

ספר תהילים כו | Tehillim / Psalms 26

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Walking in Integrity

This week's study is from *Tehillim / Psalms 26:1-12*, David opens saying א לְדוֹד | שְׁפִטְנֵי יְהוָה כִּי-אֲנִי *Of David 26:1 Vindicate me, O Lord, for I have walked in my integrity, And I have trusted in the Lord without wavering. (NASB)* What is interesting is that the Hebrew Word שִׁפְטָה has the meaning "to judge" and here David is asking the Lord "to acquit" him of the charges that have been brought against him. He continues saying ב בְּחַנְנֵי יְהוָה וְנִסְנִי צְרוּפָה [צָרְפָה] כְּלִיּוֹתַי וְלִבִּי: *26:2 Examine me, O Lord, and try me; Test my mind and my heart. (NASB)* Most people would not want someone to know their thoughts, the reason being is the wickedness that is contained within the heart; however, David asked the Lord to test both his mind and heart. David knows that God is characterized by His lovingkindness and mercy (ג כִּי-חֶסֶדְךָ לִנְגִד עֵינַי וְהִתְהַלַּכְתִּי בְּאֱמֶתְךָ:) and He has walked in God's truth. What does it mean to walk in God's truth? David says it means that ד לֹא-יִשְׁבְּתִי עִם-מְתֵי-שָׁוְא וְעַם-נִעְלָמִים לֹא אָבוֹא: ה שְׁנֵאתִי קֹהֵל *26:4 I do not sit with deceitful men, Nor will I go with pretenders. 26:5 I hate the assembly of evildoers, And I will not sit with the wicked. (NASB)* Because he has not kept the counsel of the wicked and has not sat in the assembly of evildoers, he is innocent before God. What does it mean to "sit with the wicked?" David says ו אֲרַחֵץ בְּנִקְיוֹן כַּפֵּי וְאֶסְבְּכָה אֶת-מִזְבִּיחְךָ יְהוָה: ז לְשִׁמְעַת בְּקוֹל תוֹדָה וְלִסְפֹּר כָּל- *26:6 I shall wash my hands in innocence, And I will go about Your altar, O Lord, 26:7 That I may proclaim with the voice of thanksgiving And declare all Your wonders. 26:8 O Lord, I love the habitation of Your house And the place where Your glory dwells. (NASB)* David concludes saying ט אֶל-תִּאָסֵף עִם-חַטָּאִים נַפְשִׁי וְעַם-אֲנָשֵׁי דָמִים חַיִּי: י אֲשֶׁר-בְּיַדֵּיהֶם זִמָּה וַיִּמְיָנֻם מְלֶאכֶה *26:9 Do not take my soul away along with sinners, Nor my life with men of bloodshed, 26:10 In whose hands is a wicked scheme, And whose right hand is full of bribes. 26:11 But as for me, I shall walk in my integrity; Redeem me, and be gracious to me. 26:12 My foot stands on a level place; In the congregations I shall bless the Lord. (NASB)* David is afraid the Lord will take his soul along with sinners and with the men of bloodshed. Why do you think he is worried that the Lord would remove his life and number him with the transgressors? Ultimately he says that "I will walk in integrity," thus, standing and walking in integrity is what the Lord is looking for.

עברית Hebrew	ארמי Aramaic	ελληνικός Greek
ספר תהלים פרק כו	ספר טוביה פרק כו	ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 26
א לְדוֹד שְׁפִטְנֵי יְהוָה כִּי-אֲנִי בְתַמִּי הִלַּכְתִּי וּבִיהוָה בְּטַחְתִּי לֹא אֶמְעָד: ב בְּחַנְנֵי יְהוָה וְנִסְנִי צְרוּפָה [צָרְפָה] כְּלִיּוֹתַי וְלִבִּי: ג כִּי-חֶסֶדְךָ לִנְגִד עֵינַי וְהִתְהַלַּכְתִּי בְּאֱמֶתְךָ: ד לֹא-יִשְׁבְּתִי עִם-מְתֵי-שָׁוְא וְעַם-נִעְלָמִים לֹא אָבוֹא: ה שְׁנֵאתִי קֹהֵל מְרַעִים וְעַם- רְשָׁעִים לֹא אֲשִׁיב:	א לְדוֹד דוֹן יְתִי יְהוּה אַרוֹם אַנְא בְּשַׁלְמוֹתִי אַנְא הַלִּיכִית וּבִיהוּה סְבְרִית כְּלִיתִי וּבְמִימְרָא דִיִּי הַתְּרַחֲצִית לֹא אִזְדַּעַע: ב בַּחוֹן יְתִי יְהוּה וְנִסִּי יְתִי סִנִּין כְּלִיּוֹתִי וְרַעִיוֹנִי וּלְבִי: ג מְטוֹל אַרוֹם דְּטוֹבַךְ קְבִיל עֵינַי וְהַלִּיכִית בְּקוֹשְׁטְךָ: ד לֹא אִסְתַּחֲרִית עִם גְּבְרִי שְׁקֵרָא וְעַם מִיטְמְרִין לֹאבֵאֵשָׁא לֹא אַעוֹל: ה סִנִּיתִי שְׁנֵאתִי כְּנִישַׁת מְבֵאֵשִׁין וְעַם רְשִׁיעִיא לֹא אִסְתַּחֲר:	26:1 τοῦ δαυιδ κρινόν με κύριε ὅτι ἐγὼ ἐν ἀκακίᾳ μου ἐπορεύθην καὶ ἐπὶ τῷ κυρίῳ ἐλπίζων οὐ μὴ ἀσθενήσω 16:2 δοκίμασόν με κύριε καὶ πείρασόν με πύρωσον τοὺς νεφρούς μου καὶ τὴν καρδίαν μου 26:3 ὅτι τὸ ἔλεός σου κατέναντι τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν μου ἔστιν καὶ εὐηρέστησα ἐν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ σου 26:4 οὐκ ἐκάθισα μετὰ συνεδρίου ματαιότητος καὶ μετὰ παρανομούντων οὐ μὴ εἰσέλθω

ו אַרְחֵץ בְּנִקְיוֹן כַּפַּי וְאֶסְבְּבָה אֶת-
מְזַבְחֵךְ יְהוָה: ז לְשִׁמְעַע בְּקוֹל תּוֹדָה
וּלְסַפֵּר כָּל-נִפְלְאוֹתֶיךָ: ח הַיְהוָה
אֶהְבֵּתִי מְעוֹן בְּיַתְדֶךָ וּמְקוֹם מְשָׁפֵן
כְּבוֹדֶךָ: ט אֶל-תִּאֶסְפֶּה עִם-תַּטְּאִים
נַפְשֵׁי וְעִם-אֲנָשֵׁי דָמִים חַיִּי: י אֲשַׁר-
בִּידֵיָהֶם זִמָּה וּמִיָּנָם מְלֹאָה שְׂחָד:
יא וְאֲנִי בְּתַמִּי אֶלֶף פְּדַנִּי וְחַנּוּנִי:
יב רַגְלֵי עֲמֹדָה כְּמִישׁוֹר בְּמִקְהֵלִים
אַבְרֵךְ יְהוָה:

ו אקדיש בזכותי אידי ואחזרית ואחזור
ית מדבחק יהוה: ז לאשמיעא למשמעא
בקל שבחא תושבחתא ולאישתעא כל
פרישותך: ח יהוה רחמית מדור בית
מקדשך ואתר משכן מזומן למשכן
יקרך: ט לא תכנוש עם חייביא נפשי
ועם אינשי שדיין דמא אדם חיי: י די
בידיהון עצת חטאין וימיניהון מלין
שוחדא: יא ואנא בשלימותי איזיל
פרוק יתי וחוס עלי: יב ריגלי קם קמת
בתריצא בתריצותא בכינשת צדיקין
אבריך יהוה:

26:5 ἐμίσησα ἐκκλησίαν πονηρευομένων
καὶ μετὰ ἀσεβῶν οὐ μὴ καθίσω 26:6
νίψομαι ἐν ἄθροις τὰς χεῖράς μου καὶ
κυκλώσω τὸ θυσιαστήριόν σου κύριε
26:7 τοῦ ἀκοῦσαι φωνὴν αἰνέσεως καὶ
διηγῆσασθαι πάντα τὰ θαυμάσιά σου
26:8 κύριε ἡγάπησα εὐπρέπειαν οἴκου
σου καὶ τόπον σκηνώματος δόξης σου
26:9 μὴ συναπολέσης μετὰ ἀσεβῶν τὴν
ψυχὴν μου καὶ μετὰ ἀνδρῶν αἱμάτων τὴν
ζωὴν μου 26:10 ὧν ἐν χερσίν ἀνομίαί ἢ
δεξιὰ αὐτῶν ἐπλήσθη δόρων 26:11 ἐγὼ
δὲ ἐν ἀκακίᾳ μου ἐπορεύθην λύτρωσαί
με καὶ ἐλέησόν με 26:12 ὁ γὰρ πούς
μου ἔστη ἐν εὐθύτητι ἐν ἐκκλησίαις
εὐλόγησώ σε κύριε

Tehillim / Psalms 26

Of David 26:1 Vindicate me, O Lord, for I have walked in my integrity, And I have trusted in the Lord without wavering. 26:2 Examine me, O Lord, and try me; Test my mind and my heart. 26:3 For Your lovin-kindness is before my eyes, And I have walked in Your truth. 26:4 I do not sit with deceitful men, Nor will I go with pretenders. 26:5 I hate the assembly of evildoers, And I will not sit with the wicked. 26:6 I shall wash my hands in innocence, And I will go about Your altar, O Lord, 26:7 That I may proclaim with the voice of thanksgiving And declare all Your wonders. 26:8 O Lord, I love the habitation of Your house And the place where Your glory dwells. 26:9 Do not take my soul away along with sinners, Nor my life with men of bloodshed, 26:10 In whose hands is a wicked scheme, And whose right hand is full of bribes. 26:11 But as for me, I shall walk in my integrity; Redeem me, and be gracious to me. 26:12 My foot stands on a level place; In the congregations I shall bless the Lord. (NASB)

Toviyah / Psalms Chapter 26

26:1 Of David. Judge me, O Lord, for I have walked in my innocence; and in the Lord I have hoped [and] trusted; I shall not be shaken. 26:2 Try me, O Lord, and prove me; purify my inmost thoughts. 26:3 Because your goodness is before my eyes, and I have walked in your truth. 26:4 I have not reclined [to dine] with lying men; and I will not enter with those who hide themselves to do evil. 26:5 I hate the gathering of evildoers, and with the wicked I will not recline [to dine]. 26:6 I will sanctify my hands by my merit, and I have gone around your altar, O Lord. 26:7 To make heard the sound of praise, and to tell of all your wonders. 26:8 O Lord, I love the dwelling of your sanctuary, and the place of your glorious tabernacle. 26:9 My soul will not gather with the sinners, nor my life with the men who shed blood. 26:10 In whose hands is the purpose of sinning; their right hands are full of bribes. 26:11 But I will go about in my innocence; redeem me and have mercy on me. 26:12 My foot stands upright; in the gathering of the righteous I will bless the Lord. (EMC)

Psalmoi / Psalms 26

Of David 26:1 Judge me, O Lord; for I have walked in my innocence: and hoping in the Lord I shall not be moved. 26:2 Prove me, O Lord, and try me; purify as with fire my reins and my heart. 26:3 For thy mercy is before mine eyes: and I am well pleased with thy truth. 26:4 I have not sat with the council of vanity, and will in nowise enter in with transgressors. 26:5 I have hated the assembly of wicked doers; and will not sit with ungodly men. 26:6 I will wash my hands in innocency, and compass thine altar, O Lord: 26:7 to hear the voice of praise, and to declare all thy wonderful works. 26:8 O Lord, I have loved the beauty of thy house, and the place of the tabernacle of thy glory. 26:9 Destroy not my soul together with the ungodly, nor my life with bloody men: 26:10 in whose hands are iniquities, and their right hand is filled with bribes. 26:11 But I have walked in my innocence: redeem me, and have mercy upon me. 26:12 My foot stands in an even place: in the congregations will I bless thee, O Lord. (LXX)

א לְדוֹד | שְׁפֹטֵנִי יְהוָה כִּי-אֲנִי בְּתַמִּי הִלַּכְתִּי וּבִיהוָה אֶתְּחַדָּה: א אֶמְעַד: א לְדוֹד דוֹן יְתִי יְהוָה אַרוֹם אֲנָא בְּשִׁלְמוֹתֵי Of David 26:1 Vindicate me, O Lord, for I have walked in my integrity, And I have trusted in the Lord without wavering. (NASB) The Aramaic Targum states אֲנָא הִלִּיכִית וּבִיהוּה סְבֵרִית כְּלִיתִי וּבְמִימְרָא דִּיִּי הִתְרַחֲצִית לֹא אֲזַדְעִזְע: א 26:1 Of David. Judge me, O Lord, for I have walked in my innocence; and in the Lord I have hoped [and] trusted; I shall not be shaken. (EMC) and the Septuagint states τοῦ δαυιδ κρῖνόν με κύριε ὅτι ἐγὼ ἐν ἀκακίᾳ μου ἐπορεύθην καὶ ἐπὶ τῷ κυρίῳ ἐλπίζων οὐ μὴ ἀσθενήσω 26:1 Judge me, O Lord; for I have walked in my innocence: and hoping in the Lord I shall not be moved. (LXX) How many people in the bible walked with integrity during their lives? The rabbis translate the Hebrew text as אֲנָא הִלִּיכִית meaning “in perfection I walked” using the word בשלמותי to describe the “one who walked in perfection.” Is there anyone who has walked in perfection in this world like the rabbis are saying David did? Can we honestly say that David walked in perfection? Here David

uses the word בְּתוּמֵי which is derived from the word תָּם meaning “naive, gullible, babe, ingenuous, simple, simpleminded, innocent.” The first occurrence of this word is found in the Torah in *Bereshit / Genesis 20:5-6*. In this section of Scripture we find that Abraham lied about his wife Sarah and told Abimelech that Sarah was his sister. In fact, Sarah also told Abimelech that Abraham was her brother. As a result of this Abimelech took Sarah to his palace and he had plans to make her his wife. The Lord came to Abimelech and spoke to him telling him that he is not to touch Sarah because she is Abraham’s wife.

