

## ספר תהילים יב | Tehillim / Psalms 12

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### Plea for the Lord, for His Kingdom and His Righteousness

This week's study is from *Tehillim / Psalms 12:1-8*. The Psalm is introduced as א לְמִנְצַחַת עַל- "For the choir director; upon an eight-stringed lyre. A Psalm of David." David pleases for the Lord's help saying ב הוֹשִׁיעָה יְהוָה כִּי-גָמַר חֹסֵד כִּי-פָסוּ אֱמוּנִים מִבְּנֵי אָדָם: *12:1 Help, Lord, for the godly man ceases to be, For the faithful disappear from among the sons of men. (NASB)* This verse indicates that when godly men and the faithful disappear from out of the land we are to seek the help of the Lord. The ungodly speak lies and falsehoods: ג שָׁוְא | יִדְבְּרוּ אִישׁ אֶת-רַעְוָהוּ שְׁפַת חֲלָקוֹת בְּלִב בְּלִב יִדְבְּרוּ: *12:2 They speak falsehood to one another; With flattering lips and with a double heart they speak. (NASB)* It isn't simply that the ungodly speak falsehoods to the righteous, they speak falsehoods to each other too. They speak boastful words of their evil deeds. The Lord will cut off those who live in the pride of life ד יִכַּרֵת יְהוָה כָּל-שִׁפְתֵי יִגְדֹלוֹת: *12:3 May the Lord cut off all flattering lips, The tongue that speaks great things; (NASB)* The wicked say: ה אֲשֶׁר אָמְרוּ | לְלִשְׁנֵנוּ נִגְבִּיר שִׁפְתֵינוּ אֲתָנוּ מִי אָדוֹן לָנוּ: *12:4 Who have said, 'With our tongue we will prevail; Our lips are our own; who is lord over us?' (NASB)* As a result of the wicked who destroy the innocent, the Lord will raise up and keep him who asks in safety ו מִשָּׁד עֲנִיִּים מֵאֲנָקָת *12:5 The words of the Lord are pure words; As silver tried in a furnace on the earth, refined seven times. (NASB)* Studying Scripture, we know truly the Lord will keep His promises, this is why David said: ז אֲתָהּ יְהוָה תִּשְׁמְרֵם תִּצְרְנוּ | מִן-הַדּוֹר זֶה לְעוֹלָם: *12:6 The words of the Lord are pure words; As silver tried in a furnace on the earth, refined seven times. (NASB)* Studying Scripture, we know truly the Lord will keep His promises, this is why David said: ח אֲתָהּ יְהוָה תִּשְׁמְרֵם תִּצְרְנוּ | מִן-הַדּוֹר זֶה לְעוֹלָם: *12:7 You, O Lord, will keep them; You will preserve him from this generation forever. (NASB)* When men turn away from the Lord, away from truth, justice, and righteousness, then ט סָבִיב רְשָׁעִים יִתְהַלְכוּ כִּי-יִגְדֹלוֹת: *12:8 The wicked strut about on every side When vileness is exalted among the sons of men. (NASB)*

עברית Hebrew	ארמי Aramaic	ελληνικός Greek
<b>ספר תהילים פרק יב</b>	<b>ספר טוביה פרק יב</b>	<b>ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 12</b>
א לְמִנְצַחַת עַל-הַשְּׁמִינִית מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד: ב הוֹשִׁיעָה יְהוָה כִּי-גָמַר חֹסֵד כִּי-פָסוּ אֱמוּנִים מִבְּנֵי אָדָם: ג שָׁוְא   יִדְבְּרוּ אִישׁ אֶת-רַעְוָהוּ שְׁפַת חֲלָקוֹת בְּלִב בְּלִב יִדְבְּרוּ: ד יִכַּרֵת יְהוָה כָּל-שִׁפְתֵי יִגְדֹלוֹת: ה אֲשֶׁר אָמְרוּ   לְלִשְׁנֵנוּ נִגְבִּיר שִׁפְתֵינוּ אֲתָנוּ מִי אָדוֹן לָנוּ: ו מִשָּׁד עֲנִיִּים מֵאֲנָקָת אֲבִיוֹנִים עֲתָה אָקוּם יֹאמֵר יְהוָה אֲשִׁית בְּיָשָׁע יִפְיַח לִי:	א לשבחא על כינורא דתמניא נימי תושבחתא לדויד: ב פרוק יהוה מטול דגמירו טביא צדיקיא ארום ספו מהמנייא מן בני נשא: ג שקרא ממללין אנש עם חבריה סיפ-וּוּתא שיפּוּתא שעיען בלבבהון בל-ביהון מנכלין ובלבא שקרא משקרא ממללין: ד ישיצי יהוה מן עלמא כל סיפּוּן שפּוּתא שעיען לישנא דמללא"די ממללא רברבנותא:	12:1 εις τὸ τέλος ὑπὲρ τῆς ὀγδόης ψαλμὸς τῷ δαυιδ, σῶσόν με κύριε ὅτι ἐκέλειπεν ὁσῖος ὅτι ὠλιγόθησαν αἱ ἀλήθειαι ἀπὸ τῶν υἱῶν τῶν ἀνθρώπων 12:2 μάταια ἐλάλησεν ἕκαστος πρὸς τὸν πλησίον αὐτοῦ χεῖλη δόλια ἐν καρδίᾳ καὶ ἐν καρδίᾳ ἐλάλησαν 12:3 ἐξολεθρεῦσαι κύριος πάντα τὰ χεῖλη τὰ δόλια καὶ γλώσσαν μεγαλορήμονα 12:4 τοὺς εἰπόντας τὴν γλῶσσαν ἡμῶν μεγαλυνοῦμεν τὰ χεῖλη ἡμῶν παρ' ἡμῶν ἐστὶν τίς ἡμῶν κύριός ἐστιν

<p>ז אַמְרוֹת יְהוָה אַמְרוֹת טְהוֹרוֹת כְּסֹף צָרוּף בְּעֵלִיל לְאֶרֶץ מִזְקָה שְׂבָעֵתִים: ח אַתָּה יְהוָה תִּשְׁמְרֵם תִּצְרְנוּ   מִן-הַדּוֹר זֶה לְעוֹלָם: ט סְבִיב רְשָׁעִים יִתְהַלְכוּן כְּרֵם זָלַת לְבַנֵי אָדָם:</p>	<p>ה מאן דכפרין בעיקרא דאמרין בלישנא נתגבר סיפוותנא שפוותנא עימנא מאן הוא רבון דילנא: ו מאונסא דעניי מן צווחת חשיכי השתא אקום בדינא אמר יהוה אשוי פורקן לעמי ולרשיעי אסהיד עליהון בישותא בישתא להון: ז מילין דיהוה מיליאי דכיין היך סימא סנינא בכורא על ארעא זקיק שיבעתי זמנין: ח אנת יהוה תינטרינון לצדיקיא תנצרינון מן דרא בישא הדין לעלמין: ט חזור חזור רשיעיא מהלכין כעלוקא דמצצא אדמיהון דמהון דבנינשא:</p>	<p>12:5 ἀπὸ τῆς ταλαιπωρίας τῶν πτωχῶν καὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ στεναγμοῦ τῶν πενήτων νῦν ἀναστήσομαι λέγει κύριος θήσομαι ἐν σωτηρίᾳ παρρησιάσομαι ἐν αὐτῷ 12:6 τὰ λόγια κυρίου λόγια ἀγνά ἀργύριον πεπυρωμένον δοκίμιον τῆ γῆ κεκαθαρισμένον ἐπταπλασίως 12:7 σύ κύριε φυλάξεις ἡμᾶς καὶ διατηρήσεις ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ τῆς γενεᾶς ταύτης καὶ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα 12:8 κύκλω οἱ ἀσεβεῖς περιπατοῦσιν κατὰ τὸ ὕψος σου ἐπολυώρησας τοὺς υἱοὺς τῶν ἀνθρώπων</p>
<p><b>Tehillim / Psalms 12</b> For the choir director; upon an eight- stringed lyre. A Psalm of David. 12:1 Help, Lord, for the godly man ceases to be, For the faithful disappear from among the sons of men. 12:2 They speak falsehood to one another; With flattering lips and with a double heart they speak. 12:3 May the Lord cut off all flattering lips, The tongue that speaks great things; 12:4 Who have said, ‘With our tongue we will prevail; Our lips are our own; who is lord over us?’ 12:5 ‘Because of the devastation of the afflicted, because of the groaning of the needy, Now I will arise,’ says the Lord; ‘I will set him in the safety for which he longs.’ 12:6 The words of the Lord are pure words; As silver tried in a furnace on the earth, refined seven times. 12:7 You, O Lord, will keep them; You will preserve him from this generation forever. 12:8 The wicked strut about on every side When vileness is exalted among the sons of men. (NASB)</p>	<p><b>Toviyah / Psalms Chapter 12</b> 12:1 For praise, on the lyre of eight strings. A hymn of David. 12:2 Redeem, O Lord, for the good are annihilated; for the faithful have ceased from the sons of men. 12:3 They speak lies, each to his fellow, lips are flattering; in their heart they deceive, and with a lying heart they speak. 12:4 The Lord will destroy from the world all flattering lips, the tongue that speaks arrogance. 12:5 Those who deny the essence, who say, “By our tongue we shall prevail, our lips are with us, who is our master?” 12:6 Because of the oppression of the poor, because of the cry of the needy, now I will arise, says the Lord; I will give redemption to my people, but against the wicked I will give testimony of evil. 12:7 The words of the Lord are pure words, silver purified in the furnace on the ground, refined seven times. 12:8 You, O Lord, will keep the righteous; you will protect them from this evil generation forever. 12:9 All around the wicked walk, like a leech that sucks the blood of the sons of men. (EMC)</p>	<p><b>Tehillim / Psalms 12</b> For the end, A Psalm of David, upon the eighth. 12:1 Save me, O Lord; for the godly man has failed; for truth is diminished from among the children of men. 12:2 Every one has spoken vanity to his neighbour: their lips are deceitful, they have spoken with a double heart. 12:3 Let the Lord destroy all the deceitful lips, and the tongue that speaks great words: 12:4 who have said, We will magnify our tongue; our lips are our own: who is Lord of us? 12:5 Because of the misery of the poor, and because of the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the Lord, I will set them in safety; I will speak to them thereof openly. 12:6 The oracles of the Lord are pure oracles; as silver tried in the fire, proved in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. 12:7 Thou, O Lord, shalt keep us, and shalt preserve us, from this generation, and for ever. 12:8 The ungodly walk around: according to thy greatness thou has greatly exalted the sons of men. (LXX)</p>

The Psalm begins stating א לְמַנְצֵחַ עַל-הַשְּׁמִינִית מְזֻמֹּר לְדָוִד: “For the choir director; upon an eight-stringed lyre. A Psalm of David.” The Psalm was composed for the eight-stringed lyre. Note that the Septuagint takes the more literal translation of the Hebrew text saying 12:1 εἰς τὸ τέλος ὑπὲρ τῆς ὀγδόης ψαλμὸς τῷ δαυιδ... “A Psalm of David, upon the eighth.” It is interesting that the text itself does not have the word “lyre” (לירה) but simply states עַל-הַשְּׁמִינִית “upon the eighth.” The lyre is understood or assumed based upon the word הַשְּׁמִינִית “the eighth.”

