

## ספר תהילים א | Tehillim / Psalms 1

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### Walking in the counsel of God

This week's study is from *Tehillim / Psalms* chapter 1. The first chapter of the book of Psalms serves as a preface to the entire collection of the five books of the Psalms. The author of this Psalm is speaking of the true blessedness of the righteous man and approaches the blessedness of the righteous by stating in a negative perspective what a righteous man will not do. א אֲשֶׁר־יֵאֱמַר אֲשֶׁר לֹא הִלֵּךְ בְּעֵצַת רְשָׁעִים וּבְדַרְךָ חַטָּאִים לֹא יֵשֵׁב: *1:1* *How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, Nor stand in the path of sinners, Nor sit in the seat of scoffers!* (NASB) The Psalm examines the contrast of the peaceful way of the righteous with the desperation of the wicked. The righteous man does not allow himself to be influenced by the unrighteous and instead delights in spending time meditating upon the Word of God (the Torah) day and night. The blessedness of the righteous is analogized with the healthiness and fruitfulness of a tree that is nourished by rivers of water and whatever the righteous man puts his hand to he prospers (*Tehillim / Psalms 1:3*). The wicked on the other hand are not blessed. They are like chaff driven by the wind. In judgment they will not stand and though they may be in the midst of the congregation of the righteous they will not be blessed (*Tehillim / Psalms 1:4-5*). The Psalm concludes with a contrast between the two paths a man chooses to take, (i) the way of the righteous is known by God and is blessed and provided for and (ii) the way of the ungodly is destruction. In this week's study we will look at the meaning of the blessedness of the man (אֲשֶׁר־יֵאֱמַר) that walks in righteousness and Yeshua's words in *Mathew 5:1-12*. What is this blessedness that Yeshua referring to when he said "Blessed are the poor in spirit, Blessed are those who mourn, Blessed are the gentle, Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, Blessed are the merciful, Blessed are the pure in heart, Blessed are the peacemakers, Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, and Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me?" How can we understand the blessedness of these things according to the writings of the Tanach (Torah, Neviim, and Ketuvim).

עברית Hebrew	ארמי Aramaic	ελληνικός Greek
<p><b>ספר תהלים פרק א</b></p> <p>א אֲשֶׁר־יֵאֱמַר אֲשֶׁר לֹא הִלֵּךְ  בְּעֵצַת רְשָׁעִים וּבְדַרְךָ חַטָּאִים לֹא  עָמַד וּבְמוֹשָׁב לְצִים לֹא יֵשֵׁב: ב כִּי  אִם־בְּתוֹרַת יְהוָה חִפְצוֹ וּבְתוֹרָתוֹ  יְהַגֵּה יוֹמָם וּלְיָלֵה: ג וְהָיָה כַּעֲצֵץ  שָׂתוּל עַל־פְּלִיגֵי מַיִם אֲשֶׁר פָּרְיוֹ   יִתֵּן  בְּעֵתוֹ וְעֵלְהוּ לֹא יִבּוֹל וְכָל אֲשֶׁר־יַעֲ-  שֶׂה יִצְלִיחַ</p>	<p><b>ספר טוביה פרק א</b></p> <p>א טוביה טובוהי דגבר דלא הליך  במלכת רשיעין ובאורחת חייבין  לא קם ובסיעת ממיקני לא איס-  תחר: ב אילהן בנמוסא דיהוה  רעותיה ובאוריתיה מרנין יומם יימ-  סולילי: ג ויהי כאילן חיי דנציב  על טורופי מוי די אינביה מבשל  בעידניה ואטרפוי לא נתרין וכל  לובלבו דמלבלב מגרגר ומצלח:</p>	<p><b>ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 1</b></p> <p>1 μακαριος ανηρ ος ουκ επορευθη εν  βουλη ασεβων και εν οδω αμαρτωλων  ουκ εστη και επι καθεδραν λοιμων  ουκ εκαθισεν 2 αλλ' η εν τω νομω  κυριου το θελημα αυτου και εν τω  νομω αυτου μελετησει ημερας και  νυκτος 3 και εσται ως το ξυλον το  πεφυτευμενον παρα τας διεξοδους  των υδατων ο τον καρπον αυτου  δωσει εν καιρω αυτου και το φυλλον  αυτου ουκ απορρησεται και παντα  οσα αν ποιη κατευοδωθησεται</p>

<p>ד לא-כֵן הִרְשָׁעִים פִּי אִם-כְּמִץ אֲשֶׁר-תִּדְפְּנוּ רוּחַ: הַ עַל-כֵּן   לֹא- יִקְמוּ רְשָׁעִים בְּמִשְׁפָּט וְחַטָּאִים בְּעֵדוּת צְדִיקִים: וּ כִּי-יִוָּדַע יְהוָה דְּרָךְ צְדִיקִים וְדְרָךְ רְשָׁעִים תֵּאבֵד: א</p>	<p>ד לא היכנא רשיעי אילהין כמוזא כמוצא די תשקפיניה עלעולא זעפא: ה מטול היכנא כנלא יזכון יקומון רשיעי ביומא דינא רבא וחייבין בסיעת צדיקיא: ו מטול דגלי קדם יהוה אורח צדיקיא ואורחתהון דרשיעי תהובד:</p>	<p>4 ουχ ουτως οι ασεβεις ουχ ουτως αλλ' η ως ο χνους ον εκριπτει ο ανεμος απο προσωπου της γης 5 δια τουτο ουκ αναστησονται ασεβεις εν κρισει ουδε αμαρτωλοι εν βουλη δικαιων 6 οτι γινωσκει κυριος οδον δικαιων και οδος ασεβων απολειται</p>
<p><b>Tehillim / Psalms 1</b> 1:1 How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, Nor stand in the path of sinners, Nor sit in the seat of scoffers! 1:2 But his delight is in the law of the Lord, And in His law he meditates day and night. 1:3 He will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, Which yields its fruit in its season And its leaf does not wither; And in whatever he does, he prospers. 1:4 The wicked are not so, But they are like chaff which the wind drives away. 1:5 Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous. 1:6 For the Lord knows the way of the righteous, But the way of the wicked will perish. (NASB)</p>	<p><b>Toviyah / Psalms Chapter 1</b> 1. Happy the man who has not walked in the council of the wicked, or stood in the paths of sinners, or taken a seat in the band of mockers. 2. Instead his pleasure is in the law of the Lord, and in his Torah he meditates day and night. 3. And he will be like a living tree planted by streams of water, whose fruit ripens in due course, and its leaves do not fall, and all its branches that grow ripen and flourish. 4. Not so the wicked; instead, they are like the chaff that the storm-wind will drive. 5. Therefore the wicked will not be acquitted in the great day, nor sinners in the band of the righteous, 6. Because the path of the righteous is manifest in the Lord's presence, but the paths of the wicked will perish. (EMC)</p>	<p><b>Tehillim / Psalms Chapter 1</b> 1 Blessed is the man who has not walked in the counsel of the ungodly, and has not stood in the way of sinners, and has not sat in the seat of evil men. 2 But his pleasure is in the law of the Lord; and in his law will he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be as a tree planted by the brooks of waters, which shall yield its fruit in its season, and its leaf shall not fall off; and whatsoever he shall do shall be prospered. 4 Not so the ungodly; —not so: but rather as the chaff which the wind scatters away from the face of the earth. 5 Therefore the ungodly shall not rise in judgment, nor sinners in the counsel of the just. 6 For the Lord knows the way of the righteous; but the way of the ungodly shall perish.</p>

We begin the study by looking at two translations of the Hebrew text, the Targum Pseudo Jonathan (Aramaic translation) and the Septuagint (LXX, Greek translation). Reading through these translations on *Tehillim / Psalms 1* the first thing that immediately catches one's attention is the translation in English that show a contrast between the "Happy, good" (טובה טובה) man in Targum Pseudo Jonathan and the "blessed" (אַשְׁרֵי, μακαριος) man in the Septuagint. Looking at the word for blessing, the English language leaves us asking questions about what it means to be blessed, what kind of blessing is this man receiving who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, or stand in the path of sinners, or sits in the seat of scoffers? Let's dig a little deeper into the meaning of the word for blessing according to the Hebrew Scriptures.

In the Hebrew bible, there are two words that are used to describe blessing, the word ברוך (baruch) and אַשְׁרֵי (ashrei). In the Torah, the language of "blessing" is given by the Hebrew word ברוך (baruch) "to bless." The word ברוך (baruch) is derived from the root word ברך meaning "to kneel." The word ברוך provides us with the Hebraic way of showing to bless someone is to kneel down and serve the one who is being blessed. How appropriately is God's use of this word to express to us the way in which He would bless all the peoples of this earth in the seed of Abraham by His Son who would come as a prophet, priest, and king in the role of a servant. The servant nature of ברוך is important to keep in mind while we ask the question what it means to be a blessing and to be blessed by God according to the Torah?

What does it mean to be blessed according to the Scriptures of the Hebrew Bible? Studying the Hebrew Scriptures, there are two ways for understanding a blessing, (i) to be a blessing to others and (ii) to receive a blessing from someone and thereby being "blessed." In other words, one is either

the source of the blessing or the receiver of the blessing. The most common word for blessing is written as ברוך meaning “to bless” and this word is used extensively in Parashat Lech Lecha (*Bereshit / Genesis 12:1-17:27*) where the Lord God calls on Abraham to go out from his land from his father’s house, and from his people (12:3 וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-אַבְרָם לֵךְ-לְךָ מֵאֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן וּמִמּוֹלַדְתְּךָ וּמִבֵּית אָבִיךָ אֶל-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אֹמַר לְךָ וְיָצֵאתָ שָׁמָּה וְאָמַרְתָּ לְגוֹי וְאָבְרָכָהּ) and that those who bless him the Lord will bless, and those who curse him the Lord will curse (וְכָל הַבְּרָכִים וְכָל הַקְּלָלִים). In the Torah, there are six other places where God reaffirms (confirms) His covenant with Abraham using the language of “blessing” (ברוך), these are found in *Bereshit / Genesis 15:18-21, 17:1-8, 18:18, 22:18, 26:4, and 28:14*. Comparing these texts with *Bereshit / Genesis 12:3* it is interesting to note that there are minor differences in the words used to make the covenant blessing of Abraham’s seed.