Bereshit / Genesis 20:5

ה הֲלֵא הוּא אָמַר-לִי אַחֲתִי הוּא וְהִיא-גַם-הוּא אָמְרָה אָחִי הוּא בְּתָם-לְבָבִי וּבְנִקְיִן כְּפִי עָשִׂיתִי זֹאת:
20:5 ‘Did he not himself say to me, ‘She is my sister’? And she herself said, ‘He is my brother.’ In the integrity of my heart and the innocence of my hands I have done this.’ (NASB)

Bereshit / Genesis 20:6

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהֵי הָאֱלֹהִים בְּחֶלֶם גַּם אֲנֹכִי יָדַעְתִּי כִּי בְּתָם-לְבָבְךָ עָשִׂיתָ זֹאת וְאַחֲשֶׁה גַם-אֲנֹכִי אוֹתְךָ:
20:6 Then God said to him in the dream, ‘Yes, I know that in the integrity of your heart you have done this, and I also kept you from sinning against Me; therefore I did not let you touch her.’ (NASB)

Reading through this section of Scripture from the Torah in *Bereshit / Genesis 20* is interesting, Abimelech is being warned by the Lord God about Abraham’s wife. The Hebrew text says “And God came to Abimelech” (וַיָּבֹא אֱלֹהִים אֶל-אַבְיִמֶלֶךְ בְּחֶלֶם הַלַּיְלָה) whereas the Aramaic Targum says that “the Word” from before the Lord God came to Abimelech...” (ג וְאַתָּא מִימַר מִן קֳדָם יְיָ לִוְת אַבְיִמֶלֶךְ בְּחֶלְמָא דְלַיְלָא וְאַמַּר לִיהּ הָא אַתָּא). Abimelech here states that in the innocence of his heart he did not know (20:5) and the Lord agrees with his claim saying that He knew the integrity of his heart and that He had kept Abimelech from sinning and did not let him touch Abraham’s wife. What is interesting is we see here in the Scriptures the Lord was working in Abimelech’s life and he did not even know it. Do you think this happens today in our lives?

In addition to this, when thinking on the innocent and the guilty, we are reminded of the “making of atonement” by the blood of the sacrificial animal that is required, according to the Torah, to be given in exchange for the life or blood of the guilty. The symbolic expression of an innocent life given for the guilty is indicated in the action of the guilty placing his hands upon the head of the animal and confessing his sins (see *Vayikra / Leviticus 1:4, 4:4, 16:21*, etc.). According to the Torah, the worshiper’s sins are transferred to the animal by faith and the animal was slaughtered and parts of the animal was burned along with the blood upon the altar. The Hebraic understanding of the blood atonement found in *Vayikra / Leviticus 17:11* כִּפֹּר בְּיִגְפָשׁ הַבָּשָׂר בַּדָּם הוּא וְאֲנִי נִתְתִּיו לָכֶם עַל-הַמִּזְבֵּחַ לְכַפֵּר עַל-נַפְשֹׁתֵיכֶם כִּי-הַדָּם הוּא בְּנַפְשׁ כִּפֹּר says that the blood “from within” is what cleanses a man and makes atonement for his life. Here in *Tehillim 26:1*, David was not asking God for atonement, he was in fact declaring his innocence and that he had trusted in the Lord without wavering. In addition to that, David used the Hebrew Word שָׁפַט meaning “to judge” asking the Lord “to acquit” him of the charges that have been brought against him because he is innocent.

David is so confident that he says: 26:2 *Examine me, O Lord, and try me; Test my mind and my heart.* (NASB) Most people would not want someone to know their thoughts, the reason being is the wickedness that is contained within the heart; however, David asked the Lord to test both his mind and heart. The rabbis translate *Tehillim / Psalms 26:1* using the word בשלמותי to describe the “one who walked in perfection” and this word literally means “wholeness” or “completeness.” Do you think the rabbis thought David had literally lived his life perfectly? A person who is complete or whole is not divided with regard to his faith and trust in the Lord. Is that how the rabbis understood David to have walked in perfection? Take for example, one is not to live a divided life where one is a different person depending upon different circumstances. The person of integrity is the same in his private life as he

is in his public life. Yeshua the Messiah spoke of the “*pure in heart*” (*Matthew 5:8*), pointing out that we are to be undivided in following God’s commands. This is also consistent with moral purity, the Scriptures are full of references to integrity, character, and moral purity. For example, in *1 Kings 9:4*, the Lord instructs Solomon to walk with “*integrity of heart and uprightness*” as his father David did. In *1 Chronicles 29:17* we read David saying “*I know, my God, that you test the heart and are pleased with integrity.*” We also read in *Tehillim / Psalm 78:70-72* that “*David shepherded them with integrity of heart, with skillful hands.*” Proverbs also contains many verses on integrity. *Mishley / Proverbs 10:9* says that, “*He who walks in integrity walks securely, But he who perverts his ways will be found out.*” The man who walks in integrity will have a good reputation and will have no fear of “*being exposed*” or “*found out*” due to corruption in his life. On the other hand, corruption is the opposite of integrity. Note that in the news on the war with Syria, it is said that this nation demands integrity. Is this really the case when the citizens of the USA have no integrity themselves? Look at the institution of marriage and the family, the proliferation of homosexuality today, how quickly people lie versus telling the truth, etc here in the USA. The Apostle Peter spoke a little on this and the corruption of mankind because of sin in *2 Peter 2:12-22*.

2 Peter 2:12-22

2:12 But these, like unreasoning animals, born as creatures of instinct to be captured and killed, reviling where they have no knowledge, will in the destruction of those creatures also be destroyed, 2:13 suffering wrong as the wages of doing wrong. They count it a pleasure to revel in the daytime. They are stains and blemishes, reveling in their deceptions, as they carouse with you, 2:14 having eyes full of adultery that never cease from sin, enticing unstable souls, having a heart trained in greed, accursed children; 2:15 forsaking the right way, they have gone astray, having followed the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; 2:16 but he received a rebuke for his own transgression, for a mute donkey, speaking with a voice of a man, restrained the madness of the prophet. 2:17 These are springs without water and mists driven by a storm, for whom the black darkness has been reserved. 2:18 For speaking out arrogant words of vanity they entice by fleshly desires, by sensuality, those who barely escape from the ones who live in error, 2:19 promising them freedom while they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by what a man is overcome, by this he is enslaved. 2:20 For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and are overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. 2:21 For it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment handed on to them. 2:22 It has happened to them according to the true proverb, ‘A dog returns to its own vomit,’ and, ‘A sow, after washing, returns to wallowing in the mire.’ (NASB)

¹²οὔτοι δέ, ὡς ἄλογα ζῶα γεγεννημένα φυσικὰ εἰς ἄλωσιν καὶ φθοράν, ἐν οἷς ἀγνοοῦσιν βλασφημοῦντες, ἐν τῇ φθορᾷ αὐτῶν καὶ φθαρῆσονται, ¹³ἀδικούμενοι μισθὸν ἀδικίας: ἡδονὴν ἠγούμενοι τὴν ἐν ἡμέρᾳ τρυφὴν, σπίλοι καὶ μῶμοι ἐντρυφῶντες ἐν ταῖς ἀπάταις αὐτῶν συνευωχούμενοι ὑμῖν, ¹⁴ὄφθαλμοὺς ἔχοντες μεστοὺς μοιχαλίδος καὶ ἀκαταπαύστους ἀμαρτίας, δελεάζοντες ψυχὰς ἀστηρίκτους, καρδίαν γεγυμνασμένην πλεονεξίας ἔχοντες, κατάρως τέκνα, ¹⁵καταλείποντες εὐθεῖαν ὁδὸν ἐπλανήθησαν, ἐξακολουθήσαντες τῇ ὁδῷ τοῦ Βαλαὰμ τοῦ Βοσόρ, ὃς μισθὸν ἀδικίας ἠγάπησεν ¹⁶ἔλεγε δὲ ἔσχεν ἰδίας παρανομίας: ὑποζύγιον ἄφωνον ἐν ἀνθρώπου φωνῇ φθεγγόμενον ἐκώλυσε τὴν τοῦ προφήτου παραφροσίαν. ¹⁷Οὔτοι εἰσιν πηγαὶ ἄνυδροι καὶ ὁμίχλαι ὑπὸ λαίλαπος ἐλαυνόμεναι, οἷς ὁ ζόφος τοῦ σκότους τετήρηται. ¹⁸ὑπέρογκα γὰρ ματαιότητος φθεγγόμενοι δελεάζουσιν ἐν ἐπιθυμίαις σαρκὸς ἀσελγείαις τοὺς ὀλίγως ἀποφεύγοντας τοὺς ἐν πλάνῃ ἀναστρεφόμενους, ¹⁹ἐλευθερίαν αὐτοῖς ἐπαγγελόμενοι, αὐτοὶ δοῦλοι ὑπάρχοντες τῆς φθορᾶς: ᾧ γὰρ τις ἦτηται, τούτῳ δεδούλωται. ²⁰εἰ γὰρ ἀποφυγόντες τὰ μιάσματα τοῦ κόσμου ἐν ἐπιγνώσει

τοῦ κυρίου [ἡμῶν] καὶ σωτῆρος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τούτοις δὲ πάλιν ἐμπλακέντες ἠτῶνται, γέγονεν αὐτοῖς τὰ ἔσχατα χεیرهνα τῶν πρώτων. ²¹κρεῖττον γὰρ ἦν αὐτοῖς μὴ ἐπεγνωκέναι τὴν ὁδὸν τῆς δικαιοσύνης ἢ ἐπιγνοῦσιν ὑποστρέψαι ἐκ τῆς παραδοθείσης αὐτοῖς ἀγίας ἐντολῆς. ²²συμβέβηκεν αὐτοῖς τὸ τῆς ἀληθοῦς παροιμίας, Κύων ἐπιστρέψας ἐπὶ τὸ ἴδιον ἐξέραμα, καί, υς λουσαμένη εἰς κυλισμὸν βορβόρου.

The Apostle Peter speaks of the wicked in this way “2:19 promising them freedom while they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by what a man is overcome, by this he is enslaved. 2:20 For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and are overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first.” These men that Peter is speaking of are enslaved to corruption. The Apostle Paul said in Galatians 6:8 For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. There are plenty of Scriptures regarding the desires of the flesh, the point that is being made here from Peter and Paul is that we are not of this world. We now belong to the Lord God Almighty and therefore we are to live for the Lord and not as the children of this world. According to Paul if we sow to the flesh we will reap corruption; similarly, if we sow to the Spirit, we will reap from the Spirit eternal life. If we work and walk according to the word of God and apply it to our lives (walk in His ways) we will reap eternal life. Peter said in 1 Peter chapter 1 saying 1:4 For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust. (NASB) According to Peter, in the act of studying God’s word and applying it to our lives, we learn the ways of the divine nature. What does it mean to be set free from the corruption of this world? In the Messiah we are set free, the victory has been given to us, but we also must practice this by living the way God desires for us to live, in this we are set free from the corruption of this world. In learning to walk in God’s ways, the Lord sets us free from the desires of the flesh. The corrupt and wicked man year after year chases the desire of his flesh and it truly is slavery. Being enslaved to sin and corruption, the human heart is at the center of it all. In Tehillim / Psalms 26:1-2, David was confident that this was not the case for him and he asked the Lord saying בְּהַגִּנִּי יְהוָה וְנִסְנִי צָרוּפָה [צָרָפָה] כְּלִי־תִי 26:2 Examine me, O Lord, and try me; Test my mind and my heart. (NASB) His confidence is rooted in his knowledge of the Torah and that God is characterized by His lovingkindness and mercy (גַּם-פִּי־חַסְדֶּךָ וְלִבִּי־אֱמֶתֶךָ) and that he (David) has walked in God’s truth. What does it mean to walk in God’s truth? The Apostle John had the following thoughts regarding walking in truth.

