



<p>ו בִּנְדָךְ אֶפְקִיד רוּחִי פְדִיתָה אוֹתִי  יְהוָה אֵל אֲמֹת: ז שְׁנֵאתִי הַשְׁמָרִים  הַכְּלִי-שָׁוֵא וְאֲנִי אֵל-יְהוָה בְּטַחְתִּי: ח  אֲגִילָה וְאֶשְׁמַחָה בְּחֶסֶדְךָ אֲשֶׁר רָאִיתָ  אֶת-עֲנֵנֵי יְדָעֶתָ בְּצִרּוֹת נַפְשִׁי: ט וְלֹא  הִסְגַּרְתָּנִי בְּיַד-אוֹיֵב הֶעֱמַדְתָּ בְּמַרְחָב  רַגְלִי: י חֲנַנִּי יְהוָה כִּי צָר-לִי עֲשֵׂשָׁה  כַּכֶּעֶס עֲנֵנֵי נַפְשִׁי וּבִטְנִי: יא כִּי כָלוּ  בְּגִזְוֹן חַיִּי וּשְׁנוֹתַי בְּאֲנָחָה כְּשֶׁל בְּעוֹנֵי  כַחֲזִי וְעֲצָמֵי עֲשָׂשׁוּ: יב מִכָּל-צָרָרִי  הִיִּיתִי חֲרָפָה וְלִשְׁכַּנִּי   מָאֵד וּפְחַד לִ-  מִיָּדְעִי רָאִי בַחֲזֶן נְדָדוּ מִמֶּנִּי: יג נֶשֶׁ-  פַּחְתִּי כִּמֵּת מֵלֵב הִיִּיתִי כְּכִלֵי אֲבֹד: יד  כִּי שָׁמַעְתִּי   דְּבַת רַבִּים מְגוֹר מִסְכִּיב  בְּהֶוְסְדָם יַחַד עָלַי לְקַחַת נַפְשִׁי זָמְמוּ:  טו וְאֲנִי   עָלִידָה בְּטַחְתִּי יְהוָה אֲמַרְתִּי  אֱלֹהֵי אֲתָה: טז בִּנְדָךְ עֲתַתִּי הַצִּילָ-  נִי מִיַּד-אוֹיְבֵי וּמִרְדָּפָי: יז הֲאִירָה  פְּנֵיךָ עַל-עַבְדְּךָ הוֹשִׁיעֵנִי בְּחֶסֶדְךָ: יח  יְהוָה אֵל-אֲבוֹשָׁה כִּי קָרַאתִיךָ יִבְשׁוּ  רַשְׁעִים יִדְמוּ לְשָׂאוֹל: יט תִּאֲלַמְנָה  שִׁפְתֵי שֶׁקֶר הַדְּבָרוֹת עַל-צַדִּיק עֲתַק  בְּגִאֲוָה וּבוֹז: כ מָה רַב טוֹבְךָ אֲשֶׁר-  צָפַנְתָּ לִירְאִיךָ פַעֲלֹתָ לַחֹסִים בְּךָ נִגְדָה  בְּנֵי אָדָם: כא תִּסְתִּירֵם בְּסֶתֶר פְּנֵיךָ  מִרְכָּסֵי אִישׁ תִּצְפְּנֵם בְּסֶפֶה מְרִיב  לְשָׁנוֹת: כב בָּרוּךְ יְהוָה כִּי-הִפְלִיא  חֶסֶדּוֹ לִי בְּעִיר מְצוֹר: כג וְאֲנִי   אֲמַ-  רְתִי בְּחַפְזִי נִגְרַזְתִּי מִנֶּגֶד עֵינֶיךָ אֲכֹן  שָׁמַעְתָּ קוֹל תַּחְנוּנֵי בְּשׁוּעֵי אֱלִידָה: כד  אֶהְבֹּו אֶת-יְהוָה כָּל-חֲסִידָיו אֲמוֹנִים  נֶצֶר יְהוָה וּמְשַׁלֵּם עַל-יָתֵר עֲשֵׂה  גִאֲוָה: כה חֲזַקוּ וַיֶּאֱמַץ לְבַבְכֶם כָּל-  הַמְּיַחֲלִים לִיהוָה:</p>	<p>ו באיךד אמני אפקיד רוחי פריקתא יתי יהוה  אלהא קשיטא: ז שנאתי דנטרין עובדין  דדמין ללמא ולשיקרא ואנא על יהוה כלי-  תי במימרך ייי איתרחיצית: ח אביע ואחדי  בטיבותך בטובך די חמית ית סיגופי ידעתא  בעקתינ דנפשי: ט ולא מסרתני באידא דב-  עיל דבבא אקימתא לרוחא ריגלי: י חוס  עלי יהוה ארום עיק לי בלאת חשכת מרוגזא  עיני איטלק נפשי וכריסי: יא ארום שיציאו  בדוונא חיי יומי ושניי בתינחא תקל אתקל  בחובי חילי ואברי כלאא מתכליאון: יב יתיר  מן כל מעיקיי הוית כיסופא חיסודא ולשבבי  לחדא ודלוחא לידעין לי דחמין לי בשוקא  ערקין מן קדמי: יג אתנשיית היך שכיבא  מן רעיונא דמתייאש מליבא הוית כמן דפחור  תביר דמיתבר: יד מטול די ארום שמעית  טיב ביש דארמין עלי עממין סגיאין רתיתא  מחזור חזור באיתכנשיהון כחדא עלי למיסב  נפשי חשיבו: טו ואנא עלך רחיצית במימ-  רך התרחיצית יהוה אמרית אלהי אנת: טז  באיךד אינון זמני פורקני פצי יתי מן יד בעלי  דבבי ומרודפי: יז אנהר סבר אפך על עבדך  פרוקני בטובך: יח יהוה לא אבהית ארום  קריתך יבהתון רשיעי ישתקון ויחתון לשיול  לכית קבורתא: יט תתפקקן סיפוותי שיק-  רא שפוון דמללן שקרא דממללן על צדיקיא  גידופין בגיותנותא ובסרנותא: כ כמה סגי  טובך דאטשיתא לדחלין מינד עבדתא לס-  ברין עלך למפרע להון אגר טב קביל בני  נשא: כא תממריןון בטמרא בעידן רוגזן  מגידודי גיבריא תטשינון כד במטלתא מת-  גרת לישניא: כב בריך יהוה ארום פריש  טיבותיה לי בקרתא כריכתא: כג ואנא אמ-  רית באיתבעותי למיערוק אישתציית מקביל  יקרך בקושטא שמעת קל צלותי באתחננותי  לותך: כד רחומי ית יהוה כל חסידוי מהמניא  נטיר מן ביש יהוה ופריע על דורבני דעבדין  גיותנותא: כה תקופו ויתעלים רעיונכון כל  דכיילין לבכון כל דרחצין למימרא דיהוה:</p>	<p>31:5 εις χεῖράς σου παραθήσομαι τὸ πνεῦμά  μου ἑλυτρώσω με κύριε ὁ θεὸς τῆς ἀληθείας  31:6 ἐμίσησας τοὺς διαφυλάσσοντας  ματαιότητάς διὰ κενῆς ἐγὼ δὲ ἐπὶ τῷ  κυρίῳ ἠλπισα 31:7 ἀγαλλιάσομαι καὶ  εὐφρανθήσομαι ἐπὶ τῷ ἔλεει σου ὅτι ἐπεῖδες  τὴν ταπεινώσιν μου ἕσωσας ἐκ τῶν ἀναγκῶν  τὴν ψυχὴν μου 31:8 καὶ οὐ συνέκλεισάς με  εἰς χεῖρας ἐχθροῦ ἕστησας ἐν εὐρυχώρῳ  τοὺς πόδας μου 31:9 ἐλέησόν με κύριε ὅτι  θλίβομαι ἐταράχθη ἐν θυμῷ ὁ ὀφθαλμὸς  μου ἢ ψυχὴ μου καὶ ἡ γαστήρ μου 31:10 ὅτι  ἐξέλειπεν ἐν ὁδῷν ἡ ζωὴ μου καὶ τὰ ἔτη μου  ἐν στεναγμοῖς ἠσθένησεν ἐν πτωχείᾳ ἡ ἰσχύς  μου καὶ τὰ ὀστά μου ἐταράχθησαν 31:11  παρὰ πάντας τοὺς ἐχθρούς μου ἐγενήθη  ὄνειδος καὶ τοῖς γείτοσίν μου σφόδρα καὶ  φόβος τοῖς γνωστοῖς μου οἱ θεωροῦντές με  ἔξω ἔφυγον ἀπ' ἐμοῦ 31:12 ἐπελήσθη ὡσεὶ  νεκρὸς ἀπὸ καρδίας ἐγενήθη ὡσεὶ σκευὸς  ἀπολωλὸς 31:13 ὅτι ἤκουσα ψόγον πολλῶν  παροικούντων κυκλόθεν ἐν τῷ ἐπισυναχθῆναι  αὐτοὺς ἅμα ἐπ' ἐμὲ τοῦ λαβεῖν τὴν ψυχὴν μου  ἐβουλεύσαντο 31:14 ἐγὼ δὲ ἐπὶ σὲ ἠλπισα  κύριε εἶπα σὺ εἶ ὁ θεὸς μου 31:15 ἐν ταῖς χερσίν  σου οἱ καιροὶ μου ῥῦσαι με ἐκ χειρὸς ἐχθρῶν  μου καὶ ἐκ τῶν καταδιωκόντων με 31:16  ἐπίφανον τὸ πρόσωπόν σου ἐπὶ τὸν δοῦλόν  σου σῶσόν με ἐν τῷ ἔλεει σου 31:17 κύριε  μὴ καταισχυνηθῆην ὅτι ἐπεκαλεσάμην σε  αἰσχυνηθῆισαν οἱ ἀσεβεῖς καὶ καταχθῆισαν  εἰς ἄδου 31:18 ἄλαλα γενηθήτω τὰ χεῖλη τὰ  δόλια τὰ λαλοῦντα κατὰ τοῦ δικαίου ἀνομίαν  ἐν ὑπερηφανίᾳ καὶ ἐξουδενώσῃ 31:19 ὡς  πολὺ τὸ πλῆθος τῆς χρηστότητός σου κύριε  ἦς ἔκρυσας τοῖς φοβουμένοις σε ἐξείργασω  τοῖς ἐλπίζουσιν ἐπὶ σὲ ἐναντίον τῶν υἱῶν  τῶν ἀνθρώπων 31:20 κατακρύψεις αὐτοὺς ἐν  ἀποκρύφῳ τοῦ προσώπου σου ἀπὸ παραχθῆς  ἀνθρώπων σκεπάσεις αὐτοὺς ἐν σκιῇ ἀπὸ  ἀντιλογίας γλωσσῶν 31:21 εὐλογητὸς κύριος  ὅτι ἔθαυμάστωσεν τὸ ἔλεος αὐτοῦ ἐν πόλει  περιοχῆς 31:22 ἐγὼ δὲ εἶπα ἐν τῇ ἐκστάσει  μου ἀπέριμμαι ἄρα ἀπὸ προσώπου τῶν  ὀφθαλμῶν σου διὰ τοῦτο εἰσήκουσας τῆς  φωνῆς τῆς δεήσεώς μου ἐν τῷ κεκραγέναι  με πρὸς σὲ 31:23 ἀγαπήσατε τὸν κύριον  πάντες οἱ ὄσιοι αὐτοῦ ὅτι ἀληθείας ἐκζητεῖ  κύριος καὶ ἀνταποδίδωσιν τοῖς περισσῶς  ποιούσιν ὑπερηφανίαν 31:24 ἀνδρίεσθε  καὶ κραταιούσθε ἡ καρδία ὑμῶν πάντες οἱ  ἐλπίζοντες ἐπὶ κύριον</p>
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**Tehillim / Psalms 31**