### פרשת לך לך ספר בראשית פרק יב פסוק ג

ג וְאָבְרָכָה מְבָרְכֶיהָ וּמְקַלְלֶיהָ אֶאֱרָךְ וְנִבְרַכְוּ בְךָ כָּל מְשֻׁפָּחֹת הָאָדָמָה:

### פרשת וירא ספר בראשית פרק יח פסוק יח

יח וְאָבְרָהֶם הָיוּ יְהִיֶה לְגוֹי גָּדוֹל וְעַצִּים וְנִבְרַכְוּ-בּוֹ כָּל גּוֹיֵי הָאָרֶץ:

### פרשת וירא ספר בראשית פרק כב פסוק יח

יח וְהִתְבָּרְכוּ בְּזֶרְעֶךָ כָּל גּוֹיֵי הָאָרֶץ עַקֵּב אֲשֶׁר שְׁמַעְתָּ בְּקָלִי:

### פרשת תולדת ספר בראשית פרק כו פסוק ד

ד וְהִרְבִּיתִי אֶת-זֶרְעֶךָ כְּכֹכְבֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם וְנִתְמַי לְזֶרְעֶךָ אֶת כָּל-הָאֲרָצוֹת הָאֵל וְהִתְבָּרְכוּ בְּזֶרְעֶךָ כָּל גּוֹיֵי הָאָרֶץ:

### פרשת ויצא ספר בראשית פרק כח פסוק יד

יד וְהָיָה זֶרְעֶךָ כְּעֵפֶר הָאָרֶץ וּפְרָצְתָּ יָמָה וְקִדְמָה וְצָפְנָה וְנִגְבָּה וְנִבְרַכְוּ בְךָ כָּל-מְשֻׁפָּחֹת הָאָדָמָה וּבְזֶרְעֶךָ:

In *Bereshit / Genesis 12:3* it states that “in you all the families (מְשֻׁפָּחוֹת) of the earth shall be blessed,” whereas in *Bereshit / Genesis 18:18* it says “and in him all the nations of the earth will be blessed.” (וְנִבְרַכְוּ-) וְיִתְבָּרְכוּ כָּל גּוֹיֵי הָאָרֶץ. The Targum Onkelos says “all the peoples of the earth will be blessed” (כָּל עַמְמֵי אֲרֵעָא). *Bereshit 22:18* says “and in your descendants (וְעַצִּים) all the nations of the earth will be blessed.” *Bereshit 26:4* states “by your seed (בְּזֶרְעֶךָ) all the nations of the earth shall be blessed and *Bereshit 28:14* states that “in you (בְּךָ) shall all the families (מְשֻׁפָּחוֹת) of the earth be blessed, even in your seed (וּבְזֶרְעֶךָ).” What is the significance of the change in wording from מְשֻׁפָּחוֹת (families), to גּוֹיֵי (nations) in Hebrew, and עַמְמֵי (people) in Aramaic? The covenantal promise to Abraham and the reaffirmation of the covenant reveals to us conclusively that all of the people of the earth, all the nations, all families, whether Jewish or non-Jewish are included in this promise that God is going to bless the peoples of this earth in and through Abraham and his seed. Examining these verses in *Bereshit / Genesis 15:17-18, 18:18, 22:18, and 28:14* more closely, it is interesting that the Hebrew verb patterns found within these covenant blessings reveal to us how God is going to bless all the nations of the earth. Looking at the word for blessing (ברך) it is interesting to observe that we find the word ברך alternating between the Niphal (נִפְעַל) and Hiphil (הִפְעִיל) verb patterns. The Niphal verb is a simple passive or reflexive verbal stem used to express

simple action with either a passive or reflexive voice. In other words, whatever a verb means in the Qal stem, it becomes passive or reflexive in the Niphal stem. The Hiphil stem is causative/active voice used to express causative action in an active voice. For example, מלך means “he was king” or “he reigned” in the Qal stem whereas the Hiphil form is written המליך and means “he caused to reign” or “he made someone king.” In the Hebrew text we find that blessing (ברך) is written in the Niphal stem in *Bereshit / Genesis 12:3* וַיְבָרֶכְנוּ, and *Bereshit 18:18* וַיְבָרְכוּ, and changes to the Hiphil stem in *Bereshit 22:18* וַיְהַבְרֶכְנוּ, and *Bereshit 26:4* וַיְהַבְרֶכְנוּ, and switches back to the Niphal stem in *Bereshit 28:14* וַיְבָרֶכְנוּ. In these verses, the JPS translation takes the Niphal to conform to the Hiphil while the KJV and NASB make the Hiphil conform to the Niphal and translate all the five passages as passive. The NIV takes the Niphal to be passive and the Hiphil to be reflexive translating the phrase as passive 3 times and reflexive 2 times.” The Targum Onkelos takes the Niphal in *Bereshit 12:3* as passive as does the LXX, Latin Vulgate, and Samaritan Pentateuch. The importance on understanding these differences in the verbal forms is related to interpretation of these scriptures in light of the kind of blessing God is going to give unto the nations. Studying the different verbal forms of ברך (blessing) in these verses, we find a greater number of Niphal occurrences (three) than the Hiphil (two) indicating that God will bless the nations (Niphal) or cause the nations to be blessed (Hiphil) in this seed of Abraham. So these verses of the covenantal blessing are to be interpreted as the nations of the earth will “be blessed” and not to mean that the nations would “bless themselves” or “evoke a blessing in Abraham’s name.” The understanding these passages is dependent upon the nature of the covenant that God is making with Abraham and his children. In the seed of Abraham the Lord would bring His Messiah and in His Messiah God would cause all the nations of the earth to be blessed. These verses indicate that it is through this seed of Abraham that the blessing will pass to all the nations of the earth. It is in the way of servant blessing the Lord God will ברוך (baruch) “bless” all the nations by the giving His son the Messiah. The meaning of blessing in the word ברוך (baruch) “to bless” is that of love and that of a servant heart. Therefore, when we are being a blessing to the Lord we are to serve Him with all of heart, mind, and soul (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 6:4-12*). It is interesting however, that this is not the type of blessing that Yeshua was referring too in *Matthew 5:1-12*.

The scripture verses we are looking at this week say אֲשֶׁר־יֵאָמֵר לֹא הָלַךְ בְּעֵצַת רְשָׁעִים “How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked” in *Tehillim / Psalms 1:1* utilizes the Hebrew word אֲשֶׁר־יֵאָמֵר. The word אֲשֶׁר־יֵאָמֵר is derived from the root word אָשַׁר meaning “happy one” according to the BDB lexicon. Performing a word search on the word אֲשֶׁר־יֵאָמֵר this word occurs 40 times in the Tanach, 2 times in *1 Kings*, 2 times in *Isaiah*, 28 times in *Psalms*, 4 times in *Proverbs*, 2 times in *Job*, once in *Daniel*, and once in *2 Chronicles*. It is interesting to note that the word אֲשֶׁר־יֵאָמֵר is not used in the text of the Torah and is never used of God. The use of this word (אֲשֶׁר־יֵאָמֵר), according to the Scriptures, appears to be related to the goodness of God as a result of how one lives. For example, living for the Lord and not in the counsel of the wicked or in the path of sinners, or in the seat of scoffers such a man is blessed by not doing these things. The Aramaic translation (Targum Pseudo Jonathan) says טוביה טובוהי דגבר “good is the man,” it is interesting that the word טוב is used for translation meaning “good,” hence the English translation “good is the man.” Also note that this word is repeated for emphasis and the second word is written in the plural construct form to indicate that this man is good in the sense of calling someone blessed, that goodness has been given unto him. Sokoloff’s dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic states that the word טוב is a reference to the “best thing, goodness,” “the choice product” (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 6:11*), it is also used as a reference to “separation of the choice part from it” referring to the best parts of the Korban (sacrifice) that was given to God upon the altar (*Bamidbar / Numbers 18:30, Vayikra / Leviticus 2:2, 16, 6:8*), the “best dew and rain” (*Bereshit / Genesis 49:25*), “the best wheat and wine” (*Bamidbar / Numbers 18:12, Devarim / Deuteronomy 6:11, 32:14, 33:13*), and “the best produce of the land” (*Bereshit / Genesis*

27:28, 43:11, 45:18). The blessing of goodness as it is used according to the Aramaic Scriptures, such a man who has the goodness of God is happy. For example, “*Happy am I for my portion in this world, happy is the villager whose king is his wedding attendant, happy is he who has gold in his house or in his caravan*” (Bavli Yoma 41d). The Greek translation Septuagint (LXX) uses the word μακάριος meaning “*blessed, happy*” is in agreement with the Aramaic translation of the Hebrew text.

Studying the blessedness of the man (אֲשֶׁר־יִהְיֶה־צַדִּיק) that walks in righteousness from *Tehillim / Psalms 1*, it is interesting that Yeshua’s words in *Mathew 5:1-12*, while teaching on the mount of olives, Yeshua used the same word אֲשֶׁר־יִהְיֶה meaning “*happy one*” while referring to those who are poor in spirit, who mourn, who hunger and thirst for righteousness, who are merciful and pure in heart, who are peacemakers, and who are persecuted for his sake. What is this blessedness (אֲשֶׁר־יִהְיֶה) that Yeshua is referring too, was he thinking on *Tehillim / Psalms 1*? Bellow is a summary of the sermon on the mount from *Matthew 5:1-11*.