2 John 1:4-11

1:4 I was very glad to find some of your children walking in truth, just as we have received commandment to do from the Father. 1:5 Now I ask you, lady, not as though I were writing to you a new commandment, but the one which we have had from the beginning, that we love one another. 1:6 And this is love, that we walk according to His commandments. This is the commandment, just as you have heard from the beginning, that you should walk in it. 1:7 For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist. 1:8 Watch yourselves, that you do not lose what we have accomplished, but that you may receive a full reward. 1:9 Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son. 1:10 If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house, and do not give him a greeting; 1:11 for the one who gives him a greeting participates in his evil deeds. (NASB)

⁴Ἐχάρην λίαν ὅτι εὔρηκα ἐκ τῶν τέκνων σου περιπατοῦντας ἐν ἀληθείᾳ, καθὼς ἐντολήν ἐλάβομεν παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς. ⁵καὶ νῦν ἐρωτῶ σε, κυρία, οὐχ ὡς ἐντολήν καινὴν γράφων σοι ἀλλὰ ἦν εἶχομεν ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς, ἵνα ἀγαπῶμεν ἀλλήλους. ⁶καὶ αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ ἀγάπη, ἵνα

περιπατῶμεν κατὰ τὰς ἐντολάς αὐτοῦ: αὕτη ἡ ἐντολή ἐστίν, καθὼς ἠκούσατε ἀπ' ἀρχῆς, ἵνα ἐν αὐτῇ περιπατῆτε. ⁷ὅτι πολλοὶ πλάνοι ἐξῆλθον εἰς τὸν κόσμον, οἳ μὴ ὁμολογοῦντες Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν ἐρχόμενον ἐν σαρκί: οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ πλάνος καὶ ὁ ἀντίχριστος. ⁸βλέπετε ἑαυτοὺς, ἵνα μὴ ἀπολέσητε ἃ ἐργασάμεθα ἀλλὰ μισθὸν πλήρη ἀπολάβητε. ⁹πᾶς ὁ προάγων καὶ μὴ μένων ἐν τῇ διδαχῇ τοῦ Χριστοῦ θεὸν οὐκ ἔχει: ὁ μένων ἐν τῇ διδαχῇ, οὗτος καὶ τὸν πατέρα καὶ τὸν υἱὸν ἔχει. ¹⁰εἴ τις ἔρχεται πρὸς ὑμᾶς καὶ ταύτην τὴν διδαχὴν οὐ φέρει, μὴ λαμβάνετε αὐτὸν εἰς οἰκίαν καὶ χαίρειν αὐτῷ μὴ λέγετε: ¹¹ὁ λέγων γὰρ αὐτῷ χαίρειν κοινωνεῖ τοῖς ἔργοις αὐτοῦ τοῖς πονηροῖς.

Reading through the second epistle of John, he makes a few interesting comments, (i) that John has found the children walking in truth, in the way that had been received by commandment from the Torah to do (1:4, i.e. they were walking according to God's word) and (ii) the specific commandment that John is referring to is the one regarding loving one another. He says that "this is love" that we walk according to His commandments and he qualifies his statement saying this is the commandment that you received from the beginning (1:6). This love was not simply loving "one another" but also that of loving God so much that we would obey Him according to His Word. In addition to this, John also says 1:9 *Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son. (NASB)* What does it mean to "go too far" and not abide in the teaching of Christ? The Greek text says "the one violating and not abiding in the teaching of Christ." (ἡ πᾶς ὁ προάγων καὶ μὴ μένων ἐν τῇ διδαχῇ τοῦ Χριστοῦ θεὸν οὐκ ἔχει: ὁ μένων ἐν τῇ διδαχῇ, οὗτος καὶ τὸν πατέρα καὶ τὸν υἱὸν ἔχει.) What exactly is the teaching of Christ? (Remember that John is talking in the context of the Torah.) John goes on to say that 1:10 *If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house, and do not give him a greeting; 1:11 for the one who gives him a greeting participates in his evil deeds. (NASB)* Is walking in God's truth walking in and according to His commandment? Is the teaching of Christ the teaching of the commandment in the Torah? To walk in the truth, simply means, "to order one's life according to the Word of God." Our lives are to be in tune with God's Word, that is, (i) to receive His Word, (ii) to do His Word, (iii) to continue in His Word, (iv) to take God's wisdom and knowledge about life and apply it to our lives, and (v) to walk in the ways that God has laid out in His Word. David says that "walking in God's truth" means that דִּלְאֵי שִׁבְתִּי עִם-מְתֵי-שָׁוְא וְעַם-נִעְלָמִים לֹא אֲבוֹא: הַ שִׁנְאֵתִי קָהַל מְרַעִים וְעַם-רְשָׁעִים לֹא אֲשַׁב: 26:4 *I do not sit with deceitful men, Nor will I go with pretenders. 26:5 I hate the assembly of evildoers, And I will not sit with the wicked. (NASB)* Because he has not kept the counsel of the wicked and has not sat in the assembly of evildoers, he is innocent before God. What does it mean to "sit with the wicked?" According to *Tehillim / Psalms 1*, (1) the blessed man does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, (2) does not stand in the path of sinners, (3) does not sit in the seat of the scoffers, (4) he delights in the law of the LORD, (5) he meditates on the law of the LORD day and night, (6) he will be like a tree planted by the streams of water that will yield fruit in his season like the tree, (7) not one fruit will wither like the tree's leaf, and (8) whatever he does, he prospers. *Tehillim / Psalms 1* suggests that we will prosper in the things we do if we don't follow the way of sinners (*the way of the wicked or corruption*). How does one walk according to God's way? The key to walking according to God's ways is to bind ourselves to Him and to know His Word. We are influenced by who we live with, for example, we are influenced by the unrighteousness of others, what we watch on television or what we listen to (music), the friends we associate with, etc. Studying God's word we are influenced to live in righteousness, this comes through meditating upon the word. How does one meditate on God's word? To meditate upon the Word means to ponder or contemplate the Written Word of God. This means we should be thinking about God's word regularly and consider the dwelling upon God's word as something very precious and valuable. This would require us to be exposed to God's word daily so that we can think upon (ponder) His word. Following the way of unrighteousness is the result of our not having set out minds to following the way of righteousness. This is not simply a mental exercise in and of ourselves, but is something the Holy Spirit leads us in the way that God's word directs us to go. In *Tehillim / Psalms 26:1-2*, David asked the Lord saying כִּי בָּהֲנִי יְהוָה וְנִסִּינִי כִּי בָּהֲנִי יְהוָה וְנִסִּינִי

26:2 *Examine me, O Lord, and try me; Test my mind and my heart. (NASB)* His confidence is rooted in the fact that he has lived his life according to the Torah of God. Walking in God's truth is achieved by living according to God's Word. This is what David meant when he said ו אֲרַחֵץ בְּנִקְיוֹן כְּלִי־יָדַי וְלִבִּי: כְּפִי וְאִסְבָּבָה אֶת-מִזְבְּחֶךָ יְהוָה: ז לִשְׁמַע בְּקוֹל תוֹדָה וּלְסַפֵּר כָּל-נִפְלְאוֹתֶיךָ: ח יְהוָה אֱהַבְתִּי מֵעוֹן בֵּיתְךָ וּמְקוֹם מִשְׁכַּן כְּבוֹדֶךָ: 26:6 *I shall wash my hands in innocence, And I will go about Your altar, O Lord, 26:7 That I may proclaim with the voice of thanksgiving And declare all Your wonders. 26:8 O Lord, I love the habitation of Your house And the place where Your glory dwells. (NASB)* David says that he will wash his hands in "innocence" and will go unto the altar of the Lord. In addition to this, he says that he will proclaim thanks giving by his voice and how he loves the place of God's habitation. This sounds very similar to the Thank Offering that is described in the Torah. Studying the Torah on the Thank Offering what is the spiritual significance or relevance for us today? Today we are not accustomed to using the word Korban "sacrifice" except metaphorically because of the destruction of the second temple. The author of the Torah (Moshe) spoke of the literal, physical thank offerings. The relevance of the Thank Offering today is threefold.

Firstly, giving thanks, like David is saying here in *Tehillim / Psalms 26*, is an expression of our relationship with the Lord God Almighty. In the Torah, the Thank Offering was simply called Todat (תּוֹדָת) in the Hebrew text for "thanks." If a person offers the peace offering along with his sacrifice of thanksgiving he shall offer the peace offering for thanksgiving as it is described in *Vayikra / Leviticus 7:11-15* which states 7:11 'Now this is the law of the sacrifice of peace offerings which shall be presented to the Lord. 7:12 'If he offers it by way of thanksgiving, then along with the sacrifice of thanksgiving he shall offer unleavened cakes mixed with oil, and unleavened wafers spread with oil, and cakes of well stirred fine flour mixed with oil. 7:13 'With the sacrifice of his peace offerings for thanksgiving, he shall present his offering with cakes of leavened bread. 7:14 'Of this he shall present one of every offering as a contribution to the Lord; it shall belong to the priest who sprinkles the blood of the peace offerings. 7:15 'Now as for the flesh of the sacrifice of his thanksgiving peace offerings, it shall be eaten on the day of his offering; he shall not leave any of it over until morning. (NASB) יא וְזֹאת תּוֹרַת זֶבַח הַשְּׁלָמִים אֲשֶׁר יִקְרִיב לַיהוָה: יב אִם עַל-תּוֹדָה יִקְרִיבֶנּוּ וְהִקְרִיב | עַל-זֶבַח הַתּוֹדָה חֲלוֹת מִצּוֹת בְּלוֹלֹת בַּשֶּׁמֶן וְרִקְיָקִי מִצּוֹת מִשְׁחִים בַּשֶּׁמֶן וְסֻלֹת מִרְבֶּכֶת חֲלוֹת בְּלוֹלֹת בַּשֶּׁמֶן: יג עַל-חֲלוֹת לֶחֶם חֲמִץ יִקְרִיב קֶרְבָּנוֹ עַל-זֶבַח תּוֹדַת שְׁלָמָיו: יד וְהִקְרִיב מִמֶּנּוּ אֶחָד מִכָּל-קֶרְבָּן תְּרוּמָה לַיהוָה לַכֹּהֵן (הַזֹּרֵק אֶת-דָּם הַשְּׁלָמִים לוֹ יְהוָה: טו וּבָשָׂר זֶבַח תּוֹדַת שְׁלָמָיו בְּיוֹם קֶרְבָּנוֹ יֹאכַל לֹא-יִנִּיחַ מִמֶּנּוּ עַד-בִּקְרָ: Interestingly, the Torah describes two types of offerings, the Peace Offering and the Thank Offering. Why do you think these two types of offerings are grouped together? The Apostolic Writings provides some insight into this question. There cannot be true thanksgiving to God without first having peace with God. The concept of true thanksgiving and having true peace with the Lord God is understood by the Apostles and is brought into perspective in relation to our Lord and Savior Yeshua by the Apostle Paul in *Romans 5:1-2*, ¹Δικαιωθέντες οὖν ἐκ πίστεως εἰρήνην ἔχομεν πρὸς τὸν θεὸν διὰ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ²δι' οὗ καὶ τὴν προσαγωγὴν ἐσχάκαμεν [τῇ πίστει] εἰς τὴν χάριν ταύτην ἐν ἣ ἐστῆκαμεν, καὶ καυχώμεθα ἐπ' ἐλπίδι τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ. 5:1 *Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 5:2 through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God. (NASB)* Having made peace with the Lord God in His Messiah Yeshua we have thankful hearts towards the Lord of the hope of His glory. Note that in *Tehillim / Psalms 24* the Lord God according to the Apostolic and Rabbinic commentary (Midrash), God will place His glory upon each of us in this world and in the Olam Habbah (world to come). Lacking a thankful heart before the Lord perhaps suggests a lack of genuine peace with God. Paul believed that Yeshua is our sin offering and that Yeshua has become the way or the path of peace with God our Father in Heaven.