For the choir director. A Psalm of David. 31:1 In You, O Lord, I have taken refuge; Let me never be ashamed; In Your righteousness deliver me. 31:2 Incline Your ear to me, rescue me quickly; Be to me a rock of strength, A stronghold to save me. 31:3 For You are my rock and my fortress; For Your name's sake You will lead me and guide me. 31:4 You will pull me out of the net which they have secretly laid for me, For You are my strength. 31:5 Into Your hand I commit my spirit; You have ransomed me, O Lord, God of truth. 31:6 I hate those who regard vain idols, But I trust in the Lord. 31:7 I will rejoice and be glad in Your lovingkindness, Because You have seen my affliction; You have known the troubles of my soul, 31:8 And You have not given me over into the hand of the enemy; You have set my feet in a large place. 31:9 Be gracious to me, O Lord, for I am in distress; My eye is wasted away from grief, my soul and my body also. 31:10 For my life is spent with sorrow And my years with sighing; My strength has failed because of my iniquity, And my body has wasted away. 31:11 Because of all my adversaries, I have become a reproach, Especially to my neighbors, And an object of dread to my acquaintances; Those who see me in the street flee from me. 31:12 I am forgotten as a dead man, out of mind; I am like a broken vessel. 31:13 For I have heard the slander of many, Terror is on every side; While they took counsel together against me, They schemed to take away my life. 31:14 But as for me, I trust in You, O Lord, I say, "You are my God." 31:15 My times are in Your hand; Deliver me from the hand of my enemies and from those who persecute me. 31:16 Make Your face to shine upon Your servant; Save me in Your lovingkindness. 31:17 Let me not be put to shame, O Lord, for I call upon You; Let the wicked be put to shame, let them be silent in Sheol. 31:18 Let the lying lips be mute, Which speak arrogantly against the righteous With pride and contempt. 31:19 How great is Your goodness, Which You have stored up for those who fear You, Which You have wrought for those who take refuge in You, Before the sons of men! 31:20 You hide them in the secret place of Your presence from the conspiracies of man; You keep them secretly in a shelter from the strife of tongues. 31:21 Blessed be the Lord, For He has made marvelous His lovingkindness to me in a besieged city. 31:22 As for me, I said in my alarm, "I am cut off from before Your eyes"; Nevertheless You heard the voice of my supplications When I cried to You. 31:23 O love the Lord, all you His godly ones! The Lord preserves the faithful And fully recompenses the proud doer. 31:24 Be strong and let your heart take courage, All you who hope in the Lord. (NASB)

**Toviyah / Psalms Chapter 31**

31:1 For praise; a psalm of David. 31:2 In your word, O Lord, I have placed my hope; I will never be disappointed; by your generosity save me. 31:3 Incline your ear to me, in haste save me. Be for me a strong fortress, a fortified stronghold to redeem me. 31:4 For you are my strength and trust; and for the sake of your name, guide me and sustain me. 31:5 Take me out of this net that they spread for me, for you are my strength. 31:6 Into your hand I will place my spirit; you have redeemed me, O Lord, true God. 31:7 I hate those who observe practices that are like vanity and lies; but I have relied on the Lord. 31:8 I will rejoice and be glad in your kindness, for you have seen my affliction, you know the troubles of my soul. 31:9 And you have not handed me over to the hand of my enemy; you have made my feet stand in a broad place. 31:10 Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I am in distress. My eye is wasted from agitation; my soul and my belly are destroyed. 31:11 For my life is ended in misery, and my years in sighing; my strength has failed because of my sin, and my limbs are used up. 31:12 I have become a more shameful thing than all my oppressors, and more so to my neighbors – a fearful thing to those who know me, those who see me in the street flee from my presence. 31:13 I am forgotten like a dead man from the mind; I have become like a broken vessel of the potter. 31:14 Because I have heard an evil report which many peoples say about me; terror is all around when they gather together against me; they have planned to take my soul. 31:15 But I have put my trust in you, O Lord; I said, "You are my God." 31:16 In your hand are the times of my redemption; save me from the hand of my enemies and persecutors. 31:17 Shine your countenance on your servant; redeem me by your goodness. 31:18 O Lord, I will not be disappointed, for I have called upon you; let the wicked be disappointed, let them be silent and descend to Sheol. 31:19 Let the lips of falsehood be stopped up, [the lips] that speak slander against the righteous in pride and contempt. 31:20 How great is your goodness that you have hidden for those that fear you; you have acted for those who hope in you, to pay them a good reward in front of the sons of men. 31:21 You will hide them in a hiding place in the time of your anger from troops of warriors; you will conceal them as in a shelter from the strife of tongues. 31:22 Blessed be the Lord, for he has exhibited his kindness to me in the walled city. 31:23 And I thought when I sought to flee, I have been eliminated from the presence of your glory; [but] in truth you heard the sound of my prayer when I made supplication to you. 31:24 Love the Lord, all his devotees; the Lord keeps the faithful from harm, and pays back the haughty who act proudly. 31:25 Be strong, and let your mind be sturdy, all you who have confidence in the word of the Lord. (EMC)