## Summary of Matthew 5

### 1. The Blessedness / Goodness (Beatitudes, *Matthew 5:1-11*)

a. **μακάριοι** οἱ πτωχοὶ τῷ πνεύματι, ὅτι αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν. 5:3 *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (NASB)*

אשרי עניי רוח כי להם מלכות השמים:

b. **μακάριοι** οἱ πενθοῦντες, ὅτι αὐτοὶ παρακληθήσονται. 5:4 *Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. (NASB)*

אשרי האבלים כי הם ינחמו:

c. **μακάριοι** οἱ πραεῖς, ὅτι αὐτοὶ κληρονομήσουσιν τὴν γῆν. 5:5 *Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth. (NASB)*

אשרי הענווים כי המה יירשו הארץ:

d. **μακάριοι** οἱ πεινῶντες καὶ διψῶντες τὴν δικαιοσύνην, ὅτι αὐτοὶ χορτασθήσονται. 5:6 *Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. (NASB)*

אשרי הרעבים והצמאים לצדקה כי הם ישבעו:

e. **μακάριοι** οἱ ἐλεήμονες, ὅτι αὐτοὶ ἐλεηθήσονται. 5:7 *Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. (NASB)*

אשרי הרחמנים כי הם ירחמו:

f. **μακάριοι** οἱ καθαρὸι τῇ καρδίᾳ, ὅτι αὐτοὶ τὸν θεὸν ὄψονται. 5:8 *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. (NASB)*

אשרי ברי לבב כי הם יחזו את האלהים:

g. **μακάριοι** οἱ εἰρηνοποιοί, ὅτι αὐτοὶ υἱοὶ θεοῦ κληθήσονται. 5:9 *Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. (NASB)*

אשרי רדפי שלום כי בני אלהים יקראו:

h. **μακάριοι** οἱ δεδιωγμένοι ἕνεκεν δικαιοσύνης, ὅτι αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν. 5:10 *Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (NASB)*

i. **μακάριοι** ἐστε ὅταν ὀνειδίσωσιν ὑμᾶς καὶ διώξωσιν καὶ εἴπωσιν πᾶν πονηρὸν καθ' ὑμῶν [ψευδόμενοι] ἕνεκεν ἐμοῦ: 5:11 *Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. (NASB)*

**אשריכם** אם יחרפו וירדפו אתכם וידברו בשקר עליכם כל רע בעבורי:

This section of Scripture from *Matthew 5:1-12* become known as the “beatitudes” (*blessing; bliss, absolute happiness*) as a result of the repeated use of the word “*blessed*” (μακάριος, makarios), which reflects the Hebrew word אֲשֵׁרִי (ashrei). This way of speaking is found throughout *Tehillim / Psalms* and *Mishley / Proverbs* (see *Tehillim / Psalms 1:1, 2:12, 32:1-2, 33:12, 34:8, 40:4, 41:1, 65:4, 84:4-5, 12, 89:15, 94:12, 106:3, 112:1, 119:1-2, 127:5, 128:1, 137:8-9, 144:15, 146:5, Mishley / Proverbs 3:13, 8:34, and 28:14*). Studying *Matthew 1-4* we learn that Matthew has laid out his Gospel beginning with the genealogy of Yeshua and then followed by the testimony given by John the baptizer where John says that Yeshua is the one who comes that was spoken of by Moshe, the promised Messiah who would “*baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire.*” Yeshua is presented in Matthew’s Gospel in chapters 1-4 as the Son of God and as the One in whom the Father is pleased. Following having informed the reader about who Yeshua is, Matthew then writes the sermon on the mount. It is only after we are aware of who Yeshua is that we are able to listen to and hear his words as he spoke to the people while sitting on the mount. Note that the frequency of the word אֲשֵׁרִי (ashrei) used in the Scriptures is very high in *Tehillim / Psalms* and *Mishley / Proverbs*. The Psalms and Proverbs contain many life application scriptures. This blessedness that Yeshua is speaking of, is it related to life application?

If we consider that Yeshua is thinking on the Psalms, these nine sayings Yeshua gives us (beatitudes) might be laid out in a chiasmic structure similar to the way many of the Psalms are laid out. If Yeshua was laying out these sayings in a chiasmic arrangement then the major emphasis is placed upon “*showing mercy,*” at the center of the structure with the beatitudes having these categories:

### Catagories:

1. The Poor in spirit = those persecuted as disciples of Yeshua
2. Those who mourn = persecuted for righteousness
3. Those who are gentle = peacemakers
4. Those who hunger & thirst after righteousness = pure in heart

### The Chiasmic Structure of the Beatitudes

Those poor in spirit —> kingdom of heaven  
 Those who mourn —> comforted  
     Those who are gentle —> inherit the earth  
         Those who hunger & thirst after righteousness —> satisfied  
             Those who show mercy —> shown mercy  
                 Those pure in heart —> see God  
                     Those who are peacemakers —> called sons of God  
                         Those persecuted for the sake of righteousness —> kingdom of heaven  
                             Those persecuted as disciples of Yeshua —> great reward in heaven

### Chiasm

chiasmus (from the , chiázō, "to shape like the letter X") is the figure of speech in which two or more clauses are related to each other through a reversal of structures in order to make a larger point; that is, the clauses display inverted parallelism. Chiasmus was particularly popular both in Greek and in Latin literature, where it was used to articulate balance or order within a text. As a popular example, many long and complex chiasmi have been found in Shakespeare and the Greek and Hebrew texts of the Bible.

Looking at the Greek text of the Gospel of Matthew, the use of the word μακάριοι, makarios “blessed” draws our attention since this is the same word that is used in the LXX from *Tehillim / Psalms 1*. As mentioned earlier there are two words that are used throughout the Tanach for blessing ברוך (baruch) and אֲשֶׁרִי (ashrei). Searching through the Tanach, wherever אֲשֶׁרִי (ashrei) is written it is always translated using the Greek μακάριοι (makarios). On the other hand ברוך (baruch) is translated with the Greek words ευφλογητος (eulogetos) or εulogeo (eulogeo). By the use of the word μακάριοι by Matthew indicates that Yeshua was referring to אֲשֶׁרִי “blessed” and not ברוך “to be blessed.” Mentioned earlier, the word אֲשֶׁרִי (ashrei) is never used of God and is always used of the blessing that comes upon a person who lives righteously. Therefore the major component of this “blessing” that is found in our text is that it encompasses the divine action toward one who obeyed God and acted in accordance with His prescribed commandments.

The majority of the English translations of the bible translate this as “blessed,” however some translate as “happy” such as Young’s literal translation. In addition to this, the Aramaic translation uses the word טוביה “happy” or “good” and studying the various uses of this word in the Targum Onkelos and Pseudo-Jonathan, we find that the טוביה “happiness” of the man is much more than simply being happy, the Beatitudes themselves show that one may be “blessed” even in the state of mourning. Therefore, this “blessing” encompasses the idea of a heart and conscience at peace before the Lord God Almighty. It captures the sense that one exists under the protection of God regardless of our circumstances.

Looking at the chiasmic structure, the poor in spirit may be related to those who are persecuted as disciples of Yeshua, their reward is great in heaven and their names are written in heaven. Those who have complete reliance upon God will obtain the kingdom of heaven. Those who are poor in spirit realize that they do not achieve entrance into heaven by their own strength or by material wealth and not even because of their lack of wealth. The Lord who reigns in their hearts will give them peace and right standing before God and await a future expectation of the Messiah upon the clouds. Here Yeshua is teaching us about our absolute reliance upon the Lord God Almighty for entrance into His kingdom, happy and blessed are those who completely place their trust in the Lord. Yeshua is telling us that the kingdom of heaven is a gift from God to those who admit their own spiritual poverty and believe upon Yeshua for their salvation.

The next indentation in the chiasmic structure is those who mourn. Based upon the layout of the structure, those who mourn do so because they are persecuted for righteousness sake. Now mourning as a result of persecution draws a parallel with *Isaiah 61:1-3* where comforting is found for those who mourn. In *Isaiah 61*, Israel is being oppressed by her enemies and the same is true for us who believe in Yeshua the Messiah and walk in the righteousness of our Lord and Savior. We will be persecuted even unto death. What Yeshua is trying to say is not an exhortation to mourn in order to be blessed. The mourning comes as a result of evil people persecuting God’s people for living in righteousness and holiness.

ספר ישעיה פרק סא	Book of Isaiah Chapter 61
<p>א רוח אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה עָלַי יַעַן מָשַׁח יְהוָה אֹתִי לְבַשֵּׁר  עֲנוּיִם שְׁלַחֲנִי לְחַבֵּשׁ לְנַשְׁפָּרִי-לֵב לְקָרָא לְשֹׁבוּיִם  דְּרוּר וְלְאֲסוּרִים פְּקֹחַ-קוֹחַ: ב לְקָרָא שְׁנַת-רְצוֹן  לְיְהוָה וַיּוֹם נָקָם לְאַלְהֵינוּ לְנַחֵם כָּל-אֲבֵלִים: ג  לְשׁוֹם   לְאַבְלֵי צִיּוֹן לְתֵת לָהֶם פָּאֵר תַּחַת אֶפְרַיִם  שָׁמֶן שְׂשׂוֹן תַּחַת אֶבֶל מַעֲטָה תַּהַלְלָה תַּחַת רוּחַ פְּהֵה  וְקָרָא לָהֶם אֵילֵי הַצְּדִק מִטַּע יְהוָה לְהַתְּפָאֵר:</p>	<p>61:1 The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, Because the Lord has anointed me To bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to captives And freedom to prisoners; 61:2 To proclaim the favorable year of the Lord And the day of vengeance of our God; To comfort all who mourn, 61:3 To grant those who mourn in Zion, Giving them a garland instead of ashes, The oil of gladness instead of mourning, The mantle of praise instead of a spirit of fainting. So they will be called oaks of righteousness, The planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified. (NASB)</p>

The blessing will ultimately come when the Lord will validate the way of walking in righteousness by punishing the wicked as it says in *Tehillim / Psalms 1* the path of the wicked is destruction. The blessing that is promised to those who mourn will be that they will be “comforted.” It is in and through God’s Messiah that comfort will come. In fact, Yeshua said that he will send the “comforter” to us, God’s Holy Spirit to dwell in our hearts. The Word of God that has also been given as an encouragement to all of those who mourn because of this fallen world, the pain that we go through in life, and because of the persecution that comes our way because of our faith in the Lord, the word of God helps us to continue to trust and obey the Lord God. We who place our trust in the Lord, he will comfort us.