In the second verse from the Hebrew Bible, verse one in our English translation, David pleads for the Lord’s help saying ב 12:1 Help, Lord, for the godly

*man ceases to be, For the faithful disappear from among the sons of men. (NASB)* Yeshua in Hebrew is a verbal derivative from the word “to rescue” or “to deliver” (*BDB Lexicon*). This word was used as a formal name throughout the biblical text and is found to be used among the Jews of the Second Temple Period, the Biblical Aramaic/Hebrew name יְשׁוּעַ “Yeshua” was common. The Hebrew Bible mentions several individuals with this name. This name is found in the books written in the post-Exilic period (*Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles*) and is also found in the Dead Sea Scrolls. Haggai and Zechariah use the spelling Joshua. Strong’s Concordance connects the name יְשׁוּעַ Yeshua, to the English form Jeshua (*as it is used multiple times in Ezra, Nehemiah, and 1 and 2 Chronicles*), with the verb “to deliver” (or, “to rescue”). David begins the verse asking the Lord to rescue or save, and the English translation renders this word as “help.” The Aramaic translation says “redeem” פְּרוּק יְהוּה מִטוֹל דְּגְמִירוֹ טְבִיא צְדִיקֵי אַרוּם סְפוּ מִהַמְנִיִּיא מִן בְּנֵי נִשְׂאָ: 12:2 *Redeem, O Lord, for the good are annihilated; for the faithful have ceased from the sons of men. (EMC)* and the Septuagint says “save me” σῶσόν με κύριε ὅτι ἐκέλειπεν ὁσῖος ὅτι ὠλιγώθησαν αἱ ἀλήθειαι ἀπὸ τῶν υἱῶν τῶν ἀνθρώπων 12:1 *Save me, O Lord; for the godly man has failed; for truth is diminished from among the children of men. (LXX)* David seeks help from the Lord because it seems to him that the righteous (טְבִיא צְדִיקֵי), the pious (חֲסִיד), the godly men are being destroyed or are at an end (גִּמְר). The faithful have ceased from among the sons of men. What would happen if the world ceased to have godly (faithful) men?

ג וְשִׁנְאָ | יְדַבְּרוּ אִישׁ אֶת-רַעֲיָהוּ שְׂפֹת חֲלָקוֹת בְּלִבָּב וְלִבֵּי יְדַבְּרוּ: 12:2 *They speak falsehood to one another; With flattering lips and with a double heart they speak. (NASB)* These Scriptures indicate that the ungodly not only speak falsehoods (lies) to the righteous, they also speak falsehoods to each other too and they speak boastful words of their evil deeds. The Apostle Paul wrote to the Colossians and to Ephesus that as the children of God by faith in the Messiah, we are to not lie to one another and we need to put all falsehood (lying) aside, we are to speak the truth. Lying (falsehood) are the work of the old former life (*Colossians 3:4-10 and Ephesians 4:24-27*).

### **Colossians 3:4-10**

3:4 *When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.*  
3:5 *Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry.* 3:6 *For it is because of these things that the wrath of God will come upon the sons of disobedience,* 3:7 *and in them you also once walked, when you were living in them.* 3:8 *But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth.* 3:9 *Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices,* 3:10 *and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him (NASB)*

### **Ephesians 4:24-27**

4:24 *and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.* 4:25 *Therefore, laying aside falsehood, speak truth each one of you with his neighbor, for we are members of one another.* 4:26 *Be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger,* 4:27 *and do not give the devil an opportunity. (NASB)*

If we consider these Scriptures from Colossians and Ephesians in light of the verse from *Tehillim / Psalms 12:2*, the only way we can put off the former self is with the help (הוֹשִׁיעָה) of God that is directly related to our salvation, redemption, and deliverance from sin in the Messiah Yeshua. Studying the Scriptures on the Messiah, we learn that He is the Righteous Branch, the King Messiah, the Priest Messiah, the Anointed One (מְשִׁיחַ), the One who would one day come to deliver God’s people and the One in whom God’s kingdom is



established (raised up, lifted up) in Israel and in all the World. The hope of the Messiah runs throughout the Tanakh where Mashiach will restore the Kingdom of David (*Jeremiah 23, 30:9, and Ezekiel 34:23*). He will restore the Temple in Zion (*Isaiah 2:2, Micah 4:1, Zechariah 6:13, and Ezekiel 37:26-28*). He will regather the exiles (*Isaiah 11:12, 43:5, and 51:11*). He will make a New Covenant to Israel (*Jeremiah 31:31-35*). He will usher peace into this world coupled with the knowledge of the true God (*Isaiah 2:4 and 11:9*). He will swallow up death and disease (*Isaiah 25:8*). He will bear our iniquities (*Shemot / Exodus 32:32 and Isaiah 53*). He will raise the dead to new life (*Isaiah 26:19*). And He will teach the Torah with the knowledge of the God of Israel for the purpose of uniting all of mankind as one, *Zechariah 14:9* וְהָיָה יְהוָה לְמֶלֶךְ עַל-כָּל־יְהוּדָה: *“God will be king over all the world and in that day God will be one and His name will be one.”* The “Messiah the King” that rules in righteousness with dominion over all is found in Nathan’s oracle to King David in *2 Samuel 7:10-16* that says וְשָׂמַתִּי מְקוֹם לְעַמִּי לְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְנִטְעַתִּיו וְשָׁכַן תַּחְתָּיו וְלֹא יִרְגְּזוּ עוֹד וְלֹא יִסִּיפוּ בְנֵי-עוֹלָה לְעַנּוֹתוֹ כַּאֲשֶׁר בְּרַאשׁוֹנָה: יֵאָדָּם וְלִמְנוּחַ הַיּוֹם אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִי שְׂפָטִים עַל-עַמִּי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְהִנִּיחֹתִי לָהֶם מֶלֶךְ-אֲבִיבָה וְהִגִּיד לָהֶם יְהוָה כִּי-בֵּית יַעֲשֶׂה-לָּהֶם יְהוָה: יֵב כִּי | יִמְלֹאוּ יְמֵיהֶם וְשָׁכַבְתָּ אֶת-אֲבֹתֶיךָ וְהִקִּימֹתִי אֶת-זִרְעֶךָ אַחֲרֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר יֵצֵא מִמְּעֵיךָ וְהִכִּינֹתִי אֶת-מַמְלַכְתּוֹ: יֵג הוּא יִבְנֶה-בַּיִת לְשָׁמַי וְכִנְנֹתִי אֶת-כִּסֵּא מַמְלַכְתּוֹ עַד-עוֹלָם: יֵד אֲנִי אֶהְיֶה-לּוֹ לְאָב וְהוּא יְהִי-לִי לְבֵן אֲשֶׁר בְּהַעֲוֹתוֹ וְהִכַּחֲתִיו בְּשִׁבְטֵי אֲנָשִׁים וּבְגַנְעֵי בְנֵי אָדָם: טו וְחִסְדִּי לֹא-יִסוּר מִמֶּנּוּ כַּאֲשֶׁר הִסְרֹתִי מֵעַם שְׂאוּל אֲשֶׁר הִסְרֹתִי מִלְּפָנֶיךָ: טז וְנִגְאָמְנוּ בֵּיתְךָ וּמַמְלַכְתְּךָ עַד-עוֹלָם: *7:10 ‘I will also appoint a place for My people Israel and will plant them, that they may live in their own place and not be disturbed again, nor will the wicked afflict them any more as formerly, 7:11 even from the day that I commanded judges to be over My people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. The Lord also declares to you that the Lord will make a house for you. 7:12 ‘When your days are complete and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your descendant after you, who will come forth from you, and I will establish his kingdom. 7:13 ‘He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. 7:14 ‘I will be a father to him and he will be a son to Me; when he commits iniquity, I will correct him with the rod of men and the strokes of the sons of men, 7:15 but My lovingkindness shall not depart from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. 7:16 ‘Your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever.’”* (NASB) The covenant spoken of here was not fulfilled by Solomon and therefore the Seed that is raised up after David (וְהִקִּימֹתִי אֶת-זִרְעֶךָ אַחֲרֶיךָ) is the very seed that is referred to in the covenant blessings the Lord had spoken to Abraham and to his children in Parashat Lech Lecha (*Bereshit / Genesis 12:1-17:27*). The One referred to here is the Messiah (Mashiach), the Anointed King who will sit upon the throne forever and ever (וְכִנְנֹתִי אֶת-כִּסֵּא מַמְלַכְתּוֹ עַד-עוֹלָם). Based on the Scriptures, Yeshua is both מְשִׁיחַ בֶּן-יוֹסֵף “the Messiah son of Yoseph” (the suffering servant) and מְשִׁיחַ בֶּן-דָּוִד “the Messiah son of David” (the reigning King). He is the Anointed Prophet, Priest, and King that is foreshadowed through the Tanakh in the use of the word מְשִׁיחַ (Mashiach, Messiah, Anointed One) and the various offices held by the chosen men of God as prophets, priests, and kings. Therefore the Messiah is interpreted to occupy each of the offices as prophet, priest, and king. It is interesting that through David’s life he operated in all three offices as prophet, priest, and king. As a result David’s life also foreshadows the Messiah and provides for us a Messianic expectation of the coming Messiah. In this one word from *Tehillim / Psalms 12:2*, Hoshiah, in David’s request for “help” (הוֹשִׁיעָה) this request is deeply rooted in the covenant relationship of God. As we study these scriptures it becomes apparent by the examples of the great men of faith foreshadowing the One who was to come, God’s true Messiah is Yeshua in which Hebraically the name is a verbal derivative from the word “to rescue” or “to deliver” (*BDB Lexicon*). Today, God has saved us and is saving us from our sins being accomplished in His son, Yeshua the true Messiah. The Messiah is going to return one day as מְשִׁיחַ בֶּן-דָּוִד “the Messiah son of David” (the reigning King). The question each of us must decide upon is “Am I ready to meet Yeshua as מְשִׁיחַ בֶּן-דָּוִד the Reigning King?” “Have I truly made Yeshua Lord and

*Reigning King of my life?*” “*Does my life show evidence that God has saved me?*” The desire of the one who reigns and rules forever is to save and rescue (הוֹשִׁיעָה) you! The purpose of salvation is knowing and having the peace of God in our hearts.

The Apostle Paul said in *Colossians 3:5-6* saying 3:5 *Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry.* 3:6 *For it is because of these things that the wrath of God will come upon the sons of disobedience,* Paul says it is because of these things the wrath of God will come upon the “sons of disobedience.” These things characterize the disobedient, the wicked, and the ungodly. The Lord will cut off these people who are proud and speak boastfully; this is very similar to David’s words in *Tehillim / Psalms 12:3* that says דַּיְכָרְתָּ יְהוָה 12:3 *May the Lord cut off all flattering lips, The tongue that speaks great things;* (NASB) The wicked boast and according to these Scriptures are foolish for doing so because the Lord sees their boasting and will cut off the flattering lips and the tongue that speaks against the Lord. According to the Scriptures, the wicked (foolish) deny, disregard, and rebel against God (*Tehillim / Psalms 14:1*, “*the fool says in his heart there is no God*”), slanders, lies, and deceives (*Mishley / Proverbs 10:18*), is quick tempered (*Mishley / Proverbs 12:16*), acts impetuously without regard for consequences, *Mishley / Proverbs 13:16* “*Wise people think before they act; fools don’t and even brag about it!*” Talks endlessly and brags (“*The wise person makes learning a joy; fools spout only foolishness*” *Mishley / Proverbs 15:2*, “*A fool finds no pleasure in understanding but delights in airing his own opinions.*” *Mishley / Proverbs 18:2*). He never seeks advice, accountability, or discipline (“*A fool spurns his father’s discipline, but whoever heeds correction shows prudence.*” *Mishley / Proverbs 15:5*) The foolishness of the wicked say that none is lord over them: אֲשֶׁר אָמְרוּ | לְלִשְׁנֵנוּ נִגְבִּיר שְׂפִתֵינוּ אֲתָנוּ מִי אֲדוֹן לָנוּ: 12:4 *Who have said, ‘With our tongue we will prevail; Our lips are our own; who is lord over us?’* (NASB)

In Parashat Bo (*Shemot / Exodus 10:1-11:3*), Moshe and Aaron speak to Pharaoh asking to let the people go to worship their God, *Shemot / Exodus 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.* (NASB) Worship is important for God’s people, but did you know that according to Scripture the worshiper actually begins to resemble what is being worshiped? *Tehillim / Psalms 115:1-9* says the gods of the nations (idols) are made from silver and gold, the work of man’s hands. These idols are helpless, mute, blind, deaf, and lame, and that these idols that are made are impotent, unable to communicate or meet the needs of its worshiper.

