

ספר תהילים טו | Tehillim / Psalms 15

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The Righteousness of God is Unmovable!

This week's study is from *Tehillim / Psalms 15:1-5*, The Psalm is introduced as **א לְמַנְצִיחַ לְדָוִד** “*For the choir director. A Psalm of David.*” David begins asking **15:1** *O Lord, who may abide in Your tent? Who may dwell on Your holy hill?* (NASB) Who is able to dwell in the tent of the Lord and upon the holy hill where the Temple will be built? Because of man's sinful heart, one would think that the answer would be that no man is able to “dwell” in the tent of the Lord or upon His Holy hill. However, David responds saying **15:2** *He who walks with integrity, and works righteousness, And speaks truth in his heart.* (NASB) It is those who walk with integrity and work righteousness who are able to abide in the tent of the Lord and upon His Holy hill. Those who speak truth in their hearts and live their lives devoted to the Lord Most High. David continues quantifying the man who walks with integrity, works righteousness, and speaks truth in his heart, such a man does not slander, does not do evil to his neighbor, neither does he accuse or blame his friend for anything. **15:3** *He does not slander with his tongue, Nor does evil to his neighbor, Nor takes up a reproach against his friend;* (NASB) Slander is false and injurious statements made about another (defamation), this is doing evil to another person. Gossip is “to talk about the private affairs of others, spread rumors” and is synonymous with a slanderer. David continues saying that the righteous **15:4** *In whose eyes a reprobate is despised, But who honors those who fear the Lord; He swears to his own hurt and does not change;* (NASB) The righteous despise the reprobate (person who is morally unprincipled) and honor those who fear the Lord, and the way of the righteous is to do what is right even if it means that swearing by the truth he is financially hurt. David also says that such a righteous man does not lend money at interest and does not take a bribe against those who are innocent, **15:5** *He does not put out his money at interest, Nor does he take a bribe against the innocent. He who does these things will never be shaken.* (NASB) The one who lives righteously before the Lord would rather receive harm than to do harm to others. Such a man will never be moved.

עברית Hebrew	ארמי Aramaic	ελληνικός Greek
ספר תהלים פרק טו	ספר טוביה פרק טו	ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 15
<p>א מְזֹמֵר לְדָוִד יְהוָה מִי-יִגֹּוֹר בְּאַהֲלֶיךָ מִי-יִשְׁכֵּן בְּהֵר קִדְשֶׁךָ: ב הוֹלֵךְ תְּמִים וּפְעֵל צְדָק וְדִבֵּר אֱמֶת בְּלִבָּבוֹ: ג לֹא-רָגַל עַל-לִשְׁנוֹ לֹא-עָשָׂה לְרֵעֵהוּ רָעָה וְחָרְפָּה לֹא-נִשְׂאָה עַל-קָרְבוֹ: ד נִבְזָה בְּעֵינָיו נִמְאָס וְאֵת-יְרֵאֵי יְהוָה יְכַבֵּד וְשֹׁבֵעַ לְהִרְעֵה וְלֹא יִמָּר: ה כִּסְפוֹ לֹא-נָתַן בְּנִשְׁוֹף וְשֹׁחַד עַל-נַקִּי לֹא-לָקַח עֲשֵׂה אֱלֹה לֹא יִמוּט לְעוֹלָם:</p>	<p>א תושבחתא לדוד יהוה מן חמי למידר במשכנך מן חמי יזכי למישרי בטור בי מקדשך: ב דמהליך בשלימתא ועבד צדקתא וממלל קושטא בלבביה: ג לא אכל קורצין בלישניה לא עבד לחבריה בישותא בישתא וכיסופא וחסודא לא סובר על קריביה: ד דשט באנפוי בסיר וית דחליא דיהוה מוקיר דיומי לאבאשא לגרמיה ולא משלחף יפרג:</p>	<p>15:1 ψαλμός τῷ δαυιδ κύριε τίς παροικήσει ἐν τῷ σκηνώματί σου καὶ τίς κατασκηνώσει ἐν τῷ ὄρει τῷ ἁγίῳ σου 15:2 πορευόμενος ἄμωμος καὶ ἐργαζόμενος δικαιοσύνην λαλῶν ἀλήθειαν ἐν καρδίᾳ αὐτοῦ 15:3δς οὐκ ἐδόλωσεν ἐν γλώσσῃ αὐτοῦ οὐδὲ ἐποίησεν τῷ πλησίον αὐτοῦ κακὸν καὶ ὄνειδισμὸν οὐκ ἔλαβεν ἐπὶ τοῦς ἔγγιστα αὐτοῦ</p>

<p>Tehillim / Psalms 15 A Psalm of David. 15:1 O Lord, who may abide in Your tent? Who may dwell on Your holy hill? 15:2 He who walks with integrity, and works righteousness, And speaks truth in his heart. 15:3 He does not slander with his tongue, Nor does evil to his neighbor, Nor takes up a reproach against his friend; 15:4 In whose eyes a reprobate is despised, But who honors those who fear the Lord; He swears to his own hurt and does not change; 15:5 He does not put out his money at interest, Nor does he take a bribe against the innocent. He who does these things will never be shaken. (NASB)</p>	<p>ה סמיה לא יהב בחבוליא ושוחדא על זכאה לא קביל דעבד אילין לא יזנח יזוע לעלמא: Toviyah / Psalms Chapter 15 15:1 A hymn of David. O Lord, who is worthy to dwell in your tabernacle, who is worthy to abide on the mountain of your sanctuary? 15:2 One who walks in integrity, and does righteous deeds, and speaks truth in his heart. 15:3 He does not slander with his tongue, he causes no harm to his fellow, and he bears no shame against his neighbor. 15:4 Who despises the contemptible to his face, but honors those who fear the Lord; who will swear to do harm to himself and does not change. 15:5 He has not given his money at interest; he has not accepted a bribe against the innocent; one who does these things will never be moved. (EMC)</p>	<p>15:4 ἔξουδένωται ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ πονηρευόμενος τοὺς δὲ φοβουμένους κύριον δοξάζει ὁ ὀμνύων τῷ πλησίον αὐτοῦ καὶ οὐκ ἀθετῶν 15:5 τὸ ἀργύριον αὐτοῦ οὐκ ἔδωκεν ἐπὶ τόκῳ καὶ δῶρα ἐπ' ἀθώοις οὐκ ἔλαβεν ὁ ποιῶν ταῦτα οὐ σαλευθήσεται εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα Tehillim / Psalms 15 A Psalm of David. 15:1 O Lord, who shall sojourn in thy tabernacle? and who shall dwell in thy holy mountain? 15:2 He that walks blameless, and works righteousness, who speaks truth in his heart. 15:3 Who has not spoken craftily with is tongue, neither has done evil to his neighbour, nor taken up a reproach against them that dwelt nearest to him. 15:4 In his sight an evil-worker is set at nought, but he honours them that fear the Lord. He swears to his neighbour, and disappoints him not. 15:5 He has not lent his money on usury, and has not received bribes against the innocent. He that does these things shall never be moved. (LXX)</p>
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In this week's study from *Tehillim / Psalms 15:1-5*, David begins asking מִי-יִשְׁכֵּן מִי-יִגֹּר בְּאֶהְיֶה מִי-יִשְׁכֵּן בְּהַר קֹדֶשׁ 15:1 *O Lord, who may abide in Your tent? Who may dwell on Your holy hill?* (NASB) Who is able to dwell in the tent of the Lord and upon the holy hill where the Temple will be built? Thinking on this verse, David makes a reference to the holy hill of God. It is interesting to note that during David's time the Temple was not yet built upon the Temple mount since Solomon was the one who was to build the Temple in Jerusalem. The reference to the tent of God is to the Tabernacle that was set up in Shiloh. In the Scriptures, Shiloh was a place of rest, a city of Ephraim (אֶפְרַיִם) located "on the north side of Bethel" which is a distance of about 10 miles (*Shoftim / Judges 21:19*, מִצְפּוֹנָה, | יְמִימָה אֲשֶׁר מִצְפּוֹנָה, 21:19 *So they said, 'Behold, there is a feast of the Lord from year to year in Shiloh, which is on the north side of Bethel, on the east side of the highway that goes up from Bethel to Shechem, and on the south side of Lebonah.'* NASB). In this place of Shiloh the tabernacle was set up following the conquest of the Promised Land according to *Joshua 18:1-10*.

Joshua 18:1-10

18:1 Then the whole congregation of the sons of Israel assembled themselves at Shiloh, and set up the tent of meeting there; and the land was subdued before them. 18:2 There remained among the sons of Israel seven tribes who had not divided their inheritance. 18:3 So Joshua said to the sons of Israel, 'How long will you put off entering to take possession of the land which the Lord, the God of your fathers, has given you? 18:4 'Provide for yourselves three men from each tribe that I may send them, and that they may arise and walk through the land and write a description of it according to their inheritance; then they shall return to me. 18:5 'They shall divide it into seven portions; Judah shall stay in its territory on the south, and the

house of Joseph shall stay in their territory on the north. 18:6 'You shall describe the land in seven divisions, and bring the description here to me. I will cast lots for you here before the Lord our God. 18:7 'For the Levites have no portion among you, because the priesthood of the Lord is their inheritance. Gad and Reuben and the half-tribe of Manasseh also have received their inheritance eastward beyond the Jordan, which Moses the servant of the Lord gave them.' 18:8 Then the men arose and went, and Joshua commanded those who went to describe the land, saying, 'Go and walk through the land and describe it, and return to me; then I will cast lots for you here before the Lord in Shiloh.' 18:9 So the men went and passed through the land, and described it by cities in seven divisions in a book; and they came to Joshua to the camp at Shiloh. 18:10 And Joshua cast lots for them in Shiloh before the Lord, and there Joshua divided the land to the sons of Israel according to their divisions. (NASB)