Yeshua goes on to say those who are gentle will inherit the earth, the chiasmic structure shows a parallel to those who are peacemakers who will be called the sons of God. The Greek word used for “gentle” (πραεῖς) has the meaning to be “humble, meek, gentle, and submissive.” These qualities of gentleness show to be a response of faith and maturity, faith that God controls the events of life. A peacemaker provides us with further meaning on what it means to be gentle. A peacemaker does not have within his heart pride to overpower someone but by trusting in God one seeks to make peace with all men.

The next chiasm is those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, they will be satisfied, and the parallel is those who are pure in heart will see God. In these scriptures, one’s soul is that which is thirsting and hungering for righteousness. This does not eliminate the possibility of physical hunger and thirst, but Yeshua is focusing our attention upon one’s desire for righteousness, this desire should fill up one’s entire life. Just as we seek to find food and drink for our bodies in this world, we also are to seek after righteousness to give food and drink for our souls. This is like the tree that is planted near streams of waters in *Tehillim / Psalms 1:3* that sates ג וְהָיָה כְּעֵץ שָׁתוּל עַל-פְּלִיגֵי מַיִם אֲשֶׁר פִּרְיוֹ | יִתֵּן בְּעֵתוֹ וְעָלְהוּ לֹא יִבּוֹל וְכָל יְצֵלֶיחַ 1:3 *He will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, Which yields its fruit in its season And its leaf does not wither; (NASB)* If we follow the Lord God and His righteous ways all of our lives we will be planted firmly in the ground and will not be moved. The Scripture says we are to set our hearts upon the word of God and to meditate upon His ways day and night. The Psalmist writes “My soul thirsts for God, for the living God; when shall I come and appear before God” (*Tehillim / Psalms 42:2, ג וְהָיָה כְּעֵץ שָׁתוּל עַל-פְּלִיגֵי מַיִם אֲשֶׁר פִּרְיוֹ | יִתֵּן בְּעֵתוֹ וְעָלְהוּ לֹא יִבּוֹל וְכָל יְצֵלֶיחַ 1:3*) indicating that this is something that comes from within. This righteousness is something that is obtained, the emphasis in *Tehillim / Psalms 1* and here in the Beatitudes, is not that those who hunger or thirst for righteousness will be given righteousness but that righteousness is the character of those who are true followers after God. Yeshua states that having a hunger and a thirst for righteousness, one is aware of his or her need for more of God’s righteousness. This righteousness must continually be sought after whereas the counsel of the wicked, the path of the sinner, and the seat of scoffers must be continually fled from. Faith in God and a longing for His righteousness will lead to a love for His Torah. Upon having faith in Yeshua, the Spirit of God moves within us and leads us to strive for what we have been declared to be in Yeshua the Messiah, we are made righteous. *2 Corinthians 5:21, 21 τὸν μὴ γνόντα ἁμαρτίαν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἁμαρτίαν ἐποίησεν, ἵνα ἡμεῖς γενώμεθα δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ. 5:21* *He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. (NASB)*

The scripture says that those who hunger and thirst after righteousness will be satisfied, this means that God is the one who brings satisfaction. True satisfaction and success comes with knowing God and being pleasing to Him. Those who are pure in heart will see God. Inner purity is the place from which righteous deeds flow. *Tehillim / Psalms 24:3-5* states ג מִי-יַעֲלֶה בְּהַר יְהוָה וּמִי-יָקוּם בְּמִקְוֹם קִדְשׁוֹ: ד נְקִי כַפַּיִם וְבַר לִבָּב אֲשֶׁר לֹא-נִשְׂאָ לְשׁוֹן נִפְשֵׁי וְלֹא נִשְׁבַּע לְמַרְמָה: ה יֵשָׁא בְּרִכְהָ מֵאֵת יְהוָה וַיִּצְדָּקָה מֵאֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂעוֹ: 24:3 *Who may ascend into the hill of the Lord? And who may stand in His holy place? 24:4 He who has clean hands and a pure heart, Who has not lifted up his soul to falsehood And has not sworn deceitfully. 24:5 He shall receive a blessing from the Lord And righteousness from the God of his salvation. (NASB)* The



purity of heart and the reward of a pure heart is the thirst and hunger for more and more of the righteousness of God. The pure heart involves the inward commitment to seek the Lord God almighty. The blessedness of the person who has a pure heart is that they will see God. Scripture says that God is a spirit and therefore invisible to the eyes of men (*John 1:18, 4:24, Colossians 1:15, 1 Timothy 1:17*). In Parashat Ki Tisa the Lord instructed Moshe that he can not see his face for no man can see God and live (*Shemot / Exodus 33:20*). In Parashat Yitro (*Shemot / Exodus 24:9-10*) the scriptures say that Moshe, Aharon, Nadav, and Avihu, and the seventy elders of Israel saw the God of Israel. And in *Tehillim / Psalms 17:15* it says **טו אָנִי בְצַדִּיק אֶחְזֶה** *17:15 As for me, I shall behold Your face in righteousness; I will be satisfied with Your likeness when I awake. (NASB)* The purity of heart, seeing God, and beholding His face are all connected to righteousness. The blessedness that is attached to righteousness and the purity of heart is that a person will come to know God (to see Him) perfectly and completely revealed in His Son Yeshua. This is the revelation of the Father.

Yeshua said “*Blessed are the poor in spirit, Blessed are those who mourn, Blessed are the gentle, Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, Blessed are the merciful, Blessed are the pure in heart, Blessed are the peacemakers, Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, and Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me?*” How can we understand the blessedness of these things according to the writings of the Tanach (Torah, Neviim, and Ketuvim)? The use of the two words for the blessing **ברוך** (baruch) and **אַשְׁרֵי** (ashrei) in the Tanach, and the Greek word μακαριος always being translated with **אַשְׁרֵי** along with the Aramaic translation and use of the “*Happy / good*” (**טוביה טובויה**) man, we realize that the blessing is the blessing that comes to the person who lives a righteous life. The happiness that comes to a person who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, who does not stand in the path of the sinner, and does not sit in the seat of the scoffer, is the blessing that comes as a result of one who obeys God and acts in accordance with His Torah. The righteous man delights in the Torah of God, He is like a tree that is planted by streams of water that yield its fruit in its season and its leaves do not wither (*Tehillim / Psalms 1:3*). The blessed man is sustained in the Word of the Lord and whatever he does he prospers. The contrast is that the wicked do not do as the righteous man and they are blown like chaff in the wind. Their way is the way of destruction, the unrighteous will not stand in the day of judgment. Therefore, the major point of the blessed man (**אַשְׁרֵי-** **הָאִישׁ**) is the ultimate happiness that is found is in the one who loves the Lord God Almighty and stays away from sin and unrighteousness and seeks the Lord God and His presence. Do you seek the righteousness of the Lord God? Do you meditate upon His Word day and night because of your love for Him? *Tehillim / Psalms 1* captures the idea the true believer is the one who walks in justice, mercy, righteousness, and faithfulness. In striving to be faithful and righteous he delights in God’s word. Do you delight in God’s word as a righteous man or woman of God? It is logical therefore that those who love God come to love and follow His Words and take to heart the words of our Master Yeshua the Messiah, truly blessed and happy are those who love the Lord and seek to be pleasing in His eyes.

## Christian Commentary

Commentaries usually begin introducing *Tehillim / Psalms 1* as an orphan Psalm, and for this reason in the past many have combined this Psalm with the second Psalm. *Tehillim / Psalms 1* is said to be characteristic of late writings and is believed to be a postexilic text. (Reference the commentary: *The International Critical Commentary on the book of Psalms (2 volumes)*, 2005, Varda Books, T & T Clark, Edinburgh) Edinburgh states that the language of the Hebrew text in *Tehillim / Psalms 1* is that of the Greek period, and the syntax is also late where the various words are attested in the Jewish community (*i.e.* רשעים ‘wicked’ and צדיקים 9

'righteous'). This Psalm also models the preexilic writings that speak of righteous Israel and her wicked foes, the characteristic of long periods of oppression and foreign domination do not appear in this text. The Psalm itself draws an antithesis between two types of person, (i) the righteous who are strict students who diligently study the Torah and (ii) the wicked who scorn the wisdom of God and transgress the Torah. This Psalm therefore implies a fully developed school of teaching and scribal devotion to the Law of God. The references to the judgment implies that God will one day interfere with mankind in an ultimate judgment. This judgment seat will not be simply between Israel and her enemies but between each man, known as the righteous and the wicked. As a result of the judgment of God, the righteous will rise up whereas the wicked will perish. It is thought that if the author of the Psalm was thinking about the resurrection, then the writing of this Psalm might predate the writings of Daniel (*Daniel 12:2*, ב וְרַבִּים מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל אֲדַמְתוּ-עַפְרָתָם יִקְיִצּוּ אֵלֶּה לְחַיִּי, *Daniel 12:2* עוֹלָם וְאֵלֶּה לְהַרְפוֹת לְדָרְאוֹן עוֹלָם, *Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt. NASB*). Edinburg says that the author of the Psalm begins with אֲשֶׁר־יֵאָמֵר "Happy is the man" and the reference to man here is not that of mankind (men, women, or children) but specifically to the person who devotes his entire life, all of his time, night and day to the study of the Torah of God. This righteous man who devotes his life to studying God's word is described with increasing intensity of negatives, לֹא עָמַד "who does not walk," לֹא הֶלֶךְ בְּעֵצָת "who does not stand," and לֹא יָשָׁב "who does not sit," these things indicate a continual participation in the counsel, way, and seat of wickedness and sin. The righteous man does not keep company with such men. The righteous man is then described positively saying that such a person embraces the Torah, emphasis is placed in the verse בְּכִי אֵם-בְּתוֹרַת יְהוָה הִפְצוּ וּבְתוֹרַתוֹ יִהְיֶה יוֹמָם וְלַיְלָה which says *1:2 But his delight is in the law of the Lord, And in His law he meditates day and night. (NASB)* his delight (הִפְצוּ) is in the Torah and that he studies or thinks upon the word of God day and night (יִהְיֶה יוֹמָם וְלַיְלָה). The man who studies the Law of God has happiness and is blessed like a tree that has been replanted by a gardener who has taken special attention to it. According to this illustration of the tree, the tree appears to have been removed from its native soil and transplanted in a more favored place with better soil that is near streams of water in a well irrigated garden. The Garden of Eden (*Bereshit / Genesis 2*) was most likely what was in the mind of the author. The description of the living tree on the bank of the river, draws a parallel with what the Apostle John wrote in *Hitgalut / Revelation 22:2* of the tree of life that bears fruit every month whose leaves are forever green and medicinal for the healing of the nations.