### ***Tehillim / Psalms 115:1-9***

*115:1 Not to us, O Lord, not to us, But to Your name give glory Because of Your lovingkindness, because of Your truth. 115:2 Why should the nations say, ‘Where, now, is their God?’ 115:3 But our God is in the heavens; He does whatever He pleases. 115:4 Their idols are silver and gold, The work of man’s hands. 115:5 They have mouths, but they cannot speak; They have eyes, but they cannot see; 115:6 They have ears, but they cannot hear; They have noses, but they cannot smell; 115:7 They have hands, but they cannot feel; They have feet, but they cannot walk; They cannot make a sound with their throat. 115:8 Those who make them will become like them, Everyone who trusts in them. 115:9 O Israel, trust in the Lord; He is their help and their shield.* (NASB)

Verse 115:8 says כִּמּוֹהֵם יִהְיוּ עֲשִׂיהֶם כֹּל אֲשֶׁר-בִּטְיָח בָּהֶם: that “*those who makes the idol will be like them and so will everyone who trust in them.*” Can you see a parallel here to the Text of the Psalm we are studying and to the other Scriptures regarding the foolish man? The Scriptures speak of how Pharaoh was hard of heart; he was like the Egyptian idols he worshiped, cold, blind, and dumb because he did not worship the one true God of Israel. As we worship the one who is Faithful and true we become faithful and true

followers of God. Worshiping the one who is loving and holy, we too are able to become loving and holy. The Lord God we worship is the King of kings and the Lord of lords, all things created are subject to His lordship. As the faithful followers of God, have you chosen to submit yourself to God's authority and reign in your life? These Scriptures from the Psalms speak of the true nature of the gods (the idols) the nations worship and interestingly in *Tehillim / Psalms 12* our attention is directed to the boastful lips of the wicked. The Apostle Paul said *Colossians 3:5 Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. 3:6 For it is because of these things that the wrath of God will come upon the sons of disobedience, (NASB)* the wicked worship the deeds of the flesh, and it is these deeds that Paul draws a parallel to as "idolatry." The wicked create an idol of pride in their lives and literally become the very thing they have created. The wicked worship themselves and pride of life that is the only thing that keeps them moving forward in life. Worship has a theological significance, it is not just something that we do, it is something that reshapes us and meets us at our very core of who we are (*Tehillim / Psalms 115:8*). Worship of the Lord God Almighty forces us to abandon the idols of our hearts that have enslaved us and taken dominion and power over our lives. The Lord God of Israel is in the business of setting us free from the bondage of slavery in sin. In setting us free the Lord enables us to leave behind the idols of sin in our lives. The word "worship" means "to pray, exalt, venerate, honor, or esteem." The Lord setting us free from sin enables us to worship and praise, exalt, and honor the Lord, therefore worship also prepares us for fellowship with God and identifies us as His people who are set free. According to *Tehillim / Psalms 150*, praise begins in the heavenly sanctuary and resounds throughout the domain of God. From there it is taken up on earth who praises the Lord with a variety of instruments and with dancing. Then finally, everything that has breath praises the Lord (*Tehillim / Psalms 150:6*) for such a great salvation the Lord has provided. In Parashat Bo, we read of the awesome and mighty power of God who delivers His people from slavery in Egypt. Can you see in the Word of the Psalm how the worship of God resounds throughout these verses in a way that we should shout for joy and praise for the Lord's work of salvation? As worshipers of God, we know that our Father in Heaven is good; He is Holy, He is True, He is Faithful, He is Loving, and He is Almighty!

In the Scriptures we read how God's wrath was poured out on the Egyptians, and in the Psalms how God's wrath is reserved for the wicked. We also see the victory of Christ the Messiah which is a victory for His people. Though the powers of the world in Yeshua's day had come against Him, He was victorious, and according to the Book of Revelation, it is written that "the lamb will overcome" (*Revelation 17:14*). Every king is subject to His throne, every idolatrous religious ruler (the wicked) is subject to His Lordship and every disobedient person is subject to Yeshua the lamb of God. According to the Scriptures we have a share in His (Yeshua's) victory just as the children of Yisrael shared in the victory and spoils the deliverance from the bondage of slavery. God has called and chosen us to be a faithful people. Have you remained faithful in your walk before the Lord?

The foolishness of the wicked say that none is lord over them אֲשֶׁר אָמְרוּ | לְלִשְׁנֵנוּ נִגְבִּיר שְׁפִתֵינוּ 12:4 *Who have said, 'With our tongue we will prevail; Our lips are our own; who is lord over us?'* (NASB) We as the children of God know we have one who is Lord of All who stands over us. In the Scriptures, we read of the Power of God over men and over sin. God is mightier and it is His wisdom we seek when trying to understand these things. According to *Mishley / Proverbs 2:1-4*, the search for wisdom is described as "inclining the heart" (2:2, ב) לְהִקְשִׁיב לְחִכְמָה אֲזַנְךָ תִּטֵּה לְפִיךָ לְתַבּוּנָה: 2:2), "crying out, lifting the voice" (2:3, ג) כִּי אִם לְבִינָה תִקְרָא לְתַבּוּנָה תִתֵּן קוֹלְךָ: 2:3), and "seeking for as a hidden treasure" (2:4, ד) אִם-תִּבְקֶשְׁנָה כַכֶּסֶף וְכַמְטָמוּנִים תִּחְפְּשֶׁנָּה: (אם-תִּבְקֶשְׁנָה כַכֶּסֶף וְכַמְטָמוּנִים תִּחְפְּשֶׁנָּה: 2:4), these are all descriptions of one who is obeying God's Word and who is passionately and diligently listening and searching for God's wisdom. Verse 2:4 indicates that one needs to realize the value of wisdom in order to begin searching for it, as it says "And searching for her as for hidden treasures." King Solomon goes on to say (in *Mishley / Proverbs*) that "God is the source of



ה אִז תִּבִּין יִרְאֵת יְהוָה וְדַעַת אֱלֹהִים תִּמְצָא: ו כִּי-יְהוָה, (2:5-6) *wisdom and of knowledge and understanding*” (יִתֵּן הַחֵכְמָה מִפִּי דַעַת וְתְבוּנָה: *“the fear of the Lord.”* Job understood godly wisdom and fear while he suffered the loss of his family and the health of his own body (*Job 28:23*). Solomon finishes by saying in *Mishley / Proverbs 2:7-10* the result of having received God’s wisdom that there are pleasurable and moral implications to God’s wisdom. The ability to discern justice and righteousness, equity (honesty), and good course describe moral understanding and discretion in life. The wisdom that is described here is a relationship with the Giver of wisdom, and most of importantly wisdom is what helps us to place our faith and trust in God rather than this world or in our own deeds. Not only is God the giver of wisdom and knowledge but He also gives victory to the upright, He is a shield to the blameless, He guards the path of the just, and He protects the way of the faithful (2:6-8). Do you think that the children of Yisrael understood *“the fear of the Lord,”* as God was delivering them from the bonds of slavery? The Egyptians certainly did, God is Mighty, Awesome in power, and the dread of God was upon all of the people of Egypt, this is why they drove Israel out of Egypt giving them gold and materials saying go, get out of here, if they do not leave we will die too.

David says as a result of the wicked who destroy the innocent, the Lord will raise up and keep him who asks in safety: ו מִשֹּׁד עֲנִיִּים מֵאַנְקַת אֲבִיוֹנִים עֲתָה אֶקוּם יֹאמֶר יְהוָה אֲשִׁית בְּיִשְׁע יְפִיחַ לוֹ: 12:5 *‘Because of the devastation of the afflicted, because of the groaning of the needy, Now I will arise,’ says the Lord; ‘I will set him in the safety for which he longs.’ (NASB)* History tells in the pages of the Torah, the Egyptians did not learn their lessons and devastating judgment fell upon the army by the death of the entire army drowning in the Red Sea. We should learn something important here about sin, wisdom, and worshiping God from these passages. Sin must not rule in our lives if we have been saved, set free from sin in Christ. We should not be living in wickedness, as the Apostle Paul states *Colossians 3:5 Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. 3:6 For it is because of these things that the wrath of God will come upon the sons of disobedience, (NASB)* Every king and every person is subject to God’s rule and one day each of us will give an account of our lives before God and be made subject to Yeshua the Lamb of God as it says in *Revelation 11:15-19*.

### **Revelation 11:15-19**

*11:15 Then the seventh angel sounded; and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, ‘The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever.’ 11:16 And the twenty-four elders, who sit on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshiped God, 11:17 saying, ‘We give You thanks, O Lord God, the Almighty, who are and who were, because You have taken Your great power and have begun to reign. 11:18 ‘And the nations were enraged, and Your wrath came, and the time came for the dead to be judged, and the time to reward Your bond-servants the prophets and the saints and those who fear Your name, the small and the great, and to destroy those who destroy the earth.’ 11:19 And the temple of God which is in heaven was opened; and the ark of His covenant appeared in His temple, and there were flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder and an earthquake and a great hailstorm. (NASB)*

The apostle John tells us that the Lamb of God is the one worthy to open the scroll in Revelation 4 and 5. He has opened each seal and each trumpet sounded. The repeated praise in these verses indicates that the Lamb of God had completed the work that He alone could do, and it is at this point the entire world is brought under His authority (11:17). The 24 elders fall down and worshiped (11:16). In verse 11:18 the nations rage (similar to *Tehillim / Psalms 2*) and the wrath of God has come; they connect His judgment with His love and faithfulness. God has heard the cry of His people, His servants, the prophets, and the saints who reverence His name. David understood this concept and states that the Lord says those who ask for safety





for the exact same purpose of service for the Lord.

It is in this way, in the way that God works in our lives, that we know truly the Lord will keep His promises, as it says in *Tehillim / Psalms 12:7*: מִן-הַדּוֹר זֶה לְעוֹלָם: | *12:7 You, O Lord, will keep them; You will preserve him from this generation forever. (NASB)* Let's take an example from the Torah on the Lord keeping His people, in Parashat Yitro (Shemot / Exodus 18:1-20:23), this portion of Scripture tells us that Yitro (Moshe's father in law) arrived bringing Moshe's wife Zipporah and his two sons, Gershom and Eleazar (18:1-3). Moshe told Yitro everything the Lord had done and Yitro said יִיאָמֵר יִתְרוֹ בְּרוּךְ יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר הִצִּיל אֶתְכֶם מִיַּד מִצְרַיִם וּמִיַּד פַּרְעֹה אֲשֶׁר הִצִּיל אֶת-הָעָם מִתַּחַת יַד-מִצְרַיִם: *18:10 So Jethro said, 'Blessed be the Lord who delivered you from the hand of the Egyptians and from the hand of Pharaoh, and who delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians. (NASB)* Moshe's father in law praised the Name of the Lord, and then they make an offering to the Lord and sit down to eat before God (18:12). The next day, Yitro saw all that Moshe was doing for the people sitting as judge between each man and recommended that Moshe select leaders from the people as judges so that only the heavy matters Moshe could decide upon (18:13-26). In the third month leaving Egypt, the people arrive at the wilderness of Sinai (18:26-19:1). Lord told Moshe, have the people consecrate themselves because in three days the Lord will come down to speak with them (19:7-16). The Lord Moshe and Aaron to tell the people warning them not to break through and gaze so they would not die (19:24-25) and God called Moshe and Aaron to come up on the mountain. The reading this week concludes with the Lord giving Moshe and the people His Ten Commandments (*Shemot / Exodus 20:1-19*).