ספר יהושע פרק יח

א וַיִּקְהָלוּ כָּל-עַדְת בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל שְׁמֵ אֶת-אֶהֱל מוֹעֵד וְהָאָרֶץ נִכְבְּשָׁה לְפָנֵיהֶם: ב וַיִּנְתְּרוּ בְּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר לֹא-חָלְקוּ אֶת-נַחֲלָתָם שְׁבַעָה שְׁבֵטִים: ג וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוֹשֻׁעַ אֶל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל עַד-אָנָּה אַתֶּם מִתְרַפִּים לְבֹא לְרֵשֶׁת אֶת-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לָכֶם יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם: ד הֲבֹו לָכֶם שְׁלֹשָׁה אַנְשִׁים לְשֵׁבֶט וְאֲשַׁלְחֶם וְיִקְמוּ וַיִּתְהַלְכוּ בְּאָרֶץ וַיִּכְתְּבוּ אוֹתָהּ לְפִי נַחֲלָתָם וַיָּבֹאוּ אֵלַי: ה וְהִתְחַלְקוּ אֹתָהּ לְשֵׁבַעָה חֲלָקִים יְהוּדָה יַעֲמַד עַל-גְּבוּלוֹ מִנֶּגֶב וּבֵית יוֹסֵף יַעֲמְדוּ עַל-גְּבוּלָם מִצָּפוֹן: ו וְאַתֶּם תִּכְתְּבוּ אֶת-הָאָרֶץ שְׁבַעָה חֲלָקִים וְהִבְאַתֶּם אֵלַי הֲנָה וַיְרִיתִי לָכֶם גּוֹרָל פֶּה לְפָנַי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ: ז פִּי אֵין-חֶלֶק לְלוֹיִם בְּקִרְבְּכֶם כִּי-כֹהֲנֵת יְהוָה נַחֲלָתוֹ וְגַד וִירָאוּבֵן וְחֲצִי שְׁבֵט הַמְנַשֶּׁה לְקַחוּ נַחֲלָתָם מֵעֵבֶר לִירְדֵן מִזְרָחָה אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לָהֶם מֹשֶׁה עֶבֶד יְהוָה: ח וַיִּקְמוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים וַיֵּלְכוּ וַיַּצּוּ יְהוֹשֻׁעַ אֶת-הַהֲלָכִים לְכַתֵּב אֶת-הָאָרֶץ לְאָמֵר לָכוּ וְהִתְהַלְכוּ בְּאָרֶץ וְכַתְּבוּ אוֹתָהּ וְשׁוּבוּ אֵלַי וְפֹה אֲשַׁלֶּיךָ לָכֶם גּוֹרָל לְפָנַי יְהוָה בְּשִׁלָּה: ט וַיֵּלְכוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים וַיַּעֲבְרוּ בְּאָרֶץ וַיִּכְתְּבוּהָ לְעָרִים לְשֵׁבַעָה חֲלָקִים עַל-סֹפֶר וַיָּבֹאוּ אֶל-יְהוֹשֻׁעַ אֶל-הַמַּחֲנֶה שְׁלָה: י וַיִּשְׁלַח לָהֶם יְהוֹשֻׁעַ גּוֹרָל בְּשִׁלָּה לְפָנַי יְהוָה וַיַּחֲלֶק-שָׁם יְהוֹשֻׁעַ אֶת-הָאָרֶץ לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל כַּמִּחְלָקָתָם:

The Tabernacle remained in Shiloh until the Ark of the Covenant fell into the hands of the Philistines in *1 Samuel chapter 4*. This location (Shiloh) was also referred to by the prophet Jeremiah (7:12-14, 26:4-9) approximately 500 years after the destruction of that place. In *1 Samuel 4:1-4*, the Scriptures say וַיְהִי דָבָר - וַיִּשְׁמוּאֵל לְכָל-יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיֵּצֵא יִשְׂרָאֵל לְקִרְאֵת פְּלִשְׁתִּים לְמַלְחָמָה וַיַּחֲנוּ עַל-הָאָבֶן הָעֶזְר וּפְלִשְׁתִּים חָנוּ בְּאַפֶּק: ב וַיַּעֲרְכוּ פְלִשְׁתִּים לְקִרְאֵת יִשְׂרָאֵל וַתִּטֵּשׁ הַמַּלְחָמָה וַיִּנְגַף יִשְׂרָאֵל לְפָנַי פְּלִשְׁתִּים וַיָּכּוּ בַמַּעֲרָכָה בַשָּׂדֶה כְּאַרְבַּעַת אֲלָפִים אִישׁ: ג וַיָּבֹא הָעָם אֶל-הַמַּחֲנֶה וַיֹּאמְרוּ זְקֵנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לָמָּה נִגְכַּפְנוּ יְהוָה הַיּוֹם לְפָנַי פְּלִשְׁתִּים נִקְחָה אֶלֵינוּ מִשְׁלָה אֶת-אֲרוֹן בְּרִית וַיִּשְׁעוּ אֶל-הַמַּחֲנֶה וַיִּשְׁעוּנוּ מִכָּף אֵיבֵינוּ: 4:1 Thus the word of Samuel came to all Israel. Now Israel went out to meet the Philistines in battle and camped beside Ebenezer while the Philistines camped in Aphek. 4:2 The Philistines drew up in battle array to meet Israel. When the battle spread, Israel was defeated before the Philistines who killed about four thousand men on the battlefield. 4:3 When the people came into the camp, the elders of Israel said, 'Why has the Lord defeated us today before the Philistines? Let us take to ourselves from Shiloh the ark of the covenant of the Lord, that it may come among us and deliver us from the power of our enemies.' 4:4 So the people sent to Shiloh, and from there they carried the ark of the covenant of the Lord of hosts who sits above the cherubim; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark of the covenant of God. (NASB) Israel was defeated in *1 Samuel 4:1-3* and the people decided to bring the Ark of the Covenant up from Shiloh to the war hoping that God would help in their battle with the Philistines. Taking the Ark of the Covenant from Shiloh to the battle, Israel was again defeated because they forgot one most important thing. They had forgotten that God was not going to give them His power

without their obedience to His commands. The most important aspect of this story is that the people thought they could live their lives as they pleased in opposition to God's instruction and make use of the Ark of the Covenant for their own purposes. They took the Ark of the Covenant for the purpose of manipulating God to help them appears to be a form of witchcraft. Have you ever done something righteous and then thought "the Lord will favor me now, and I will be blessed?" Is this not something that parallels the question David is asking in the Psalm **יְהִיָּה מִי-יִגֹּוֹר בְּאַהֲלֵךְ מִי-יִשְׁכֵּן בְּהַר קֹדְשֶׁךָ 15:1 O Lord, who may abide in Your tent? Who may dwell on Your holy hill? (NASB)** Who is able to dwell in the tent of the Lord and upon the holy hill where the Temple will be built? One does not dwell in the tent of the Lord or upon His Holy hill unless one lives in His righteousness and has an upright heart. The upright heart does not perform righteous deeds for the sole purpose of gaining favor before God in order to manipulate Him into working in our lives. The righteous live in righteousness and in justice, because the Lord God is Holy, Righteous, and Just and not for the sole purpose of obtaining something one needs.

David responds saying: **הוֹלֵךְ תְּמִים וּפְעֵל צְדָק וְדִבֵּר אֱמֶת בְּלִבּוֹ: 15:2 He who walks with integrity, and works righteousness, And speaks truth in his heart. (NASB)** Those who speak truth in their hearts, live their lives devoted to the Lord Most High. It is only those who walk in integrity, and work righteousness, and speak the truth that are fit for communion with God and are able to abide in His tent and remain upon His Holy hill. *Tehillim / Psalms 119:1-8* outlines what it means to live in integrity before the Lord.

ספר תהילים פרק קיט

א אֲשֶׁרֵי תְּמִימֵי-דָרְךָ הַהֲלֹכִים בְּתוֹרַת יְהוָה: ב אֲשֶׁרֵי נִצְרֵי עֲדוֹתָיו בְּכָל-לֵב יִדְרְשׁוּהוּ: ג אַף לֹא-
פָּעִלוּ עֲוֹלָה בְּדַרְכָּיו הֲלָכוּ: ד אַתָּה צִוִּיתָה פְּקֻדֹתֶיךָ לְשֹׁמֵר מֵאֵד: ה אֲחֲלִי יִפְנוּ דַרְכֵי לְשֹׁמֵר חֻקֶיךָ:
ו אַז לֹא-אֲבוֹשׁ בְּהַבִּיטִי אֶל-כָּל-מִצְוֹתֶיךָ: ז אוֹדֶךָ בְּיִשָּׁר לֵב בְּלִמְדֵי מִשְׁפָּטֶיךָ צְדָקָה: ח אֶת-חֻקֶיךָ
אֲשֹׁמֵר אֶל-תַּעֲזֹבֵנִי עַד-מָאֵד:

Tehillim / Psalms 119:1-8

*119:1 How blessed are those whose way is blameless, Who walk in the law of the Lord.
119:2 How blessed are those who observe His testimonies, Who seek Him with all their heart.
119:3 They also do no unrighteousness; They walk in His ways. 119:4 You have ordained Your precepts, That we should keep them diligently. 119:5 Oh that my ways may be established To keep Your statutes!
119:6 Then I shall not be ashamed When I look upon all Your commandments. 119:7 I shall give thanks to You with uprightness of heart, When I learn Your righteous judgments. 119:8 I shall keep Your statutes; Do not forsake me utterly! (NASB)*

The Way Of Integrity (Tehillim / Psalms 119:1-8)

1. To Walk In the Law Of the Lord, (119:1)
2. To Observe His Testimonies, (119:2)
3. To Seek Him With All The Heart, (119:2)
4. To Do No Unrighteousness, (119:3)
5. To Have No Reason To Be Ashamed, (119:6)
6. To Pray With Uprightness Of Heart, (119:7)
7. The Desire To Learn His Judgments, (119:7)
8. The Resolve To Keep God's Statutes, (119:8)

Notice how we are instructed to walk in the Law of the Lord, to observe His testimonies, to seek God with all our heart, to not work unrighteousness and therefore having no reason to be ashamed, to pray with an upright heart, to have a desire to love God's judgments, and to be determined to keep God's statutes. In the list of the way of the righteous who walk in integrity, point #6 says to pray with an upright heart (אֹדָה בְּיֵשֶׁר) (לִבִּי) the Hebrew text says "to give thanks with a straight heart."

David continues quantifying the man who walks with integrity, works righteousness, and speaks truth in his heart, such a man does not slander, does not do evil to his neighbor, neither does he accuse or blame his friend for anything. 15:3 *He does not slander with his tongue, Nor does evil to his neighbor; Nor takes up a reproach against his friend;* (NASB) The Hebrew phrase used "slander" or "gossip" is translated as "to not spy upon the tongue" (לֹא-רָגַל | עַל-לְשׁוֹנוֹ) which means "one who reveals secrets." Information has been spied out and the goal is to reveal what has been learned to another. Slander, on the one hand, is false and injurious statements made about another (defamation), this is doing evil to another person. Gossip is "to talk about the private affairs of others, spread rumors" whether true or not, and is synonymous with a slanderer. In Romans, the Apostle Paul speaks about the sinful nature and lawlessness of mankind, saying how God poured out His wrath on those who rejected His instruction (Torah). Because they had turned away from God's instruction and guidance, He gave them over to their sinful natures. In the list of sins Paul gives we read about gossips and slanderers (*Romans 1:29-32*).