On the other hand, the wicked are likened to "chaff" on a threshing floor which is driven by the wind and blown away because it has no value. The idea is that as the wind drives away the wicked, so we should drive them away from us out of our lives. Do not take counsel in the wicked, do not stand in the path of the sinner, and do not sit with the scornful (*Tehillim / Psalms 1:1*). It is said that the wicked will not rise up, and not be able to stand in the judgment. If the author is thinking of the resurrection that takes place in the judgment, at the end of the age of the world, what he is illustrating here is that the righteous will share in that resurrection and the unrighteous will not. Like it says *Isaiah 26:14-19*, the people of God will rise while their oppressors will not rise.

<p><b>ספר ישעיה פרק כו</b></p> <p>יד מְתִים בַּל-יַחֲיוּ רַפְּאִים בַּל-יִקְמוּ לָכֵן פָּקַדְתָּ וַתִּשָּׁחַ-  מִיָּדָם וַתִּמְאַבֵּד כָּל-זִכָּר לָמוֹ: טו יִסְפָּתָ לַגּוֹי יְהוָה יִסְפָּתָ  לַגּוֹי נִכְבְּדְתָ רַחֲמֶךָ כָּל-קְצוּי-אַרְצֵךְ: טז יְהוָה בָּצַר פְּקֻדוֹתֶיךָ  צָקוֹן לַחַשׁ מוֹסְרֶךָ לָמוֹ: יז כָּמוֹ הָרָה תִּקְרִיב לִלְדוֹת תִּחִיל  תִּזְעַק בְּחֻבְלֶיהָ כִּן הָיִינוּ מִפְּנֵיךָ יְהוָה: יח הָרִינוּ חֲלָנוּ כָמוֹ  יִלְדָנוּ רוּחַ יְשׁוּעַת בַּל-נִעֲשָׂה אֶרֶץ וּבַל-יָפְלוּ יִשְׁבֵי תִבְלִ:  יט יַחֲיוּ מִתֵּיךָ נִבְלָתֵי יְקוּמוּן הִקִּיצוּ וְרָנְנוּ שְׁכֵנֵי עֶפְרַי כִּי  טל אֹרֶת טִלְדָּ וְאַרְצֵךְ רַפְּאִים תִּפְיֵל</p>	<p><b>Book of Isaiah Chapter 26</b></p> <p>26:14 The dead will not live, the departed spirits will not rise; Therefore You have punished and destroyed them, And You have wiped out all remembrance of them. 26:15 You have increased the nation, O Lord, You have increased the nation, You are glorified; You have extended all the borders of the land. 26:16 O Lord, they sought You in distress; They could only whisper a prayer, Your chastening was upon them. 26:17 As the pregnant woman approaches the time to give birth, She writhes and cries out in her labor pains, Thus were we before You, O Lord. 26:18 We were pregnant, we writhed in labor, We gave birth, as it seems, only to wind. We could not accomplish deliverance for the earth, Nor were inhabitants of the world born. 26:19 Your dead will live; Their corpses will rise. You who lie in the dust, awake and shout for joy, For your dew is as the dew of the dawn, And the earth will give birth to the departed spirits. (NASB)</p>
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In addition to these verses, Yeshua mentions the resurrection of the just (the righteous) in *Luke 14:14* but does not mention the unjust (the wicked). The Apostle Paul also mentions the resurrection of believers in *1 Corinthians 15*, Paul also does not speak of the unjust (the wicked). The wicked are only mentioned explicitly in the Ketuvei Shelachim (Apostolic Writings) in *John 5:28-29* (5:28 *‘Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, 5:29 and will come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment.* NASB) and *Hitgalut / Revelation 20:11-15* (20:11 *Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. 20:12 And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. 20:13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. 20:14 Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. 20:15 And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.* NASB). In these verses the wicked are raised to a resurrection of judgment and are then cast into the lake of fire in Hell.

All trees that are flowering trees produce fruit. Within this Psalm we find that a persons life that is lived in righteous will produce fruit, our lives need to match the life of truth. The one who lives a life of righteousness is befitting of the kingdom of God meaning that a good tree bears good fruit and that the fruit is edible. We need to be careful to examine our lives, am I living contrary to the ways of righteousness as taught by Yeshua and the Torah? The point is that good fruit is not expected to come from a bad tree, and the bad tree consists of those who walk in unrighteousness. A tree is judged by its fruit, whether it is good or bad, by taste and feel, not simply by its outward appearances. In the 1st Century Jewish communities, “bad” and “Pharisee” did not go together, the Pharisees were known for their extreme piety and care taken in halachic matters. Yeshua himself uses the Pharisee as a benchmark for righteousness in *Matthew 5:20*. The point was that group membership, being a Pharisee, did not guarantee personal standards. Being a member of a messianic congregation or a church does not guarantee a person a standard of righteousness, is not how a person is judged to be righteous or unrighteous. In John chapter 15 Yeshua speaks extensively about the gardener, the tree, and the bearing of fruit. In the opening verse of *John 15:1*, Yeshua says “*I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser.*” Yeshua says that every branch that does not bear fruit is cut off and then says “*Abide in me and I in you,*” and states that the fruit can not bear fruit unless it abides in the vine. The rabbis of the 1st Century and the people would have been familiar with these concepts, and from *Tehillim / Psalms 1*, the righteous man, that abides in the study of the Torah will be like a tree that

bears fruit in its season. The concept of the gardener, the fruit bearing vine, and the righteous man that is blessed would have all been very familiar concepts to the 1st Century person and hence Yeshua's illustration on the importance of believing in and remaining in Him, let's read *John 15:1-17*.