### ספר שמות פרק יח

ח וַיְסַפֵּר מֹשֶׁה לְחִתְנוֹ אֵת כָּל-אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה יְהוָה לְפַרְעֹה וּלְמִצְרַיִם עַל אֹדֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל אֵת כָּל-הַתְּלָאָה אֲשֶׁר מָצְאֶתֶם בְּדֶרֶךְ וַיִּצְלַם יְהוָה: ט וַיַּחֲדֵי יִתְרוֹ עַל כָּל-הַטּוֹבָה אֲשֶׁר-עָשָׂה יְהוָה לְיִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר הִצִּילוּ מִיַּד מִצְרַיִם: י וַיֹּאמֶר יִתְרוֹ בְּרוּךְ יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר הִצִּיל אֶתְכֶם מִיַּד מִצְרַיִם וּמִיַּד פַּרְעֹה אֲשֶׁר הִצִּיל אֶת-הָעָם מִתַּחַת יַד-מִצְרַיִם: יא עַתָּה יָדַעְתִּי כִּי-גָדוֹל יְהוָה מִכָּל-הָאֱלֹהִים כִּי בִדְבַר אֲשֶׁר זָדוּ עֲלֵיהֶם: יב וַיִּקַּח יִתְרוֹ חֲתָן מֹשֶׁה עֲלָה וּזְבָחִים לָאֱלֹהִים וַיָּבֵא אֶהָרֶן וְכֹל | וַקְּנִי יִשְׂרָאֵל לְאַכֹּל-לֶחֶם: יג-חֲתָן מֹשֶׁה לְפָנֵי הָאֱלֹהִים:

### Shemot / Exodus 18:8-12

*18:8 Moses told his father-in-law all that the Lord had done to Pharaoh and to the Egyptians for Israel's sake, all the hardship that had befallen them on the journey, and how the Lord had delivered them. 18:9 Jethro rejoiced over all the goodness which the Lord had done to Israel, in delivering them from the hand of the Egyptians. 18:10 So Jethro said, 'Blessed be the Lord who delivered you from the hand of the Egyptians and from the hand of Pharaoh, and who delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians. 18:11 'Now I know that the Lord is greater than all the gods; indeed, it was proven when they dealt proudly against the people.' 18:12 Then Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took a burnt offering and sacrifices for God, and Aaron came with all the elders of Israel to eat a meal with Moses' father-in-law before God. (NASB)*

These Scriptures tell us that Moshe told Yitro all the hardships that had befallen them on the journey and all the Lord had done for Israel's sake. Yitro heard of the hardships of Israel, all of the sin of Egypt, and all the Lord had done for Moshe in the deliverance of Israel from bondage. Hearing these things Yitro gave praise to the Lord saying בְּרוּךְ יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר הִצִּיל אֶתְכֶם מִיַּד מִצְרַיִם “Blessed is the Lord that delivered you from the hand of the Egyptians” (18:10). Follow the sequence of events here, Yitro arrived (18:1-3), Moshe told him of all God had done (18:8), Yitro praised God (18:10), then they offered Sacrifices to the Lord and sat

down to have a meal together at peace (18:12). Because of what God had done, Yitro said יְדַעְתִּי כִּי- עֲתָה גְדוֹל יְהוָה מִכָּל-הָאֱלֹהִים “Now I know that God is greater than all other gods.” Because of what God has done in the Bible and in our lives we know God is greater than all things! The Apostle Paul said the Torah is a tutor or teacher in *Galatians 3:24* ὥστε ὁ νόμος παιδαγωγὸς ἡμῶν γέγονεν εἰς Χριστόν, ἵνα ἐκ πίστεως δικαιωθῶμεν: 3:24 *Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith. (NASB)* What is the Torah teaching us here about the Psalm of David and our lives and sin? God is greater than all things. The reason the Lord allows sin, and failure in our lives is so that we come to Him (God) on our knees as humble servants and not on our feet in the pride of life.

We read in *Tehillim / Psalms 12:7*: אֲתָה יְהוָה תִּשְׁמְרֵם תָּצַרְנוּ | מִן-הַדּוֹר זֶה לְעוֹלָם: 12:7 *You, O Lord, will keep them; You will preserve him from this generation forever. (NASB)* the Scripture states that He (the Lord) will keep and preserve him from this generation of evil men. Earlier mentioning the sequence of events in Parashat Yitro, we today learn of all the Lord has done for us, we praise God’s Name for the work He has done, we come to the Lord God Almighty in the Messiah in the offering for atonement He has provided, just like Yitro and Moshe did offering sacrifices unto the Lord, and then because of these things we are able to live at peace with God and with others (i.e. just as they sat in a fellowship meal together). The Scriptures this week teach us to rely upon the Lord for everything, even in our day-to-day lives for help from sin. The Lord will keep us and preserve us from this generation of wickedness. He will refine us as silver, just as he refined the children of Israel. God’s deliverance was not based upon Israel, it was based upon Himself and in Him keeping His promises! The Lord can and will deliver you from sin in Yeshua the Messiah but you have to wholly rely upon Him! If you are not or have not yet become a child of God by faith in Yeshua the Messiah and made him Lord, Savior and King of your life, do so today! Seek the Lord and His righteousness, ask for His help in living in righteousness and justice, ask for His help in loving others and being good to our neighbors, trust in the Lord to transform your life and to conform you unto the likeness of His Son Yeshua the Messiah. Seeing these things is important, the reason being is when men turn away from the Lord, they turn away from truth, justice, and righteousness, and in the pride of life live wickedly before God and sin greatly. *Tehillim / Psalms 12* concludes with verse 8 saying ט סָבִיב רָשָׁעִים יִתְהַלְכוּן בְּרָם: 12:8 *The wicked strut about on every side When vileness is exalted among the sons of men. (NASB)* The wicked strut about boasting in their version of the truth. In *Matthew 6:33* Yeshua said <sup>33</sup>ζητείτε δὲ πρῶτον τὴν βασιλείαν [τοῦ θεοῦ] καὶ τὴν δικαιοσύνην αὐτοῦ, καὶ ταῦτα πάντα προστεθήσεται ὑμῖν. 6:33 *‘But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. (NASB)* What did Yeshua mean when He said seek first His kingdom and His righteousness? To be in a right relationship with the Lord God Almighty, one must strive to be obedient to His word. The striving daily to obey, *Matthew 6:33* is telling us to be determined to allow God to destroy the sin that is in our lives. This is walking in righteousness in this life, our goal is to be doing all we know with the help of the Holy spirit to stop sinning. This on our own is something that is very hard to do. The point is that we approach this with placing a high priority on working in cooperation with Him in putting sin to death in our lives. The Apostle Paul said in *Romans 8:12* *So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh 8:13 for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live. 8:14 For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. (NASB)* Are you being led by the Spirit and called a son of God? The Lord wants us to first acknowledge that sin is in fact sin according to the Scriptures and then we are to live in righteousness before Him. If we seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, the other things we do in life for the Lord, how we live, will come much easier for us. The Lord expects us to walk in daily righteous obedience to His Word and by the leading of His Holy Spirit. If we miss the mark that we are striving for, there is forgiveness and restoration in His Son. If we strive to do this we will not be living like the wicked, strutting around on every side in pride, or in the vileness of the ungodly among the sons of men. If we are truly His, we will daily be striving to live righteously before the Lord Almighty! Let’s pray!

## Christian Commentary

The *International Critical Commentary on the Psalms (ICCP)*, Driver, Plummer, and Briggs, 2005, states that *Tehillim / Psalms 12* is a prayer in which the congregation earnestly seeks God to save them. The faithful vanish away and liars prevail (12:2-3). The congregation asks the Lord to cut off the liars (12:4-5) and the Lord states that He will arise and set the afflicted in safety (12:6-7). The congregation then expresses confidence that the Lord will preserve them from the wicked who surround them (12:8-9). The commentators believe the date of the psalm is not late because of the Hebrew imperative form in 12:4, the cohortative in 12:2, however they observe that the demonstrative זֶה in 12:8 is not classic. *Tehillim / Psalm 12* uses אֲמוֹנִים, חֲסִידִים in 12:2, and אֲבִיוֹנִים, עֲנִיִּים in 12:6, to refer to the righteous members of the congregation over against the wicked members, this suggests a time of religious declension, in which the pious were in great peril, especially from slander and violence. The commentators believe this was a time of external peace and internal corruption; great stress is placed upon sins of speech in 12:3 giving examples from *Tehillim / Psalms 144:8*, *Mishley / Proverbs 6:24*, *1 Chronicles 12:33*, and in 12:4 referencing *Tehillim / Psalms 131:1*, they say suggest there has been influence by Persian ethics. It is believed that *Tehillim / Psalms 12:6* is a citation from *Isaiah 33:10* and not the reverse. All of this is taken to mean that this Psalm was written in the Persian period, and the time when the people were corrupted and mingling with the neighboring nations prior to the reforms of Ezra and Nehemiah. (“*The International Critical Commentary: Psalms (in 2 volumes)*” by Charles A. Briggs, Varda Books, 2005, 1112p. Page Vol. I, page 95”)

The first stanza, according to the interpretation adopted by the commentators, kindness and trustworthiness seem no longer to exist in the community. In the other case, the persons themselves who should have these characteristics are no more. Unfaithfulness has so spread throughout the congregation that it has become a personal matter of man with man, flattering lips, and double mindedness. The second stanza states that the Lord will cut off every flattering lip parallels to the tongue speaking great words. This refers to the speaker and not the words themselves, proud and boastful, and the hearer flattering, deceiving, and misleading. The wicked say “*We are mightier, with no one mightier than we are*” with regard to “*who is lord over us?*” The wicked believe they are their own lord and they have their own power, they are makers of themselves. The proud and the hypocrites place their confidence in themselves and in their speech to deceive men and do not submit themselves to God. Stanza three has the enemies who are violent attacking the people who are unprepared taking their spoils. The Lord will stand between the righteous and the unrighteous (12:6). *Tehillim / Psalms 12:6* states 12:6 *The words of the Lord are pure words; As silver tried in a furnace on the earth, refined seven times.* NASB (זֶה אִמְרוֹת יְהוָה אִמְרוֹת טְהוֹרוֹת כֶּסֶף צְרוּף בְּעֵלִיל לְאֶרֶץ) It is believed this verse destroys the structure of stanza three which has the fourth line at the close of 12:7. It is believed this is a gloss that shows the admiration of the editor of God’s Word.

## Rabbinic Commentary

The rabbinic commentary (Midrash) on *Tehillim / Psalms 12* has 5 parts. Reading through this week’s Midrash we will be looking at Parts 2, 3, and 4. Let’s begin by outlining Midrash Tehillim Chapter 12 Parts 2, 3, and 4.