Romans 1:18-31

1:18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, 1:19 because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. 1:20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. 1:21 For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. 1:22 Professing to be wise, they became fools, 1:23 and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures. 1:24 Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them. 1:25 For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. 1:26 For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, 1:27 and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error. 1:28 And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper; 1:29 being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips, 1:30 slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, 1:31 without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful; 1:32 and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them. (NASB)

Based upon the Apostle Paul's commentary, we see from this passage how serious the sin of gossip is and that it characterizes those who are under the wrath of God. One of the things that destroys the body of be-

lievers is through gossip and slander, spreading rumors or secrets behind one's back. The Scriptures speak extensively on this topic.

Vayikra / Leviticus 19:16, לא-תֵלֵךְ רְכִיל בְּעַמֶּיךָ לֹא תַעֲמֹד עַל-דַּם רֵעֶךָ אֲנִי יְהוָה: 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. (NASB)

Mishley / Proverbs 11:13, הוֹלֵךְ רְכִיל מְגַלֶּה-סוֹד וְנֹאמֵן-רוּחַ מְכַסֶּה דְבָר: 11:13 He who goes about as a talebearer reveals secrets, But he who is trustworthy conceals a matter. (NASB)

Mishley / Proverbs 16:28, אִישׁ תְּהַפְּכֹת יִשְׁלַח מְדוֹן וְנִרְגָן מִפְּרִיד אֱלוֹף: 16:28 A perverse man spreads strife, And a slanderer separates intimate friends. (NASB)

Mishley / Proverbs 20:19, גוֹלֵה-סוֹד הוֹלֵךְ רְכִיל וּלְפִתּוֹ שֹׁפְטִיו לֹא תִתְעַרְבּ: 20:19 He who goes about as a slanderer reveals secrets, Therefore do not associate with a gossip. (NASB)

Jeremiah 6:28, כָּלֶם סָרִי סוֹרְרִים הֵלְכֵי רְכִיל נְחֹשֶׁת וּבְרֹזֶל כָּלֶם מְשַׁחִיתִים הֵמָּה: 6:28 All of them are stubbornly rebellious, Going about as a talebearer. They are bronze and iron; They, all of them, are corrupt. (NASB)

Jeremiah 9:4-6, ג אִישׁ מִרְעִיהוּ הַשְּׁמִירוֹ וְעַל-כָּל-אֶחָד תִּבְטַחַחוּ כִּי כָל-אֶחָד עֹקֹב יַעֲקֹב וְכָל-רֵעַ רְכִיל יִהְיֶה: ד וְאִישׁ בְּרִיעֵהוּ יִהְיֶה וְנֹאמֶת לֹא יִדְבְּרוּ לְמַדּוֹ לְשׁוֹנֵם דְּבָר-שִׁקֵּר הָעֲוֹנָה נִלְאוּ: ה שְׂבֹתָהּ בְּתוֹךְ: 9:4 'Let everyone be on guard against his neighbor, And do not trust any brother; Because every brother deals craftily, And every neighbor goes about as a slanderer. 9:5 'Everyone deceives his neighbor And does not speak the truth, They have taught their tongue to speak lies; They weary themselves committing iniquity. 9:6 'Your dwelling is in the midst of deceit; Through deceit they refuse to know Me,' declares the Lord. (NASB)

The Torah says in *Vayikra / Leviticus 19:16* (Parashat Kedoshim) to not go (walk) as a “slanderer/gossip” using the word רְכִיל which means “gossip” or “slanderer.” Other places in Scripture, we find the same word, in *Mishley / Proverbs 11:13, 20:19, and Jeremiah 6:28*. *Mishley / Proverbs 16:28* says the slanderer is a “grumbler who is a champion of separation.” Here King Solomon describes the slanderer as a grumbler or quarrelsome (וְנִרְגָן) person who desires to cause separation and he is a champion of this. *Jeremiah 9:4-6* states to be on guard because every brother deals craftily and goes about slandering, the one who deceives his neighbor does not speak the truth and have taught their tongues to lie. The slanderer wears themselves committing iniquity. This is consistent with one who learns a secret and then goes about working to reveal the secret to others. How are we to avoid gossip? According to the Scriptures, we are to not associate ourselves with someone who is a known gossip (*Mishley / Proverbs 20:19*). When someone starts a conversation to commit gossip, change the subject. If you have fallen into the habit of gossiping, ask the Lord to change your heart.

ד נִבְזָה | בְּעֵינָיו נִמְאָס וְאֶת-יְרֵאֵי יְהוָה יִכְבֵּד נִשְׁבַּע הַיָּשָׁר: 15:4 In whose eyes a reprobate is despised, But who honors those who fear the Lord; He swears to his own hurt and does not change; (NASB) The Hebrew text says literally “despise in his eyes the despicable (reprobate)” (נִבְזָה | בְּעֵינָיו נִמְאָס). According to Easton's Dictionary, the reprobate man is

“that which is rejected on account of its own worthlessness (Jeremiah 6:30 and Hebrews 6:8). This word is also used with reference to persons cast away or rejected because they have failed to make use of opportunities offered them (1 Corinthians 9:27 and 2 Corinthians 13:5-7).” According to the Concise Oxford English Dictionary, the reprobate is “an unprincipled person, according to Calvinism, a sinner who is not of the elect and is predestined to damnation.” For an individual to be reprobate means that they have been rejected by God. They are rejected because they first rejected Him. There is a knowing willful refusal to believe and obey and honor God in the life of a reprobate. The Aramaic Targum states **ד דשט באנפוי בסיר** :רג: *15:4 Who despises the contemptible to his face, but honors those who fear the Lord; who will swear to do harm to himself and does not change. (EMC)* The Septuagint (LXX) states **15:4 ἐξουδένωται ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ πονηρευόμενος τοὺς δὲ φοβουμένους κύριον δοξάζει ὁ ὀμνύων τῷ πλησίον αὐτοῦ καὶ οὐκ ἀθετῶν** *15:4 In his sight an evil-worker is set at nought, but he honours them that fear the Lord. He swears to his neighbour, and disappoints him not. (LXX)* The Aramaic translation appears to say God despises the contemptible to his face. The Greek translation says “in his” sight, the lower case “his” suggests that the translators believed this is a reference to the righteous, the righteous are to “set at nought (nothing)” the worker of evil. The worker of evil does not want to hear the way of God, they do not want the peace of God. They have had the opportunity to know the Lord, to walk in His ways to experience His rest, but have instead chosen to go their own ways, to dwell in their own places, in lies, untruths, slandering and gossips. The Apostle Paul described the reprobate in *Romans 1:28-32*.

Romans 1:28-32

1:28 And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper, 1:29 being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips, 1:30 slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, 1:31 without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful; 1:32 and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them. (NASB)

²⁸καὶ καθὼς οὐκ ἔδοκίμασαν τὸν θεὸν ἔχειν ἐν ἐπιγνώσει, παρέδωκεν αὐτοὺς ὁ θεὸς εἰς ἀδόκιμον νοῦν, ποιεῖν τὰ μὴ καθήκοντα, ²⁹πεπληρωμένους πάση ἀδικίᾳ πονηρία πλεονεξία κακία, μεστοὺς φθόνου φόβου ἔριδος δόλου κακοηθείας, ψιθυριστάς, ³⁰καταλάλους, θεοστυγεῖς, ὕβριστάς, ὑπερηφάνους, ἀλαζόνας, ἐφευρετὰς κακῶν, γονεῦσιν ἀπειθεῖς, ³¹ἀσυνέτους, ἀστόργους, ἀνελεήμονας: ³²οἵτινες τὸ δικαίωμα τοῦ θεοῦ ἐπιγνόντες, ὅτι οἱ τὰ τοιαῦτα πράσσοντες ἄξιοι θανάτου εἰσίν, οὐ μόνον αὐτὰ ποιοῦσιν ἀλλὰ καὶ συνευδοκοῦσιν τοῖς πράσσουσιν.

It is interesting reading through Paul’s exhortation, in ***Romans 1:32***, he says that “and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them.” These are not individuals who never had an opportunity to know the Lord, rather, these are persons who believe their way is better than God’s way. These are people who have made a conscious, deliberate choice to walk contrary to the will of God. Paul wrote further on this topic saying in *2 Timothy 3:1-5*, ***3:1 But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. 3:2 For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3:3 unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, 3:4 treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 3:5 holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; Avoid such men as these. (NASB)*** Men will be

lovers of themselves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those who do good, traitors, high minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God, and having a form of godliness yet denying the power therefore. Paul says to turn away from such people. It may very well be that Paul had *Tehillim / Psalms 15* in mind while writing in *2 Timothy 3*. David says the righteous despise the reprobate (*person who is morally unprincipled*) and honor those who fear the Lord. He continues saying that the way of the righteous is to do what is right even if it means that swearing by the truth one is financially hurt. Doing right and standing for the truth even if the truth hurts us, this is the way of the righteous.