**Psalmoi / Psalms 31**

For the end, a Psalm of David, an utterance of extreme fear. 31:1 O Lord, I have hoped in thee; let me never be ashamed: deliver me in thy righteousness and rescue me. 31:2 Incline thine ear to me; make haste to rescue me: be thou to me for a protecting God, and for a house of refuge to save me. 31:3 For thou art my strength and my refuge; and thou shalt guide me for thy name's sake, and maintain me. 31:4 Thou shalt bring me out of the snare which they have hidden for me; for thou, O Lord, art my defender. 31:5 Into thine hands I will commit my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth. 31:6 Thou has hated them that idly persist in vanities: but I have hoped in the Lord. 31:7 I will exult and be glad in thy mercy: for thou hast looked upon mine affliction; thou hast saved my soul from distresses. 31:8 And thou hast not shut me up into the hands of the enemy: thou hast set my feet in a wide place. 31:9 Pity me, O Lord, for I am afflicted: my eye is troubled with indignation, my soul and by belly. 31:10 For my life is spent with grief, and my years with groanings: my strength has been weakened through poverty, and my bones are troubled. 31:11 I became a reproach among all mine enemies, but exceedingly so to my neighbours, and a fear to mine acquaintance: they that saw me without fled from me. 31:12 I have been forgotten as a dead man out of mind: I am become as a broken vessel. 31:13 For I heard the slander of many that dwelt round about: when they were gathered together against me, they took counsel to take my life. 31:14 But I hoped in thee, O Lord: I said, Thou art my God. 31:15 My lots are in thy hands: deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, 31:16 and from them that persecute me. Make thy face to shine upon thy servant: save me in thy mercy. 31:17 O Lord, let me not be ashamed, for I have called upon thee: let the ungodly be ashamed, and brought down to Hades. 31:18 Let the deceitful lips become dumb, which speak iniquity against the righteous with pride and scorn. 31:19 How abundant is the multitude of thy goodness, O Lord, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee! thou hast wrought it out for them that hope on thee, in the presence of the sons of men. 31:20 Thou wilt hide them in the secret of thy presence from the vexation of man: thou wilt screen them in a tabernacle from the contradiction of tongues. 31:21 Blessed be the Lord: for he has magnified his mercy in a fortified city. 31:22 But I said in my extreme fear, I am cast out from the sight of thine eyes: therefore thou didst hearken, O Lord, to the voice of my supplication when I cried to thee. 31:23 Love the Lord, all ye his saints: for the Lord seeks for truth, and renders a reward to them that deal very proudly. 31: 24 Be of good courage, and let your heart be strengthened, all ye that hope in the Lord. (LXX)

This week's study is from *Tehillim / Psalms 31:1-25*, the opening verses state: **א לְמַנְצֵחַ מְזֻמֹּר לְדָוִד: For the choir director. A Psalm of David. 31:1 In You, O Lord, I have taken refuge; Let me never be ashamed; In Your righteousness deliver me. (NASB)** David seeks refuge in the Lord never to be ashamed and because of the Lord's righteousness He will deliver him. What does it mean that *"because of the Lord's righteousness He will deliver?"* (בְּצַדִּיקְתָּךְ פְּלִטְנִי) It is interesting that the Hebrew word used for *"deliver me"* (פְּלִטְנִי) is from the root word פלט meaning *"escape"* as in escaping his enemies, therefore David is saying that the Lord, because of His righteousness, He will



help him to escape from his enemies, from trials and troubles, this is a form of rescuing in a time of need. According to *Tehillim / Psalms 34:17* David said: צַעֲקוּ וַיהוָה שָׁמַע וּמְכַל-צָרוֹתֵם הִצִּילָם: *34:17 The righteous cry, and the Lord hears And delivers them out of all their troubles. (NASB)* and in *Tehillim / Psalms 107:6* it says: וַיִּצְעֲקוּ אֶל-יְהוָה בְּצָר לָהֶם מִמְּצוּקוֹתֵיהֶם יִצִּילָם: *107:6 Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble; He delivered them out of their distresses. (NASB)* We can conclude that when the righteous cry for help, the Lord hears and delivers. When we think of “the Lord who delivers” it naturally makes us think about spiritual “deliverance and salvation” of the Lord. Thinking on this topic of deliverance and salvation, leads to what the Scriptures say regarding the “Kingdom of Heaven” or “Kingdom of God.” If you were asked to describe the Kingdom of Heaven, deliverance, and salvation, according to the Bible, how would you answer that question? How would modern Christianity today answer that question? Would there be a difference between your answer and what has been taught from the pulpit? Many people believe that Yeshua taught the Kingdom of God is something that exists only in heaven and it is something that we will one day attain but we are still waiting for today. On the other hand, in *Luke 17:20-21*, Yeshua taught the following saying, <sup>20</sup>Ἐπερωτηθεῖς δὲ ὑπὸ τῶν Φαρισαίων πότε ἔρχεται ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ ἀπεκρίθη αὐτοῖς καὶ εἶπεν, Οὐκ ἔρχεται ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ μετὰ παρατηρήσεως, <sup>21</sup>οὐδὲ ἐροῦσιν, Ἴδου ᾧδε: ἢ, Ἐκεῖ: ἰδοὺ γὰρ ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ ἐντὸς ὑμῶν ἐστιν. “Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, ‘The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, ‘See here!’ or ‘See there!’ For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you.’” It is interesting that according to the Greek text, Yeshua said ἐντὸς (entos) which translates “within” or “in the midst of” you. In the Apostolic Writings, Yeshua explained that the Kingdom of Heaven was coupled with repentance (*Matthew 3:2, 4:17*). The Kingdom of Heaven is within you, in your midst, and thus the message of the gospel is something that “we live” as the children of God. This means that the kingdom of God is available to us right here, right now, we do not have to wait until after we die in order to experience the Kingdom of Heaven and the promises of God. We have access to the promises of God right now in our lives in Yeshua the Messiah! There is healing available today for every individual, the power of God is here now to deliver us from any kind of distress or trouble, just like David is saying in the Psalms. In addition to this, often we hear it said by the anti-missionaries that “if Yeshua was the Messiah, why has he not brought peace to this world?” They say that the rabbis state the Messiah will bring peace to the world and between men. It is interesting, according to the *Talmud Bavli, Sanhedrin 37a* we read the following.

***Talmud Bavli, Sanhedrin 37a***

לפיכך נברא אדם יחידי, ללמדך שכל המאבד נפש אחת מישראל - מעלה עליו הכתוב כאילו איבד עולם מלא, וכל המקיים נפש אחת מישראל - מעלה עליו הכתוב כאילו קיים עולם מלא.

*“For this reason was man created alone, to teach you that whosoever destroys a single soul, Scripture imputes (guilt) to him as though he had destroyed a complete world; and whosoever preserves a single soul, Scripture ascribes (merit) to him as though he had preserved a complete world.”*

According to the rabbis in the *Talmud Bavli, Sanhedrin 37a*, each person is considered an entire world. Yeshua the Messiah did in fact make peace with the entire world, in “our” entire world, in our lives! In doing this he has also made peace between men, between those who have made Him Lord of their lives! You can experience this and the Kingdom of Heaven, if you are willing to make Him Lord of your life, to rule and to reign in your midst. Note how this is the very concept of Yeshua’s words when He said ἐντὸς (entos), in our midst, all of our lives are to be lived for Him, we serve Him, He guides and directs us in His ways, by His Holy Spirit, we have the power of God to overcome sin, He can and does deliver us each day, etc. The Messiah has in fact, according to the Holy Scriptures and according to the Rabbis (*Sanhedrin 37a*), brought peace to each man who is rabbinically considered a complete world! When we being to think about the Scriptures from this perspective, it is possible to answer the anti-missionaries even from a rabbinic per-

spective. According to the Apostolic Writings, the Holy Spirit lives inside of us, if we abide in Christ and Christ abides in us. The Holy Spirit sets us on fire for the Lord and we burn in zeal for the things of God because our entire world has been changed and when our world has been changed our perspective of the world around us changes also. Has this happened to you yet in your life and walk in Christ? Everything in life, everything we do, and everyone we come in contact with should be influenced because the Lord lives ἐντὸς (entos), in our midst. Does this sound like what Paul was saying to the Colossians in *Colossians 3:14-17* <sup>14</sup>ἐπὶ πάντων δὲ τούτοις τὴν ἀγάπην, ὃ ἐστὶν σύνδεσμος τῆς τελειότητος. <sup>15</sup>καὶ ἡ εἰρήνη τοῦ Χριστοῦ βραβεύετω ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν, εἰς ἣν καὶ ἐκλήθητε ἐν ἐνὶ σώματι: καὶ εὐχάριστοι γίνεσθε. <sup>16</sup>ὁ λόγος τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐνοικεῖτω ἐν ὑμῖν πλουσίως, ἐν πάσῃ σοφίᾳ διδάσκοντες καὶ νουθετοῦντες ἑαυτοὺς ψαλμοῖς, ὕμνοις, ᾠδαῖς πνευματικαῖς ἐν [τῇ] χάριτι ἄδοντες ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν τῷ θεῷ: <sup>17</sup>καὶ πᾶν ὃ τι ἐὰν ποιῆτε ἐν λόγῳ ἢ ἐν ἔργῳ, πάντα ἐν ὀνόματι κυρίου Ἰησοῦ, εὐχαριστοῦντες τῷ θεῷ πατρὶ δι’ αὐτοῦ. *3:14 Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity. 3:15 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful. 3:16 Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. 3:17 Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father. (NASB)* Yeshua said in *Luke 6:45* ὁ ἀγαθὸς ἄνθρωπος ἐκ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ θησαυροῦ τῆς καρδίας προφέρει τὸ ἀγαθόν, καὶ ὁ πονηρὸς ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ προφέρει τὸ πονηρόν: ἐκ γὰρ περισσεύματος καρδίας λαλεῖ τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ. *‘The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart. (NASB)* If our world is changed, everything we do will be in the name of the Lord and the good treasure the Lord deposits in our hearts will be brought forth. When your world is created new you are given a testimony to give to others of how the Lord is working in and through you. Praise the Lord!