<p><b>ΙΩΑΝΝΗΣ 15:1-17</b></p> <p><sup>1</sup>Εγώ ειμι ἡ ἀμπελος ἡ ἀληθινή, καὶ ὁ πατήρ μου ὁ γεωργὸς ἐστίν. <sup>2</sup>πᾶν κλῆμα ἐν ἐμοὶ μὴ φέρον καρπὸν, αἶρει αὐτό, καὶ πᾶν τὸ καρπὸν φέρον καθαίρει αὐτὸ ἵνα καρπὸν πλείονα φέρῃ. <sup>3</sup>ἤδη ὑμεῖς καθαροὶ ἐστε διὰ τὸν λόγον ὃν λελάληκα ὑμῖν: <sup>4</sup>μείνατε ἐν ἐμοί, κἀγὼ ἐν ὑμῖν. καθὼς τὸ κλῆμα οὐ δύναται καρπὸν φέρειν ἀφ' ἑαυτοῦ ἐὰν μὴ μένῃ ἐν τῇ ἀμπέλῳ, οὕτως οὐδὲ ὑμεῖς ἐὰν μὴ ἐν ἐμοὶ μένητε. <sup>5</sup>ἐγώ ειμι ἡ ἀμπελος, ὑμεῖς τὰ κλήματα. ὁ μένων ἐν ἐμοὶ κἀγὼ ἐν αὐτῷ οὗτος φέρει καρπὸν πολύν, ὅτι χωρὶς ἐμοῦ οὐ δύνασθε ποιεῖν οὐδέν. <sup>6</sup>ἐὰν μὴ τις μένῃ ἐν ἐμοί, ἐβλήθη ἔξω ὡς τὸ κλῆμα καὶ ἐξηράνθη, καὶ συνάγουσιν αὐτὰ καὶ εἰς τὸ πῦρ βάλλουσιν καὶ καίεται. <sup>7</sup>ἐὰν μείνητε ἐν ἐμοὶ καὶ τὰ ῥήματά μου ἐν ὑμῖν μείνη, ὃ ἐὰν θέλητε αἰτήσασθε καὶ γενήσεται ὑμῖν. <sup>8</sup>ἐν τούτῳ ἐδοξάσθη ὁ πατήρ μου, ἵνα καρπὸν πολὺν φέρητε καὶ γένησθε ἐμοὶ μαθηταί. <sup>9</sup>καθὼς ἠγάπησέν με ὁ πατήρ, κἀγὼ ὑμᾶς ἠγάπησα: μείνατε ἐν τῇ ἀγάπῃ τῇ ἐμῇ. <sup>10</sup>ἐὰν τὰς ἐντολάς μου τηρήσητε, μενεῖτε ἐν τῇ ἀγάπῃ μου, καθὼς ἐγὼ τὰς ἐντολάς τοῦ πατρός μου τετήρηκα καὶ μένω αὐτοῦ ἐν τῇ ἀγάπῃ. <sup>11</sup>Ταῦτα λελάληκα ὑμῖν ἵνα ἡ χαρὰ ἡ ἐμὴ ἐν ὑμῖν ἢ καὶ ἡ χαρὰ ὑμῶν πληρωθῇ. <sup>12</sup>αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ ἐντολὴ ἡ ἐμὴ, ἵνα ἀγαπάτε ἀλλήλους καθὼς ἠγάπησα ὑμᾶς: <sup>13</sup>μείζονα ταύτης ἀγάπην οὐδεὶς ἔχει, ἵνα τις τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ θῇ ὑπὲρ τῶν φίλων αὐτοῦ. <sup>14</sup>ὑμεῖς φίλοι μου ἐστε ἐὰν ποιῆτε ἃ ἐγὼ ἐντέλλομαι ὑμῖν. <sup>15</sup>οὐκέτι λέγω ὑμᾶς δούλους, ὅτι ὁ δούλος οὐκ οἶδεν τί ποιεῖ αὐτοῦ ὁ κύριος: ὑμᾶς δὲ εἶρηκα φίλους, ὅτι πάντα ἃ ἤκουσα παρὰ τοῦ πατρός μου ἐγνώρισά ὑμῖν. <sup>16</sup>οὐχ ὑμεῖς με ἐξελέξασθε, ἀλλ' ἐγὼ ἐξελεξάμην ὑμᾶς καὶ ἔθηκα ὑμᾶς ἵνα ὑμεῖς ὑπάγητε καὶ καρπὸν φέρητε καὶ ὁ καρπὸς ὑμῶν μένῃ, ἵνα ὃ τι ἂν αἰτήσητε τὸν πατέρα ἐν τῷ ὀνόματί μου ὁῶ ὑμῖν. <sup>17</sup>ταῦτα ἐντέλλομαι ὑμῖν, ἵνα ἀγαπάτε ἀλλήλους.</p>	<p><b>John 15:1-17</b></p> <p>15:1 'I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. 15:2 'Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit. 15:3 'You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. 15:4 'Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. 15:5 'I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. 15:6 'If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned. 15:7 'If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. 15:8 'My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples. 15:9 'Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. 15:10 'If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. 15:11 'These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full. 15:12 'This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. 15:13 'Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. 15:14 'You are My friends if you do what I command you. 15:15 'No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you. 15:16 'You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you. 15:17 'This I command you, that you love one another. (NASB)</p>
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The tree, according to the Scriptures, represents the righteous man who is planted in a fertile garden that is irrigated by many channels of water. Such an illustration would make one think upon the gardens of Solomon, the gardens of Damascus, of Egypt, and of Babylon. All of these gardens were watered by great rivers and it is possible that the rivers of the Garden of Eden are also thought of during this illustration that Yeshua is giving. Yeshua gives the parable of the tree itself and the fruit that is born out from the good tree and the good vine. If one does not abide in Him, such a person is unable to bear the fruit of truth, of life, and of God. The mark of the fruit that is born of the one who abides in Yeshua is for the glory of God. Yeshua speaks of the righteous man who must remain in Him. The righteous man has within him a great desire to study God's word and to remain in the Messiah of God and as a result of these things everything he does he will succeed. Thinking upon these things, success, does this refer to financial blessing or success within the kingdom of God? Within the context of these Scriptures and in Yeshua's words, our success will come most assuredly within the kingdom of God as we reach out for the lost souls in this world for God's truth and for salvation. It is interesting here that Yeshua says in *John 15:6* that those who do not remain in

Him (the wicked) will be cast away and he will dry up and those dry branches will be gathered and cast into the fire. (‘ἐὰν μή τις μένη ἐν ἐμοί, ἐβλήθη ἔξω ὡς τὸ κλῆμα καὶ ἐξηράνθη, καὶ συναγούσιν αὐτὰ καὶ εἰς τὸ πῦρ βάλλουσιν καὶ καίεται. 15:6 ‘If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned.(NASB)) This description of the unrighteous who do not remain in the Messiah, those who following the way of wicked men (*Tehillim / Psalms 1:1*) follow a way that goes on to everlasting destruction. The connection to Yeshua’s words here in *John 15* with *Tehillim / Psalms 1* is in his words that speak of the bearing of fruit and the keeping of the Mitzvot (Commandments) of God in the Torah. Abiding in Yeshua, in Christ /Messiah, and in God’s word, we will not stand in judgment in the last day. Consider this in Parashat Shoftim (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 16:18-21:9*) according to Ginsburg’s Masoretic text, shown below, emphasis is placed on the letter “Tav” (ת) with a note in the marginal Masorah on *Devarim / Deuteronomy 18:13* the letter ת is enlarged. The emphasis is meant to draw our attention specifically to the word תָּמִים that functions as an opening to the verses 18:15-20.

13 ׀ אֹתָם מִפְּנֵיךָ: **תָּמִים** תְּהִיָּה עִם יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ: כִּי |  
 14 הַגּוֹיִם הָאֵלֶּה אֲשֶׁר אָתָּה יוֹרֵשׁ אוֹתָם אֶל-מַעְנָנִים וְאֶל-  
 15 קַסְמִים יִשְׁמְעוּ וְאָתָּה לֹא כֵן נָתַן לְךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ: נְבִיא  
 16 מִקִּרְבְּךָ מֵאֲחֵיךָ כְּמִנִּי יָקִים לְךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֵלָיו  
 17 תִּשְׁמָעוּן: כָּל אֲשֶׁר-שָׁאֲלָתָּ מֵעַם יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּחֵרֶב  
 18 בְּיוֹם הַקָּהָל לֵאמֹר לֹא אִסָּף לְשַׁמֵּעַ אֶת-קוֹל יְהוָה  
 אֱלֹהֵי וְאֶת-דְּוָאֵשׁ הַגְּדֹלָה הַזֹּאת לֹא-אֲרָאָה עוֹד וְלֹא  
 אָמוֹת: וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵלָי הִיטִיבוּ אֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְוּ: נְבִיא  
 17 אָקִים לָהֶם מִקִּרְבְּ אֲחֵיהֶם כְּמוֹךָ וְנָתַתִּי דְבָרֵי בְּפִיו  
 18 וּדְבַר

9 v. סכיר מן- . 12 v. ס"א יהוה אלהיך וכן ח"ש, תיע ות"ס. 13 v. ת' רבתי.  
 14 v. בס"א אין כאן סרר. 14 v. ס"א ואחה.

Verse 18:13 says תָּמִים תְּהִיָּה עִם יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ “You are to be ‘innocent/guileless/lamb-like/child-like’ before the Lord your God.” The context of these scriptures indicates the call for innocence before God is contrasted with the nations (Goyim, גוים) evil practices of witchcraft and consulting diviners being juxtaposed to verse 18:14. In *Tehillim / Psalms 1* the wicked are contrasted with the righteous, and in Yeshua’s words the righteous will be those who remain in him and the unrighteous (wicked) are those who do not remain and will be cast into the fire? In the Torah, the Lord God said לְךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ “not so has the Lord your God, given for you.” Within the Scriptures found in Parashat Shoftim, Moshe writes that the Lord is going to rise up a prophet like himself. The enlarged “ת” catches our attention directing us to the importance of being innocent before the Lord our God and listening to the one who will be raised up as a prophet like Moshe. The special emphasis on תָּמִים (innocence), the way of the nations, and the Lord God raising a prophet like Moshe 18:15-18 help to elucidate the meaning of the text and provides for us a stark contrast between those who love and obey God and those who do not. Withing these Scriptures from Parashat Shoftim (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 18*) we find the Lord God directing us in His truth and we are told to walk in His ways and not in the ways of the nations. To walk in the counsel of the wicked, stand in the way of the sinner, and sit in the seat of the scornful, truly happy and blessed is the man who does not do these things. In *Tehillim / Psalms 1* the righteous man is the one who delights in God’s word,

and practices the way of the Lord, that the righteous man's good pleasure is in the Lord. Yeshua tells us that this tree that bears fruit can only be found in the person who remains in him, in the Lord, and in His words.

Studying *John 15*, we see that Yeshua repeats twice that the one who remains in him can ask whatever they want and it will be given to them. In addition to this, Yeshua commands that we love one another. Loving one another is repeated twice in *John 15:1-17*. The contrast made between the righteous and the unrighteous, the one who walks in the way of sinners, the innocence of the one who is to come before the Lord, and the command to love one another, when all of these things become present in our lives, only then will what we ask of the Lord be given. *Tehillim / Psalms 66:18* אֶדְבָּרֵי | יִשְׁמַע | לֹא רָאִיתִי בְּלִבִּי לֹא יִשְׁמַע | If I regard wickedness in my heart, The Lord will not hear; (NASB). Here it literally says if I see iniquity (אֶדְבָּרֵי) in my heart the Lord will not hear me. The innocence that is spoken of is not related to salvation, but it is related to the relationship that we have with the Lord and the effectiveness of our lives that are used for His purposes in His kingdom. We have the ability to hinder the work of God in our lives to reach others. We must abstain from walking in unrighteousness and seek after the righteousness of God. Yeshua shows us the way, we are to remain in him; the righteous man abstains from all such conduct and avoids the company of all unrighteous men.

## Rabbinic Commentary

The question might be asked, what do the rabbis have in common with the writings of the apostles? Should the disciplines of New Testament studies neglect the rabbinic literature? According to Brad Young, Much of the NT was written by Jewish authors for a Jewish audience saying “*many aspects and literary types in rabbinic texts are paralleled in the NT.*” (“*Meet the Rabbis, Rabbinic thought and the teachings of Jesus,*” by Brad H. Young, 2007, Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.) What is it about the thinking of the ancient Rabbis and their interpretation of the bible that could help us to understand Scripture? While studying Midrash Tehillim we will keep these questions in mind.

The Midrash on Tehillim 1 is quite extensive having 22 parts. This week we will be looking at part 20 of the midrash. Let's begin by outlining Midrash Tehillim, part 20.