Secondly, thanksgiving expresses our reliance upon the Lord as we express our thanks for His kindness, blessing, salvation, mercy, and restoration in our relationship with Him. According to *Vayikra / Leviticus 7:15* the offering of thanks before the Lord appears to have been done with expediency in consuming the sacred flesh: וּבָשָׂר זֶבַח תּוֹדַת שְׁלָמָיו בְּיוֹם קֶרְבָּנוֹ יֹאכַל לֹא-יִנִּיחַ מִמֶּנּוּ עַד-בִּקְרָ: 7:15 *'Now as for the flesh of the sacrifice of his thanksgiving peace offerings, it shall be eaten on the day of his offering; he shall*

not leave any of it over until morning. (NASB) According to *Vayikra / Leviticus 7:15*, there is urgency for thanksgiving that is connected to consuming (eating) the sacrifice expressed here in the verse. The meal could not be left over until morning; the giving of thanks cannot wait. The tendency on our behalf today is when we pray asking the Lord for help we wait to see what happens, to see how things turn out before we give thanks to God. Does waiting on God to answer our prayer before giving thanks pose a problem within the context of the Thank offering we are studying here? How do you think David understood this question with regard to *Tehillim / Psalms 26:6-8*? Once having prayed for the Lord's help we should not wait to give thanks for His hearing and helping us with regard to our prayer. We need to be in a continual state of thankfulness before the Lord for His mercy. Biblical faith trusts and testifies even in the midst of the problems of life, this is similar to what Paul wrote in *1 Thessalonians 5:18* saying ἐν παντί εὐχαριστεῖτε: τοῦτο γὰρ θέλημα θεοῦ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ εἰς ὑμᾶς. *5:18 in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.* (NASB) The essential meaning of the verse in *1 Thessalonians 5:18* might be understood in the context of eating the sacred flesh in the *Todat Korban* (Thank Offering), according to the Torah, don't wait to see how things turn out, give thanks to the Lord immediately and don't let anything remain until morning. Interestingly, those who left over the "Todat Korban" for a later time committed a great sin and were not accepted before Lord God וְאִם הָאָכַל יֵאָכַל מִבֶּשֶׂר-וַיַּבַּח שְׁלֹמֹי בַיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי לֹא יִרְצֶה הַמִּקְרִיב אֹתוֹ יח וְאִם הָאָכַל יֵאָכַל מִבֶּשֶׂר-וַיַּבַּח שְׁלֹמֹי בַיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי לֹא יִרְצֶה הַמִּקְרִיב אֹתוֹ יח :אֶתְשָׂא: *Vayikra / Leviticus 7:18* 'So if any of the flesh of the sacrifice of his peace offerings should ever be eaten on the third day, he who offers it will not be accepted, and it will not be reckoned to his benefit. It shall be an offensive thing, and the person who eats of it will bear his own iniquity.' (NASB) According to the Torah, eating the sacrifice following the third day would result in the person bearing their own iniquity or guilt. If we pray only to receive and do not give thanks prior to God working in our lives, is this a sin before God?

Thirdly, thanksgiving expresses our resolve or determination of faith in the Lord God to help us and that He hears our prayers. In ancient Israel, at any moment, there was always the possibility of being attacked by the philistines or an enemy living in or near the land of Israel. Life and circumstances were always difficult whether philistine forces, roman forces, or just the typical difficulties in life. With this in mind, the giving of a Thank Offering becomes one of faith and shows ones determination and thankfulness before God no matter the circumstance. Regardless of how we feel we need to demonstrate our faith even in the midst of our pain and trouble. One way to begin doing this is by allowing Yeshua the Messiah to establish Himself as your mediator of peace before the Lord and to reconcile (restore to a state of good standing) us to God. Consider what Yeshua said prior to His leaving to return to the Father in Heaven in *John 20:20-23*, ²⁰καὶ τοῦτο εἰπὼν ἔδειξεν τὰς χεῖρας καὶ τὴν πλευρὰν αὐτοῖς. ἐχάρησαν οὖν οἱ μαθηταὶ ἰδόντες τὸν κύριον. ²¹εἶπεν οὖν αὐτοῖς [ὁ Ἰησοῦς] πάλιν, Εἰρήνη ὑμῖν: καθὼς ἀπέσταλκέν με ὁ πατήρ, καὶ γὰρ πέμπω ὑμᾶς. ²²καὶ τοῦτο εἰπὼν ἐνεφύσησεν καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς, Λάβετε πνεῦμα ἅγιον: ²³ἂν τινῶν ἀφῆτε τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἀφέονται αὐτοῖς, ἂν τινῶν κρατῆτε κεκράτηνται. *20:21 So Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you.'* *20:22 And when He had said this, He breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. 20:23 'If you forgive the sins of any, their sins have been forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they have been retained.'* (NASB) The Offering of Peace symbolizes our being in a right relationship with God. This is why we begin our relationship with the Lord by confessing our sins and by recognizing the importance of the sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins that is found in Yeshua God's only Son. When David said וְאָרְחָץ בְּנִקְיוֹן כַּפָּי וְאֶסְבֶּכֶה אֶת-מִזְבְּחֶךָ יְהוָה: ז לְשֹׁמֵעַ בְּקוֹל תּוֹדָה וּלְסַפֵּר כָּל-נִפְלְאוֹתֶיךָ: ו *26:6 I shall wash my hands in innocence, And I will go about Your altar, O Lord, 26:7 That I may proclaim with the voice of thanksgiving And declare all Your wonders. 26:8 O Lord, I love the habitation of Your house And the place where Your glory dwells.* (NASB) he very well may have been thinking on the sacrificial system that is laid out in the Torah and was a very important part of his life. Today, these things are very important for us to meditate upon, the reason being is because of the significance of Yeshua the Messiah's atoning role in making atonement for our sins according to the Torah of God.

ט אַל-תִּיאָסֵף עַם-תְּטֹאִים נַפְשֵׁי וְעַם-אֲנָשֵׁי דָמִים חַיִּי: י אֲשֶׁר-בְּיַדֵּיהֶם זִמָּה וַיִּמְיָנֵם David concludes saying

26:9 Do not take my soul away along with sinners, Nor my life with men of bloodshed, 26:10 In whose hands is a wicked scheme, And whose right hand is full of bribes. 26:11 But as for me, I shall walk in my integrity; Redeem me, and be gracious to me. 26:12 My foot stands on a level place; In the congregations I shall bless the Lord. (NASB) Is David really worried that the Lord will carry him away along with the wicked? It appears that he is making a request (asking) the Lord to not carry him away. Why do you think David is afraid that the Lord will take his soul with the men who shed the blood of the innocent? Could it possibly be because of his having Uriah the husband of Bathsheba put to death? King David understood that God patiently waits and forgives those who seek His face in humility and repentance. The opening verses in *Tehillim / Psalms 51* tell us the purpose of the Psalm א a song of David that is associated with the transgression of the sin with Bat-Shava (בת-שבע, Bathsheba). *Tehillim / Psalms 51* provide us with some details on the condition of King David after having sinned in adultery with Bathsheba.

ספר תהילים פרק נא פסוק א-כא

א לַמְנַצֵּחַ מְזוֹר לְדוֹד: ב בָּבוֹא-אֵלָיו נָתַן הַנְּבִיא כְּאֲשֶׁר-בָּא אֶל-בֵּת-שָׁבַע: ג חַנּוּנֵי אֱלֹהִים כַּחֲסֵדְךָ כְּרַב רַחֲמֶיךָ מִחֵה פְשָׁעַי: ד הָרְבִי [הָרַב] כַּבֹּסְנֵי מַעֲוֹנֵי וּמַחְטָאֵתֵי טְהַרְנֵי: ה כִּי-פֶשַׁעַי אֲנִי אָדַע וְחַטָּאתַי נִגְדֵי תָמִיד: ו לֵךְ לַבְּדָד | חַטָּאתִי וְהִרַע בְּעֵינַיִךָ עֲשִׂיתִי לְמַעַן-תִּצְדַּק בְּדַבְרֶךָ תוֹכַח בְּשִׁפְטֶיךָ: ז הֵן-בְּעוֹן חוֹלְלֵתִי וּבְחַטָּא יִחַמְתַּנִּי אֱמִי: ח הֵן-אָמַת חִפְצָתְךָ בְּטַחֲוֹת וּבְסִתְּמֹת חֲכָמָה תוֹדִי-עֲנִי: ט תַּחַטָּאֵנִי בְּאִזּוֹב וְאֶטְהַר תַּכְבֹּסְנֵי וּמִשְׁלַג אֶלְבִּי: י תִּשְׁמִיעֵנִי שְׁשׁוֹן וְשִׁמְחָה תִּגְלַנֶּה עֲצָמוֹת דְּפִיתִ: יא הַסֵּתֵר פְּנִיךָ מִחַטָּאֵי וְכָל-עֲוֹנֹתֵי מַחֶה: יב לֵב טְהוֹר בְּרָא-לִי אֱלֹהִים וְרוּחַ נְכוֹן חִדַּשׁ בְּקִרְבִּי: יג אֶל-תִּשְׁלִיכֵנִי מִלְּפָנֶיךָ וְרוּחַ קְדוֹשְׁךָ אֶל-תִּקַּח מִמֶּנִּי: יד הַשִּׁיבָה לִּי שְׁשׁוֹן יִשְׁעֶךָ וְרוּחַ נְדִיבָה תִּסְמְכֵנִי: טו אֲלַמְּדָה פְשָׁעִים דְּרָכֶיךָ וְחַטָּאִים אֵלֶיךָ יִשׁוּבוּ: טז הַצִּילֵנִי מִדְּמָיִם | אֱלֹהִים אֱלֹהֵי תְשׁוּעָתִי תִרְנֵן לִשׁוֹנִי צְדָקָתְךָ: יז אֲדַנִּי שִׁפְתֵי תִפְתַּח וּפִי יִגִּיד תְהִלָּתְךָ: יח כִּי | לֹא-תִחַפֵּץ זְבַח וְאַתְנָה עוֹלָה לֹא תִרְצֶה: יט זְבַחֵי אֱלֹהִים רוּחַ נְשִׁבָרָה לֵב-נִשְׁבָּר וְנִדְבָה אֱלֹהִים לֹא תִבְזֶה: כ הִיטִיבָה בְּרִצּוֹנְךָ אֶת-צִיּוֹן תִּבְנֶה חוֹמוֹת רְיוֹשָׁלָם: כא אַז תִּחַפֵּץ זְבַחֵי-צֶדֶק עוֹלָה וְכִלִּיל אֵז יַעֲלוּ עַל-מִזְבְּחֶךָ פְּרִים:

Tehilim / Psalms 51:1-21

51:1 Be gracious to me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; According to the greatness of Your compassion blot out my transgressions. 51:2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity And cleanse me from my sin. 51:3 For I know my transgressions, And my sin is ever before me. 51:4 Against You, You only, I have sinned And done what is evil in Your sight, So that You are justified when You speak And blameless when You judge. 51:5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me. 51:6 Behold, You desire truth in the innermost being, And in the hidden part You will make me know wisdom. 51:7 Purify me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. 51:8 Make me to hear joy and gladness, Let the bones which You have broken rejoice. 51:9 Hide Your face from my sins And blot out all my iniquities. 51:10 Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me. 51:11 Do not cast me away from Your presence And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me. 51:12 Restore to me the joy of Your salvation And sustain me with a willing spirit. 51:13 Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, And sinners will be converted to You. 51:14 Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, the God of my salvation; Then my tongue will joyfully sing of Your righteousness. 51:15 O Lord, open my lips, That my mouth may declare Your praise. 51:16 For You do not delight in sacrifice, otherwise I would give it; You are not pleased with burnt offering. 51:17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise. 51:18

By Your favor do good to Zion; Build the walls of Jerusalem. 51:19 Then You will delight in righteous sacrifices, In burnt offering and whole burnt offering; Then young bulls will be offered on Your altar. (NASB)

Reading *Tehillim / Psalms 51* we get the idea that David's soul is suffering under the weight of his guilt after having lusted for another man's wife, being intimate with her and impregnating her, and then to cover up his sin killing Uriah, Bat-Shava's husband (See 2 *Samuel 11*). In the beginning of the Psalm, David uses three words for sin in the first few verses, **פְּשָׁעַי** meaning "crime, sin, offense, felony, transgression," **מַעֲוֹנַי** from the root **עוון** meaning "sin, crime, offence, evil," and the word **וּמַחֲטָאתַי** from the root **חטא** meaning "sin, fault, offence, sinfulness, ungodliness, crime." In addition to this, during David's confession of his sin, he used three words asking for forgiveness, **כְּחַסְדְּךָ** from the root word **חסד** meaning "grace, mercy," **רַחֲמֶיךָ** from the root word **רחם** meaning "to have mercy, compassion," **כַּבֵּסֵנִי** from the root word **כבס** meaning "to wash." In addition to this, the Torah also lists for us the sins that separate us from God. *Mishley / Proverbs 21:2-3* tells us **כָּל-דֶּרֶךְ אִישׁ יָשָׁר בְּעֵינָיו וְתוֹכֵן לִבּוֹת יְהוָה** *21:2 Every man's way is right in his own eyes, But the Lord weighs the hearts. (NASB)* *Mishley / Proverbs 21:3* explains to us that the Lord God weighs our hearts saying "To do righteousness and justice is desired by the Lord more than sacrifice." Concerning sin in our lives, God sees our hearts and knows everything about us, nothing is hidden from Him. David realizes this while writing his Psalm in *Tehillim / Psalms 51*.