In *Tehillim / Psalms 31*, David requests that the Lord rescue him quickly, to be his rock of strength, and a stronghold to save (31:2). He then declares the Lord to be these things and that He will lead and guide him (31:3). The Scriptures say | אָזְנְךָ מְהֵרָה הַצִּילֵנִי הָיֵה לִי | לְצוּר-מְעוֹז לְבֵית מְצוּדוֹת לְהוֹשִׁיעֵנִי: | *31:2 Incline Your ear to me, rescue me quickly; Be to me a rock of strength, A stronghold to save me. 31:3 For You are my rock and my fortress; For Your name’s sake You will lead me and guide me. (NASB)* It is interesting in *Tehillim / Psalms 31:2 (3)* that David says the Lord is his “rock of strength” (לְצוּר-מְעוֹז) whereas in *Tehillim / Psalms 31:3 (4)* David says “You are my rock and my fortress” (כִּי-סִלְעִי וּמְצוּדָתִי אַתָּה) using two different words for the work rock צוּר “rock, cliff; fortress” and סִלְעַ “rock, petro; boulder, cliff.” Note that according to Parashat Haazinu we read from *Devarim / Deuteronomy 32:4* הַצּוּר תָּמִים פְּעֻלוֹ כִּי כָל-דַּרְכָּיו מְשֻׁפָּט אֵל אֲמוּנָה וְאֵין עוֹל צְדִיק וְיִשָּׁר הוּא: *32:4 ‘The Rock! His work is perfect, For all His ways are just; A God of faithfulness and without injustice, Righteous and upright is He. (NASB)* According to this verse from the Torah, “the deeds of the צוּר (Rock) are perfect...” The Targum Onkelos translates צוּר tzur as “Mighty One, תְּקִיפָא” (עוֹבְדוּהִי) ד תְּקִיפָא דְשְׁלֵמִין עוֹבְדוּהִי) (אֲרִי כָל-אֲרִיחָתִיהָ דִּינָא אֱלֹהָא מְהִימְנָא דְמוֹ-קְדָמוּהִי עוֹלָה לָא נִפְק דְמוֹ-קְדָמוּ-יָפִי וְקָשִׁיט הוּא: meaning God, Who is referred to as a צוּר Tzur, which literally means “rock.” In our prayers we find this expression as well, for instance, צוּר יִשְׂרָאֵל “Zur Yisrael,” the “Rock of Israel.” Maimonides (Ramban) understands this to mean that God is the “rock from which all things are made, the source of all that exists” (*Guide for the Perplexed 1:16, [http://www.sefaria.org/Guide\\_for\\_the\\_Perplexed.1.16.1](http://www.sefaria.org/Guide_for_the_Perplexed.1.16.1), accessed November 20, 2013*). In addition to these things, it is interesting to note something in the rabbinic literature regarding the rock, the children of Israel, and the wilderness, according to Midrash Rabba Bamidbar 1.2.

## Midrash Rabba, Bamidbar 1.2

(שם במדבר כ') ולא היהמים לעדה, והיאך היתה הבאר עשויה סלע כמין כוורת היתה ומתגלגלת ובאת עמהם במסעות וכיון שהיו הדגלים חונים והמשכן עומד היה אותו הסלע בא ויושב לו בחצר

אהל מועד והנשיאים באים ועומדים על גביו ואומרים עלי באר והיתה עולה, ואח"כ הבאתי לכם שלוים, המדבר הייתי לישראל שמא כמדבר נהגתי עמכם אלא אם ארץ מאפליה לא אני בידי הייתי מאיר לכם שנא' (שמות יג)

*“How was the well constructed? It was rock-shaped like a kind of bee-hive, and wherever they journeyed it rolled along and came with them. When the standards [under which the tribes journeyed] halted and the tabernacle was set up, that same rock would come and settle down in the court of the Tent of Meeting and the princes would come and stand upon it and say, Rise up, O well, and it would rise.”*

In addition to this, the Targum Jonathan expands upon *Bamidbar / Numbers 21:19* to describe the rock or “well” that “followed” them (the children of Israel) saying:

*“From the time that the well in Mattanah was given them, it was made again to them brooks that were overflowing and violent; and again it went up unto the tops of the mountains, and went down with them into the valleys...”*

ומן דאתיהבת להון למתנא חזרת למיסוק עימהון לטוורייתא רמייא ומטוורייתא רמייא נחתא עימהון לגלימתא מחזרא לכל משיריתא דישראל ומשקיא יתהון כל חד וחד בתרע משכניה

So the rabbis who translated Targum Jonathan use a parable to say that these waters that proceeded from the rock followed Israel and gave them life giving waters. In the Tosefta, the tradition is related as follows (Note, *the Tosefta is the rabbinic commentary on the Mishnah compiled in the 5th century A.D. Sukkah 3.11, cited in Strack and Billerbeck, Kommentar zum Neuen Testament, vol. 3, p. 406; cf. Neusner, p.220*):

*“It was likewise with the well that was with the children of Israel in the wilderness, it [the well] was like a rock that was full of holes like a sieve from which water trickled and arose as from the opening of a flask. It [the rock-well] ascended with them to the top of the hills and descended with them into the valleys; wherever Israel tarried there it tarried over against the entrance to the tabernacle”*

According to these references from the rabbis, there appears to be a Midrashic tradition dating back to the time of the translating of the Targums (Aramaic translations) and of the Talmud, that the parable of the rock that followed Israel giving them life giving waters was taught to the children of Israel. What is interesting is that according to the Apostolic Writings, it appears that the Apostle Paul utilizes the rabbinic midrash while speaking to the Corinthians in *1 Corinthians 10:1-4*. What is interesting to note is that the first Century people would have been familiar with this parable of the rock that followed Israel.

### **1 Corinthians 10:1-4**

*10:1 For I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea; 10:2 and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea; 10:3 and all ate the same spiritual food; 10:4 and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Christ. (NASB)*

<sup>1</sup>Οὐ θέλω γὰρ ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν, ἀδελφοί, ὅτι οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν πάντες ὑπὸ τὴν νεφέλην ἦσαν καὶ πάντες διὰ τῆς θαλάσσης διήλθον, <sup>2</sup>καὶ πάντες εἰς τὸν Μωϋσῆν ἐβαπτίσθησαν ἐν τῇ νεφέλῃ καὶ ἐν τῇ θαλάσῃ, <sup>3</sup>καὶ πάντες τὸ αὐτὸ πνευματικὸν βρῶμα ἔφαγον, <sup>4</sup>καὶ πάντες τὸ αὐτὸ πνευματικὸν ἔπιον πόμα: ἔπιον γὰρ ἐκ πνευματικῆς ἀκολουθούσης πέτρας: ἡ πέτρα δὲ ἦν





**ספר דברים פרק ט**

עֲמָה וְנִחַלְתָּהּ אֲשֶׁר פְּדִיתָ בְּגִדְלָהּ אֲשֶׁר-הוֹצֵאתָ מִמִּצְרַיִם בְּיַד חֲזָקָה: כֹּז זָכַר לְעַבְדֶּיךָ לְאַבְ-  
רָהָם לְיִצְחָק וְלְיַעֲקֹב אֶל-תַּפְּוֹן אֶל-קָשִׁי הָעַם הַזֶּה

**ספר דברים פרק כא**

לְעַמָּה יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר-פְּדִיתָ יְהוָה וְאֶל-תַּתְּוֹן דָּם נָקִי בְּקִרְבֵּי עַמָּה יִשְׂרָאֵל וְנִכְפַּר לָהֶם הַדָּם: ט  
וְאַתָּה תִּבְעֵר הַדָּם הַנָּקִי מִקִּרְבָּהּ כִּי-תַעֲשֶׂה הַיִּשָּׁר

**ספר שמואל ב פרק ז**

מִפְּנֵי עַמָּה אֲשֶׁר פְּדִיתָ לָהּ מִמִּצְרַיִם גּוֹיִם וְאַלְהֵינוּ: כֹּד וְתִכְוֶנֶן לָהּ אֶת-עַמָּה יִשְׂרָאֵל | לָהּ לְעַם  
עַד-עוֹלָם וְאַתָּה יְהוָה הָיִיתָ לָהֶם לְאֱלֹהִים: כה

**ספר תהילים פרק עא**

וְנִפְשֵׁי אֲשֶׁר פְּדִיתָ: כֹּד גַּם-לְשׁוֹנֵי כָל-הַיּוֹם תִּהְיֶה צְדָקָתְךָ כִּי-בִשְׁוֹ כִּי-תִפְּרוּ מִבְּקָשֵׁי רַעְתֵּי:

**ספר נחמיה פרק א**

עַבְדֶּיךָ וְעַמָּה אֲשֶׁר פְּדִיתָ בְּכַחַהּ הַגְּדוֹל וּבִיְדֵי הַחֲזָקָה: יא אֲנָא אֲדֹנָי תְּהִי נָא אֲזִנְיָהּ-קִשְׁבָּת  
אֶל-תְּפִלַּת עַבְדְּךָ וְאֶל-תְּפִלַּת עַבְדֶּיךָ הַחֹפְצִים

**ספר דברי הימים א פרק יז**

לְגִרְשׁ מִפְּנֵי עַמָּה אֲשֶׁר-פְּדִיתָ מִמִּצְרַיִם גּוֹיִם: כב וְתַתְּוֹן אֶת-עַמָּה יִשְׂרָאֵל | לָהּ לְעַם עַד-עוֹלָם  
וְאַתָּה יְהוָה הָיִיתָ לָהֶם לְאֱלֹהִים: כג וְעַתָּה יְהוָה הַדְּבָר

The interesting point of David's statement is that he declares the Lord is able to deliver him from the net or snare of the enemy, that he (David) commits his spirit to the Lord, and that the Lord has redeemed him in the sense of the Lord making payment with money or taking something to use as a substitute in his place. In the Scripture references shown above, this redemption פְּדִיתָ that is from Egypt seems to draw a parallel to the lamb of God during Pesach. There was a costly price that was paid, the price of an innocent life, the blood of the lamb. The Lord saved Israel, not only physically, but spiritually, just like He is doing today for us.

What is interesting about these verses is that David follows these words saying that it is those who trust in idols that set these traps for him (31:7, יָדַעְתָּ בְּצָרוֹת, ח אֲגִילָה וְאֲשַׁמְחָה בְּחִסְדְּךָ אֲשֶׁר רָאִיתָ אֶת-עַנְיִי יָדַעְתָּ בְּצָרוֹת, 31:7) saying 31:6 *I hate those who regard vain idols, But I trust in the Lord.* (NASB) The Aramaic Targum states 31:7 *I hate those who observe practices that are like vanity and lies; but I have relied on the Lord.* (EMC) and the Septuagint states 31:6 *ἐμίσησας τοὺς διαφυλάσσοντας ματαιότητας διὰ κενῆς ἐγὼ δὲ ἐπὶ τῷ κυρίῳ ἠλπίσα* 31:6 *Thou has hated them that idly persist in vanities: but I have hoped in the Lord.* (LXX) David says that those who set spiritual traps are ones who trust in idols and the rabbis parallel this to “Vanity and lies” in both the Aramaic Targum and the Septuagint. If we think about this a little closer, when our enemy tries to set a trap for us to harm us both physically and spiritually, what is the underlying purpose? Generally, the underlying purpose is for power, money, selfishness, pride, all of these are in fact “idols” that may be set up in a persons heart and what we hold at the center of our hearts is the thing that we trust (See Ezekiel 14 regarding idols that one sets up in their heart). The great thing is that according to David, the Lord knows our afflictions and the trouble of our souls (31:7), the Lord has not given us over to our enemies (31:8, וְלֹא הִסְגַּרְתָּנִי, ט



(בְּיַד-אוֹיְבֵי הַעֲמֻדָּה בְּמַרְהָב רַגְלִי: or to the schemes of our enemies. This means that the Lord is able to keep us from deception and lead us into all truth. The enemy will fall into their own traps because they walk in the dark and not by the light of the truth, the enemy does not follow the Messiah Yeshua, they do not study the Torah, and they do not seek our Father who is in heaven.

David continues asking the Lord to be gracious to him because his body and soul are wasted away in grief. יִהְיֶה כִּי צָר-לִי עֲשֻׁשָׁה בְּכַעַס עֵינַי נִפְשִׁי וּבִטְנִי: יֵאָמֵר כִּי כָּלֹו בְּגִזּוֹן חַיִּי וּשְׁנוֹתַי בְּאַנְחָה כָּשָׁל בְּעוֹנָי: *31:9 Be gracious to me, O Lord, for I am in distress; My eye is wasted away from grief, my soul and my body also. 31:10 For my life is spent with sorrow And my years with sighing; My strength has failed because of my iniquity, And my body has wasted away. (NASB)* It is because of his iniquity that his body wastes away. The Aramaic Targum states חוּס עֲלֵי יְהוָה אַרְוֵם עֵיק לִי בְּלֵאת חֲשַׁכְתָּ מְרוּגָזָא עֵינַי אִיטְלַק נִפְשִׁי וּכְרִיסִי: יֵאָמֵר אַרְוֵם שִׁיִּצִּיאוּ בְּדוּוּנָא חַיִּי יוּמֵי וּשְׁנַיִ בְּתִנְחָא תְקַל אַתְקַל בַּחוּבֵי חִילֵי וְאַבְרֵי כְּלָאוּ מִתְכְּלִיאֹוּן: *31:10 Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I am in distress. My eye is wasted from agitation; my soul and my belly are destroyed. 31:11 For my life is ended in misery, and my years in sighing; my strength has failed because of my sin, and my limbs are used up. (EMC)* and the Septuagint states 31:9 ἐλέησόν με κύριε ὅτι θλίβομαι ἐταράχθη ἐν θυμῷ ὁ ὀφθαλμός μου ἡ ψυχὴ μου καὶ ἡ γαστήρ μου 31:10 ὅτι ἐξέλιπεν ἐν ὀδύνη ἡ ζωὴ μου καὶ τὰ ἔτη μου ἐν στεναγμοῖς ἠσθένησεν ἐν πτωχείᾳ ἡ ἰσχύς μου καὶ τὰ ὀστέα μου ἐταράχθησαν *31:9 Pity me, O Lord, for I am afflicted: my eye is troubled with indignation, my soul and by belly. 31:10 For my life is spent with grief, and my years with groanings: my strength has been weakened through poverty, and my bones are troubled. (LXX)* What is interesting is that in the Hebrew and Aramaic translations, the wasting away, the troubles that David is speaking of is related to his sin (iniquity), on the other hand, the rabbis who translated the Septuagint say that it is by reason of his poverty (πτωχεία) or poorness. David says that his bones are troubled because of his πτωχεία (poverty) that parallels his sin. When living in sin the soul is starving for relationship with our Father in heaven and for food, spiritual food, the Word of God. The body can waste away by reason of not being properly fed spiritually and not remaining in Christ. Note how David does not put his trust in flesh and blood, his trust is in the Lord. Are you getting enough spiritual food today or are you in a state of spiritual πτωχεία (poverty)? If the latter, what can you do to change that?

David continues saying that he hears the words of his enemies and that they scheme to do him harm. יֵב מִכָּל-צַרְרֵי הַיִּיתִי חֲרָפָה וְלִשְׁכֵנֵי | מָאֵד וּפְחָד לְמִידְעֵי רְאִי בַּחוּץ נִדְדוּ מִמֶּנִּי: יֵג נִשְׁפַּחְתִּי כִּמְת מֶלֶב הַיִּיתִי כִּכְלִי: *31:11 Because of all my adversaries, I have become a reproach, Especially to my neighbors, And an object of dread to my acquaintances; Those who see me in the street flee from me. 31:12 I am forgotten as a dead man, out of mind; I am like a broken vessel. 31:13 For I have heard the slander of many, Terror is on every side; While they took counsel together against me, They schemed to take away my life. (NASB)* Was it because of his sin that men have plotted against him and he walks about like a dead man? Is this a reference to what happened with his sin with Batsheva (Bathsheba)? Remembering David's sin with Bathsheva in *1 Samuel 11*, he alienated her family because he had her husband killed and she became pregnant. The Torah states in *Bamidbar / Numbers 32:23*: וְאִם-לֹא תַעֲשׂוּן כִּן הִנֵּה חַטָּאתְכֶם לַיהוָה וְדָעוּ חַטָּאתְכֶם אֲשֶׁר תִּמְצָא אֶתְכֶם: *32:23 'But if you will not do so, behold, you have sinned against the Lord, and be sure your sin will find you out. (NASB)* If one does not obey the Lord your sin will find you out! Note that the definition of sin is disobedience to the Lord.