David also says that such a righteous man does not lend money at interest and does not take a bribe against those who are innocent, : 15:5 ה כִּסְפוֹ | לֹא-נִתַּן בְּנִשְׁוֹתָ וְשִׁחַד עַל-נֶקֶי לֹא-לָקַח עִשָׂה אֵלָהּ לֹא יִמוּט לְעוֹלָם. *He does not put out his money at interest, Nor does he take a bribe against the innocent. He who does these things will never be shaken. (NASB)* The first half of *Tehillim / Psalms 15:5*, David's words appear to be derived from *Devarim / Deuteronomy 23:19* that says כ לֹא-תִשִׂי אֶת-הַנֶּשֶׁה בְּנֶשֶׁה אֶת-כֹּסֶף הַנֶּשֶׁה אֶת-כָּל-דְּבָר : 23:19 אֶת-נֶשֶׁה: *'You shall not charge interest to your countrymen: interest on money, food, or anything that may be loaned at interest. (NASB)* Moshe addressed this issue in the Torah regarding how the children of Israel are to handle loaned money to their brothers. The law states that "if you lend money to one of my people among you who is needy, do not be like a moneylender, charge him no interest" (*Shemot / Exodus 22:25*). The prohibition against charging interest here is drawn in parallel to the one who walks righteously before the Lord. Why does David parallel the righteous with charging interest? The reason is the prohibition against charging interest also included "food or anything else that may earn interest" (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 23:19*). When giving food to the poor, we do not expect anything back in return. The reason being, an interest bearing loan, whether money or food, would only exacerbate the plight of the poor. The Lord God promised a blessing on the gracious lender that would surpass any interest that a person would make from a loan. Yeshua also taught on this topic in the Gospel of Matthew saying ⁴²τῷ αἰτοῦντί σε δός, καὶ τὸν θέλοντα ἀπὸ σοῦ δανίσασθαι μὴ ἀποστραφῆς 5:42 *'Give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you. (NASB)*

Matthew 5:39-44

5:39 *'But I say to you, do not resist an evil person; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. 5:40 'If anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, let him have your coat also. 5:41 'Whoever forces you to go one mile, go with him two. 5:42 'Give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you. 5:43 'You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' 5:44 'But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,(NASB)*

³⁹ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω ὑμῖν μὴ ἀντιστῆναι τῷ πονηρῷ: ἀλλ' ὅστις σε ῥαπίζει εἰς τὴν δεξιὰν σιαγόνα [σου], στρέψον αὐτῷ καὶ τὴν ἄλλην: ⁴⁰καὶ τῷ θέλοντί σοι κριθῆναι καὶ τὸν χιτῶνά σου λαβεῖν, ἄφες αὐτῷ καὶ τὸ ἱμάτιον: ⁴¹καὶ ὅστις σε ἀγγαρεύσει μίλιον ἓν, ὑπάγε μετ' αὐτοῦ δύο. ⁴²τῷ αἰτοῦντί σε δός, καὶ τὸν θέλοντα ἀπὸ σοῦ δανίσασθαι μὴ ἀποστραφῆς. ⁴³Ἄκουσατε ὅτι ἐρρήθη, Ἀγαπήσεις τὸν πλησίον σου καὶ μισήσεις τὸν ἐχθρόν σου. ⁴⁴ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω ὑμῖν, ἀγαπάτε τοὺς ἐχθροὺς ὑμῶν καὶ προσεύχεσθε ὑπὲρ τῶν διωκόντων ὑμᾶς

The principle that is being taught here in *Matthew 5:39-44* is that even our enemies in their time of need, we should lend to them and do so not expecting anything in return (*Luke 6:35*), by doing this your reward will be great in heaven. There are many passages throughout the Scriptures exhorting us to have a generous and giving heart, especially to the less fortunate. Moshe taught his people: "If there is a poor man among your brothers in any of the towns of the land that the LORD your God is giving you, do not be hardhearted

or tightfisted toward your poor brother. Rather be openhanded and freely lend him whatever he needs” (Devarim / Deuteronomy 15:7-8). The parallel that is drawn here to the righteous and the one who lends money without interest, is that the Lord expects His children to act righteously when dealing with money. This helps us to remember that our ability to work comes from God (Devarim / Deuteronomy 8:18) and it is the Lord who “sends poverty and wealth, He humbles and He exalts” (1 Samuel 2:7). The Lord desires for us to look to Him for our needs rather than to rely upon a money lender. The Lord God also expects His children to give to those in need, so we give of our time, our talents and our treasure. Yeshua taught the Torah principle of blessing from the Lord saying “Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you” (Luke 6:38).

David also says that such a righteous man does not take a bribe against those who are innocent, ה | לא-נתן בְּנִשְׁחָד עַל-נְקִי לֹא-לָקַח עֲשָׂה אֲלֶהָ לֹא יִמוּט לְעוֹלָם: 15:5 כְּסָפוֹ | *He does not put out his money at interest, Nor does he take a bribe against the innocent. He who does these things will never be shaken.* (NASB) It is interesting that David begins his Psalm asking 15:1 | יְהוָה מִי-יִגְוֹר בְּאֶהְלֶךָ מִי-יִשְׁכֵּן בְּהַר קֹדְשֶׁךָ | *O Lord, who may abide in Your tent? Who may dwell on Your holy hill?* (NASB) Who is able to dwell in the tent of the Lord and upon the holy hill where the Temple will be built? David’s answer to this through the Tehillim / Psalm 15 goes on to describe those who are welcome in God’s presence. In Tehillim / Psalms 15:2 there are three broad characteristics that describe this person. The one who is welcome in God’s presence is one who has integrity, one who does righteousness, and one who speaks truth. In Tehillim / Psalms 15:3-5 these three characteristics are explained in more detail and David finishes saying such a person will never be shaken. Tehillim / Psalms 15:3 corresponds to speaking truth, the first portion of 15:4 corresponds to working righteousness, and the last part of 15:4 and 15:5 correspond to the quality of walking in integrity. The person who is welcome in the presence of God is one who speaks truth in his heart. He does not simply give lip service to God outwardly, his whole character is truth from the inside out. There is no form of deception within such a person. This is a very important concept because what we think inwardly is a characteristic or our entire lifestyle like it says in Mishley / Proverbs 23:7 which says ז | כִּי | כְּמוֹ-שָׁעַר בְּנִפְשׁוֹ כֵּן-הוּא אֹכֹל | *For as he thinks within himself, so he is. He says to you, ‘Eat and drink!’ But his heart is not with you.* (NASB) Instead of merely speaking the truth, Tehillim / Psalms 15 is pointing out the righteous person lives the truth and this is what he thinks from within himself. The truthful lifestyle shows itself in several ways, first, the upright person does not “slander with his tongue,” he tells the truth without adding to or taking away. He does not gossip, he does not run down others verbally, whether in their presence or behind their back. Simply put, the righteous do not slander with their tongues. The unrighteous do these things and work evil towards his neighbor. The righteous do not take up reproach against his friend, does not keep a running score of the wrongs that were done against him, and does not hold a grudge. He does not continue to bring up the past sins, the righteous person forgives. David goes on stating that the one who is welcome in God’s presence is the one who “works righteousness.” In Tehillim / Psalms 15:4 we read the contrast between the righteous and the unrighteous, the Scriptures say ד | נִבְזָה | בְּעֵינָיו נִמְאָס וְאֵת- | *In whose eyes a reprobate is despised, But who honors those who fear the Lord; He swears to his own hurt and does not change;* (NASB) This righteous person views people and life through God’s eyes. He hates what God hates and honors what God honors. Such a person is not caught up in worshipping the rich and beautiful, the famous and powerful, he places value on people who put God first and live their lives for Him. The righteous man does not make his evaluation based upon the world’s standard of success and achievement. The righteous live in truth, act in an ethical manner, and are honorable in all their dealings in this world. This is the very definition of integrity, such a person who walks in integrity is welcome in God’s presence. The righteous man does what he says he will do, and this kind of person keeps his promises even if it costs him something “He swears to his own hurt, and does not change.”

He does not deliberately try to hurt himself, rather, if he makes a promise or if circumstances change so that he is at a disadvantage, he still keeps his word. The righteous man does not exploit and abuse others. According to the Torah, we are not to take advantage of people, we are not to take advantage of another person's misfortune. The righteous do not take a bribe against the innocent (*Tehillim / Psalms 15:5*), he is not susceptible to outside influence or corruption. He makes decisions honestly and stands on those honest decisions. David says that those who are welcome in the Tent of God, in His presence, are those who walk in integrity, who do righteous deeds, and who speak the truth. David writes innocent, הַ כֶּסֶף | לֹא-נָתַן בְּנִשְׁוֹף, 15:5 *He does not put out his money at interest, Nor does he take a bribe against the innocent. He who does these things will never be shaken.* (NASB) The Aramaic Targum says הַ סְמִיָּה לֹא יֵהֵב בַּחבּוּלִיא וְשׁוּחַדָּא עַל זְכָאָה לֹא קִבִּיל דְעֵבַד אִילִין לֹא יִזְנַח יִזּוּעַ לְעֵלְמָא: 15:5 *He has not given his money at interest; he has not accepted a bribe against the innocent; one who does these things will never be moved.* (EMC) Those who do these things will not be moved. The righteous person, the one who walks in the way of the Lord will not be shaken, he has placed himself upon a solid foundation. When David says that the righteous will never be shaken, he is saying that this person has a fundamental stability. His lifestyle is marked by integrity, righteous deeds, and truth, this person is not blown by the wind, when difficult times come he remains secure in his faith and is welcome in God's presence. In God's eyes, men and women are measured by their character. David asks מִי-יִשְׁכֵּן בְּהַר קְדֻשָּׁה 15:1 *O Lord, who may abide in Your tent? Who may dwell on Your holy hill?* (NASB) The answer that he gives is those whose lives are marked with integrity, truth, and justice. Is your life marked by integrity, truth, and justice? Do you want your life to exhibit these important qualities? Scripture says that the heart of man is deceitful and desperately wicked (*Jeremiah 17:9*), it is only the Lord God Almighty, His Holy Spirit, and His Son Yeshua that can transform a man from the inside out. Do you want to be transformed from the inside out? Come let's pray!

Christian Commentary

The *International Critical Commentary on the Psalms (ICCP)*, Driver, Plummer, and Briggs, 2005, states that *Tehillim / Psalms 15* is a didactic poem inquiring what sort of a man is qualified to be a guest of YHVH (15:1) describing him in accordance with "a decalogue of duties" (15:2-5) and declaring that such a man is secure (15:5). Driver, Plummer, and Briggs states that *Tehillim / Psalms 15* was not taken up into the earlier major Psalters because it was neither a hymn nor prayer but simply didactic in character and less suited for public worship. ("Didactic" means "intended to teach, particularly in having moral instruction as an ulterior motive.") *Tehillim / Psalms 15* resembles *Tehillim / Psalms 24:3-6*, which has a similar couplet of inquiry and a similar response. The language and phrasing in *Isaiah 33:14-16* is similar to *Tehillim / Psalms 15*, there is interdependence and probably ethical conception of *Isaiah 3* is earlier than the more complete one of the Psalms. The same concept of guest גּוֹר is given in *Isaiah 3* where YHVH is a consuming fire and in *Tehillim / Psalms 15* He is a hospitable tent. A parallel is found between *Tehillim / Psalms 15* and *Isaiah 33*:

1. הלך צדקות (33:15) is parallel to הלך תמים (15:2)
2. דבר מישרים (33:15) is parallel to דבר אמת (15:2)
3. נער כפיו מתמך בשחד (33:15) is parallel to שחר לא לקח (15:5)

David compresses the 613 commands of the Law into eleven, *Isaiah* compresses into six, *Micah 6:8* compresses into three, *Amos 5:4* and *Habakkuk 2:4* each into one. The commentators believe that the high level

of mental truthfulness in the Psalm implies that there is an influence of Persian ethics and therefore the Psalm is of the Persian period. The commentators again believe this Psalm is late. The form of the Psalm implies familiarity with its use in the earlier Hebrew codes and a legal habit of mind.