ספר משלי פרק כא פסוק א-ה

א פִּלְגֵי-מַיִם לֵב-מְלֹךְ בְּיַד-יְהוָה עַל-כָּל-אֲשֶׁר יַחֲפֹץ יִטְנוּ: ב כָּל-דֶּרֶךְ אִישׁ יָשָׁר בְּעֵינָיו וְתוֹכֵן לִבּוֹת יְהוָה: ג עֲשֵׂה צְדָקָה וּמִשְׁפָּט נִבְחָר לִיהוָה מִזֶּבֶחַ: ד רוּם עֵינַיִם וּרְחֹב-לֵב נֹרֵא שְׁעֵים חֲטָאתַ: ה מִחֻשְׁבוֹת חָרוּץ אֵךְ-לְמוֹתָר וְכָל-אֵץ אֵךְ-לְמַחְסוֹר:

Proverbs 21:1-5

21:1 The king's heart is like channels of water in the hand of the Lord; He turns it wherever He wishes. 21:2 Every man's way is right in his own eyes, But the Lord weighs the hearts. 21:3 To do righteousness and justice Is desired by the Lord more than sacrifice. 21:4 Haughty eyes and a proud heart, The lamp of the wicked, is sin. 21:5 The plans of the diligent lead surely to advantage, But everyone who is hasty comes surely to poverty. (NASB)

In David's use of these three words to describe his sin, **פְּשָׁעַי** is a reference to his external guilt in sin, whereas **מַעֲוֹנַי** and **וּמַחֲטָאתַי** is referring to his internal state. David recognized that in his heart he did not exercise justice (**מִשְׁפָּט**) and righteousness (**צְדָקָה**) before God and before others. He committed murder. The greatness of this external and internal uncleanness excluded David from worshiping in God's presence. Only a complete eradication of his sin will restore him into fellowship with God and His presence. As a result, David seeks the internal cleansing that is accomplished only by the grace and mercy of God as understood according to the Hebrew text on the use of the words **כְּחַסְדְּךָ** and **רַחֲמֶיךָ** and then to be cleansed externally by the purifying waters by the phrase "to wash" (**כַּבֵּסֵנִי**) me from my sins. This is emphasized in David's statement in *Tehillim / Psalms 51:4* in the Hebrew Bible, (note it is *51:2* in the English Bible) **הֲרַבָּה [הָרַב] כַּבֵּסֵנִי** by the word **טַהַרְנִי** meaning "cleanse me" in the sense of ritual purity. David realizes that sinning with Bat-Shava and against Uriah is synonymous with sinning against God. He then confirms the Lord's righteous judgment against sin and God's desire for righteousness in His people (**לֵךְ לְבַדְּךָ | חֲטָאתַי**) **וְהִרַע בְּעֵינַיִךְ עֲשִׂיתִי לְמַעַן-תִּצְדַּק בְּדַבְרֶךָ תִּזְכֶּה בְּשִׁפְטֶךָ** in *Tehillim / Psalms 51:6*. In *Tehillim / Psalms 26:11*, David asks **פְּדֵנִי** meaning to "be cashed in, redeemed, liberated, saved" and **וְהַיְנִי** to be "graceful, attractive, charming" to him. Here he is speaking in different terms than what he has asked and in the way that he has asked according to *Tehillim / Psalms 51*. This may be because he is speaking of having trusted in the Lord

and is not specifically thinking of a particular sin like in *Tehillim / Psalms 51*.

It is interesting to note that the Aramaic Targum states 26:9 *My soul will not gather with the sinners, nor my life with the men who shed blood. 26:10 In whose hands is the purpose of sinning; their right hands are full of bribes. 26:11 But I will go about in my innocence; redeem me and have mercy on me. 26:12 My foot stands upright; in the gathering of the righteous I will bless the Lord.* (EMC) ט לא תכנוש עם חייביא נפשי ועם אינשי שדיין דמא אדם חיי: י די בידיהון עצת חטאין וימיניהון מלין שוחדא: יא ואנא בשלימותי איזיל פרוק יתי וחוס עלי: יב ריגלי קם קמת בתריצא בתריצותא בכינשת צדיקין אבריק יהוה: Here David makes a statement rather than a request saying that his soul will not be gathered with sinners, that these wicked men who shed blood, their hands are purposed to sin and corruption, and he will walk in innocence meaning that he has not purposed his hands to sin. The Septuagint states something similar 26:9 *Destroy not my soul together with the ungodly, nor my life with bloody men: 26:10 in whose hands are iniquities, and their right hand is filled with bribes. 26:11 But I have walked in my innocence: redeem me, and have mercy upon me. 26:12 My foot stands in an even place: in the congregations will I bless thee, O Lord.* (LXX) 26:9 μη συναπολέσης μετὰ ἀσεβῶν τὴν ψυχὴν μου καὶ μετὰ ἀνδρῶν αἱμάτων τὴν ζωὴν μου 26:10 ὧν ἐν χειρὶν ἀνομία ἢ δεξιὰ αὐτῶν ἐπλήσθη δώρων 26:11 ἐγὼ δὲ ἐν ἀκακίᾳ μου ἐπορεύθην λύτρωσαί με καὶ ἐλέησόν με 26:12 ὁ γὰρ πούς μου ἔστι ἐν εὐθύτητι ἐν ἐκκλησίαις εὐλογήσω σε κύριε. In the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek texts, David concludes saying יא וְאֲנִי בְּתַמִּי אֵלֶיךָ פִּדְנִי וְחַנּוּנִי: יב רַגְלִי עֲמֻדָה בְּמִישׁוֹר בְּמִקְהָלִים אֲבָרֶךָ: יג הֲלֹא: 26:11 *But as for me, I shall walk in my integrity; Redeem me, and be gracious to me. 26:12 My foot stands on a level place; In the congregations I shall bless the Lord.* (NASB) Ultimately he states that “*I will walk in integrity,*” and thus, standing and walking in integrity is what the Lord is looking for in our lives. We are to be consistent in our faith and in the way that we live our lives here on earth which is accomplished by the help of the Lord God Almighty. Let’s Pray!

Rabbinic Commentary

The Rabbinic Commentary (Midrash) on *Tehillim / Psalms 26* has 7 parts. Reading through the Midrash we will be looking at Parts 2, 3, 4, and 5. Let’s begin by outlining *Midrash Tehillim Chapter 25, Parts 2, 3, 4, and 5*.

Part 2

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) that speaks of the verse that says “*A Psalm of David, Judge me, O Lord (Tehillim / Psalms 26:1),*” however, the midrash opens with “*Another comment, Consider what Scripture says elsewhere.*”
- The פתיחה (Petihta) “*the homiletic introduction*” to the Midrash says “*Whoso loves correction, loves knowledge; but he that hates reproof is brutish (Mishley / Proverbs 12:1).*”
- The משל (mashal) “*the parable,*” goes on to explain the פתיחה (Petihta), the rabbis discuss those who love correction and knowledge using four examples from the lives of four men, Job, Abraham, Hezekiah, and David.
- The נמשל (Nimshal) “*expansion on the parable*” expands upon the משל (mashal) goes on to expand upon how one man rebelled, one laughed, one sought a friend, and one asked why the lash was held back while they were being smitten of the Lord.
- The Concluding phrase says “*And as David said, Blessed is the man who You chastise, O Lord, and teaches him out of Your Torah (Tehillim / Proverbs 94:12).*”

Part 3

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) “*Examine me, O Lord, and prove me (Tehillim / Psalms 26:2).*”

- The פתיחתא (Petihta) “*the homiletic introduction*” to the Midrash, the rabbis say “*David said, Prove me, O Lord, as You proved Abraham, of whom the verse God did prove Abraham (Bereshit / Genesis 22:1) shows that Abraham stood up to his proving.*”
- The משל (mashal) “*the parable,*” goes on to explain the פתיחתא (Petihta), the rabbis discuss how David asked the Lord to reprove him like he reproved Abraham.
- The נמשל (Nimshal) “*expansion on the parable*” expands upon the משל (mashal) goes on to expand upon the parable, and how and when the king is to be praised, how the Lord proves David, etc.
- The Concluding phrase says “*What kindness of Yours was in this, that they worked and were paid? Slothful workers, we are. Yet give us good pay, and that would be Your great kindness. Hence Solomon said, The Lord God be with us, as he was with our fathers (1 Kings 8:57).*”

Part 4

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) “*I David have hated the assembly of evil doers (Tehillim / Psalms 26:5).*”
- The פתיחתא (Petihta) “*the homiletic introduction*” to the Midrash, the rabbis ask the question saying “*What assembly of evil doers?*”
- The משל (mashal) “*the parable,*” goes on to explain the פתיחתא (Petihta), the rabbis list various groups of evil doers, those during the sin of the golden calf (Parashat Ki Tisa), Korach and the assembly of men who rebelled against Moshe.
- The נמשל (Nimshal) “*expansion on the parable*” expands upon the משל (mashal) goes on to expand upon the parable, and those who rebelled against God’s chosen one.
- The Concluding phrase says “*And I will not sit with the wicked (Tehillim / Psalms 26:5) with Korach and his company whom Moshe meant when he said, Depart, I pray, from the tents of these wicked men (Bamidbar / Numbers 16:26).*”

Part 5

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) “*I will wash my hands in innocence; so will I compass Your altar, O Lord (Tehillim / Psalms 26:6).*”
- The פתיחתא (Petihta) “*the homiletic introduction*” to the Midrash says “*This verse is to be read in the light of what is taught in a Mishnah, on each of the first seven days of Sukkot men circled the altar once, reciting, We beseech You, O Lord, save now (Tehillim / Psalms 118:25).*”
- The משל (mashal) “*the parable,*” goes on to explain the פתיחתא (Petihta), the rabbis discuss what it means to have innocent hands with regard to the circling the altar of God.
- The נמשל (Nimshal) “*expansion on the parable*” expands upon the משל (mashal) goes on to expand upon the parable, the rabbis provide examples of having innocent hands, the leading example is not to have hands of robbery and violence.
- The Concluding phrase says “*Woe to that man whose advocate turns accuser. Hence David said, I will wash my hands in innocence; so will I compass Your altar; Or Lord, with a festive wreath got through purchase, not robbery.*”

In Midrash Tehillim 26, Part 2, the midrash opens with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) saying “*Another comment, Consider what Scripture says elsewhere*” and is alluding to the verse that says “*A Psalm of David, Judge me, O Lord (Tehillim / Psalms 26:1),*” most likely leading off of Midrash Tehillim Part 1. In the homiletic introduction, the rabbis speak of *Mishley / Proverbs 12:1* saying “*Whoso loves correction, loves knowledge; but he that hates reproof is brutish.*” The rabbis provide examples from the lives of four men, Job, Abraham, Hezekiah, and David. The first example is Job and the rabbis say that when Job was smitten (struck or afflicted) that he rebelled. Did Job really rebel before God when affliction come his way? The example of rebellion is given by the following verses:

1. “I will speak in the bitterness of my soul. I will say unto God, Do not condemn me; show me where You contend with me. Is it good to You that You should oppress me? (Job 10:1-3)” (10:1 *‘I loathe my own life; I will give full vent to my complaint; I will speak in the bitterness of my soul. 10:2 ‘I will say to God, ‘Do not condemn me; Let me know why You contend with me. 10:3 ‘Is it right for You indeed to oppress, To reject the labor of Your hands, And to look favorably on the schemes of the wicked?’* NASB אָמַר ב אִמַר אֶמְצֵא נַפְשִׁי בְחַיֵּי אֶעְזֹבָה עָלַי שִׁיחֵי אֲדַבְרָה בְּמַר נַפְשִׁי: ב אִמַר אֶמְצֵא נַפְשִׁי בְחַיֵּי אֶעְזֹבָה עָלַי שִׁיחֵי אֲדַבְרָה בְּמַר נַפְשִׁי: ג הַטּוֹב לָךְ | כִּי-תַעֲשֶׂק כִּי תִמְאָס גִּיעַ כְּפִידָה וְעַל-עֲצַת אֱל-אֱלוֹהִים אֱל-תִרְשָׁעֵנִי הוֹדִיעֵנִי עַל מַה-תִּרְיַבְנִי: ג הַטּוֹב לָךְ | כִּי-תַעֲשֶׂק כִּי תִמְאָס גִּיעַ כְּפִידָה וְעַל-עֲצַת: (רְשָׁעִים הוֹפְעֵת:)
2. “Wherefore am I smitten? What have I done unto You? Tell me where I have sinned. How many are my iniquities and sins? Make me to know my transgressions and my sin (Job 13:23).” (13:23 *‘How many are my iniquities and sins? Make known to me my rebellion and my sin. NASB כָּמָה כָּג (לִי עֲוֹנוֹת וְחַטָּאוֹת פִּשְׁעֵי וְחַטָּאוֹת הִדִּיעֵנִי:)*
3. “I know that Yours is the power, and that You do this to me not for any injustice in my hands, O earth, cover not my blood, and let my cry have no resting place (Job 16:17-18).” (16:17 *Although there is no violence in my hands, And my prayer is pure. 16:18 ‘O earth, do not cover my blood, And let there be no resting place for my cry. NASB יז עַל לֹא-חַמָּס בְּכַפִּי וְתִפְלְתִי זָכָה: יח אֶרֶץ אֵל- (תִּכְסִי דָמִי וְאֵל-יְהִי מְקוֹם לְזַעֲקָתִי:)*