### Outline of Midrash Tehillim / Psalms, Chapter 12, Parts 2, 3, and 4

#### Part 2:

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) “*May the Lord cut off*



*all smooth lips, the tongue that speaks great things (Tehillim / Psalms 12:4)."*

- The פתיחתא (Petihta) *"the homiletic introduction"* to the Midrash says *"Rabbi Khappara taught in the name of rabbi Nathan, So vicious is slander that long ago David, in the name of the Lord's Holy Spirit, cut off the slanderer by excommunicating him, as is said May the Lord cut off the tongue that speaks great things (Tehillim / Psalms 12:4)."*
- The משל (mashal) *"the parable,"* goes on to explain the פתיחתא (Petihta), the rabbis taught saying *"Slander is more vicious than the three transgressions which are called great, namely, idolatry, adultery, and murder."*
- The נמשל (Nimshal) *"expansion on the parable"* expands upon the משל (mashal) and goes on to expand upon the meaning of what the rabbis meant when they said that slander is more vicious than three transgressions idolatry, adultery, and murder.
- The Concluding phrase says *"Did not the measure of punishment begin with them, as in the next verse it is said Go through the city and smite and begin with My consecrated ones? (Ezekiel 9:5-6)."*

### Part 3:

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) *"On account of the oppression of the poor, on account of sighing of the needy, now will I arise, says the Lord (Tehillim / Psalms 12:6)."*
- The פתיחתא (Petihta) *"the homiletic introduction"* to the Midrash says *"When judges seek to corrupt justice, the Holy One blessed be He, makes His presence rise and depart from among them."*
- The משל (mashal) *"the parable,"* goes on to explain the פתיחתא (Petihta), the rabbis taught saying *"The punishment for oppressing the poor is greater than the punishment of the generation that perished in the flood."*
- The נמשל (Nimshal) *"expansion on the parable"* expands upon the משל (mashal) and goes on to describe how oppressing the poor is so great.
- The Concluding phrase says *"According to Rabbi Hoshai, God said, Even as I set the one in safety, I make the measure of punishment grow hot upon the other."*

### Part 4:

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) *"The words of the Lord are pure words (Tehillim / Psalms 12:7)."*
- The פתיחתא (Petihta) *"the homiletic introduction"* to the Midrash says *"Rabbi Joshua son of Levi said, In Scripture, The Holy One blessed be He, speaks in a roundabout way so as not to utter and unseemly word, as is shown by the previous discussion of the Psalm Blessed is the man."*
- The משל (mashal) *"the parable,"* goes on to explain the פתיחתא (Petihta), the rabbis taught saying *"The Holy One blessed be He, declared to Moshe, I gave you two precepts which concern the maintenance of ritual purity."*
- The נמשל (Nimshal) *"expansion on the parable"* expands upon the משל (mashal) goes on to expand upon the meaning of the two precepts that concern the maintenance of ritual purity.
- The Concluding phrase says *"Rabbi Joshua son of Levi said, Even children living in the days of Saul and David and in the days of Samuel knew those subtle distinctions of the law which elaborate forty nine arguments by which a thing may be proved clean, and forty nine arguments by which a thing may be proved unclean, as was stated above in the Seventh Psalm."*

Midrash Tehillim chapter 12 contains 5 parts and we will be looking at part 2, 3, and 4. Midrash

Tehillim 12 part 2 is introduced (the דיבור המתחיל, Dibur Hamathil) “*May the Lord cut off all smooth lips, the tongue that speaks great things (Tehillim / Psalms 12:4).*” According to the beginning words, we will be looking at pride and how the Lord will cut off those who boast and speak great things. The Homiletic introduction to the midrash (the פתיחתא, Petihta) says “*Rabbi Khappara taught in the name of rabbi Nathan, So vicious is slander that long ago David, in the name of the Lord’s Holy Spirit, cut off the slanderer by excommunicating him, as is said May the Lord cut off the tongue that speaks great things (Tehillim / Psalms 12:4).*” Was there a time in David’s life where this had come true, that God cut off the tongue of the person who speaks great things? One example from David’s life may be taken from the first book of Samuel Chapter 25 on the story of Nabal (נבל), Abigail, and David. According to a Hebrew lexicon, נבל as an adjective or noun means “*villain, scoundrel, knave, rascal, fink, heel, hound, jackal, miscreant, scallywag, scamp, blackguard,*” and as a verb “*to wither.*” When written as לנבל “*to nabal*” means “*to talk obscenely.*” Let’s read the story of Nabal, Abigail, and David in *1 Samuel 25:1-38*.

ספר שמואל א פרק כה	1 Samuel 25:1-38
<p>א וַיָּמָת שְׁמוּאֵל וַיִּקְבְּצוּ כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּסְפְּדוּ-לוֹ וַיִּקְבְּרוּהוּ בְּבֵיתוֹ בְּרָמָה וַיָּקָם דָּוִד וַיֵּרֵד אֶל-מִדְבַּר פָּאָרָן: ב וַאִישׁ בְּמַעֲוֹן וּמַעֲשֵׂהוּ בַּכְרָמֶל וְהָאִישׁ גְּדוֹל מְאֹד וְלוֹ צֹאן שְׁלֹשֶׁת-אַלְפִים וְאַלְף עֵזִים וַיְהִי בְגֹזוֹ אֶת-צֹאֲנוֹ בַּכְרָמֶל: ג וְשֵׁם הָאִישׁ נָבָל וְשֵׁם אִשְׁתּוֹ אַבְיָגַיִל וְהָאִשָּׁה טוֹבַת-שֵׁקֶל וַיִּפֹּת תֹּאֲרָ וְהָאִישׁ קָשָׁה וְרַע מְעַלְלִים וְהוּא כָלְבוֹ [כְּלָבִי]: ד וַיִּשְׁמַע דָּוִד בַּמִּדְבָּר כִּי-גִזָּז נָבָל אֶת-צֹאֲנוֹ: ה וַיִּשְׁלַח דָּוִד עֲשָׂרָה נְעָרִים וַיֹּאמֶר דָּוִד לְנְעָרָיו עֲלוּ כְרָמְלָה וּבְאַתֶּם אֶל-נָבָל וּשְׁאַלְתֶּם-לוֹ בְּשֵׁמי לְשָׁלוֹם: ו וְאַמַּרְתֶּם כֹּה לְחָי וְנַאֲתָה שְׁלוֹם וּבֵיתָה שְׁלוֹם וְכָל אֲשֶׁר-לָהּ שְׁלוֹם: ז וְעַתָּה שְׁמַעְתִּי כִּי גִזְזִים לָהּ עֲתָה הִרְעִים אֲשֶׁר-לָהּ הִיוּ עִמָּנוּ לֹא הִכְלַמְנוּהוּ וְלֹא-נִפְקַד לָהֶם מְאוּמָה כָּל-יְמֵי הַיּוֹתָם בַּכְרָמֶל: ח שְׁאַל אֶת-נְעָרֶיהָ וַיִּגִּדוּ לָהּ וַיִּמְצְאוּ הַנְּעָרִים חֵן בְּעֵינֶיהָ כִּי-עַל-יּוֹם טוֹב בָּנוּ [בְּאֲנוּ] תִּנְהַגְנָה אֶת אֲשֶׁר תִּמְצָא יְדָהּ לְעֵבְדֶיךָ וּלְבָנֶיךָ לְדָוִד: ט וַיָּבֹאוּ נְעָרֵי דָוִד וַיְדַבְּרוּ אֶל-נָבָל כְּכָל-הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה בְּשֵׁם דָּוִד וַיִּנְחֹחוּ: י וַיַּעַן נָבָל אֶת-עַבְדֵי דָוִד וַיֹּאמֶר מִי דָוִד וּמִי בֶן-יִשִׁי הַיּוֹם רַבּוּ עַבְדִּים הַמְתַּפְרָצִים אִישׁ מִפְּנֵי אֲדֹנָיו: יא וְלִקְחֹתִי אֶת-לֶחְמִי וְאֶת-מִימֵי וְאֵת טְבַחְתִּי אֲשֶׁר טְבַחְתִּי לְגִזְזֵי וְנִתְתִּי לְאֲנָשִׁים אֲשֶׁר לֹא יַדְעֹתַי אִי מִזֶּה הֵמָּה: יב וַיִּהְפְּכוּ נְעָרֵי-דָוִד לְדַרְכָּם וַיָּשֻׁבוּ וַיָּבֹאוּ וַיִּגְדּוּ לוֹ כְּכָל הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה: יג וַיֹּאמֶר דָּוִד לְאֲנָשָׁיו חָגְרוּ   אִישׁ אֶת-חַרְבּוֹ וַיִּחְגְּרוּ אִישׁ אֶת-חַרְבּוֹ וַיִּחְגְּרוּ גַם-דָּוִד אֶת-חַרְבּוֹ וַיַּעֲלוּ   אַחֲרָי דָּוִד כָּאֲרַבַּע מְאוֹת אִישׁ וּמְאֹתִים יָשְׁבוּ עַל-הַפְּלִים: יד וְלֹאֲבִיגַיִל אִשְׁת׃ נָבָל הִגִּיד נְעָר-אַחַד מֵהַנְּעָרִים לְאִמְרוֹ הִנֵּה שְׁלַח דָּוִד מְלָאכִים   מִהַמִּדְבָּר לְכַרֵּךְ אֶת-אֲדֹנָינוּ וַיַּעַט בָּהֶם: טו וְהָאֲנָשִׁים טָבִים לָנוּ מְאֹד וְלֹא הִכְלַמְנוּהוּ וְלֹא-פָקַדְנוּ מְאוּמָה כָּל-יְמֵי הַתְּהַלְכָנוּ אִתֶּם בְּהִיוֹתָנוּ בַּשָּׂדֶה: טז חֹמָה הִיוּ עִלְיָנוּ גַם-לַיְלָה גַם-יּוֹמָם כָּל-יְמֵי הַיּוֹתָנוּ עִמָּם רַעִים הַצָּאֵן: יז וְעַתָּה דַעֲי וְרָאִי מִה-תַּעֲשִׂי כִּי-כִלְתָהּ הִרְעָה אֶל-אֲדֹנָינוּ וְעַל כָּל-בֵּיתוֹ וְהוּא בֶן-בְּלִיעַל מִדְבָּר אֲלֵי: יח וְתַמְהָר אַבְיָגַיִל [אַבְיָגַיִל] וַתִּקַּח מְאֹתִים לֶחֶם וּשְׁנַיִם גְּבִילֵי-זֵיִן וְחֲמֵשׁ צֹאן עֲשׂוּיֹת [עֲשׂוּיֹת] וְחֲמֵשׁ סְאִים קָלִי וּמֵאָה צִמְקִים וּמְאֹתִים דְּבָלִים וְתִשָּׂם עַל-הַחֲמָרִים:</p>	<p>25:1 Then Samuel died; and all Israel gathered together and mourned for him, and buried him at his house in Ramah. And David arose and went down to the wilderness of Paran. 25:2 Now there was a man in Maon whose business was in Carmel; and the man was very rich, and he had three thousand sheep and a thousand goats. And it came about while he was shearing his sheep in Carmel 25:3 (now the man’s name was Nabal, and his wife’s name was Abigail. And the woman was intelligent and beautiful in appearance, but the man was harsh and evil in his dealings, and he was a Calebite), 25:4 that David heard in the wilderness that Nabal was shearing his sheep. 25:5 So David sent ten young men; and David said to the young men, ‘Go up to Carmel, visit Nabal and greet him in my name; 25:6 and thus you shall say, ‘Have a long life, peace be to you, and peace be to your house, and peace be to all that you have. 25:7 ‘Now I have heard that you have shearers; now your shepherds have been with us and we have not insulted them, nor have they missed anything all the days they were in Carmel. 25:8 ‘Ask your young men and they will tell you. Therefore let my young men find favor in your eyes, for we have come on a festive day. Please give whatever you find at hand to your servants and to your son David.’ 25:9 When David’s young men came, they spoke to Nabal according to all these words in David’s name; then they waited. 25:10 But Nabal answered David’s servants and said, ‘Who is David? And who is the son of Jesse? There are many servants today who are each breaking away from his master. 25:11 ‘Shall I then take my bread and my water and my meat that I have slaughtered for my shearers, and give it to men whose origin I do not know?’ 25:12 So David’s young men retraced their way and went back; and they came and told him according to all these words. 25:13 David said to his men, ‘Each of you gird on his sword.’ So each man girded on his sword. And David also girded on his sword, and about four hundred men went up behind David while two hundred stayed with the baggage. 25:14 But one of the young men told Abigail, Nabal’s wife, saying, ‘Behold, David sent messengers from the wilderness to greet our master, and he scorned them. 25:15 ‘Yet the men were very good to us, and we were not insulted, nor did we miss anything as long as we went about with them, while we were in the fields. 25:16 ‘They were a wall to us both by night and by day, all the time we were with them tending the sheep. 25:17 ‘Now therefore, know and consider what you should do, for evil is plotted against our master and against all his household; and he is such a worthless man that no one can speak to him.’ 25:18 Then Abigail hurried and took two hundred loaves of bread and two jugs of wine and five sheep already prepared and five measures of roasted grain and a hundred clusters of raisins and two hundred cakes of figs, and loaded them on donkeys. (NASB)</p>