Stanza 1 of *Tehillim / Psalms 15* is a couplet inquiry similar to *Tehillim / Psalms 24:3, 8, and 10*. The question is “who” and not “what person,” what sort of a person, what will be the character of the person who will be a guest in the tent of the Lord? The tent is a poetic term for the temple. This is an interesting conclusion of the commentary and is highly likely the result of the belief that this Psalm is later, that David was not the author of the Psalm. The temple was the house or palace of YHVH and was conceived as a place of sacrifice and worship, as the place of his royal presence, a place for shelter from ones enemies. The privilege of access to the sacred tent as a guest is one thing but the privilege of being a resident on the holy mountain as citizens is another. The holy mount is a reference to Jerusalem or Zion.

Stanza 2 of *Tehillim / Psalms 15* is a decalogue composed of two pentades of ethical requirements. The verses 15:2-3 comprehends a couplet and a triplet. The couplet is more general that requires a moral walk or conduct. The guest of YHVH should be perfect in his righteousness, complete, faultless, and this is probably original. The two kindred words appears to be that of a later prosaic editor to require each its own verb and so the later editor inserted “works” before “righteousness” and destroyed the measure. The moral speech “*he that speaks truth*” here truth and falsehood are conceived in the pre-exilic sense as connected with injury to others, but internal speech to himself (in his mind). Due to Persian influence, the Persians from an earlier date than their contact with Israel, being distinguished above all other ancient nations for the stress they put upon moral truthfulness. It is interesting that the commentators are quick to believe the moral truthfulness that is given in the Psalm is derived from the Persian influence and not from the Torah. Very little mention is made to the Torah as a source of moral and ethical truth. The commentators go on to say that the more general attitude of the ethical requirements passes over to the more specific negative conduct showing a progressive order of thought. The relationships grow consistently closer in the order, “*his neighbor, his friend, and one near to him*” and also the actions “*play the spy upon*” etc. They say that a copyist omitted a single letter from the original “*neighbor*” and substituted a Hebrew word meaning “*tongue*” which has been rendered in various ways. The most familiar to English readers are “*He that hath used no deceit in his tongue,*” “*He that backbiteth not with his tongue,*” “*He that slandereth not with his tongue,*” none of these are well sustained. The evil disposition was expressed in spying and has passed over into an activity of doing of injuries. *Tehillim / Psalms 15:4-5* speaks of the reprobate, the one who is rejected of YHVH and is antithetical to “*them that fear YHVH.*” The reprobate is despised in God’s eyes, He looks upon them with contempt, and the latter “*He honoreth.*” The righteous swear to his own hurt and the wicked violate their oaths. “*The violation of the oath of promise now passes over to the more positive usury, and more guilty bribery, in violation of the ancient codes; the former of Ex. 22:24 (E) Lv. 25:37 (H) Dt. 23:20, cf. Ez. 18:8, 13, 17 Pr. 28:8; the latter of Ex. 23:8 (E) Dt. 27:25 (Deca-logue) Dt. 10:17, 16:19, 1 S. 8:3, cf. Is. 1:23, 5:23, 33:15, Ez. 22:12, Ps. 26:10, Pr. 17:23.*” (“*The International Critical Commentary: Psalms (in 2 volumes)*” by Charles A. Briggs,. Varda Books, 2005, 1112p. Page Vol. I, page 115)

Stanza 3 of *Tehillim / Psalms 15* is a monostich, summing up the decalogue in a final response saying “*whoso does these things will not be moved.*” This phrase is often employed to indicate the firm, secure condition of the people of God, in Zion. A later editor added the word “*forever*” to strengthen the concluding verse.

Rabbinic Commentary

The rabbinic commentary (Midrash) on *Tehillim / Psalms 15* has 7 parts. Reading through this week’s Midrash we will be looking at Parts 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6. Let’s begin by outlining Midrash *Tehillim*

Outline of Midrash Tehillim / Psalms, Chapter 15, Parts 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6

Part 2:

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) “*The question who will abide in Your Tabernacle? (Tehillim / Psalms 15:1).*”
- The פתיחתא (Petihta) “*the homiletic introduction*” to the Midrash says “*is to be considered in light of what Scripture says elsewhere, Jerusalem will be without walls.*”
- The משל (mashal) “*the parable,*” goes on to explain the פתיחתא (Petihta), the rabbis draw a parallel the city without walls to the Lord God being a wall of fire between the people and their enemies.
- The נמשל (Nimshal) “*expansion on the parable*” expands upon the משל (mashal), the rabbis expand slightly on the Lord being a wall of fire.
- The Concluding phrase says “*Therefore, David said, since there is a wall of fire in the area outside, and the glory is in the area inside, how can any one bear to abide at Jerusalem? Hence he said, Who will abide in Your Tabernacle?*”

Part 3:

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) “*Another comment on Who will abide in Your Tabernacle, taking the syllable gur to mean “sojourn,” the verse is not to be read Who will abide, but Who will sojourn in Your Tabernacle? ”*
- The פתיחתא (Petihta) “*the homiletic introduction*” to the Midrash contrasts the difference between who will abide and who will sojourn in the Tabernacle of the Lord.
- The משל (mashal) “*the parable,*” goes on to explain the פתיחתא (Petihta), the rabbis discuss a few examples of sojourning and the Tabernacle of God.
- The נמשל (Nimshal) “*expansion on the parable*” expands upon the משל (mashal), the rabbis expand on those who can sojourn in God’s Tabernacle..
- The Concluding phrase says “*So too, David asked, Lord, who will abide in Your Tabernacle? And the Holy One blessed be He replied, He that obeys many commandments, obeys the commandments and practices self-denial.*”

Part 4:

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) “*He that walks uprightly, and works righteousness, (Tehillim / Psalms 15:2).*”
- The פתיחתא (Petihta) “*the homiletic introduction*” to the Midrash says “*He that walks uprightly is the Holy One, blessed be He, of whom it is said For the Lord is righteous, He loves righteousness (Tehillim / Psalms 11:7)*”
- The משל (mashal) “*the parable,*” goes on to explain the פתיחתא (Petihta), the rabbis provide parables to describe how God is the righteous God.
- The נמשל (Nimshal) “*expansion on the parable*” expands upon the משל (mashal), the rabbis expand on the righteousness of God and parallel Tehillim / Psalms 15 to the attributes of God.
- The Concluding phrase says “*For when all the nations of the earth gather, ready to give up all their money for one precept of Torah, they will be unable to quench God’s love for Israel, as is said Many waters cannot quench love (Song 8:7), By many waters is clearly meant the nations, that make a rushing like the rushing of the nations of the world, of whom it is said Now therefore, behold, the*

Lord brings up the waters of the flood even the king of Assyria (Isaiah 8:7)."

Part 5:

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) “*Rabbi Azaria taught in the name of rabbi Judah, In the time to come, the guardian angels of the nations of the earth will come to accuse the children of Israel and will say in the presence of the Holy One blessed be He, Master of the Universe, these worshiped idols, and those worshiped idols.*”
- The פתיחתא (Petihta) “*the homiletic introduction*” to the Midrash draws a contrast between the nations and Israel.
- The משל (mashal) “*the parable,*” goes on to explain the פתיחתא (Petihta), the rabbis provide examples on why God forgives Israel and does not forgive the nations.
- The נמשל (Nimshal) “*expansion on the parable*” expands upon the משל (mashal), the rabbis expand on the reasons why God forgives Israel and not the nations.
- The Concluding phrase says “*He said, We have a little sister (Song 8:8), but which He meant, as a child before it reaches maturity is not held responsible for its misdeeds, so the children of Israel are not held responsible for any of the sins wherewith they have soiled themselves throughout the days of the year, the Day of Atonement cleanses them, as is said, On this day will a cleansing be appointed for you (Vayikra / Leviticus 16:30).*”
- ”

Part 6:

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) “*Another comment, He that walks upright (Tehillim / Psalms 15:2).*”
- The פתיחתא (Petihta) “*the homiletic introduction*” to the Midrash compares the righteous to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
- The משל (mashal) “*the parable,*” goes on to explain the פתיחתא (Petihta), the rabbis draw a parallel to various men in the Scriptures who have the attributes that are listed in *Tehillim / Psalms 15*.
- The נמשל (Nimshal) “*expansion on the parable*” expands upon the משל (mashal), the rabbis expand on the different types of men, those who are righteous, who keep the word of truth in their hearts, etc.
- The Concluding phrase says “*I concluded therefore that the words He will never be moved mean that he who des these things will be rescued from death to live in the world to come.*”

Part 2 of *Midrash Tehillim 15* opens with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) asking the question of who will abide in Your Tabernacle Lord? (*Tehillim / Psalms 15:1*). The homiletic introduction (פתיחתא) to the Midrash begins with Jerusalem having no walls, the reason being the Lord God Almighty is like a wall of fire between the people and their enemies. A reference to *Zechariah 2:8-9 (2:4-5, NASB)* is given that says ח וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו רִצְוֹן דָּבַר אֶל־הַנְּעָר הַלֵּז לֵאמֹר פְּרֹזוֹת תֵּשֵׁב יְרוּשָׁלַם יִרְבֵּי אָדָם וּבָהֶמָּה בְּתוֹכָהּ: ט וְאָנֹכִי אֶהְיֶה־לָּהּ: 2:4 and said to him, ‘Run, speak to that young man, saying, ‘Jerusalem will be inhabited without walls because of the multitude of men and cattle within it. 2:5 ‘For I,’ declares the Lord, ‘will be a wall of fire around her, and I will be the glory in her midst.’ (NASB) The rabbi say that the wall of fire will be in the area outside of the walls and His glory will be in the midst of her, that is in the area inside the ways. Part 2 of *Midrash Tehillim 15* concludes saying “*Therefore, David said, since there is a wall of fire in the area outside, and the glory is in the area inside, how can any one bear to abide at Jerusalem? Hence he said, Who will abide in Your Tabernacle?*” The Lord is like an impregnable wall surrounding His people “*As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the LORD is round about his*

ב ירושלים הרים סביב לה ויהנה סביב לעמו (Tehillim / Psalm 125:2, *people from henceforth even for ever*). The safest and most secure place for God's people is to be in the will of God, seeking Him, and walking in truth, righteousness, and justice. The Scriptures in Zechariah state that the Lord is an invincible wall of fire that protects His people. This reminds us of other places in Scripture that states "*The angel of the Lord encamps round about them that fear him, and delivers them*" (Tehillim / Psalm 34:7) and of Elisha's servant who is fearful of the enemy host arrayed against them who was then encouraged when his eyes were enabled to see the angelic host of God surrounding Israel, in answer to Elisha's prayer, the Scriptures say "*the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha*" (2 Kings 6:17). The rabbis parallel this to David's words in Tehillim / Psalms 15:1 asking *יהנה מי יגור באהלך מי יושבן ביהר קדשך 15:1 O Lord, who may abide in Your tent? Who may dwell on Your holy hill? (NASB)* Who is able to dwell in the Tabernacle of the Lord? The interesting point of the midrash and David's question of who might dwell in the Tabernacle may be found in the words of Isaiah. *Isaiah 60:18* says *יה לא ישמע עוד חמס בארצך שד 60:18 Violence will not be heard again in your land, Nor devastation or destruction within your borders; But you will call your walls salvation, and your gates praise. (NASB)* The Lord surrounds His people like a wall of fire, and according to Isaiah, the walls we will call salvation and the gates praise. The Lord God Almighty is our salvation, the gate is Yeshua the Messiah who is to be praised. In the Messiah (Christ) we are saved, the Lord has provided His Salvation where the enemy is sin and death.