The rabbis conclude for Job saying *“Thus spoke the one who, upon being smitten, rebelled.”* How does Job speaking these words or asking these questions result in rebellion before the Lord? Does this midrash suggest the idea that if something bad happens to us that it may be the Lord who is reproofing our behavior or sin that should lead us to repentance? It might be that Job refused to entertain the idea that he had sinned before God which led to his present situation? Job believed that he was innocent and therefore he responded to the Lord in the way that He did. According to the Torah, we read in *Vayikra / Leviticus 5:17*, *וְאִם-נִפְשָׁה יִז 5:17 ‘Now if a person sins and does any of the things which the Lord has commanded not to be done, though he was unaware, still he is guilty and shall bear his punishment. (NASB)* In the Torah, we are warned of sin that we are unaware we may have committed. The rule is that if we have sinned before God, even though we do not know about it, we are guilty and will bear our iniquity. Thus, ignorance is no excuse before God about the sin in our lives. Was it a bad idea for Job to continue to believe that he had not sinned and to say so in his prayers to the Lord? Are the rabbis saying that Job was presumptuous of his innocence? Was it humble of Job to declare his innocence and to stand by his statements? Would it have been a better idea that he would have repented of or at least mentioned to the Lord that if he had sinned to be forgiven and to remove the punishment he was receiving? The rabbis may be thinking that Job’s repeated claim on his innocence was a form of rebellion by having a lack of humility before the Lord. Is a lack of humility a form of rebellion before God?

The second one who was smitten laughed, the rabbis say this was Abraham. The rabbis quote from *Bereshit / Genesis 17:17*, *וַיִּבְרַכְתִּי אֹתָהּ וְגַם נָתַתִּי מִמֶּנָּה לָךְ בֵּן וַיִּבְרַכְתִּיהָ וְהָיְתָה לְגוֹיִם מְלֻכֵי עַמִּים מִמֶּנָּה יְהִיוּ: יז וַיִּפֹּל אַבְרָהָם עַל-פָּנָיו וַיִּצְחַק וַיֹּאמֶר בְּלִבּוֹ הֲלִבֶּן הֲלָבֶן מֵאָה-שָׁנָה יוֹלֵד וְאִם-שָׂרָה הִבְתַּ-תְּשָׁעִים שָׁנָה תֵּלֵד: יח וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָהָם אֵל-הָאֱלֹהִים לֹא יִשְׁמַעְעָל יְחִיָּה לְפָנָיִךְ: יט וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים אֲבָל שָׂרָה אֲשֶׁתְּךָ יִלְדָת לָךְ בֵּן וְקִרְאתָ אֶת-שְׁמוֹ: יז:16 ‘I will bless her, and indeed I will give you a son by her. Then I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of peoples will come from her.’ 17:17 Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said in his heart, ‘Will a child be born to a man one hundred years old? And will Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child? 17:18 And Abraham said to God, ‘Oh that Ishmael might live before You!’ 17:19 But God said, ‘No, but Sarah your wife will bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; and I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant for*

his descendants after him. (NASB) They say that Abraham was smitten of God and that he laughed referring to *Bereshit / Genesis 17:17* which states that Abraham laughed when he heard the Lord tell him that his wife was going to have a son. The question though is how was Abraham smitten of God? The rabbis say “with whom may the Lord and Abraham be compared?” They tell a parable of a man who was beating his son.

<p>The man beating his son swore that he would continue to beat him, saying, My son, I have sworn and I would continue beating you. The son replied, Yours is the power. The father continued beating his son thinking that his son would say, I have had enough. As the son was struck more and more, however, the father finally said, Enough of beating him! Even so, it was said The Lord appeared unto Abram, and said unto him, I am God, Shaddai, that is, It is enough. (<i>Bereshit / Genesis 17:1</i>), I am He who said to My world, It is enough. I am also He who said of your trial, it is enough.</p>	<p>וְיִיד, יִיד וְבָה וְלִרְמַאִישׁ רֹבֵס וְהַכְּמָ הִיָּה לֹא יֵה אֲרִיּוֹ כֵךְ, וְתֹאכָה וִיד בֹּאֵה רְמַא הַקְּלֵשׁ זֵי תִישָׂאֲרָב) יִדֵשׁ לֹא יִנָּא וִילֵא רְמַאִיו סְרַבָּא אֹוֵה יִנָּא, יִיד יִמְלוּעֵל יִתְרַמַּאשׁ אֹוֵה יִנָּא, (א יִיד תְּוֹסֻנְל יִתְרַמַּאשׁ</p>
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Here in this parable, the rabbis are saying that God and Abraham are like this man who was beating his son. The man says that he has sworn to beat his son and so he will continue to do so. After having beaten his son the father finally said enough, no more beating him. The rabbis say that *Bereshit / Genesis 17:1* when the Lord says that He is El Shaddai (אֱלֹהִים-אֵל שַׁדַּי) the all sufficient God, that the Lord was ending Abraham’s trial and was giving him a son. Was Abraham not having a son until his old age God’s testing him and his faith? According to Parashat Lech Lecha (*Bereshit / Genesis 12:1-17:27*) א וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-אַבְרָם לֵךְ-לְךָ מֵאֶרֶץ צָרָה וּמִמּוֹלַדְתְּךָ וּמִבֵּית אָבִיךָ אֶל-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אֲרָאָה: ב וְאָעֲשֶׂה לְגֹי גְדוֹל וְאַבְרָכָךָ וְאֶגְדְּלָהּ שְׁמִי וְהָיָה בְרָכָה: ג מֵאֶרֶץ צָרָה וּמִמּוֹלַדְתְּךָ וּמִבֵּית אָבִיךָ אֶל-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אֲרָאָה: ד וְאָבְרַכְךָ מִכָּל-עָרָה וְיִבְרַכְךָ בָּהּ כָּל-מִשְׁפַּחַת הָאָדָמָה: 12:1 Now the Lord said to Abram, ‘Go forth from your country, And from your relatives And from your father’s house, To the land which I will show you; 12:2 And I will make you a great nation, And I will bless you, And make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing; 12:3 And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.’ (NASB) From the time of the Lord calling Abram from the land of his father to the land of Canaan, and up until now, he was given the promise of being a great nation and that all of the families of the earth will be blessed in his seed. This took a significant amount of faith that Sarah in her old age would be capable of bearing children, and based upon Abraham’s response it seems he was seriously doubting that Sarah would bear him a child. Why do you think that Abraham not having children from Sarah was a form of being smitten of God? Could it be that from since the creation the Lord blessed the living creatures on this earth including man so that he would be fruitful and multiply, and Abraham not having children was therefore seen as a work of the Lord? The Lord God was keeping him and his wife from having children? This is most likely the reason the rabbis say Abraham was smitten of God.

The third one who was smitten was said to have sought a friend, and the rabbis say this was Hezekiah (*Isaiah 38:2*). The rabbis quote from *Isaiah 38* א בַּיָּמִים הֵהֵם חָלָה חֶזְקִיָּהוּ לָמוּת וַיְבוֹא אֵלָיו יְשַׁעְיָהוּ בֶן-אֲמוּץ: ב וַיֹּסֵב חֶזְקִיָּהוּ פָּנָיו אֶל-הַקִּיר וַיִּתְפַּלֵּל אֶל-יְהוָה: ג וַיֹּאמֶר אֲנִי יְהוָה זָכַר-נָא אֶת אֲשֶׁר הִתְהַלַּכְתִּי לְפָנֶיךָ בְּאֶמְתָּ וּבְלִבְשֵׁי שָׁלוֹם וְהֵטוֹב בְּעֵינֶיךָ עֲשִׂיתִי וַיִּבֶךְ חֶזְקִיָּהוּ בְּכִי גְדוֹל: ד וַיְהִי דְבַר-יְהוָה אֶל-יְשַׁעְיָהוּ לֵאמֹר: ה הֲלוֹךְ וְאַמְרַתְּ אֶל-חֶזְקִיָּהוּ כֹה-אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי דָוִד אָבִיךָ שְׁמַעְתִּי אֶת-תְּפִלָּתְךָ: 38:1 In those days Hezekiah became mortally ill. And Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came to him and said to him, ‘Thus says the Lord, ‘Set your house in order, for you shall die and not live.’ 38:2 Then Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to the Lord, 38:3 and said, ‘Remember now, O Lord, I beseech You, how I have walked before You in truth and with a whole heart, and have done what is good in Your sight.’ And Hezekiah wept bitterly. 38:4 Then the word of the Lord came to Isaiah, saying, 38:5 ‘Go and say to Hezekiah, ‘Thus says the Lord, the God of your father David, ‘I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; behold, I will add fifteen years to your life. (NASB) In these Scripture verses we do not read that Hezekiah sought a friend? Why do the rabbis use the example of Hezekiah having sought a friend when the Lord had smitten him?

The fourth one who was smitten the rabbis say is David and when David was being struck by God, he asks the Lord why the lash is being held back to strike him again. The rabbis conclude Midrash Tehillim

26, Part 2 saying “ *This was David, who said, Judge me, O Lord. As Solomon said, Whoso loves correction, loves knowledge (Mishley / Proverbs 12:1). And as David said, Blessed is the man who You chastise, O Lord, and teaches him out of Your Torah (Tehillim / Proverbs 94:12).*” ((אלהים)) זה דוד, שנאמר לדוד שפטני (אלהים)) [ה'], וכן אמר שלמה אוהב מוסר אוהב דעת (משלי יב א), וכן דוד אמר אשרי הגבר אשר תיסרנו יה (תהלים צד). The rabbis quote from Proverbs saying that the love of correction is the love of knowledge, and that a man is blessed to be chastised of the Lord and instructed according to God's Torah.

Midrash Tehillim 26, Part 3 opens with the Dibur Hamathil (דיבור המתחיל) saying “*Examine me, O Lord, and prove me (Tehillim / Psalms 26:2).*” The rabbis say in the homiletic introduction, “*David said, Prove me, O Lord, as You proved Abraham, of whom the verse God did prove Abraham (Bereshit / Genesis 22:1) shows that Abraham stood up to his proving.*” *Bereshit / Genesis 22:1-2* states א וַיְהִי אַחֲרֵי הַדְּבָרִים וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים נֹסֶה אֶת-אַבְרָהָם וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו אַבְרָהָם וַיֹּאמֶר הִנְנִי: ב וַיֹּאמֶר קַח-נָא אֶת-בְּנֶךְךָ אֶת-יִצְחָק אֲשֶׁר-אַהְבָּתָּהּ: 22:1 *Now it came about after these things, that God tested Abraham, and said to him, ‘Abraham!’ And he said, ‘Here I am.’* 22:2 *He said, ‘Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you.’ (NASB)* They also say that God proved Isaac upon the altar because he stood up to it. They are saying that David was asking the Lord to examine and prove him (*Tehillim / Psalms 26:2*) he is asking God to prove him like he did to Joseph and Potiphar's wife. It is interesting that the midrash quotes from *Tehillim / Psalms 105:19*.