יט ותאמר לנערֶיהָ עֲבְרוּ לְפָנַי הַנְּנִי אֲחֲרֵיכֶם בָּאָה וּלְאִישָׁהּ  
 נָבָל לֹא הִגִּידָהּ: כ וְהָיָה הַיּוֹם | רִכְבָּת עַל-הַחֲמוֹר וַיֵּרְדֹת בְּסִמְתֵּי  
 הַהָר וְהִנֵּה דָוִד וְאֲנָשָׁיו יֹרְדִים לְקִרְאָתָהּ וּתְפַגְּשׁ אֹתָם: כא וְדָוִד  
 אָמַר אֵף לְשֹׁקֵר שְׁמֵרְתִי אֶת-כָּל-אֲשֶׁר לְזֶה בְּמִדְבָּר וְלֹא-נִפְקַד  
 מִכָּל-אֲשֶׁר-לוֹ מְאוּמָה וַיִּשָׁב-לִי רַעְיָה תַחַת טוֹבָה: כב כֹּה-  
 יַעֲשֶׂה אֱלֹהִים לְאִיבֵי דָוִד וְכֹה יִסִּיף אִם-אֲשִׁיֵּר מִכָּל-אֲשֶׁר-לוֹ  
 עַד-הַבֹּקֵר מִשְׁתִּין בְּקִיר: כג וּתְרָא אַבִּיגַיִל אֶת-דָּוִד וּתְמַהֵר  
 וּתְרַד מֵעַל הַחֲמוֹר וּתִפֹּל לְאַפֵּי דָוִד עַל-פְּנֵיהָ וּתִשְׁתַּחוּו אַרְצָ: כד  
 וּתִפֹּל עַל-רַגְלָיו וּתְאָמַר בִּי-אֲנִי אֲדֹנָי הֵעֹן וַתִּדְבֹר-נָא אֲמַתְךָ  
 בְּאִזְנֶיךָ וַיִּשְׁמַע אֶת דְּבָרֶי אֲמַתְךָ: כה אֵל-נָא יְשִׁים אֲדֹנָי | אֶת-  
 לְבוֹ אֵל-אִישׁ הַבְּלִיעֵל הַזֶּה עַל-נָבָל כִּי כִשְׁמוֹ כֵּן-הוּא נָבָל שְׁמוֹ  
 וְנָבָלָה עִמּוֹ וְאֲנִי אֲמַתְךָ לֹא-רְאִיתִי אֶת-נְעָרֵי אֲדֹנָי אֲשֶׁר שְׁלַחְתָּ:  
 כו וְעַתָּה אֲדֹנָי חִי-יְהִי וְחִי-נִפְשָׁךָ אֲשֶׁר מְנַעַךְ יְהִי מִבּוֹא  
 בְּדַמַּיִם וְהוֹשַׁע יְדֶךָ לְךָ וְעַתָּה יְהִי וְנָבָל אִיבִיד וְהַמְבַקְשִׁים אֵל-  
 אֲדֹנָי רַעְיָה: כז וְעַתָּה הַבְּרָכָה הַזֹּאת אֲשֶׁר-הִבִּיא שְׁפָחָתְךָ לְאֲדֹנָי  
 וְנִתְּנָה לְנְעָרִים הַמְתַּהַלְכִים בְּרַגְלֵי אֲדֹנָי: כח שָׂא נָא לְפִשְׁעֵי  
 אֲמַתְךָ כִּי-עָשָׂה יַעֲשֶׂה יְהִי לְאֲדֹנָי בֵּית נְאֻמָּן כִּי-מִלְחָמוֹת יְהִי  
 אֲדֹנָי נִלְחָם וְרַעְיָה לֹא-תִמְצָא בְךָ מִיְמֶיךָ: כט וַיִּקָּם אָדָם לְרִדְפָךָ  
 וַיִּלְבַּקֵּשׁ אֶת-נִפְשָׁךָ וְהָיְתָה נַפְשׁ אֲדֹנָי צְרוּרָה | בְּצָרוֹר הַחַיִּים  
 אֵת יְהִי אֱלֹהֶיךָ וְאֵת נַפְשׁ אִיבִיד יִקְלַעְנָה בְּתוֹךְ כַּף הַקַּלֵּעַ: ל  
 וְהָיָה כִּי-יַעֲשֶׂה יְהִי לְאֲדֹנָי כְּכָל אֲשֶׁר-דִּבַּר אֶת-הַטּוֹבָה עֲלֶיךָ  
 וַצִּנֵּךְ לְנִגִּיד עַל-יִשְׂרָאֵל: לא וְלֹא-תִהְיֶה זֹאת | לְךָ לְפִנְיָה  
 וְלִמְכַשׁוֹל לֵב לְאֲדֹנָי וְלִשְׁפָד-דָּם חַנּוּם וְלִהְיוֹשִׁיעַ אֲדֹנָי לוֹ וְהִיטֵב  
 יְהִי לְאֲדֹנָי וַיִּזְכֹּרְתָ אֶת-אֲמַתְךָ: לב וַיֹּאמֶר דָּוִד לְאַבִּיגַיִל  
 בְּרוּךְ יְהִי אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר שְׁלַחְךָ הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה לְקִרְאָתִי: לג  
 וּבְרוּךְ טַעַמְךָ וּבְרוּכָה אַתְּ אֲשֶׁר כָּלַתְנִי הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה מִבּוֹא בְּדַמַּיִם  
 וְהוֹשַׁע יְדֵי לִי: לד וְאוּלָם חִי-יְהִי אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר מְנַעַנִי  
 מִהֲרַע אֶתְךָ כִּי | לוֹלִי מִהֲרַת וּתְבֹאֲתִי [וּתְבֹאֲתִי] לְקִרְאָתִי כִּי אִם-  
 נוֹתַר לְנָבָל עַד-אוֹר הַבֹּקֵר מִשְׁתִּין בְּקִיר: לה וַיִּקַּח דָּוִד מִיְדֶהָ  
 אֶת אֲשֶׁר-הִבִּיאָהּ לוֹ וְלֶה אָמַר עָלַי לְשָׁלוֹם לְבִיתְךָ רְאִי שְׁמַעְתִּי  
 בְּקוֹלְךָ וְאֲשָׂא פְּנֵיךָ: לו וּתְבֹא אַבִּיגַיִל | אֵל-נָבָל וְהִנֵּה-לוֹ מִשְׁתֵּה  
 בְּבֵיתוֹ כְּמִשְׁתֵּה הַמֶּלֶךְ וְלֵב נָבָל טוֹב עָלָיו וְהוּא שָׁכַר עַד-מָאֹד  
 וְלֹא-הִגִּידָהּ לוֹ דְּבָר קִטּוֹן וְגָדוֹל עַד-אוֹר הַבֹּקֵר: לז וַיְהִי בְּבֹקֵר  
 בְּצֹאת הַיּוֹם מִנְּבָל וּתְגַד-לוֹ אִשְׁתּוֹ אֶת-הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה וַיָּמָת לְבוֹ  
 בְּקַרְבּוֹ וְהוּא הָיָה לְאָבֶן: לח וַיְהִי כַעֲשָׂרֹת הַיָּמִים וַיָּגַף יְהִי  
 אֶת-נָבָל וַיָּמָת:

25:19 She said to her young men, 'Go on before me; behold, I am coming after you.' But she did not tell her husband Nabal. 25:20 It came about as she was riding on her donkey and coming down by the hidden part of the mountain, that behold, David and his men were coming down toward her; so she met them. 25:21 Now David had said, 'Surely in vain I have guarded all that this man has in the wilderness, so that nothing was missed of all that belonged to him; and he has returned me evil for good. 25:22 'May God do so to the enemies of David, and more also, if by morning I leave as much as one male of any who belong to him.' 25:23 When Abigail saw David, she hurried and dismounted from her donkey, and fell on her face before David and bowed herself to the ground. 25:24 She fell at his feet and said, 'On me alone, my lord, be the blame. And please let your maidservant speak to you, and listen to the words of your maidservant. 25:25 'Please do not let my lord pay attention to this worthless man, Nabal, for as his name is, so is he. Nabal is his name and folly is with him; but I your maidservant did not see the young men of my lord whom you sent. 25:26 'Now therefore, my lord, as the Lord lives, and as your soul lives, since the Lord has restrained you from shedding blood, and from avenging yourself by your own hand, now then let your enemies and those who seek evil against my lord, be as Nabal. 25:27 'Now let this gift which your maidservant has brought to my lord be given to the young men who accompany my lord. 25:28 'Please forgive the transgression of your maidservant; for the Lord will certainly make for my lord an enduring house, because my lord is fighting the battles of the Lord, and evil will not be found in you all your days. 25:29 'Should anyone rise up to pursue you and to seek your life, then the life of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of the living with the Lord your God; but the lives of your enemies He will sling out as from the hollow of a sling. 25:30 'And when the Lord does for my lord according to all the good that He has spoken concerning you, and appoints you ruler over Israel, 25:31 this will not cause grief or a troubled heart to my lord, both by having shed blood without cause and by my lord having avenged himself. When the Lord deals well with my lord, then remember your maidservant.' 25:32 Then David said to Abigail, 'Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who sent you this day to meet me, 25:33 and blessed be your discernment, and blessed be you, who have kept me this day from bloodshed and from avenging myself by my own hand. 25:34 'Nevertheless, as the Lord God of Israel lives, who has restrained me from harming you, unless you had come quickly to meet me, surely there would not have been left to Nabal until the morning light as much as one male.' 25:35 So David received from her hand what she had brought him and said to her, 'Go up to your house in peace. See, I have listened to you and granted your request.' 25:36 Then Abigail came to Nabal, and behold, he was holding a feast in his house, like the feast of a king. And Nabal's heart was merry within him, for he was very drunk; so she did not tell him anything at all until the morning light. 25:37 But in the morning, when the wine had gone out of Nabal, his wife told him these things, and his heart died within him so that he became as a stone. 25:38 About ten days later, the Lord struck Nabal and he died. (NASB)