David then responds saying טו וְאֵנִי | עֲלִיךָ בְּטַחְתִּי יְהוָה אֱמַרְתִּי אֱלֹהֵי אֶתָּה: טז בְּיַדְךָ עֲתַתִּי הַצִּילְנִי מִיַּד- אוֹיְבֵי וּמִרְדָּפָי: יז הָאֵירָה פָּנָיךָ עַל-עַבְדְּךָ הוֹשִׁיעֵנִי בְּחַסְדְּךָ: יח יְהוָה אֵל-אַבּוֹשָׁה כִּי קָרַאתִיךָ יִבְשׂוּ רַשְׁעִים יְדָמוּ: *31:14 But as for me, I trust in You, O Lord, I say, 'You are my God.' 31:15 My times are in Your hand; Deliver me from the hand of my enemies and from those who persecute me. 31:16 Make Your face to shine upon Your servant; Save me in Your lovingkindness. 31:17 Let me not be put to shame, O Lord, for I call upon You; Let the wicked be put to shame, let them be silent in Sheol. (NASB)* It is interesting that David says הוֹשִׁיעֵנִי בְּחַסְדְּךָ “save me in your grace.” Again we find David speaking of the grace of God and the mercy the Lord has shown him to save him, to keep him from being ashamed and even from going down to the grave. According to the Torah, in Parashat Bereshit (*Bereshit / Genesis 1:1-6:8*), in the Lord's



## Outline of Midrash Tehillim / Psalms, Chapter 31, Parts 1, 4, 6, 8, and 9

### Part 1

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) saying “*For the leader: A Psalm of David. In You O Lord, do I put my trust; let me never be ashamed (Tehillim / Psalms 31:1-2).*”
- The פתיחתא (Petihta) “*the homiletic introduction*” to the Midrash says “*These words are to be considered in the light of the verse Who among you that fears the Lord, that obeys the voice of His servant, that walks in darkness, and has no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and rest upon his God (Isaiah 50:10).*”
- The משל (mashal) “*the parable,*” goes on to explain the פתיחתא (Petihta), the rabbis discuss David’s words regarding “trust” and “shame.”
- The נמשל (Nimshal) “*expansion on the parable*” expands upon the משל (mashal) goes on to expand upon the reasons for which David trusted in the Lord and contained in that trust is that the Lord will not cause him to be ashamed.
- The Concluding phrase says “*And Daniel also, him I delivered only because he trusted in My name, as is said Then the king commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den (Daniel 6:24). How so? Because he had trusted in his God. Hence David said, Since it is true that whoever trusts in You is delivered, I too, will put my trust in You, as is said In You, O Lord, do I put my trust.*”

### Part 4

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) saying “*Another comment. In You, O Lord, do I put my trust; let me never be ashamed.*”
- The פתיחתא (Petihta) “*the homiletic introduction*” to the Midrash says “*elsewhere this is what Scripture says, Ashamed be all they that serve graven images bow down to Him all you gods (Tehillim / Psalms 97:7).*”
- The משל (mashal) “*the parable,*” goes on to explain the פתיחתא (Petihta), the rabbis continue to discuss David’s words regarding not being put ashamed.
- The נמשל (Nimshal) “*expansion on the parable*” expands upon the משל (mashal) goes on to expand upon David’s words of not being ashamed and say that the Lord will give a little semblance of life to each idol for the purpose of causing the idol to bow down to the Lord God Almighty and put shame to the worshipers of the idols.
- The Concluding phrase says “*That is will happen you can tell from the verse, And this will be the plague wherewith the Lord will smite all the peoples that have fought against Jerusalem; their flesh will consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes will consume away in their sockets, and their tongue will consume away in their mouth (Zechariah 14:12). But the other said, As an idol is melted down by fire, so those who bow down to it will be consumed by fire.*”

### Part 6

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) saying “*Rabbi Joshua son of Levi taught, Why do the words will be ashamed occur twice?*”
- The פתיחתא (Petihta) “*the homiletic introduction*” to the Midrash says “*Because in the time to come, when the Holy One blessed be He, judges Israel, the righteous as well as the wicked, He will grant pardon to the righteous, that they may enter the Garden of Eden, but will send the wicked back to Gehenna.*”
- The משל (mashal) “*the parable,*” goes on to explain the פתיחתא (Petihta), the rabbis continue to discuss David’s words regarding being put ashamed.
- The נמשל (Nimshal) “*expansion on the parable*” expands upon the משל (mashal) goes on to expand upon being ashamed and describe the righteous and the wicked in the Garden of Eden and Gehenna.



- The Concluding phrase says “Now, if the measure of punishment, in which God limits Himself, smites sixteen ways, how much greater is the measure of God’s goodness, which is unlimited.”

## Part 8

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) saying “Blessed be the Lord, for He has shown me His marvelous kindness in a strong city (Tehillim / Psalms 31:22).”
- The פתיחתא (Petihta) “the homiletic introduction” to the Midrash says “... that is, in wicked Rome.”
- The משל (mashal) “the parable,” goes on to explain the פתיחתא (Petihta), the rabbis discuss David’s words with regard to the Lord showing His kindness to His people.
- The נמשל (Nimshal) “expansion on the parable” expands upon the משל (mashal) goes on to expand upon how the Lord shows kindness to His people. The rabbis comment on the minimum requirements for one to receive God’s kindness, those whom the Lord preserves are those who affirm their faith in Him.
- The Concluding phrase says “Of them the Holy One blessed be He, declares, Only for a little time were the children of Israel redeemed, and then again were they enslaved, but still they affirm their faith in Me, that I will redeem them. Hence The Lord preserves those who affirm the faith.”

## Part 9

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) saying “In commenting on the passage Then will you return and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serves God, and him that serves Him not (Malachi 3:17-18).”
- The פתיחתא (Petihta) “the homiletic introduction” to the Midrash says “Rabbi Akha son of Ada said that the words between the righteous and the wicked mean between him who has faith and him who has no faith, that he that serves God is he who is willing to serve God’s need, and that he that serves Him not is he who is not willing to serve God’s need.”
- The משל (mashal) “the parable,” goes on to explain the פתיחתא (Petihta), the rabbis discuss David’s words with regard to a passage in Malachi and the differences between the righteous and the wicked who study Torah.
- The נמשל (Nimshal) “expansion on the parable” expands upon the משל (mashal) goes on to expand upon the differences between the righteous and the wicked and interestingly how the rabbis view the study of Torah. What is the purpose for studying Torah? If both the righteous and the wicked study Torah, what is the distinction that is made between the two types of people?
- The Concluding phrase says “Rabbi Tanchuma said, Trouble also makes a man’s strength fail, for it is written, By reason of the disquietness of my heart my heart pants, my strength fails me (Tehillim / Psalms 38:9, 11).”

Midrash Tehillim 31, Part 1 opens with the דיבור המתחיל (Dibur Hamathil) saying “For the leader. A Psalm of David. In You O Lord, do I put my trust; let me never be ashamed (Tehillim / Psalms 31:1-2). The homiletic introduction to the Midrash states “These words are to be considered in the light of the verse Who among you that fears the Lord, that obeys the voice of His servant, that walks in darkness, and has no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and rest upon his God (Isaiah 50:10, יְהוָה יִרְאֵם בְּכֶם יִרְאֵם יְהוָה וְיִשְׁעֶן בְּאַלְהֵיוֹ: (שְׁמִיעַ בְּקוֹל עֲבָדוֹ אֲשֶׁר | הִלְךְ חֹשְׁכִים וְאֵין נִגְהָ לוֹ בְּטַח בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה וְיִשְׁעֶן בְּאַלְהֵיוֹ: The Rabbis are making a contrast between David’s words and Isaiah 50:10 which asks the question of who fears the Lord and yet walks in darkness? David was able to put his trust in the Lord because he did not walk in darkness. The Aramaic Targum states א לשבחה תושבחתא לדוד: ב במימך יהוה סברית לא אבהת לעלמא בצדקתך שזיב 31:1 For praise; a psalm of David. 31:2 In your word, O Lord, I have placed my hope; I will never be disappointed; by your generosity save me. (EMC) Here David says that he has placed his trust in the Word of the Lord. The Lord has mercifully saved David because of His word and His promises and he recognized





following:

ח לך | אָמַר לְבִי בְקִשׁוּ פְנֵי אֶת-פְּנֵיךָ יְהוָה אֲבִיךָ:

**Tehillim / Psalms 27:8**

27:8 When You said, ‘Seek My face,’ my heart said to You, ‘Your face, O Lord, I shall seek.’ (NASB)

ז יְהוָה | עָזִי וּמִגְנִי בּוֹ כִּטָּח לְבִי וְנִעְזַרְתִּי וַיִּעֲלֶז לְבִי וּמִשִּׁירֵי אֲהַדְּנֶנּוּ:

**Tehillim / Psalms 28:7**

28:7 The Lord is my strength and my shield; My heart trusts in Him, and I am helped; Therefore my heart exults, And with my song I shall thank Him. (NASB)