Tehillim / Psalms 105:9-21

105:9 The covenant which He made with Abraham, And His oath to Isaac. 105:10 Then He confirmed it to Jacob for a statute, To Israel as an everlasting covenant, 105:11 Saying, ‘To you I will give the land of Canaan As the portion of your inheritance,’ 105:12 When they were only a few men in number, Very few, and strangers in it. 105:13 And they wandered about from nation to nation, From one kingdom to another people. 105:14 He permitted no man to oppress them, And He reprovved kings for their sakes: 105:15 ‘Do not touch My anointed ones, And do My prophets no harm.’ 105:16 And He called for a famine upon the land; He broke the whole staff of bread. 105:17 He sent a man before them, Joseph, who was sold as a slave. 105:18 They afflicted his feet with fetters, He himself was laid in irons; 105:19 Until the time that his word came to pass, The word of the Lord tested him. 105:20 The king sent and released him, The ruler of peoples, and set him free. 105:21 He made him lord of his house And ruler over all his possessions, (NASB)

ט אֲשֶׁר כָּרַת אֶת-אַבְרָהָם וּשְׁבוּעָתוֹ לְיִשְׁחָק: י וַיַּעֲמִידָהּ לְיַעֲקֹב לְחֵק לְיִשְׂרָאֵל בְּרִית עוֹלָם: יא לְאֹמֶר לְךָ אֶתְּךָ אֶת-אַרְצְךָ כְּנָעַן חֶבְל נַחֲלָתְכֶם: יב בְּהִיוֹתָם מְתֵי מִסְפָּר כְּמַעֲט וְגָרִים בָּהּ: יג וַיִּתְּהַר לָכֹה מְגוּי אֶל-גּוֹי מִמְּמַלְכָּה אֶל-עַם אַחֵר: יד לֹא-הִנִּיחַ אָדָם לְעַשְׂקָם וַיּוֹכַח עֲלֵיהֶם מְלָכִים: טו אֶל-תִּגְעוּ בְּמִשְׁיַחַי וּלְנַבְיָאֵי אֶל-תִּרְעוּ: טז וַיִּקְרָא רָעַב עַל-הָאָרֶץ כָּל-מִטָּה-לָחֶם שָׁבַר: יז שָׁלַח לְפָנֵיהֶם אִישׁ לְעֶבֶד נְמֹכָר יוֹסֵף: יח עָנּוּ בַּכְּבֵּל רַגְלָיו [רַגְלָיו] בְּרֶזֶל בָּאֵה נִפְשׁוּ: יט עַד-עַתָּה בָּא-דְבָרוֹ אֲמַרְתָּ יְהוָה צִרְפָּתָהּ: כ שָׁלַח-מַלְאָךְ וַיִּתִּירָהוּ מִשַּׁל עַמִּים וַיִּפְתַּחְהוּ: כא שָׁמוּ אָדוֹן לְבֵיתוֹ וּמִשַּׁל בְּכָל-קְנִיָּנוֹ:

According to *Tehillim / Psalms 105:19*, the Scripture says the word of the Lord “*purified*” (צִרְפָּתָהּ) Joseph. How did the word of the Lord test or purify Joseph with regard to Potiphar's wife? The midrash goes on to say that while God was proving David, that David had no strength to endure. The virtues that David had were that he did not dwell with the wicked, he hated the assembly of the evil doers, and that his hands were innocent. The midrash concludes with king Solomon speaking to the Lord.

“Solomon said to the Holy One blessed be He, Master of the Universe. When a king hires diligent workmen, and they do their work well, and he gives them their pay, should the king be praised? When is he to be praised? When he hires slothful workers, but gives them their pay in full. And Solomon went on to say, Our fathers worked diligently and received good pay. What kindness of Yours was in this, that they worked and were paid? Slothful workers, we are. Yet give us good pay, and that would be Your great kindness. Hence Solomon said, The Lord God be with us, as he was with our fathers (1 Kings 8:57).” (Midrash Tehillim 26, Part 3)

וכן אמר שלמה לפני הקב"ה רבונו של עולם מלך ששוכר פועלים טובים, והן עושין מלאכתן יפה, המלך נותן להם שכרם, מה שבח יש למלך, ואימתי הוא משובח, בזמן שהוא שוכר פועלים עצלים, ונותן להם שכרם משלם, [וכן אמר שלמה אבות עשו ונטלו שכר טוב, מה טובה זו שעשו ונטלו, אנו פועלים עצלים תן לנו שכר טוב], וזו טובה גדולה, וכן הוא אומר יהי ה' אלהינו עמנו כאשר היה עם אבותינו (מ"א מלכים א' ח נז).

So what is the basic conclusion here in the midrash? It seems that the rabbis are paralleling the slothful workers to us, we are the hireling and we are not doing all that we should be or that we could be doing more for the Lord. Nevertheless, the Lord pays us in full, and pours out His blessing upon us. This is the kindness and mercy of God. Midrash Tehillim 26, Part 3 concludes with Scripture *“Solomon said, The Lord God be with us, as he was with our fathers (1 Kings 8:57).”*

Midrash Tehillim 26, Part 4 opens with the Dibur Hamathil (דיבור המתחיל) saying *“I David have hated the assembly of evil doers (Tehillim / Psalms 26:5).”* The rabbis ask the question *“What assembly of evil doers?”* The response is those who assembled themselves against Moshe and Aaron, (i) at the sin of the golden calf (*Parashat Ki Tisa*), and (ii) Korach and the men who rebelled against Moshe and Aaron. The context of *Tehillim / Psalms 26:5* is that David follows this verse stating that he will wash his hands in innocence. The midrash uses an example taken from *Parashat Korach (Bamidbar / Numbers 16:1-17:15)*, which describes Korach, Datan, and Aviram assembling themselves against Moshe and against Aaron and questioned whether their role as priests was really the will of God (ב וַיִּקְמוּ לְפָנַי מִלְּשָׁה וְאֲנָשִׁים מִבְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל). There were two hundred and fifty men who agreed with Korach and who presented themselves before the Lord to offer incense by fire. As a result, the entire assemble of men died by fire from the Lord God because of their sin. The entire camp of Korach, Datan, and Aviram were also swallowed up according to the Torah the earth opened up and they went down to the grave alive. After these things, the children of Israel complained against Moshe and Aaron and a plague broke out in their midst because of their complaints. Moshe told Aaron to take a censor filled with burning incense and to stand in the gap between the dead and the living. The people did not appear to understand that rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft (*1 Samuel 15:23*). The peoples response over the death of Korach, Datan, and Aviram is recorded in *Bamidbar / Numbers 17:6* (Hebrew Bible) and *16:41* (English Bible) *16:41 But on the next day all the congregation of the sons of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron, saying, ‘You are the ones who have caused the death of the Lord’s people.’ (NASB)* The second sin of rebellion causes the Lord to say *“part from the midst of the congregation so that I can consume them.”* Rebellion and having a rebellious spirit before the Lord is certain death. David said *“I hated the assembly of evil doers (Tehillim / Psalms 26:5).”* Does our spirit today in any way exhibit aspects of rebellion like Israel? From the Torah text in *Parashat Korach*, in both cases the bringing of fire that was not commanded of God is considered strange or foreign before the Lord. As a result, fire proceeded from the Lord and they died. Have you ever offered offering strange fire before the Lord in the way that you served Him? These men were in the act of open rebellion offering fire the Lord had not commanded or instructed. According to the Scriptures, Korach, Datan, and Aviram and the 250 men were drawing near (approaching)

the Lord in their own way and not according to the way in which God had called them. After the 250 men died, God commands Moshe to take up the censers because they are holy; the censers were purified by fire. It is interesting if we think about fire on its use in the purifying sense; God has used fire and its illustration in our lives to show how He is breaking down, molding, and reshaping us into His image and the image of His son Yeshua the Messiah. For example, the manufacturing process would not be possible without fire, the use of fire to break down and reshape materials for our own use. It is also interesting to note about the surrounding pagan cultures the people would sacrifice their children to Molech as it says in *2 Kings* - וְטָמְאָה אֶת-
 יְ 23:10 *And he defiled Topheth, which is in the valley of the children of Hinnom, that no man might make his son or his daughter to pass through the fire to Molech. (NASB)* Here we find the concept of the passing through the fire. The children were caused to pass through the fire and they were burned up as a sacrifice to the demonic spirit Molech (*the name of the graven image or idol*). When these children passed through the fire, their lives were changed, they died. If we walk in our own ways or in the ways of men our lives change to be in accordance with the ways that speak contrary to God’s way and we will die spiritually. The path that we take will reshape our lives, who we are on the inside, and more specifically our relationship with God. It is of utmost importance to stay on the straight and narrow path, studying the bible daily so that God’s fire, the fire from the Lord will be kindled in our hearts so we become pliable and can be shaped into the image God would have us to be. The prophet Zephaniah says in *Zephaniah 3:8* ‘Therefore wait for Me,’ declares the Lord, ‘For the day when I rise up as a witness. Indeed, My decision is to gather nations, To assemble kingdoms, To pour out on them My indignation, All My burning anger; For all the earth will be devoured By the fire of My zeal. 3:9 ‘For then I will give to the peoples purified lips, That all of them may call on the name of the Lord, To serve Him shoulder to shoulder. (NASB) Here the earth is devoured by fire and then God will give the people purified lips that will call upon the name of the Lord. Midrash Tehillim 26, Part 4 concludes saying “And I will not sit with the wicked (Tehillim / Psalms 26:5) with Korach and his company whom Moshe meant when he said, Depart, I pray, from the tents of these wicked men (Bamidbar / Numbers 16:26).” The midrash states that David was thinking of the wicked men who are described in the Torah (*Parashat Korach*) when he said that he hated the assemble of evil doers and that he will not sit with the wicked. If we consider Parashat Korach and the sitting with the wicked, the wicked will take you down to the grave alive with them. In a similar manner, we need to guard our hearts very carefully and live according to God’s Word in and according to the way that He has said we are supposed to live.

Midrash Tehillim 26, Part 5 opens with the Dibur Hamathil (דיבור המתהיל) saying “I will wash my hands in innocence; so will I compass Your altar, O Lord (Tehillim / Psalms 26:6).” The midrash states that “This verse is to be read in the light of what is taught in a Mishnah, on each of the first seven days of Sukkot men circled the altar once, reciting, We beseech You, O Lord, save now (Tehillim / Psalms 118:25).” Here the rabbis mention the biblical harvest festival of Sukkot (Tabernacles). This festival is celebrated on the full moon following Rosh Ha-Shannah, the Biblical New Year. On this holiday, one is to wave bundles of palm branches, willow, myrtle, and a yellow fruit called the etrog (*yellow lemon-like fruits*) as a symbol of the earth’s bounty, and to live in temporary booths roofed with branches, known as sukkot. The midrash mentions the circling of the altar and praying asking the Lord to “save now” (Hosha-na). On the sixth day of Sukkot (“*Hoshanah Rabbah*,” “*great praise*”) the custom is to proceed in seven circles, called hakafot, with the lulav and etrog. The number seven represents the seven days of creation. The liturgy declares again and again “Hosha-na!” (“Save us!”) The kind of salvation that is referred to is the prayers asking for rescue from drought, from flood, from famine, and from the dangers of the world. At the end of the Hoshanah Rabbah process, the willows are beaten on the ground, as a sign that one wants to get rid of sin. The circles around the inside of the synagogue seem to imply that there is an invisible altar in the center. Originally, the Temple altar would have been at the center of this ritual and is what is described here in the midrash. On the seventh day of the Sukkot season, Shemini Atzeret, one prays elaborate poems for rain, and the yizkor prayer is recited, stating what we have in communion with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The eighth day of the holiday is Simchat Torah (the Joy of Torah). On the evening of Simchat Torah, one circles seven times

again, this time while dancing with the Torah. One repeats this ritual in the morning, and then completes the cycle of Torah by reading Parashat Achari Mot, the end of the book of Deuteronomy (Moses' death) and the beginning of the book of Genesis (the creation of the world). For more information look at the section titled Sukkah (סוכה) from the Mishnah and Talmud. It is the sixth volume in the Order (Mishnaic section) of Moed. Sukkah that deals primarily with laws relating to the holiday of Sukkot. It has five chapters which include details on the Sukkah, or hut, which is lived in during Sukkot, the laws concerning each of the four species of vegetation which are waved during prayers over the holiday, and the Celebration of the Water-Drawing (שמחת בית השואבה, Simhat Beit Ha-Sho'evah) which took place at the Temple in Jerusalem on the nights of Sukkot.