### Outline of Midrash Tehillim / Psalms, Chapter 1, Part 20

- The midrash speaks about the wicked who are like “chaff”
- Verse Song 2:1, I am the rose of Sharon and the lily of the valleys
- The Lord God gives us love more than any other people
- The rabbis liken the rose of Sharon to the people, the Lord God freshens his people like a rose in the valley freshens in the morning.
- The rabbis liken the rose of Sharon to the wilderness, saying good things are hidden there, and say the cedar, Shittah tree, myrtle, and oil tree are planted there.
- The rabbis liken the rose of Sharon to the earth, where all of the dead are hidden, and discuss the resurrection of the dead referring to *Isaiah 26:19*.
- The rabbis liken the lily of the valley to the righteous, saying the righteous are not like the lily of the mountain but of the valley which blossoms again and again.
- The wicked are likened to the vilest thing and to chaff and the lily of the mountain that withers quickly.
  - The rabbis liken Israel to the lily of the valleys, but the lily of the valley of Gehenna, and the Lord God raised her up out of Gehenna, and she will sing a song to the Lord.

- The question is asked how do the children of Israel differ from the other nations? Parallels are drawn saying that she worshiped idols like the nations, she shed blood like the nations, she committed incest like the nations, but the others are being sent down to Gehenna and she is raised up.
- The the Lord God said since what you say is true, let every nation go down together into Gehenna with his god and let them be tested by fire. Israel proclaims that the Lord is their expectation and their hope, he alone is worthy to be trusted.
- The judgment by fire is contrasted to David's words in *Tehillim / Psalms 23* and visiting transgression with the rod in *Tehillim / Psalms 89:33*.
- The midrash ends saying that the righteous in this world are stricken but in the world to come will have a firm footing and great strength. The word of our God will stand forever (*Isaiah 40:8*) and the righteous who obey the Torah, the word of our God will also stand forever.

A couple things catch our attention while reading the Midrash on Tehillim 1, Part 20. First, the references to Gehenna. Gehenna in Hebrew גיהנום and in Greek γέεννα is a place of suffering and torture and was believed to be the residence of condemned souls, the wicked (unrighteous, unjust people). According to *Easton's dictionary*, Gehenna was originally “the valley of the sons of Hinnom” a place in a narrow valley south of Jerusalem where the people at one time offered their children to Molech (see *2 Chronicles 28:3, 33:6, and Jeremiah 7:31, and 19:2-6*). After this horrible time the valley became the place where the city would throw their trash and the dead bodies of animals and of criminals and all kinds of vile things. A fire was kept burning in order to burn up the refuse and the dead. Over time this became known as a type or image of the place of everlasting destruction and Yeshua used this as a reference to Hell in *Matthew 5:22, 5:29, 5:30, 10:28, 18:9, 23:15, 23:33, Mark 9:43, 9:45, 9:47, and Luke 12:5*. In the more modern English translations this word Gehenna is rendered as “Hell.” In the older translations such as the KJV the Greek is transliterated into English as “*Gehenna*.” Some in Orthodox Judaism teach that Hell does not exist as an anti-missionary tactic against “salvation” in Yeshua. It is said “when you are dead you are dead, and that is the end of it.” According to the Ketuvei Shelachim (Apostolic Writings) there was a very clear and early understanding of Hell by Yeshua's use of Gehenna to make his illustration. Yeshua taught about the danger of Hell using the word גיהנום / γέεννα (Gehenna) to illustrate what it will be like for the person who goes there. In addition to this, Midrash Tehillim also includes references to Gehenna. Midrash Tehillim is known to exist from the 11th Century and it is believed the commentary come out of the time period o the tannaim and the recording of the Mishnah and the Talmud which would place the commentary close to within 200 years of Yeshua walking this earth. Therefore, the concept of “Hell” a place for the wicked, the unjust, and the unrighteous is extant within Judaism according to the rabbinic commentary on Tehillim, and this understanding on Hell being the place for the wicked in Judaism is very early. Not surprising since Yeshua uses Gehenna quite frequently throughout the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke.

Another interesting comment by the rabbis in Midrash Tehillim part 20, is the concept of being tested by fire. This reminds us of the Apostle Paul's words in *1 Corinthians 3:11-17*. Let's look at the section from Midrash Tehillim and from Scripture in *1 Corinthians 3*.

### מדרש תהלים פרק א סימן כ

ואומרים לפניו רבונו של עולם מה נשתנו ישראל משאר אומות, אלו עובדי ע"ז, ואלו עובדי ע"ז, אלו שופכי דמים, ואלו שופכי דמים, אלו מגלי עריות, ואלו מגלי עריות, הללו יורדין לגיהנם, והללו אין יורדין, אמר להם הקב"ה אם כן תרד כל אומה ואומה ואלהיה עמה לגיהנם ותבדוק את עצמה, וגם ישראל ילכו ויבדקו את עצמם, משיבים ישראל ואומרים לפני הקב"ה, אתה הוא סיכוינו, ואתה הוא סברנו, אין לנו מובטח אלא אתה, אם רצונך עבור אתה בראשינו, ואומר להם הקב"ה אל תיראו שכולכם לובשי שני, זה ברית מילה, שנאמר לא תירא לביתה משלג כי כל ביתה לבוש שנים (משלי לא כא), ואף על פי כן אני אלך עמכם, שנאמר כי כל העמים ילכו איש בשם אלהיו ואנחנו (נלך בשם ה' אלהינו לעולם ועד) (מיכה ד ה

### Midrash Tehillim, Chapter 1, Part 20

How do the children of Israel differ from the other nations of the earth? The others worshiped idols, and these worshiped idols. The others shed blood, and these shed blood. The others committed incest, and these committed incest. But though the others are being sent down to Gehenna, these are not being sent down. The Holy One blessed be He, will answer, **Since what you say is true, let each and every nation together with its god go down to Gehenna, and let each be tested with fire, and let the children of Israel also go down into Gehenna, and let them be tested by fire.** Whereupon the children of Israel will answer the Holy One blessed be He, and say, You are our expectation, and you are our hope. We have no one worthy of trust but you. And if it be your will that we go down into Gehenna, pray go you to the head of us. The Holy One blessed be He, will then say to them, Be not afraid for all of you are clothed in scarlet. By which is meant the mark of circumcision, as alluded to in the verse, she is not afraid of the snow for her household, for all her household are clothed with scarlet (Mishley / Proverbs 31:21). Nevertheless, I shall go down with you, as is said For all the peoples walk every one in the name of his god, we will walk in the name of the Lord our God forever and ever (Micah 4:5).

### ΠΡΟΣ ΚΟΡΙΝΘΙΟΥΣ Α 3:11-17

<sup>1</sup>Θεμέλιον γὰρ ἄλλον οὐδεὶς δύναται θεῖναι παρὰ τὸν κείμενον, ὃς ἐστὶν Ἰησοῦς Χριστός. <sup>12</sup>εἰ δέ τις ἐποικοδομεῖ ἐπὶ τὸν θεμέλιον χρυσόν, ἄργυρον, λίθους, τιμίους, ξύλα, χόρτον, καλάμην, <sup>13</sup>ἐκάστου τὸ ἔργον φανερόν γενήσεται, ἢ γὰρ ἡμέρα δηλώσει: ὅτι ἐν πυρὶ ἀποκαλύπτεται, καὶ ἐκάστου τὸ ἔργον ὁποῖόν ἐστιν τὸ πῦρ [αὐτὸ] δοκιμάσει. <sup>14</sup>εἴ τις τὸ ἔργον μενεῖ ὁ ἐποικοδόμησεν, μισθὸν λήμψεται: <sup>15</sup>εἴ τις τὸ ἔργον κατακαήσεται, ζημιωθήσεται, αὐτὸς δὲ σωθήσεται, οὕτως δὲ ὡς διὰ πυρός. <sup>16</sup>οὐκ οἴδατε ὅτι ναὸς θεοῦ ἐστε καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ θεοῦ οἰκεῖ ἐν ὑμῖν; <sup>17</sup>εἴ τις τὸν ναὸν τοῦ θεοῦ φθείρει, φθερεῖ τοῦτον ὁ θεός: ὁ γὰρ ναὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ἅγιός ἐστιν, οἳ τινές ἐστε ὑμεῖς.

### 1 Corinthians 3:11-17

3:11 For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 3:12 Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, **3:13 each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work.** 3:14 If any man's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward. **3:15 If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.** 3:16 Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? 3:17 If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are. (NASB)

In the Midrash, the rabbis are talking about the accusations being made against Israel at the judgment and that each nation will go down with their gods and be tested by fire. Similarly, the children of Israel will also be tested by fire. The one whose hope is in the Lord will be saved. It is with this mindset that the Apostle Paul writes to the believers in Corinth that no man can lay a foundation other than that which has been laid which is Yeshua (Jesus) the Messiah (Christ). The foundation according to the Rabbis is that of studying Torah, *Tehillim / Psalms 1* speaks of the righteous man whose delight is in the Torah of God, such a righteous man does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, stand in the path of sinners or sit in the set of the scornful. The apostle Paul is saying that no man can lay a foundation other than what God has done, that is, a foundation which is made in Yeshua the Messiah. According to Paul, the work of each man will become apparent when it is revealed or tested by fire. The work that remains is the works that were done by faith in the Lord God Almighty and His Messiah Yeshua (Jesus). The rabbis are looking at the scripture from *Tehillim / Psalms 1:4* "The wicked are not so, but are like the chaff which the wind drives away." The wicked



are like the chaff that burn in fire. In the Mashal (משל) of the midrash it says that the angels will denounce Israel in the judgment time. The Nimshal states that all will be tested by fire, and the chaff will be burned. In addition to this, the midrash states that the Lord will go before the people, He will go with her (Israel) and protect her from destruction.