The root word for “heart” in Hebrew is spelled Lamed-beit-beit (לֵב). Studying the letters of the word “levav,” the letter beit in Hebrew means “house.” What is interesting is based upon the spelling of the Hebrew word for heart, our hearts have two houses. This implies that there are two sides to our souls. What does this mean? What is implied is that our two sides are at odds with one another, where one part wants the spiritual things, and the other part wants the things of this world (*our fleshly desires*). This is not to suggest that there is a little good and a little bad within us but simply that the one side looks to the right and the other to the left. In the Shema the Scriptures tell us to love the Lord with all our heart and heart is spelled here as לֵב which suggests that our “heart” love is to include both sides, we are to bring both sides of our heart in line with seeking and loving God. In *Tehillim / Psalms 27:8* and *28:7*, David says that he will seek the Lord with his heart and that his heart trusts in the Lord. In these Psalms, David spells heart as לֵב with only one letter beit, suggesting only one house. This indicates that with David his heart was united, he was not doubled hearted or double souled. Was this why the Scriptures say that David was a man after God’s own heart? When David served the Lord he did it whole heartedly. In the Psalm, when God said “Seek My Face” (בְּקִשׁוּ פְנֵי) David replied saying “Your face I will seek” (אֶת-פְּנֵיךָ יְהוָה אֲבִיךָ). Today, do we seek God’s face like David did with all his heart? *Jeremiah 29:13* says: יְגִיד וּבְקִשְׁתֶּם אֹתִי וּמְצֵאתֶם כִּי תִדְרְשׁוּנִי בְּכָל-לִבְבְּכֶם: *29:13* ‘You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart. (NASB) The prophet Jeremiah said that we will seek and find the Lord when we do so with all of our heart, note how heart is spelled here as לֵב which again suggests that our searching “hearts” are to include both sides, we are to bring both sides of our heart to seek the Lord, we are not to have a divided soul. Regarding having a divided soul, the Apostle James spoke of the one who is double souled and being unstable in his ways in *James 1:1-10*.

**James 1:1-10**

1:1 James, a bond-servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes who are dispersed abroad: Greetings. 1:2 Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, 1:3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. 1:4 And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. 1:5 But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. 1:6 But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. 1:7 For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, 1:8 being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. 1:9 But the brother of humble circumstances is to glory in his high position; 1:10 and the rich man is to glory in his humiliation, because like flowering grass he will pass away. (NASB)

<sup>1</sup>Ἰάκωβος θεοῦ καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ δοῦλος ταῖς δώδεκα φυλαῖς ταῖς ἐν τῇ διασπορᾷ χαίρειν. <sup>2</sup>Πᾶσαν χαρὰν ἠγάσασθε, ἀδελφοί μου, ὅταν πειρασμοῖς περιπέσητε ποικίλοις, <sup>3</sup>γινώσκοντες ὅτι τὸ δοκίμιον ὑμῶν τῆς πίστεως κατεργάζεται ὑπομονήν: <sup>4</sup>ἡ δὲ ὑπομονὴ ἔργον τέλειον ἔχέτω, ἵνα ᾗτε τέλειοι καὶ ὀλόκληροι, ἐν μηδενὶ λειπόμενοι. <sup>5</sup>Εἰ δὲ τις ὑμῶν λείπεται σοφίας, αἰτεῖτω παρὰ τοῦ διδόντος θεοῦ πᾶσιν ἀπλῶς καὶ μὴ ὀνειδίζοντος, καὶ δοθήσεται αὐτῷ. <sup>6</sup>αἰτεῖτω δὲ ἐν πίστει, μηδὲν διακρινόμενος, ὁ γὰρ διακρινόμενος ἔοικεν κλύδωνι θαλάσσης ἀνεμιζομένῳ καὶ ῥιπιζομένῳ: <sup>7</sup>μὴ γὰρ οἴεσθω ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἐκεῖνος ὅτι λήμψεται τι παρὰ τοῦ κυρίου, <sup>8</sup>ἄνθρωπος δίψυχος, ἀκατάστατος ἐν πάσαις ταῖς ὁδοῖς αὐτοῦ. <sup>9</sup>Καυχᾶσθω δὲ ὁ ἀδελφὸς ὁ ταπεινὸς ἐν τῷ ὕψει αὐτοῦ, <sup>10</sup>ὁ δὲ πλούσιος ἐν τῇ ταπεινώσει αὐτοῦ, ὅτι ὡς ἄνθος χόρτου παρελεύσεται.

In *James 1:8*, he says ἄνθρωπος δίψυχος, ἀκατάστατος ἐν πάσαις ταῖς ὁδοῖς αὐτοῦ *1:8 being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. (NASB)* What is interesting is the word *δίψυχος* that James uses here is defined to mean “two souls” which states that one is “double minded” or “split in half” on the inside. This parallels the idea that our hearts have two houses and it is possible to go through life walking two different paths. James says that the man who walks two paths “double souled or double minded” is unstable in all his ways. James parallels this to the man who asks in faith and then wavers doubting God has heard his prayer. He says that such a man is like the sea that is driven by the wind and such a man should not expect he will receive anything from the Lord. The one who allows the one half of his soul to walk in darkness and then the other part of his soul desires the things of God, John says that there is no fellowship with God or with Christ if we walk in darkness. According *1 John 1:7 but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another; and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. (NASB)* Based upon this verse, does our walking in the light cause the blood of Yeshua to be effective in cleansing us from sin? What does it mean to walk in the light? Does this mean to obey God’s commandments? The way John describes the effectiveness of Yeshua’s blood to cleanse, he suggests we are to walk in repentance, in innocence, with justice, and righteousness, and holiness and then Yeshua’s blood will cleanse us. We are to have an active part in seeking God and turning from sin. This characterizes the believer as having a heart that is wholly devoted to the Lord, just like David having a united life, not a double sided and hypocritical life. The rabbis continue in the midrash giving the example of Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah (*Sadrach, Meshach, and Abednego*) being thrown into the furnace and their trust in the Lord. Midrash Tehillim 31, Part 1 then concludes saying “*And Daniel also, him I delivered only because he trusted in My name, as is said Then the king commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den (Daniel 6:24). How so? Because he had trusted in his God. Hence David said, Since it is true that whoever trusts in You is delivered, I too, will put my trust in You, as is said In You, O Lord, do I put my trust.*” If we place our trust in the Lord, our lives should reflect that trust demonstrating the love that we have for the Lord and for others. Our love for the Lord is demonstrated in our desire to obey his commandments. Our love for others is to walk in justice, innocence, and righteousness when dealing with those who are lost, those who are saved, and the poor and less fortunate people on this earth.

Midrash Tehillim 31, Part 4 opens with the Dibur Hamathil (דִּבְרוּר הַמַּתְחִיל) saying “*Another comment. In You, O Lord, do I put my trust; let me never be ashamed.*” The homiletic introduction to the Midrash states “*elsewhere this is what Scripture says, Ashamed be all they that serve graven images bow down to Him all you gods (Tehillim / Psalms 97:7).*” The rabbis say that shame is paralleled to those who serve graven images (idols). They continue to describe what God will do to the idols who the people worship that have no life, no breath, no eyes, no mouth, and no ears to hear.

*Rabbi Yudan said in the name of rabbi Nahman, Some day the Holy One blessed be He, will give a little semblance of life to each idol so that it can come and bow down to the Holy One blessed be He, as is said Bow down to Him, all you gods, and thus shame its worshippers. Rabbi Phinehas said, some day the Holy One blessed be He, will grant speech to the idol so that it can talk in the presence of its worshippers, and say to them, Woe unto you that left*

*Him who lives forever, who is the Maker of heaven and earth (Bereshit / Genesis 14:19), and bowed down to that of which it is said Idols have mouths, but they speak not (Tehillim / Psalms 115:5). Rabbi Johanan said, When the Holy One blessed be He, revealed Himself at Sinai, He put strength into the idols, and they bowed down to Him. Rabbi Tahalifa taught, In saying All the gods bowed down to Him (Tehillim / Psalms 97:7), Scripture supports Rabbi Johanan. It does not say, They will bow down to Him, but they bowed down to Him, that is, the gods had already bowed down to Him in the past. Rabbi Judah and Rabbi Nehemiah differed. One said, as an idol is made with several joints, so those who bow down to it will fall apart at their several joints, so those who bow down to it will fall apart at their several joints. (Midrash Tehillim 31, Part 4)*

אמר ר' יודן בשם ר' נחמן עתיד הקב"ה ליתן ממש מעט בעבודה זרה, והיא באה ומשתחוה להקב"ה, שנאמר והשתחוּ לו כל אלהים (שם שם תהלים צ"ז), ואחר כך היא בושה לעובדיה. אמר ר' פנחס עתיד הקב"ה לעשות פתחון פה לעבודה זרה, להיות מדברת בפני עובדיה, ואומרת להם אוי לכם שהנחתם לחי העולמים, שהוא קונה שמים וארץ, והשתחיתם למי שנאמר עליו פה להם ולא ידברו (תהלים קטו ה). אמר ר' יוחנן כשנגלה הקב"ה בסיני, נתן כח בעבודה זרה והשתחוּהוּ לו. אמר רב תחליפא והכתוב מסייע לו לר' יוחנן, שנאמר והשתחוּ לו כל אלהים (שם תהלים צז ז), ישתחוּ אין כתיב כאן, אלא והשתחוּ, שכבר השתחוּ לו. ר' יהודה ור' נחמיה, חד אמר מה עבודה זרה נעשית פרקים פרקים, כך עובדיה נעשין פרקים פרקים, תדע לך ראה מה כתיב

It is interesting how the rabbis parallel “being ashamed” with the bowing down and worshipping idols. They say that in the Olam Habah (*World to come*) the shame of those who worshiped idols will reach a maximum when the Lord God Almighty causes the lifeless idols to simulate life and bow down to the Lord to show that He truly is Lord of all. According to the midrash, the Holy One blessed be He “*will grant speech to the idol so that it can talk in the presence of its worshipers, and say to them, Woe unto you that left Him who lives forever, who is the Maker of heaven and earth (Bereshit / Genesis 14:19),*” the idols themselves will rebuke the people for their lack of faith turning from the one true God to worship wood and stone. In the book of Ezekiel, the prophet Ezekiel speaks of idols that are not made of wood and stone but are what have been set up in one’s heart that has become a stumbling block to the people.