Midrash Tehillim 26, Part 5 speaks about the circling of the altar while carrying the palm branches, myrtle, and willows of the brook and whether these were gotten by robbery. The midrash is speaking on the verse from the Psalm, "I will wash my hands in innocence; so will I compass Your altar, O Lord (Tehillim / Psalms 26:6)." According to the Masoretic Text, the Scripture states אֶרְחֵץ בְּנִקְיוֹן כַּפַּי וְאֶסְבְּבָה יְהוָה: 26:6 I shall wash my hands in innocence, And I will go about Your altar, O Lord, (NASB) The Aramaic Targum states אֶקְדִּישׁ בְּזִכּוּתִי אִידֵי וְאֶחְזַרֵּית וְאֶחְזַר ית מדבחר יהוה: 26:6 I will sanctify my hands by my merit, and I have gone around your altar, O Lord. (EMC) The Septuagint states 26:6 νίψομαι ἐν ἁθώσις τὰς χεῖράς μου καὶ κυκλώσω τὸ θυσιαστήριόν σου κύριε 26:6 I will wash my hands in innocency, and compass thine altar, O Lord: (LXX) Notice how each translation describes David saying that he goes around or surrounds (אֶסְבְּבָה) the altar of the Lord (יְהוָה). It is obvious from the Psalm that there is a tradition of circling the altar like what we find here in the tradition of Sukkot. This may be why the rabbis make mention of and draw a parallel to the festival of Sukkot with regard to Tehillim / Psalms 26:6. The midrash states "I will wash my hands in innocence implies that the festive wreath must be got through purchase, not through robbery, for in a Mishnah we are taught, A festive wreath that is got by robbery or is withered as unfit for circling the altar with; for a festive wreath must be innocent of violence or robbery, lest the advocate turn accuser." (שיהא במקח ולא בגזל, דתנן לולב הגזול והיבש פסול, שיהא נקי מן החמס) The palm branches, myrtle, and willows of the brook function as witnesses of joy before God. Before God if these things were obtained by robbery, then rather than being a witness of joy they become an accuser of condemnation. The midrash goes into a parable to illustrate how this occurs.

"Rabbi Levi said, A man who uses a festive wreath go by robbery to whom may he be likened? To a highwayman who sat at a crossroads, robbing all those who came and went. And once even as a royal legate was passing on his way to levy the tax of a certain province, the highwayman, springing up against him got the better of him and robbed him, taking all he had with him. After a time the highwayman was captured and cast into prison. When the king's legate heard this, he went to the highwayman and said to him, Up and give me all that you robbed and taken away from me, and I will plead for you. The highwayman answered, of all that I seized upon and took away from you I have nothing left, except this rug which belongs to you. The legate said to him, Give it to me, and I will plead for you. And as the highwayman gave it to him, the legate said, Tomorrow you will be taken out to judgment, and when the king says to you, is there any man that will plead for you? I will make the plea. The next day, the highwayman was taken out to judgment. The king asked him, Have you a man to plead for you? And the highwayman replied, Such and such a legate. The king then sent for the legate and asked, do you know anything good of this man? The legate answered, I do indeed. On the day that you sent me to levy the tax of a certain province, this man springing out upon me, got the better of me, and robbed me, taking away all that I had with me. This very rug is his witness. Then all said, Woe to the man whose advocate turns accuser. Even so, when a man takes a festive wreath that is got by robbery, it cries out before the Holy One blessed be He, I was gotten by robbery. I was gotten by violence. Of such a man the ministering angels say, Woe to that man whose advocate turns accuser. Hence David said, I will

wash my hands in innocence; so will I compass Your altar, Or Lord, with a festive wreath got through purchase, not robbery.” (Midrash Tehillim 26, Part 5)

תא חפקמו, מיכרד תשרפב בשויש מיטסלל, המוד אוה המל לוזג בלול לטונ אוהש ימ יול יר הימדקו יולע מקו, אתנידמ אדחד איסומיד אבגימל יעב, וויגל דח רבע נמז דח, מיבשו מירבועה עמש, אקליפב ביהיתאיו האטסיל אוהה דיצתיא נימוי רתבל, היבג יוהד המ לכ ביסנו, היחפקו פלימ אנאו, ינממ הבסנו תיחפקד המ לכ יל בה סוק היל רמאו, היבגל ליזאו אכלמד אנויגל אוהה רמא, דדיד נמ אוהו, אטיפט נידה אלא, יל תיל דנימ תיבסנו תיחפקד המ לכ היל רמא, אתוכז דלע אכלמו אנידל קפנ תא רחמל היל רמא, היל היתי ביהי דכו, וכז דל פלימ אנאו היתי יל בה היל רמא אנידל קפנ רחמל, וכז דלע פלימ אנאו, אתוכז דלע פלימד שנ רב דל תיא דל רמאו דל ירק היל רמא, היל ארקו אכלמ חלש, נלפ וויגל היל רמא, וכז דלע פלימד שנ רב דל תיא אכלמ היל אייבגימל ינתחלשד אנמיז אוההב, היל אנא מיכח היל רמא, ארבג נידהב וכז פלימל תא מיכח דיהסמ אטיפט נידו, יאבג הוהד המ לכ ביסנו, יאחפקו ימדקו ילע מק, תינולפ אתנידמד איסומיד חווצו, לוזג בלול חקול מדא דכ, ורוגיטק ורוגינס השענש הזל יוא מירמוא לכה וליחתה, יולע ול השענש הז שיאל יוא הילע ניחווז תרשה יכאלמו, ינא סומח, ינא לוזג רמואו, ה"בקה ינפל לזגב אלו חקמב, יפכ וויקנב זיחרא דוד רמא דככיפל, ורוגיטק ורוגינס

So we can see according to the parable that a thief was making an attempt at freedom by using the testimony of someone he had robbed. Could you imagine actually trying to do that? The obvious problem here in the parable is that the thief was unrepentant. Judaism teaches that the condemned are to be given the opportunity to confess his sins on his way to execution so that he might have “a share in the world to come” (*Mishnah Sanhedrin 6:2*). Here in the parable the thief was going to the judge to be sentenced for his crime and he was not going to be executed. In fact, the one who was robbed was who made the offer to be an advocate on the thief’s behalf. It should have been obvious that the advocate would turn accuser when before the judge. Regardless of this, Midrash Tehillim 26, Part 5 concludes saying “*Woe to that man whose advocate turns accuser. Hence David said, I will wash my hands in innocence; so will I compass Your altar, Or Lord, with a festive wreath got through purchase, not robbery.*” The rabbis parallel this advocate / accuser with David washing his hands in innocence and compassing the altar of God. What exactly is the point of the midrash? When thinking on the parable in the midrash and the advocate who turned accuser, it is the testimony of the one who was robbed that changed based on the conversation he had with the thief. Think about this concept for a moment, the changing testimony that will be given at judgment. We know, according to the Scriptures, that the Word of God is called “*His Testimony,*” not only because the Scriptures testify of His will but that of His promises for each and every one of us who would grasp hold of Him, believe in His Messiah, and seek truth. Is it possible that the word of God could turn from advocate to accuser at the judgment throne of God? *Tehillim / Psalms 119: 1-2* states אֲשֶׁרֵי נִצְרִי עֲדֹתָיו ב אֲשֶׁרֵי תְּמִימֵי-דָרְךָ הֵהֲלֵכִים בְּתוֹרַת יְהוָה: 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. (NASB) The person who seeks the Lord with all of their heart is not one who is wise in their own conceit. The one who seeks the Lord is the one who dedicates himself to the covenant of God and yields obedience to the dictates of His Torah (*His Testimonies*). The thief in the parable did not yield himself to obedience to the Torah, he was a thief and he expected the one he robbed to help him to continue in his deception before the judge. The danger for us today is to live a life that is not in obedience to the Torah (or all of God’s Word) and then expect the testimony (God’s Word) to back us up before the judgment throne of the Lord. Reading through the Scriptures regarding deception before the judge of the heavens and the earth, we are told in *Revelation 20* that no one can deceive God, just like the palm branches, myrtle, and willows of the brook that are waived before the Lord, if they are gotten by robbery the Lord God Almighty will know.

Καὶ εἶδον θρόνον μέγαν λευκὸν καὶ τὸν καθήμενον ἐπ' αὐτόν, οὗ ἀπὸ τοῦ προσώπου ἔφυγεν ἡ γῆ καὶ ὁ οὐρανός, καὶ τόπος οὐχ εὐρέθη αὐτοῖς. καὶ εἶδον τοὺς νεκρούς, τοὺς μεγάλους καὶ τοὺς μικρούς, ἐστῶτας ἐνώπιον τοῦ θρόνου, καὶ βιβλία ἠνοιχθήσαν: καὶ ἄλλο βιβλίον ἠνοιχθή, ὃ ἐστὶν τῆς ζωῆς: καὶ ἐκρίθησαν οἱ νεκροὶ ἐκ τῶν γεγραμμένων ἐν τοῖς βιβλίοις κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτῶν. καὶ ἔδωκεν ἡ θάλασσα τοὺς νεκρούς τοὺς ἐν αὐτῇ, καὶ ὁ θάνατος καὶ ὁ ἅιδης ἔδωκαν τοὺς νεκρούς τοὺς ἐν αὐτοῖς, καὶ ἐκρίθησαν ἕκαστος κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτῶν. καὶ ὁ θάνατος καὶ ὁ ἅιδης ἐβλήθησαν εἰς τὴν λίμνην τοῦ πυρός. οὗτος ὁ θάνατος ὁ δευτέρος ἐστὶν, ἡ λίμνη τοῦ πυρός. καὶ εἴ τις οὐχ εὐρέθη ἐν τῇ βίβλῳ τῆς ζωῆς γεγραμμένος ἐβλήθη εἰς τὴν λίμνην τοῦ πυρός.

Revelation 20:11-15

20:11 Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. 20:12 And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. 20:13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. 20:14 Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. 20:15 And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. (NASB)

Interestingly, according to *Revelation 20:11-15*, the Word of God is the one who is opened and set before us and our lives are judged according to the sins we have committed and the Word of God. So if we live a life of disobedience, the Word of God will turn advocate to accuser. The Apostle John says Καὶ εἶδον θρόνον μέγαν λευκὸν καὶ τὸν καθήμενον ἐπ' αὐτόν, οὗ ἀπὸ τοῦ προσώπου ἔφυγεν ἡ γῆ καὶ ὁ οὐρανός, καὶ τόπος οὐχ εὐρέθη αὐτοῖς “*Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them.*” This verse shows us that in the presence of the Lord God Almighty no one can stand, in fact, heaven and earth flee from His presence. Nothing can be hidden, there is no deception before the Lord Almighty. The awesome power of the Lord God Almighty, even heaven and earth must be moved to make way for His presence. John says καὶ εἶδον τοὺς νεκρούς, τοὺς μεγάλους καὶ τοὺς μικρούς, ἐστῶτας ἐνώπιον τοῦ θρόνου, καὶ βιβλία ἠνοιχθήσαν: καὶ ἄλλο βιβλίον ἠνοιχθή, ὃ ἐστὶν τῆς ζωῆς: καὶ ἐκρίθησαν οἱ νεκροὶ ἐκ τῶν γεγραμμένων ἐν τοῖς βιβλίοις κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτῶν which translates literally “*An I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and scrolls (βιβλία) were opened. And another scroll (βιβλίον) was opened, which is the one of life. And were judged the dead from out of the things being written in the scrolls (βιβλίοις) according to their works.*” Notice how the text is written; their works done in the body were judged according to what was written in the scrolls. The scrolls (βιβλία) that are opened up are the Scrolls of the Word of God (The Bible), the Torah, Neviim, Ketuvim, and the Apostolic Writings. Each man, each person, each life will be judged based upon the Word of God! Examining the Hebrew text, Aramaic Targum, the Septuagint, and the theology of the rabbis in Midrash Tehillim 26, according to God’s word we are to walk in innocence before the Lord, and it is only in innocence that we are able to walk in His presence (*i.e. around the altar*). Note also this is why we need Yeshua the Messiah and the power of the Holy Spirit to empower our lives for service to the Lord. The idea that the Testimony of God is the Word of God, should lead us to Yeshua the Messiah who is the one who bore witness of our Father in Heaven. God has spoken to us in these last days by His Son, Yeshua the Messiah. He is the just, righteous, and true advocate on our behalf. But remember, if our lives do not measure up, the advocate may become accuser. We know that our lives do not measure up, this is why the Lord has provided atonement in Yeshua according to His Word. The point is we need to seek the Lord, seek His truth, and walk in innocence before Him seeking His help for our salvation, and in fact asking Him to make us to know His ways so that we can live obediently before him (*See the study on Tehillim / Psalms 25*). The significance of what we have studied here is that in order to be forgiven of our sins, we need an advocate

who will stand up for us before the Lord, we also must believe in this one advocate whom God had sent to save us from our sins. Yeshua the Messiah, He is the one in whom God has provided atonement in blood, the living Word. If you want to truly believe in God’s Word, then place your faith today, in Yeshua God’s only begotten Son to receive atonement for your soul. Let’s Pray.

Heavenly Father,

David stated that he would walk in innocence before You. Lord, we ask that You would make known Your ways, Your truth, and the path in which You want us to walk in. We Thank You Lord for teaching us Your ways and revealing to us your mercy and truth that is found in the One You sent to save us from our sins. Thank You for sending Your son Yeshua the Messiah who laid His life down on our behalf so that we may enter into Your salvation. Thank You Lord for paying the covenant price for the forgiveness of our sins. We believe that Your Word directs us to Your Son Yeshua, and that in Him we have the hope of eternal life. Help us to trust in You Lord as we wait patiently for You and Your presence each day. Help us to dedicated our lives to You each day, 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