The Scriptures describe Nabal as a rich Calebite who was harsh and ill-tempered. David was not yet King of Israel and he and his men were living off the wilderness of Param (*1 Samuel 25:5-11*) because of King Saul and were providing protection for the shepherds in the area. The Scriptures say that Nabal lived in the city of Maon, and he owned much land in the Judean town of Carmel as well as men, sheep, and goats. These events that happened occurred during the time of sheep shearing. During this time David sent a small group of men to Nabal with a request for provisions, David instructed his men on exactly what to say when they approached Nabal. David had instructed his men to speak to Nabal in such a way so as to inform him





מֵאוֹמֶה כִּי אִם-אוֹתָךְ בְּאִשְׁרֵךְ אֶת-אִשְׁתּוֹ וְאִיךָ אֶעֱשֶׂה הַרְעָה הַגְּדוֹלָה הַזֹּאת וְחָטַאתִי לְאֱלֹהִים: *There is no one greater in this house than I, and he has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How then could I do this great evil and sin against God? (NASB)*

- **Cain said of murder, Bereshit / Genesis 4:13:** מִנְּשׂוֹא: יג וַיֹּאמֶר קַיִן אֶל-יְהוָה גְּדוֹל עֲוֹנִי מִנְּשׂוֹא: *“Cain said to the Lord, ‘My punishment is too great to bear!’ (NASB)*

The rabbis teach that slander is more vicious than three transgressions or idolatry, adultery, and murder, saying “*God Himself, if one dare speak thus, cries out concerning slanderers, for in saying Who will rise up for Me against those that speak evil (Tehillim / Psalms 94:16) He meant Who can abide those that speak evil, unless it is Gehenna? But Gehenna cries out, Even I cannot abide them. And so the Holy One blessed be He, says to Gehenna, I from above will punish them, and you from below, as it is said What punishment will be inflicted upon you, O slanderous tongue?*” (עם) [לי] (עם) מרעים (תהלים צד יו), מי יכול לעמוד להם בגיהנם, וגיהנם צווחת אף אני איני יכולה לעמוד בהן, אמר הקב"ה אני (מלמעלה ואתה מלמטה). The rabbis go on to draw a parallel with the tongue with the arrows saying “*Which man is worse, He that smites with a sword or he that smites with an arrow? He that smites with a sword is unable to kill except at close quarters, but he that smites with an arrow shoots it forth, so that it kills far away, as is said Their tongue is an arrow shot out, it speaks deceit (Jeremiah 9:7), and also as is said, sons of men whose teeth are spears and arrows (Tehillim / Psalms 57:7).*” The boastful words of the wicked, the unrighteous tongue may attack at a great distance like the spear and the arrow because this may be done in secret behind one’s back. In addition to this, “*Rabbi Samuel son of Nakhman said, Why is the evil tongue called a triple slaying tongue? Because it slays three persons, the person speaking, the person spoken to, and the person spoken of*” (האומר והמקבל והנאמר עליו) (לפי שהורג שלשה).

The root meaning of the name Nabal (נבל) is “wilt” (verb), and came to mean “failure,” and so gained the figurative meaning of “shameless improprieties.” In the Nabal narrative, he is described as living up to his name (*1 Samuel 25:25*) in addition to being harsh and ill-tempered. Traditionally Nabal is euphemistically translated as fool, for which a Hebrew synonym is kesil (כשל, literally meaning “to fail or stumble”). In the genealogical lists of the Books of Chronicles, there is a man named Nadab, whose brother is married to a person named Abihail (*1 Chronicles 2:28-29*). כח וַיְהִיו בְּנֵי-אוֹנָם שְׁמִי וַיְדַע וּבְנֵי שְׁמִי נָדָב וְאַבִּישׁוּר: כט 2:28 *The sons of Onam were Shammai and Jada. And the sons of Shammai were Nadab and Abishur. 2:29 The name of Abishur’s wife was Abihail, and she bore him Ahban and Molid. (NASB)* It is possible that the name Abigail (אבגיל) is a corruption of Abihail (אַבִּיהַיִל), so that it more closely describes the character of the wife, since Abigail roughly means joy of my father, suggesting positive characteristics, while Abihail means only my father is strength. Rather than the name of his wife was Abigail (אבגיל) the account in the Books of Samuel may have originally read the name of the chief of Abihail (שם שר אביהיל), and told of a clan named Abihail, which left a political alliance with the Rechabites (represented by Nabal/Nadab) to join the Kingdom of Judah (represented by David’s band of men), taken from *Cheyne and Black, Encyclopedia Biblica*.

In the life of David, Nabal was cut off because of his wickedness and boastful tongue. The Scriptures say “*May the Lord cut off all smooth lips, the tongue that speaks great things (Tehillim / Psalms 12:4).*” We should take what we say with our lips very seriously. The pride of life, the smooth lips, the tongue that speaks great things, the sin of boasting, pride, what we say, is very easy to do, so much so that it is considered to be greater than the three great sins in the bible idolatry, adultery, and murder. Considering these things, do you take your words seriously today? Do you consider your words on par (equal) to the

three great sins listed above? According to the Scriptures, God is concerned with what we say and what we do, these things come from our heart and affect our relationship with Him. It is time to reevaluate the way we speak, what we say, because Scripture states *“May the Lord cut off all smooth lips, the tongue that speaks great things (Tehillim / Psalms 12:4).”*

*Midrash Tehillim 12* part 3, opens with (the דיבור המתחיל, Dibur Hamathil) *“On account of the oppression of the poor; on account of sighing of the needy, now will I arise, says the Lord (Tehillim / Psalms 12:6).”* The Lord rises up on account of the oppressed, drawing a parallel to *Shemot / Exodus 3:6-10*, וַיֹּאמֶר אֲנֹכִי אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם אֱלֹהֵי יִצְחָק וְאֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב וַיִּסְתַּר מִשֶּׁה פָּנָיו כִּי יָרָא מֵהִבִּיט אֶל-הָאֱלֹהִים: ז וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה רֵאֵה רְאִיתִי אֶת-עַמִּי אֲשֶׁר בְּמִצְרַיִם וְאֶת-צַעֲקוֹתָם שָׁמַעְתִּי מִפְּנֵי נַגְשָׁיו כִּי יָדַעְתִּי אֶת-מַכְאֲבָיו: ח וְאָרַד לְהַצִּילוֹ | מִיַּד מִצְרַיִם וּלְהַעֲלֹתוֹ מִן-הָאֶרֶץ הַהִוא אֶל-אֶרֶץ טוֹבָה וְרַחֲבָה אֶל-אֶרֶץ זָבַת חֶלֶב וּדְבַשׁ אֶל-מְקוֹם הַפְּנִיעָנִי וְהַחֲתִי וְהָאֱמֹרִי וְהַפְּרִזִּי וְהַחֲוִי וְהַיְבוּסִי: ט וְעַתָּה הִנֵּה צַעֲקַת בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל בָּאָה אֵלַי וְגַם-רְאִיתִי אֶת-הַלַּחֵץ אֲשֶׁר מִצְרַיִם: י וְעַתָּה לָכֵה וְאֶשְׁלַחְךָ אֶל-פְּרַעֲזָה וְהוֹצֵא אֶת-עַמִּי בְנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמִּצְרַיִם: 3:6 *He said also, ‘I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.’ Then Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God. 3:7 The Lord said, ‘I have surely seen the affliction of My people who are in Egypt, and have given heed to their cry because of their taskmasters, for I am aware of their sufferings. 3:8 ‘So I have come down to deliver them from the power of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and spacious land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanite and the Hittite and the Amorite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite. 3:9 ‘Now, behold, the cry of the sons of Israel has come to Me; furthermore, I have seen the oppression with which the Egyptians are oppressing them. 3:10 ‘Therefore, come now, and I will send you to Pharaoh, so that you may bring My people, the sons of Israel, out of Egypt.’ (NASB)* Because of the unrighteousness and sin of the wicked and the oppression of Israel, the Lord raises up, suggesting that in the rising motion the Lord begins to move to deliver His people. The rabbis say in the Petihta (פתיחתא) *“When judges seek to corrupt justice, the Holy One blessed be He, makes His presence rise and depart from among them.”* A judge who corrupts justice would be numbered among the unrighteous in his evil deeds. According to the Torah, the chosen people of God are to live in justice and righteousness. Central to the Torah’s approach to justice is that two eye witnesses are required to establish the facts in a given case. For example, circumstantial evidence, theory, and logical conjecture are not admissible in court as proof of a crime. Parashat Shoftim (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 16:18-21:9*) establishes the principle that explains why the judicial system in the Torah is different from other judicial systems and why it works. As Moshe prepared Israel to leave the desert and enter into the Promised Land, the issues of leadership and justice become very important because Moshe will not be going. Leaders are to lead in administration and foresight, they must strengthen the people’s resolve to obey their obligations as the chosen people. The obligation was to present to the world a model of judicial integrity and wisdom of the Truth of God living in their lives according to the Scriptures. This is why it was required that the king make a hand written copy of the Torah and carry it with him at all times (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 17:18-20*). The true test of leadership is found in one’s ability to apply consistent justice in accordance with the principles laid out in the Scriptures. Based on the midrash, the Lord is present during legal proceedings and that when a judge corrupts justice, the Lord departs from among them. The Lord is present when justice is being delivered. This shows us the integral part the Lord has within the judicial process. We are expected to administer God’s justice with seriousness and deliberation in our lives. When we think about the way we handle our relationships with others, are you taking your faith seriously enough to administer righteousness as God says we should be righteous? I accepted Yeshua into my life when I was 5 or 6 years old at my mothers knee 35 years ago, and confessed that faith before men 27 years ago when I was 13 years old asking Yeshua to be Lord of my life. Even to this day I struggle with administering righteousness to others and the Lord is working in me daily to tame my tongue. Just the other week I gave a tongue lashing to a friend online and remembered that account as I write this commentary, Lord forgive me! The



hidden motive of our hearts need to be that of righteousness knowing that no one is able to escape God's justice, so we must live in righteousness and justice ourselves. According to the Midrash, The rabbis taught "The punishment for oppressing the poor is greater than the punishment of the generation that perished in the flood." Rabbi Yudan said "the punishment for oppressing the poor is greater than the punishment of the generation that perished in the flood." For of the generation of the flood it is written in Tehillim / Psalms 29:10, יְהוָה לְמַבּוּל יָשָׁב וַיֵּשֶׁב יְהוָה מְלֶכֶּךָ לְעוֹלָם: 29:10 The Lord sat as King at the flood; Yes, the Lord sits as King forever. (NASB) The Scripture suggests that God sat at the command to bring the flood, however, in the case of the afflicted, the oppression by the wicked, the Lord God stands up from off His throne: מִשָּׂד עֲנִיִּים מֵאַנְקַת אֲבִיוֹנִים עָפָה אָקוּם יֹאמֵר יְהוָה אֲשִׁית בְּיָשַׁע יְפִיחַ לוֹ: 12:5 'Because of the devastation of the afflicted, because of the groaning of the needy, Now I will arise,' says the Lord; 'I will set him in the safety for which he longs.' (NASB) Doesn't this sound like the account on the stoning of Stephen when he said behold I see heaven opened, I see the glory of God and I see Yeshua standing at the right hand of God (Acts 7:56)? The Scriptures suggest that the affliction of the innocent, the oppression of the poor is a very great sin before the Lord. The rabbis conclude Midrash Tehillim 12, part 3 saying "I will set him in safety while blowing upon him (Tehillim / Psalms 12:6). According to Rabbi Hoshai, God said, Even as I set the one in safety, I make the measure of punishment grow hot upon the other." (ר' הושעיא) אשית בישע יפיה לו. Here we find "sin, punishment, and redemption" in the concluding statements. Punishment comes as a result of the sin of the wicked oppressing the righteous and the poor. Salvation comes to those whom the Lord loves, those who walk in righteousness and justice, who do not oppress the poor and who do not seek to corrupt the truth.