Studying Midrash Tehillim 1 Part 20 there is an interesting parallel found within the Apostolic Writings. In *1 Corinthians 3:11-17*, the Apostle Paul says that we are the Temple of God and the Spirit of God dwells within each of us. The parallel found here is that the Lord our God is with us and His Spirit will go with us. It is interesting that there appears to be a parallel here in the rabbinic commentary with Paul's understanding of the testing by fire and the Lord going with us and our bodies being the Temple of God. Was Paul drawing upon his rabbinic schooling in his understanding of these things? Looking at the Christian commentary, and in the Strong's concordance, it is interesting that no reference to the scriptures is given as a source text on *1 Corinthians 3:13 and 3:15*. On the other hand, Midrash Tehillim states "*Rabbi Reuben said in the name of rabbi Hanina, were it not that the verse is so clear, it is scarcely conceivable that one would dare say such a thing as By fire will judgment be executed upon the Lord (Isaiah 66:16).*" (ר' ראובן בשם ר' חנינא אמר אלמלא). " כי באש ה' נשפט (ישעיהו סו יו) מדרש תהילים א making a reference to *Isaiah 66:16*.

<p><b>ספר ישעיה פרק סו</b></p> <p>יד וּרְאִיתֶם וְשֵׁשׁ לְבַבְכֶם וְעֲצָמוֹתֵיכֶם כְּדָשָׂא תִפְרָחְנָה וְנוֹדְעָה יָד-יְהוָה אֶת-עַבְדָּיו וְזַעַם אֶת-אֵיבָיו: טו כִּי-הִנֵּה יְהוָה בָּאֵשׁ יָבֹא וְכִסּוּפָה מִרְכַּבְתָּיו לְהַשִּׁיב בְּחֶמְהָ אָפוּ וּגְעָרָתוֹ בְּלֶהֱבִי-אֵשׁ: טז כִּי בָאֵשׁ יְהוָה נִשְׁפָּט וּבְחַרְבוֹ אֶת-כָּל-בָּשָׂר וְרַבּוֹ חַלְלֵי יְהוָה: יז הַמְתַקְדָּשִׁים וְהַמִּטְהַרִים אֶל-הַגִּנּוֹת אַחַר אַחַד [אַחַת] בְּתוֹךְ אֲכָלֵי בָשָׂר הַחֲזִיר וְהַשֶּׁקֶץ וְהַעֲכָבֵר יַחְדָּו יִסְפוּ נְאֻם-יְהוָה: יח וְאֲנֹכִי מַעֲשִׂיהֶם וּמַחְשְׁבֹתֵיהֶם בָּאָה לְקַבֵּץ אֶת-כָּל-הַגּוֹיִם וְהַלְשֵׁ-נֹת וּבָאוּ וּרְאוּ אֶת-כְּבוֹדִי</p>	<p><b>Isaiah 66:14-18</b></p> <p>66:14 Then you will see this, and your heart will be glad, And your bones will flourish like the new grass; And the hand of the Lord will be made known to His servants, But He will be indignant toward His enemies. 66:15 For behold, the Lord will come in fire And His chariots like the whirlwind, To render His anger with fury, And His rebuke with flames of fire. <b>66:16 For the Lord will execute judgment by fire And by His sword on all flesh, And those slain by the Lord will be many.</b> 66:17 'Those who sanctify and purify themselves to go to the gardens, Following one in the center, Who eat swine's flesh, detestable things and mice, will come to an end altogether,' declares the Lord. 66:18 'For I know their works and their thoughts; the time is coming to gather all nations and tongues. And they shall come and see My glory. (NASB)</p>
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According to the Midrash, the apostle Paul may have been drawing upon *Isaiah 66:15-16* to illustrate the importance of building upon the foundation that God has laid, which is Yeshua the Messiah. The judgment of God will be by fire is attested to throughout Scripture, in sefer Tehillim / Psalms 1 in the reference to the chaff, and within the rabbinic commentary. All the rest that man builds on with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, and straw will be burned up as chaff by fire. In addition to Paul, the apostle peter said something very similar, in *2 Peter 3:7* *ῥοὶ δὲ νῦν οὐρανοὶ καὶ ἡ γῆ τῷ αὐτῷ λόγῳ τεθησαυρισμένοι εἰσὶν πυρὶ, τηρούμενοι εἰς ἡμέραν κρίσεως καὶ ἀπωλείας τῶν ἀσεβῶν ἀνθρώπων. 3:7 But by His word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. (NASB)* The Reformation study bible says "*stored up for fire. Sodom and Gomorrah serve for Peter as a paradigm of final fiery judgment (2:6). Although this picture of a universal inferno at the last judgment is unique to Peter, the idea of divine judgment by fire is common in the Old Testament (Devarim / Deuteronomy 32:22, Isaiah 66:15-16, Malachi 4:1) and is found in the New Testament as well (Matthew 3:12, 1 Corinthians 3:13, and 2 Thessalonian 1:7-8).*" Here a reference is made back to *Isaiah 66:15-16* and to other locations in the Tanach hence the of judgment by fire appears to be a developed concept within the rabbinic literature and the Apostolic Writings (NT).

Yeshua said that those who hunger and thirst after righteousness will be satisfied. This is the question we must ask ourselves, "*Do I truly hunger and thirst for righteousness?*" According to *Tehillim / Psalms 1*, and Yeshua's words God is the only one who brings true satisfaction and this comes only

in knowing God and being pleasing to Him. The inner purity, and innocence of heart comes not only by the Lord working and transforming us from the inside out, but in our desire to draw nearer to Him and seek His ways and His truth. The inner purity that Yeshua gives us, if we remain in him, is the place from which righteous deeds flow, and we bear much fruit that is pleasing to our Father who is in Heaven. *Tehillim / Psalms 24:3-5* states מִי-יַעֲלֶה בְּהַר יְהוָה וּמִי-יִקְוֶם בְּמִקְוֶם קִדְשׁוֹ: ד נְקִי כַפַּיִם וּבֵר לִבָּב אֲשֶׁר לֹא-נִשְׂא לְשׁוֹן 24:3 וְיִשָּׂא בְרָכָה מֵאֵת יְהוָה וְצַדִּיקָה מֵאֵלֵהי יִשְׁעוּ: ה 24:4 הַיְשָׁבֵעַ לְמַרְמָה: ה יִשָּׂא בְרָכָה מֵאֵת יְהוָה וְצַדִּיקָה מֵאֵלֵהי יִשְׁעוּ: ה 24:5 הַיְשָׁבֵעַ לְמַרְמָה: ה יִשָּׂא בְרָכָה מֵאֵת יְהוָה וְצַדִּיקָה מֵאֵלֵהי יִשְׁעוּ: ה *Who may ascend into the hill of the Lord? And who may stand in His holy place? 24:4 He who has clean hands and a pure heart, Who has not lifted up his soul to falsehood And has not sworn deceitfully. 24:5 He shall receive a blessing from the Lord And righteousness from the God of his salvation. (NASB)* The purity of heart comes first by the Lord God almighty working in our lives through His Son, and second by our delight of God's work that has been made manifest in our lives. It is in that thirst and hunger for more and more of the righteousness of God, that we know we are remaining in Yeshua, in Christ, in God's Messiah.

The use of these words for the blessing בָּרוּךְ (baruch) and אֲשֶׁרִי (ashrei) in the Tanach, along with the Greek word μακαριος always being translated for אֲשֶׁרִי, and the Aramaic use of the word for the "Happy / good" (טוביה טובויה) man, we realize that true blessing comes to the person who lives a righteous life. The happiness that comes to a person who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, who does not stand in the path of the sinner, and does not sit in the seat of the scoffer, is the blessing that comes as a result of one who obeys God and acts in accordance with His Truth. The righteous man delights in the way of the Lord, and remains in His truth producing fruit like the tree that is planted by streams of water that yield its fruit in its season and its leaves do not wither (*Tehillim / Psalms 1:3*). The man who remains in God's word is sustained by Him, there is no greater foundation that has been laid than that of what the Word of the Lord has done for us. If we remain in Christ we will not be blown like chaff in the wind because we have been established upon a solid foundation. Thus, the truth of the blessed man (אֲשֶׁרִי-הָאִישׁ) is the ultimate happiness that is found in the one who loves the Lord God Almighty and stays away from sin and unrighteousness and seeks the Lord God and His presence. Do you seek the righteousness of the Lord God? Do you meditate upon His Word day and night because of your love for Him? *Tehillim / Psalms 1* captures the idea that the true believer is the one who walks in justice, mercy, righteousness, and faithfulness. In striving to be faithful and righteous before God let us dedicate our lives in a new way so that we are known as those who love God, love Yeshua, love His Holy Word, and love one another as our Master Yeshua the Messiah has taught us. Truly blessed and happy are those who love the Lord and seek to be pleasing in His eyes. Let's pray!

Heavenly Father,

As we study Your Word, we see the importance of seeking You according to Your Righteous ways. Yeshua spoke of the blessedness of being a child of God that whether we mourn or are persecuted we are happy in You because of Your love for us. We realize that first and foremost, You in the fullness of Your mercy and grace have provided for us atonement according to Your Word in Yeshua the Messiah. The atonement that You have provided is an absolute necessity for us to receive forgiveness. Help us to accept, embrace, and believe with all our hearts, our minds, and our strength the gift You have provided in Yeshua. Help us to effectively proclaim the life, death, and glorious bodily resurrection of Yeshua the Messiah. Help us to draw near to You in righteousness and in truth. We believe that Yeshua is the way, the truth, and the life. Please forgive us of my sins, have mercy upon us Lord. Cleanse us from all sin Lord in Yeshua's name. We want to grow and to be filled with all of You Lord. Help us to live according to Your will as it is laid out according to the Scriptures. Sanctify us in Your Holy Word Lord and in Your Son

Yeshua. Help me to sanctify you Lord in our hearts, in our lives, and in all that we do. Thank You Lord for everything You have done for us. We praise Your Holy Name and give You all of the honor, and the praise forever and ever.

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

Be Blessed in Yeshua, Christ our Messiah!

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