ג דבר אחר מי יגור באהלך. מי ידור אין כתיב כאן, אלא מי *Midrash Tehillim 5, Part 3* begins stating *Another comment on Who will abide in Your Tabernacle, taking the syllable gur to mean "sojourn," the verse is not to be read Who will abide, but Who will sojourn in Your Tabernacle?* The rabbis want to explain further on the topic of "who will abide and who is able to sojourn in the Tabernacle of God? In this midrash the rabbis give examples of men who have died because of their neglect to take care and watch because of the glory of God. Rabbi Joshua son of Levi gives the example from Parashat Shemini (*Vayikra / Leviticus 10*) of Nadav and Avihu who were burnt for offering incense before the Lord, the question is asked "*is it possible for anyone to sojourn in Your Tabernacle?*" Rabbi Samuel says that it is written of Uzza in *1 Chronicles 13:8-10* saying *ה ודויד וכל ישראל משחקים לפני ה הלאהים בכל עז ובשירים ובכנרות ובנבלים ובתפים ובמצלתיים ובחצצרות: ט ויבאו עד גרן כידן וישלח עזא את ידו לאחז את הארון כי שמטו הכקר: י ויחר אף יהנה בעזא ויכהו על אשר שלח ידו על הארון וימת שם: 13:8 David and all Israel were celebrating before God with all their might, even with songs and with lyres, harps, tambourines, cymbals and with trumpets. 13:9 When they came to the threshing floor of Chidon, Uzza put out his hand to hold the ark, because the oxen nearly upset it. 13:10 The anger of the Lord burned against Uzza, so He struck him down because he put out his hand to the ark; and he died there before God. (NASB)* Uzza put his hand forth to prevent the Ark from falling, the Lord stuck him dead. "Can anyone then sojourn in Your Tabernacle?" A parable is spoken saying *משל לעירוני שנכנס למדינה, וראה אותן שמוכרין מיני כתייתין וכל דבר, אמר מי יכול לשבוע מאלו, אמרו לו חביריו מי שיש לו מעות הרבה* "A parable of a rustic who came to the city. He saw many kinds of pastries and all sorts of delicacies being sold there and asked, Can a man get his fill of these things? His companions replied, Yes, if he has coins, many coins." A parallel is drawn between the one who sojourns in the Tabernacle to one who comes into the city (Jerusalem) and sees all kinds of pastries and delicacies being sold. A person asks can a man get his fill of these things? His companions reply that only if one has much money. The concluding phrase then states "*So too, David asked, Lord, who will abide in Your Tabernacle? And the Holy One blessed be He replied, He that obeys many commandments, obeys the commandments and practices self-denial.*" So the rabbis parallel the one who is able to sojourn in the Tabernacle is equal to one who obeys the mitzvot (commandments) and practices self denial. An interesting point about these comments on dwelling in the

Tabernacle of the Lord, when one gets married, moves in with the wife or husband, each of us gets to know each others habits, likes, dislikes, mandates, and all the wrinkles in each other’s personalities pretty quickly. The interesting point about marriage is that when you dwell with someone you will definitely get to know that person intimately. In *Shemot / Exodus 25:1-31:18*, the Lord designed a sacred place to dwell called the Mishkhan (Tabernacle). The purpose was so that we would have a meeting place to pray and worship Him. The Lord directed the construction of the Tabernacle because the place was to be a holy place where He would meet with us and that we might hear His words and follow Him. This comment at the conclusion of Midrash Tehillim 15 Part 3 saying “*So too, David asked, Lord, who will abide in Your Tabernacle? And the Holy One blessed be He replied, He that obeys many commandments, obeys the commandments and practices self-denial,*” it is because God is holy that He has chosen that our worship of Him should be done so in holiness and in a holy place. We understand God’s holiness, His character, His lovingkindness, according to the Scriptures. David wrote that those who are welcome in the Tent of God, in His presence, are those who walk in integrity, who do righteous deeds, and who speak the truth. David writes he who does good to the innocent, walks with integrity, speaks truth in his heart, etc will never be shaken, (הַ כִּסְפוֹ | לֹא-נִתָּן בְּנִשְׁוֹף) :*15:5 He does not put out his money at interest, Nor does he take a bribe against the innocent. He who does these things will never be shaken. NASB*) Those who do these things will not be moved. All of these things are found in the Torah and with the help of the Holy Spirit we can walk in righteousness and because the Lord is the God of our Salvation, He is the one who sustains us, we can rest assured that we will not be shaken, he has placed us upon a solid foundation. When David says that the righteous will never be shaken, he is saying that this person has a fundamental stability. His lifestyle is marked by integrity, righteousness, and truth, this person is not blown by the wind, when difficult times come he remains secure in his faith and such a person is welcome in God’s presence.

Midrash Tehillim 15, Part 4 opens with the Dibur Hamathil (דיבור המתחיל) saying “*He that walks uprightly, and works righteousness, (Tehillim / Psalms 15:2).*” Reading through the midrash, the rabbis are essentially speaking about God, that the Lord God Almighty is the one who walks uprightly and works righteousness. The homiletic introduction (פתיחתא) states “*He that walks uprightly is the Holy One, blessed be He, of whom it is said For the Lord is righteous, He loves righteousness (Tehillim / Psalms 11:7)*” The midrash then parallels *Tehillim / Psalms 15* to the righteousness of God, let’s summarize Part 4 of *Midrash Tehillim 15*.

Summary Midrash Tehillim Part 4

1. He that speaks the truth is also the Holy One blessed be He of whom it is written “But the Lord God is the God of truth (*Jeremiah 10:10*).
2. He that bites not with His tongue (*Tehillim / Psalms 15:3*) is the Holy One blessed Be He.
3. He who does no evil to His neighbor is again the Holy One blessed be He.
4. In His eyes, he who rejects His word, is despised (*Tehillim / Psalms 15:4*), these words refer to the Holy One blessed be He, who rejected Saul’s kingship, saying through Samuel to Saul, Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He has also rejected you from being king (*1 Samuel 15:23*).
5. He honors them that fear the Lord (*Tehillim / Psalms 15:4*) refers to the Holy One blessed be He.
6. He that swears to hurt and changes not (*Tehillim / Psalms 15:4*) is again the Holy One blessed be He
7. He who does not put out His money to usury (*Tehillim / Psalms 15:5*) is the Holy One blessed be He, who did not give the Torah for money but gave it without price.

8. He takes no bribe against the innocent (*Tehillim / Psalms 15:5*) refers to the Holy One blessed be He.

Rabbi Joshua taught concerning point #2, that “*the Lord God speaks in a roundabout way so as to avoid unseemly (improper) words, as indicated in a previous Psalm*” (דאמר ר' יהושע הקב"ה עיקם שלש תיבות וכו') (כדכתיב לעיל).

Questions

1. Can you think of any examples where the Lord speaks in a “*roundabout way*” in Scripture?
2. What do the rabbis suggest the reason is that the Lord speaks in a “*roundabout way*?”

One way in which the Lord speaks in a roundabout way is by speaking through parables. Yeshua gave a response to this very question we are asking, the disciples asked why does he speak to the people in parables in *Matthew 13:10-17*? Let's read Yeshua's commentary on this question of why he speaks in a “*roundabout way*” (parables).

Matthew 13:10-17

13:10 And the disciples came and said to Him, 'Why do You speak to them in parables?' 13:11 Jesus answered them, 'To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted. 13:12 'For whoever has, to him more shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him. 13:13 'Therefore I speak to them in parables; because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. 13:14 'In their case the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says, 'You will keep on hearing, but will not understand; You will keep on seeing, but will not perceive; 13:15 For the heart of this people has become dull, With their ears they scarcely hear, And they have closed their eyes, Otherwise they would see with their eyes, Hear with their ears, And understand with their heart and return, And I would heal them.' 13:16 'But blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear. 13:17 'For truly I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it (NASB)

¹⁰Καὶ προσελθόντες οἱ μαθηταὶ εἶπαν αὐτῷ, Διὰ τί ἐν παραβολαῖς λαλεῖς αὐτοῖς; ¹¹ὁ δὲ ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπεν αὐτοῖς ὅτι Ὑμῖν δέδοται γνῶναι τὰ μυστήρια τῆς βασιλείας τῶν οὐρανῶν, ἐκείνοις δὲ οὐ δέδοται. ¹²Ὅστις γὰρ ἔχει, δοθήσεται αὐτῷ καὶ περισσευθήσεται: ὅστις δὲ οὐκ ἔχει, καὶ ὃ ἔχει ἀρθήσεται ἀπ' αὐτοῦ. ¹³διὰ τοῦτο ἐν παραβολαῖς αὐτοῖς λαλῶ, ὅτι βλέποντες οὐ βλέπουσιν καὶ ἀκούοντες οὐκ ἀκούουσιν οὐδὲ συνίουσιν: ¹⁴καὶ ἀναπληροῦται αὐτοῖς ἡ προφητεία Ἡσαΐου ἣ λέγουσα, Ἀκοῆ ἀκούσετε καὶ οὐ μὴ συνῆτε, καὶ βλέποντες βλέψετε καὶ οὐ μὴ ἴδητε. ¹⁵ἐπαχύνθη γὰρ ἡ καρδία τοῦ λαοῦ τούτου, καὶ τοῖς ὠσὶν βαρέως ἤκουσαν, καὶ τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς αὐτῶν ἐκάμμυσαν: μήποτε ἴδωσιν τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς καὶ τοῖς ὠσὶν ἀκούσωσιν καὶ τῇ καρδίᾳ συνῶσιν καὶ ἐπιστρέψωσιν, καὶ ἰάσομαι αὐτούς. ¹⁶Ὑμῶν δὲ μακάριοι οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ ὅτι βλέπουσιν, καὶ τὰ ᾧα ὑμῶν ὅτι ἀκούουσιν. ¹⁷ἀμὴν γὰρ λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι πολλοὶ προφήται καὶ δίκαιοι ἐπεθύμησαν ἰδεῖν ἃ βλέπετε καὶ οὐκ εἶδαν, καὶ ἀκούσαι ἃ ἀκούετε καὶ οὐκ ἤκουσαν.

