God's timing.

David continues saying in his Psalm saying, מִיַּטֵּה עֲזָרָה יִשְׁלַח, *110:2 The Lord will stretch forth Your strong scepter from Zion, saying, 'Rule in the midst of Your enemies. (NASB)* The scepter is a rod of authority that is mentioned throughout the Torah, for example the rod that Moshe carried while going before Pharaoh in Egypt. This speaks of a royal scepter which is also known as a staff. A rod is frequently mentioned as a weapon in the Scriptures and is symbolic of authority as we see here the Lord stretching forth His rod of authority. Over and over again we see the Lord commanding Moshe to stretch out his staff and right hand over Egypt. In the Torah, Moshe speaks of a blessing and a curse which depends upon whether one listens or does not listen to the mitzvot (commands) of the Lord our God. The example that Moshe provides is that the blessing belongs to those who are in a covenant relationship with the Lord. In addition, it is interesting while reading *Devarim / Deuteronomy 30*, the Lord will only hear us if we are listening to His commands and applying them to our lives! Consequentially, those who are cursed are those who are outside of a covenant relationship with the Lord. While reading *Tehillim / Psalms 23*, David makes a similar contrast on the covenant of God in Psalm in *23:4*. David says כִּי-אֵלֶּהָ בְּגִיּא צִלְמֹת לֹא-אִירָא *23:4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. (NASB)* According to David, the rod and staff they comfort him. How does the rod and staff of God provide comfort? Taking a closer look at the Psalm, we learn that David uses these two Hebrew Words, שְׁבֵטָהּ וּמִשְׁעֶנְתָּהּ. What David is trying to say here in *Tehillim / Psalms 23:4* is in relation to protection against our enemies, to discipline, to guide, and to rescue. The staff or rod was also symbolic of authority, as for example the scepter that stands between the king's feet. David begins his verse saying כִּי-אֵלֶּהָ בְּגִיּא צִלְמֹת לֹא-אִירָא *“Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me.”* David is confident the Lord is with him because of the covenant relationship that he has with the Lord. This may be the reason David uses the word שְׁבֵט which also has the meaning “*tribe or*

*clan.*” A person who is living among the tribes of Israel are living in the covenant blessing, this applies whether one is native born or a ger (stranger) who lives in the midst of Israel. The words of the rod which the Lord stretches out, are expressive to emphasize the Covenant of God with His people (the tribes of Israel), His protection, and the one upon whom we are to lean, an implied reference that we are to lean, learn, and live in the Lord God Almighty. (Notice the parallel to Yeshua’s Words.) Remaining in the covenant relationship with the Lord, we are comforted in His presence. This leads to our understanding that He cares for us, protects us, and guides us in His holy word. He is Lord and King over the community, over relationships, over individual lives, and essentially all of who we are.

Within the theme of the deliverer, the greatest enemy of all is sin. The Lord sends His deliverer to take His people out of all forms of bondage, and most importantly, to the deliverance from sin. This is consistent from the very beginning (Torah) where we are called to seek His righteousness, justice, and truth. (*Revelation 19:8*) His ways that are revealed to us in the commandments according to the Torah and Yeshua demonstrated this truth in his life so that we would also do the same. In the sight of a holy God, we are called to seek His holiness. This was the attitude which was missing from Pharaoh and his people. As a result, we are told the Lord God of Israel אֶת-לְבָבוֹ הִקְבַּדְתִּי “*glorified (hardened) his heart,*” suggesting that the Lord God Almighty helped to facilitate the strengthening of pride in Pharaoh’s life. Don’t let your attitude cause the Lord to harden your heart today! The neglect (absence) of a repentant heart is connected to the self glorification of our own hearts. This week’s Torah portion causes us to consider the attitudes of our hearts in relation to the themes of the power of God (the right hand), and the future expectation of the Lord sending His deliverer (Mashiach) and of redemption. We only receive forgiveness of sin and salvation when we conform our hearts and lives to repentance and truth according to God’s Word!