Midrash Tehillim 12, Part 4, begins (דיבור המתחיל, Dibur Hamathil) saying "The words of the Lord are pure words (Tehillim / Psalms 12:7)." The homiletic introduction to the Midrash (פתיהתא, Petihta) says "Rabbi Joshua son of Levi said, In Scripture, The Holy One blessed be He, speaks in a roundabout way so as not to utter and unseemly word, as is shown by the previous discussion of the Psalm Blessed is the man" drawing a parallel to Tehillim / Psalms 1. Another rabbi stated that "the words of the Lord, words concerning purity, were committed to the care of those who are as pure as silver (Tehillim / Psalms 12:7)" and rabbi Tankhum said "the Holy One blessed be He, declared to Moshe, I gave you two precepts which concern the maintenance of ritual purity." The rabbis draw a parallel on the purity of God's words (אמרות יהוה אמרות) to ritual purity; the reason being is the Hebrew word for purity (טהר) is used to describe the word of God and silver. The two places purity of God's Word and ritual purity meet according to rabbinic tradition is found in the following locations: "One in the chapter on the red heifer whose ashes were used for lustration (Bamidbar / Numbers 19:1-22), and the other in the chapter stating under what circumstances a priest may defile himself for the dead, the section beginning Say unto the priests, the sons of Aaron, say unto them, There will none defile himself for the dead among his people, except for his kin that is near unto him, etc (Vayikra / Leviticus 21:1-2)." In the משל (mashal) the rabbis taught saying that God gave two precepts on maintaining ritual purity with regard to the purity of God's Word that we read in Tehillim / Psalms 12:7. After the statement that parallels precepts on maintaining ritual purity, we read the following:

*Rabbi Yannai said, The words of Torah were not given as clear cut decisions. For with every word which the Holy One blessed be He, spoke to Moshe, He offered him forty nine arguments by which a thing may be proved clean, and forty nine other arguments by which it may be proved unclean. When Moshe asked, Master of the universe, in what way will we know the true sense of a law? God replied, The majority is to be followed, when a majority ways it is unclean, it is unclean, when a majority says it is clean, it is clean. אמר ר' ינאי לא ניתנה דברי תורה חתיכין, אלא על כל דבור שהיה אומר הקב"ה למשה היה אומר מ"ט פנים טהור, ומ"ט פנים*

טמא, אמר לפניו רבונו של עולם עד מתי נעמוד על בירונו של דבר, אמר ליה אחרי רבים להטות, (רבו המטמאין טמא, רבו המטהרין טהור) *Midrash Tehillim 12, Part 4*

According to the midrash, the rabbis say that the words of the Torah are not clear. Are the words of the Torah not clear cut? What exegetical problem do these statements in the midrash face? What is the peshat (simple meaning)? Does the midrashic argument make sense or does it seem forced? If the latter, what may be motivating such forced interpretation? Where do the rabbis get the idea that the Torah was not given as clear cut decisions and where do they find the Lord giving Moshe 49 arguments to prove a thing clean or unclean? Do we need an argument to prove something unclean or clean? Should we not simply believe the Word of God and obey? Let's look at an example regarding purity and righteousness from the Torah.

In Parashat Kedoshim (*Vayikra / Leviticus 19:1-20:27*) we read negative mitzvot (commandments) in *Vayikra / Leviticus 19*. The Scriptures outline not to steal, lie, or deal falsely to one another, how to treat others and in doing so this shows reverence to the Lord our God (*19:14*). Let's read the section of Scripture while bearing in mind the question from the midrash on the Torah being clear cut or not?

### ***Vayikra / Leviticus 19:11-19***

*19:11 'You shall not steal, nor deal falsely, nor lie to one another. 19:12 'You shall not swear falsely by My name, so as to profane the name of your God; I am the Lord. 19:13 'You shall not oppress your neighbor, nor rob him. The wages of a hired man are not to remain with you all night until morning. 19:14 'You shall not curse a deaf man, nor place a stumbling block before the blind, but you shall revere your God; I am the Lord. 19:15 'You shall do no injustice in judgment; you shall not be partial to the poor nor defer to the great, but you are to judge your neighbor fairly. 19:16 'You shall not go about as a slanderer among your people, and you are not to act against the life of your neighbor; I am the Lord. 19:17 'You shall not hate your fellow countryman in your heart; you may surely reprove your neighbor, but shall not incur sin because of him. 19:18 'You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the sons of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am the Lord. 19:19 'You are to keep My statutes. You shall not breed together two kinds of your cattle; you shall not sow your field with two kinds of seed, nor wear a garment upon you of two kinds of material mixed together. (NASB)*

יא לא תגנבו ולא תכחשו ולא תשקרו איש בעמיתו: יב ולא תשבועו בשמי לשקר וחללת את-שם אלהיך אני יהוה: יג לא תעשק את-רעהך ולא תגזל לא-תלין פעלת שכיר אתך עד-בקר: יד לא-תקלל חרש ולפני עור לא תתן מכשל ויראת מאלהיך אני יהוה: [שני] [חמישי כשהן מחוברין] טו לא-תעשו עול במשפט לא-תשא פני-דל ולא תהדר פני גדול בצדק תשפט עמיתך: טז לא-תלהך רכיל בעמיה לא תעמד על-דם רעהך אני יהוה: יז לא-תשנא את-אחיהך בלבבך הוכח תוכיח את-עמיתך ולא-תשא עליו חטא: יח לא-תקם ולא-תטר את-בני עמך ואהבת לרעהך כמוך אני יהוה: יט את-תקתי תשמרו בהמתך לא-תרביע פלאים שדך לא-תזרע פלאים ובגד פלאים שעטנו לא יעלה עליך:

While reading through Parashat Kedoshim in *Vayikra / Leviticus 19*, all of these commands appear to be reasonable and understandable until we reach *Vayikra / Leviticus 19:19*. The Scriptures say יט את-תקתי תשמרו בהמתך לא-תרביע פלאים שדך לא-תזרע פלאים ובגד פלאים שעטנו לא יעלה עליך: *19:19 'You are to keep My statutes. You shall not breed together two kinds of your cattle; you shall not sow your field with two kinds of seed, nor wear a garment upon you of two kinds of material mixed together. (NASB)* So, as we read

this verse, why does God command us not to breed two kinds of cattle together, not to sow the field with two kinds of seed, and not to wear clothing of two different kinds of material (*Vayikra / Leviticus 19:19*)? Why would God say this? Do these scriptures apply to our life today or, was it simply a contextual issue? If these are commands we should observe today, are we simply getting caught up in the nitpicking of the “laws?” Aren’t there more important commands we should be focusing upon? When we come across Scripture in the Torah that says “do not” should we not be aware of them and try to do our best to observe them because it is what God’s Word says? Are these words not clear cut?

It is interesting while reading through these Scriptures, looking at the context, do not steal, do not deal falsely, do not lie to one another, do not swear falsely, do not oppress your neighbor, do not curse a deaf man, do not do injustice in judgment, do not show partiality, do not hate your fellow countryman in your heart, do not take vengeance, do not bear a grudge against others, and that we are to love our neighbor as ourselves. What we find here being laid out in Scripture is “*practical purity*,” how we should treat others and how our relationship with others is connected to our relationship with God. The Psalms say **ג מִי-יַעֲלֶה** **24:3** *Who may ascend into the hill of the Lord? And who may stand in His holy place?* **ד נְקִי כַפַּיִם וּבֵר לֵבָב אֲשֶׁר לֹא-נִשְׂאָ לְשׂוֹא נִפְשֵׁי וְלֹא נִשְׁבַּע לְמַרְמָה:** *Who has clean hands and a pure heart, Who has not lifted up his soul to falsehood And has not sworn deceitfully.* (NASB) Purity becomes practical when our outward behavior towards God and towards other changes, we are setting ourselves apart to the Lord in a very practical way. These Scriptures are speaking of having clean hands and a clean heart before the Lord as we go about our daily lives. With this in mind, regarding *Vayikra / Leviticus 19:19*, the Scripture says **יט אַת-תִּקְחֵתִי תִשְׁמְרוּ בְהַמְתָּהּ לֹא-תִרְבִּיעַ כְּלָאִים שָׂדֶה לֹא-תִזְרַע כְּלָאִים וּבְגָד כְּלָאִים** **19:19** *You are to keep My statutes. You shall not breed together two kinds of your cattle; you shall not sow your field with two kinds of seed, nor wear a garment upon you of two kinds of material mixed together.* (NASB) These Scriptures are very practical for our lives today. Take the wearing of cloths that contains two different types of threads as an example. As we live our lives and when we come before the Lord, we are not to have “mixed lives” (*a parallel to mixed threads*); our lives are not to be mingled with sin, rebellion, oppression, lies, etc. The mitzvah on not wearing cloths of mixed threads reminds us of who we are, a holy, chosen, set apart people for the Lord God Almighty, we are to be living lives free from sin with the goal of being pure in heart and living in righteousness and justice. With this in mind, was this command only given to the children of Israel within the context of the Mishkan (Tabernacle) and the Holy Temple in Jerusalem? Was this given only for a set period of time in history, or is this given to us today as a reminder of our need to live holy lives? Thinking on these things, this is by far not nitpicking over the “law” of God. When thinking on the commands of God, each one is very relevant even today. These Scriptures are clear cut if we take the time to sit and think about what the Lord is trying to teach us in His Word. The Concluding phrase of *Midrash Tehillim 12*, part 4 says “*Rabbi Joshua son of Levi said, Even children living in the days of Saul and David and in the days of Samuel knew those subtle distinctions of the law which elaborate forty nine arguments by which a thing may be proved clean, and forty nine arguments by which a thing may be proved unclean, as was stated above in the Seventh Psalm.*” Have we given an adequate argument for observing *Vayikra / Leviticus 19:19*? The Apostle Paul said in *Romans 13:12-14* “*The night is almost gone, and the day is near. Therefore let us lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light ... put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts.*” (NASB) Paul said “*make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts*” the Scriptures on purity have great application for our lives today. Going before the Lord, ask Him for help to understand His Holy Word. Trust in the Lord for forgiveness of sin and cleansing that He has provided for us today in Yeshua His Son. Rejoice in the knowledge that God is helping us to live a life of purity, holiness, righteousness, and justice. What an awesome God we serve! Let’s Pray!



Heavenly Father,

Thank You for Your Word, the Bible. The Scriptures speak of how you love the righteous and the upright in heart. Help us to set our hearts to the pursuit of holiness and righteousness. Lord please send your Holy Spirit and change everything about our lives that does not bring glory to Your Name. Thank You for Your mercy You show us each day. Help us to walk in righteousness and justice and help us to walk in the freedom from sin.. In Your Son, we have the hope of eternal life. Please write Your Holy Word in our hearts so that we never forget the hope that we have in You and in the blood of Yeshua. Thank You Lord for the words of this Psalm from David’s life. Help us to trust in Your Righteousness, in Yeshua, and in the work that He did upon the cross to make atonement for our sins. As we continue to live and dedicated our lives to You, fill us with Your presence Lord and thank You for revealing these truths to our hearts. We praise Your Holy Name and give You all of the honor, and the glory, and the praise forever and ever.

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

Be Blessed in Yeshua, Christ our Messiah!

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