In *Matthew 13:10-17*, the disciples ask Yeshua why he speaks to the people in parables? He answers directing their attention to Scripture from the prophet Isaiah saying that this is done so as to fulfill a prophecy of

Isaiah 13:14 'In their case the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says, 'You will keep on hearing, but will not understand; You will keep on seeing, but will not perceive; 13:15 For the heart of this people has become dull, With their ears they scarcely hear, And they have closed their eyes, Otherwise they would see with their eyes, Hear with their ears, And understand with their heart and return, And I would heal them.' The Messiah, He would come speaking in parables and the people would not understand. Yeshua goes on to say that blessed are their eyes because of what they see and their ears because of what they hear. In our relationship with God, we must be discerning that He is at work, so when the Lord works a miracle in our lives, in a similar way our eyes have seen the wonderful work of God and others ears hear the praise that we give to the Lord as a result of His righteous works in our lives.

In point #7 from the summary of *Midrash Tehillim 16 part 4*, the rabbis say “*He who does not put out His money to usury (Tehillim / Psalms 15:5) is the Holy One blessed be He, who did not give the Torah for money but gave it without price.*” They quote from *Isaiah 55:1* that says א הוי כָּל-צָמָא לְכוּ לַמַּיִם וְאֲשֶׁר אֵין-לוֹ כֶּסֶף לְכוּ שִׁבְרוּ וְאָכְלוּ וּלְכוּ שִׁבְרוּ בְּלוֹא-כֶּסֶף וּבְלוֹא מְחִיר יַיִן וְחֶלֶב: ב לָמָּה תִשְׁקְלוּ-כֶּסֶף בְּלוֹא-לֶחֶם וַיִּגְיַעְכֶּם בְּלוֹא לְשִׁבְעָה שְׂמֵעוּ שְׂמֵעוּ אֵלַי וְאָכְלוּ-טוֹב וְתִתְעַנֵּג בְּדִשָׁן נַפְשְׁכֶם: ג הֲטוֹ אֲזַנְכֶם וּלְכוּ אֵלַי שְׂמֵעוּ וְתַחֲי: 55:1 ‘*Ho! Every one who thirsts, come to the waters; And you who have no money come, buy and eat. Come, buy wine and milk Without money and without cost. 55:2 'Why do you spend money for what is not bread, And your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, And delight yourself in abundance. 55:3 'Incline your ear and come to Me. Listen, that you may live; And I will make an everlasting covenant with you, According to the faithful mercies shown to David. (NASB)* Isaiah says to come to the waters those who thirst and have no money to buy and eat. Buying wine and milk will be done without money and without cost (55:1). This suggests to refer to God giving the Torah to His people without cost. The words of the Lord are pure words, as silver, money that is tried in the open before all men and because of God’s love He has given His words, His Torah freely. This is as if He is giving money away to all. The midrash concludes saying “*For when all the nations of the earth gather, ready to give up all their money for one precept of Torah, they will be unable to quench God’s love for Israel, as is said Many waters cannot quench love (Song 8:7), By many waters is clearly meant the nations, that make a rushing like the rushing of the nations of the world, of whom it is said Now therefore, behold, the Lord brings up the waters of the flood even the king of Assyria (Isaiah 8:7).*” The nations will gather and will give all of their money for one precept of the Torah. It appears that all the money in the world would not purchase one precept from the Torah. There is not enough money in the world to buy God’s love. The attitude here regarding the Torah and the nations, the people believe that money can purchase God’s love, and by purchasing God’s love this would somehow cause God to stop loving Israel? This however is not the case, the Torah is given freely, all the money in the world cannot buy even one precept and certainly cannot cause God’s love to pass from one nation to another. This is similar to what was taking place in *Bamidbar / Numbers 22:1-35*, the story of Balaam, the “diviner,” who was hired to curse Israel by Balak, the King of Moab. Based upon the story, Balaam was seeking to curse those whom God had blessed. That caused Balaam to go against those whom God was for (Israel). In so doing, Balaam found God to be his adversary. It is better for us to have God as our advocate rather than our adversary. The Apostle Paul wrote, “*What then shall we say about these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?*” (*Romans 8:31*). The challenge then is not to “convert” God to be on our side (*like the nations try to do with money and purchasing a precept from the Torah*), but to allow God to convert (transform) us and to walk uprightly before the Lord so that we may be on His side. Many are just like Balaam in seeking to get God to join them, to be on their side; observing the Mitzvot is one such motive if it is done to earn right standing before the Lord. Our righteousness is established in Yeshua the Messiah (Christ), our transformed lives that are in Christ cause us to live uprightly before the Lord God Almighty. The message of the Midrash and the Scriptures is that we are on one side, and God is on the opposite side. We are sinners, both by nature and by choice; God is righteous (*note how the rabbis equate Tehillim / Psalm 15 to the Holy One blessed be He*).

We are born into an adversarial relationship to God. It is God who takes the initiative so that we might no longer be His enemies, but His sons. The Torah says that it is God who blesses and curses. If one wished to be blessed, he must not only seek the Lord God Almighty and His Messiah, but he also must bless others. Anyone who curses those whom God has blessed will be cursed. Balak sought to flatter Balaam by telling him that he could bless or curse whomever he wished. The truth was that God had blessed Israel, and there was nothing Balaam could do to change this. Similarly, the nations mistakenly use their money in an attempt to purchase one precept from the Torah to gain God's love and take His love from Israel. Have you mistakenly tried to earn God's love by what you do? Think on this for a moment, it is God's love that flows through you that should cause you to live righteously before Him, not the other way around.

Midrash Tehillim 15, Part 5 is introduced with the Dibur Hamathil (דיבור המתחיל) saying “*Rabbi Azaria taught in the name of rabbi Judah, In the time to come, the guardian angels of the nations of the earth will come to accuse the children of Israel and will say in the presence of the Holy One blessed be He, Master of the Universe, these worshiped idols, and those worshiped idols.*” This midrash draws a contrast between the nations and Israel (פתיחתא, “the homiletic introduction”). In the Dibur Hamathil, the rabbis say the “guardian angels of the nations” come before the Lord (into His presence) and accuse the children of Israel. Who do you think are the “guardian angels” of the nations? Since the nations are wicked and God would not send His holy angels to take care of a wicked nation, the rabbis seem to be drawing a parallel to the book of Job of a time when Satan presented himself before the Lord and accused Job.

Job 1:1-12

1:1 There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job; and that man was blameless, upright, fearing God and turning away from evil. 1:2 Seven sons and three daughters were born to him. 1:3 His possessions also were 7, 000 sheep, 3, 000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen, 500 female donkeys, and very many servants; and that man was the greatest of all the men of the east. 1:4 His sons used to go and hold a feast in the house of each one on his day, and they would send and invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them. 1:5 When the days of feasting had completed their cycle, Job would send and consecrate them, rising up early in the morning and offering burnt offerings according to the number of them all; for Job said, ‘Perhaps my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts.’ Thus Job did continually. 1:6 Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them. וַיְהִי הַיּוֹם וַיָּבֹאוּ בְנֵי הָאֱלֹהִים לְהִתְיַצֵּב עַל-יְהוָה וַיָּבֹא גַם-הַשָּׁטָן) (בְּתוֹכָם) 1:7 The Lord said to Satan, ‘From where do you come?’ Then Satan answered the Lord and said, ‘From roaming about on the earth and walking around on it.’ 1:8 The Lord said to Satan, ‘Have you considered My servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, fearing God and turning away from evil.’ 1:9 Then Satan answered the Lord, ‘Does Job fear God for nothing? 1:10 ‘Have You not made a hedge about him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. 1:11 ‘But put forth Your hand now and touch all that he has; he will surely curse You to Your face.’ 1:12 Then the Lord said to Satan, ‘Behold, all that he has is in your power, only do not put forth your hand on him.’ So Satan departed from the presence of the Lord. (NASB)

In the book of Job, the deceiver/accuser (Satan, הַשָּׁטָן) presented himself before the Lord and brought accusation against Job a servant of the Most High God. Those who accuse the children of God are not God's holy angels, it is the accuser who comes and brings accusation. Therefore we may conclude that the “guardian angels” of the nations are angels who are not God's holy and righteous angels. In the Midrash the guardian angel makes the following accusations “*these worshiped idols, and those worshiped idols. These*

committed incest, and those committed incest. These shed blood, and those shed blood. And yet these are being sent down to Gehenna, but those are being sent down. Does this mean that there is partiality in You?” הללו עובדי עבודה זרה, והללו עובדי עבודה זרה, הללו מגלי עריות, והללו מגלי עריות, הללו שופכי דמים, והללו (שופכי דמים, מפני מה הללו יורדין לגיהנם, והללו אין יורדין, וכי יש משא פנים לפניך) Not only does the accuser make accusation against the children of Israel, he also makes accusation against God suggesting that there is “*partiality*” in Him. The Lord replies “*If a man gave all the substance of his house for love, how could he ever be utterly condemned? (Song 8:7). How can I condemn the children of Israel?*” The nations respond saying they will also give up all of their treasures to be forgiven, and God replies like we read earlier in *Midrash Tehillim 15 Part 4*, “*Even if you now give up all your money for one percent of the Torah which you once rejected, you will not be forgiven.*” The nations will gather in the world to come, seeing the power of God and the consequences of sin would give all of their money for even one precept of the Torah. According to the rabbis, all the money in the world would not purchase one precept from the Torah. There is not enough money in the world to buy God’s love. The attitude regarding the Torah and the nations, the people believe that money can purchase God’s love, and by purchasing God’s love this would somehow cause God to stop loving Israel? The love of God towards Israel is free, and the conclusion of the *Midrash Tehillim 15, Part 5* takes a quote from the Song of Solomon saying “*He said, We have a little sister (Song 8:8), but which He meant, as a child before it reaches maturity is not held responsible for its misdeeds, so the children of Israel are not held responsible for any of the sins wherewith they have soiled themselves throughout the days of the year, the Day of Atonement cleanses them, as is said, On this day will a cleansing be appointed for you (Vayikra / Leviticus 16:30).*” The rabbis conclude that on the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) Israel is forgiven for all of her past sins committed during the year. This is the one day out of the year that the High Priest (Cohen Hagadol) enters into the Holy of Holies and sprinkles the blood upon the mercy seat to make atonement for the nation of Israel.

Midrash Tehillim 15, Part 6, opens with (דיבור המתחיל) “*Another comment, He that walks upright (Tehillim / Pslams 15:2).*” The rabbis continue to discuss those who walks upright before the Lord and the ones who walk upright are the righteous Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (פתיחתא). Of Isaac, the rabbis say “*He that works righteousness (Tehillim / Psalms 15:2) is Isaac, whose work was in righteousness, for he surrendered himself as an offering.*” (ופועל צדק. זה יצחק, שהיתה פעולתו בצדק, שמסר עצמו לעקדה.) Isaac as a young boy worked righteousness by surrendering himself as an offering when Abraham bound him and placed him upon the altar. *Midrash Tehillim 15, Part 6* goes on to compare those who walk upright in the following ways.

Summary of those who walk upright from the midrash

1. Isaac surrendering himself is a work of righteousness.
2. He that speaks the truth is Jacob because the truth was given to Jacob (*Micah 7:20*).
3. The person that does not backbite with his tongue is Benjamin.
4. He that does not evil to his brother is Joseph.
5. Phinehas of the tribe of Levi when he slew the Israelite who sinned with the woman of Baal-Peor.
6. Moshe because he did not desire the plunder of Egypt because it is written he took Joseph’s bones (*Shemot / Exodus 13:19*).

It is interesting that reading the biblical narrative on Jacob’s life, he certainly did not speak the truth very often to Laban, and so the statement that Jacob speaks the truth is interesting, the reference to *Micah 7:20* appears to be a reference to national Israel rather than to the individual where both Abraham and Jacob are mentioned.

Micah 7:15-20

7:15 'As in the days when you came out from the land of Egypt, I will show you miracles.'
7:16 Nations will see and be ashamed Of all their might. They will put their hand on their mouth, Their ears will be deaf. 7:17 They will lick the dust like a serpent, Like reptiles of the earth. They will come trembling out of their fortresses; To the Lord our God they will come in dread And they will be afraid before You. 7:18 Who is a God like You, who pardons iniquity And passes over the rebellious act of the remnant of His possession? He does not retain His anger forever, Because He delights in unchanging love. 7:19 He will again have compassion on us; He will tread our iniquities under foot. Yes, You will cast all their sins Into the depths of the sea. 7:20 You will give truth to Jacob And unchanging love to Abraham, Which You swore to our forefathers From the days of old. (NASB)

טו פִּימִי צִאתְךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם אֲרָאנוּ נִפְלְאוֹת: טז יִרְאוּ גוֹיִם וַיִּבְלְשׁוּ מִפֶּלַל גְּבוּרָתְךָ יִשְׁמְרוּ יָד עַל־
פֶּה אֲזִינֵיהֶם תִּחְרָשְׁנָה: יז יִלְחֲכוּ עֶפֶר כַּנְּחָשׁ כְּזֹחֲלֵי אֶרֶץ יִרְגְּזוּ מִמִּסְגֵּרֵתֵיהֶם אֶל־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ
יִפְחָדוּ וַיִּרְאוּ מִמֶּךָ: יח מִי־אֵל כְּמוֹךָ נִשְׂא עֹון וְעֵבֶר עַל־פֶּשַׁע לְשֹׂאֲרֵית נִחַלְתּוּ לֹא־הִחְזִיק לְעַד אִפּוֹ
כִּי־חָפֵץ חֶסֶד הוּא: יט יָשׁוּב יִרְחַמְנוּ יִכְבֹּשׁ עֲוֹנֵתֵינוּ וְתִשְׁלִיךְ בְּמַצְלוֹת יָם כָּל־חַטָּאוֹתֶם: כ תִּתֵּן
אֲמַת לִיעֶקֶב חֶסֶד לְאַבְרָהָם אֲשֶׁר־נִשְׁבַּעְתָּ לְאַבְתֵּינוּ מִימֵי קָדָם:

The end of the book of Micah speaks of the lovingkindness and mercy of God, that He is not angry forever and that He delights in unchanging love. He is full of compassion and forgiving and pardons iniquity and He treads our iniquities under His feet. Truly the one who is upright is the Lord God Almighty, He gave of Himself, His Word, His Son, to make atonement for our sins. The Midrash concludes stating “Another comment, He that does not put out his money on usury is such as were Shammai and Hillel, who did not teach Torah for money. Nor takes a reward against the innocent (Tehillim / Psalms 15:5) is a man such as Samuel, who said, Here I am, witness against me before the Lord, and before His anointed whose ox have I taken? Or whose ass have I taken? Or whom have I defrauded? Or whom have I oppressed? Or of whose hand have I taken a ransom to bind mine eyes therewith? (1 Samuel 12:3). He that does these things will never be moved (Tehillim / Psalms 15:5). Rabbi Samuel said, I knew not the import of the word moved in this context, until King Solomon threw light on it for me in the verse Those that are removed You will not forbear to rescue (Mishley / Proverbs 24:11). I concluded therefore that the words He will never be moved mean that he who des these things will be rescued from death to live in the world to come.” (כספו) לא נתן בנשך.] זה שמאי והלל, שלא למדו תורה בדמים. ושוחד על נקי לא לקח. זה שמואל, שנאמר הנני ענו בי [את שור מי לקחתי וגוי, ומיד מי לקחתי כופר] (ש״א שמואל א' יב ג). עושה אלה לא ימוט לעולם, אמר ר' שמואל המוט הזה איני יודע מה הוא, עד שבא שלמה ופירש, הצל לקוחים למות ומטים להרג (משלי כד יא), הוי אומר לא According to Midrash Tehillim Part 6, rabbis Hillel and Shammai did not teach Torah for money. Does the conclusion to the midrash parallel teaching the Torah for money as being similar to taking a reward against the innocent? The example of the prophet Samuel is given and his words from 1 Samuel 12:3 that he has not taken anything from anyone so as to “bind his eyes.” The person who takes money for teaching the word of God might be blinded to teach only certain portions of the Scriptures, being paid for teaching the Scriptures brings with it the danger of teaching only what is approved by those who are giving money. The person who does not take a bribe, who does not take a reward against he innocent, who does not oppress another human being, such a person will never be moved (Tehillim / Psalms 15:5). Rabbi Samuel said, I knew not the import of the word “moved” in this context, until King Solomon threw light on it for me in the verse Those that are removed You will not forbear to rescue (Mishley / Proverbs 24:11). I concluded therefore that the words He will never be moved mean that he who does these things will be rescued from

death to live in the world to come.” Obeying God is drawn in parallel to the reason why God does not hold sin against Israel, their obedience is said what causes God to rescue Israel from death and cause them to live in the world to come. How do you think this applies to us today? (*Note, this is why traditional Christian teaching on the Torah is for works to earn salvation ‘i.e. Obedience in the OT is how one was saved and that has changed in Jesus Christ.’*)

Having faith in the Lord and His Messiah Yeshua, is this obedience to God? Does believing and then persevering in the faith go hand in hand? Yeshua said: *Matthew 24:12 “But the one who endures to the end, he will be saved. (NASB)* and the Apostle Paul said *1 Corinthians 9:24 Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win. 9:25 Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. 9:26 Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; 9:27 but I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified. (NASB)* Paul also said in *Romans 3:23 that “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”* These Scriptures suggest that faith and persevering in faith do in fact go hand in hand. All have sinned in the past, and in the present all fall short in reflecting God’s love, which is a major part of His mercy. We live in a world that prides itself in all its accomplishments and therefore the danger that one may fall into is that through our perseverance we are justified. The fact is the Scriptures teach from the beginning that the Lord is the one who keeps us and sustains us. We live in a world that prides itself in the philosophy of having the freedom of being able to do anything one wants, a world without rules. But in such a philosophy, where is their strength? It in the things of the world? The message that we take away this week from the midrash and from Scripture is that those who look to the Lord will have their strength renewed. He is the One we are to turn to. The wicked say “*My way is hid from the Lord*” (*Isaiah 40:27*) the wicked make ready their bow (*Tehillim / Psalms 11:2*) and shoot at the upright, they boast of their heart’s desire, in their pride they do not seek Him, they say in themselves “I will not be moved” (*Tehillim / Psalms 10*) and do not believe that the Lord knows their ways. David writes in *Tehillim / Psalms 14, ה כִּסְפוֹ | 15:5 He does not put out his money at interest, Nor does he take a bribe against the innocent. He who does these things will never be shaken. (NASB)* The Aramaic Targum says *ה סמיה לא יהב בחבוליא ושוחדא על זכאה לא קביל דעבד אילין לא יזנח יזוע לעלמא: 15:5 He has not given his money at interest; he has not accepted a bribe against the innocent; one who does these things will never be moved. (EMC)* Those who seek the Lord and walk in His ways will not be moved. Those who are righteous in Yeshua the Messiah has been placed upon a solid foundation. Let’s pray!

Heavenly Father,

Thank you for helping us to understand what it means to be acceptable in your sight. It is only by Your great salvation, Your Mercy, and Your Grace that we are able to stand before you! David concludes saying that those who are righteous will not be moved. Make us unmovable Lord. We thank you Lord for sending us Your Son Yeshua who paid the covenant price for the forgiveness of our sins. We believe that in Your Son Yeshua, we have a firm foundation, we are unmovable, and have the hope of eternal life. Help us to trust in You Lord as we wait patiently for You and Your presence each day. We believe in the Righteous work Yeshua did in His life and upon the cross to make atonement for our sins. Help us 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!

* * * * *

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