#### **Ezekiel 14:1-8**

*14:1 Then some elders of Israel came to me and sat down before me. 14:2 And the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 14:3 ‘Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their hearts and have put right before their faces the stumbling block of their iniquity. Should I be consulted by them at all? 14:4 ‘Therefore speak to them and tell them, ‘Thus says the Lord God, ‘Any man of the house of Israel who sets up his idols in his heart, puts right before his face the stumbling block of his iniquity, and then comes to the prophet, I the Lord will be brought to give him an answer in the matter in view of the multitude of his idols, 14:5 in order to lay hold of the hearts of the house of Israel who are estranged from Me through all their idols.’ 14:6 ‘Therefore say to the house of Israel, ‘Thus says the Lord God, ‘Repent and turn away from your idols and turn your faces away from all your abominations. 14:7 ‘For anyone of the house of Israel or of the immigrants who stay in Israel who separates himself from Me, sets up his idols in his heart, puts right before his face the stumbling block of his iniquity, and then comes to the prophet to inquire of Me for himself, I the Lord will be brought to answer him in My own person. 14:8 ‘I will set My face against that man and make him a sign and a proverb, and I will cut him off from among My people. So you will know that I am the Lord. (NASB)*

According to Ezekiel, the elders of Israel came to the prophet to inquire of the Lord. What is interesting



about this text is with regard to the elders who appear to be doing a righteous thing, to seek the word of the Lord from the man of God. The problem was however, they went before the man of God and the Lord God Almighty with idols in their hearts. Because they had idols in their hearts, the Lord said to Ezekiel in 14:4 *‘Therefore speak to them and tell them, ‘Thus says the Lord God, ‘Any man of the house of Israel who sets up his idols in his heart, puts right before his face the stumbling block of his iniquity, and then comes to the prophet, I the Lord will be brought to give him an answer in the matter in view of the multitude of his idols (NASB)* the Lord said that the answer they would receive would be according to the idols that were already in their hearts. In other words, if someone has an idol inside his heart, and he goes to a prophet for information, God would have that prophet answer him according to the idol in his heart and the person would end up getting the wrong answer or information. Today, if we go before the Lord in the name of Yeshua the Messiah, and keep an idol in our hearts, would we receive the correct answer from the Lord? Many people have secret idols hidden in the chambers of their hearts from the sight of men which is not hidden from God. Because these idols are a stumbling block to the idol barer, it might be that the idol that is in the heart will decide what is received from God. *Hebrews 4:12-13 states 4:12 For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. 4:13 And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. (NASB)* All the things that people try to hide from the Lord are open before Him. The difficulty is however that the idol that is set up in the heart is harder to recognize than the others since these are not made of wood and stone. In Ezekiel’s day, God dealt thoroughly with this kind of secret idolatry. His throne on earth is within the hearts of His people. The rabbis say that in the last days these idols will be caused to bow down before the Lord. The Apostle Paul wrote that in the last days every knee will bow to the Lord. Consider this for a moment, if pride is the idol that is on one’s heart, in the last day during the great throne of judgment, the Lord will cause that idol to kneel before Him and confess that He is Lord of all! Note the consistency with the rabbinic commentary and the Apostolic Writings.

#### ***Romans 14:11-12***

*14:11 For it is written, ‘As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, And every tongue shall give praise to God.’ 14:12 So then each one of us will give an account of himself to God. (NASB)*

#### ***Philippians 2:9-11***

*2:9 For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, 2:10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 2:11 and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (NASB)*

There is an interesting connection here between the idols that are given a “*little semblance of life*” in the midrash to the idols of the heart, and the power of God that will cause every knee to bow and every tongue to confess that Yeshua is Lord of all. The midrash concludes stating “... *That is will happen you can tell from the verse, And this will be the plague wherewith the Lord will smite all the peoples that have fought against Jerusalem; their flesh will consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes will consume away in their sockets, and their tongue will consume away in their mouth (Zechariah 14:12). But the other said, As an idol is melted down by fire, so those who bow down to it will be consumed by fire.*” If we maintain idols in our heart, the Scriptures say (*Ezekiel 14:8*) that the Lord will cut the person off who does such a thing and “*So you will know that I am the Lord.*” How many peoples lives have been ruined today because they have maintained idols before God in their hearts and say because of Yeshua I am saved and turn around and question the problems that are going on in their lives and ask why God doesn’t help them? The answer to that is, “*there is a very large number of people today in that situation and they do not even realize it.*” The rabbis say the idols will burn and melt before God by the fire that proceeds from Him,

the question is on that great day, will you also be consumed by the fire because of the idol that is hold up in your soul?

Midrash Tehillim 31, Part 6 opens with the Dibur Hamathil (דיבור המתחיל) saying “*Rabbi Joshua son of Levi taught, Why do the words will be ashamed occur twice?*” It is interesting that the Psalm does have the word ashamed occur twice and David asking not to be put ashamed (אל-אבושה) but rather for the wicked to be made ashamed.

**Tehillim / Psalms 31:2**

ב בָּךְ יְהוָה חֲסִיטִי אֶל-אֲבוּשָׁה לְעוֹלָם בְּצַדִּיקְתָּךְ פְּלִטָּנִי:

**Tehillim / Psalms 31:18**

יְהוָה אֶל-אֲבוּשָׁה כִּי קָרָאתִיךָ יְבוֹשׁוּ רְשָׁעִים יְדָמוּ לְשֹׂאוֹל:

The homiletic introduction (פתיחתא, Petihta) to the Midrash states “*Because in the time to come, when the Holy One blessed be He, judges Israel, the righteous as well as the wicked, He will grant pardon to the righteous, that they may enter the Garden of Eden, but will send the wicked back to Gehenna.*” The midrash states that both the righteous and the wicked will be judged guilty, however the righteous will be pardoned and set free and not sent to Hell (Gehenna). The rabbis go on to describe how the wicked will be put to shame for their sin and reason how they have no excuse for not repenting of their sins before God.

*Then He will return and take the wicked out of Gehenna, and bring them into the Garden of Eden, and say to them, Here is a place for the righteous, but here also are places still empty, so that you can not say, Even had we repented, there would have been no place open to us with the righteous in the Garden of Eden. Then He will take the righteous from the Garden of Eden and bring them into Gehenna, and say to them, Here is a place for the wicked, but here also are places still empty, so that you can not say, Even had we been found guilty, there would have been no place open to us in Gehenna. But as the wicked have inherited the places you might have had, as well as their own places in Gehenna, for Scripture says to the wicked, Because your shame was double therefore in their land they will possess double (Isaiah 61:7), so have you inherited in the Garden of Eden your own places as well as the places they might have had. And because the wicked will be ashamed, David said, O Lord, let me not be ashamed (Tehillim / Psalms 31:18). Upon whom the shame? Upon the wicked. Let the wicked be ashamed, let them be put to silence in the nether world. (Midrash Tehillim 31, Part 6)*

וחוזר ומוציאן מגיהנם, ומכניסן לגן עדן עם הצדיקים, ואומר להן הרי מקום הצדיקים, ומוציא את הצדיקים מגן עדן ומכניסן לתוך גיהנם, ואומר להם הרי מקום הרשעים, והרי עוד מקום פנוי בייניהם, אלא שהרשעים יורשין לגיהנם שלהם ושלכם, והוא שאמר הכתוב תחת בשתכם וגו' משנה יירשו (ישעיה סא ז), ומחזיר הצדיקים לגן עדן והרשעים לגיהנם, ולפי שאומות העולם מתביישין לעתיד לבא, לכך אמר דוד אל אבושה כי קראתיך, ולמי היא הבושה לרשעים, שנאמר יבושו רשעים ידמו לשאול (תהלים לא יח). אמר רב מי שנותרן פגם אל יראה באותה הטובה, שנאמר מה רב טובך אשר צפנת ליראיך (שם שם תהלים ל"א כ)

According to the midrash, both the righteous and the wicked will be judged guilty however the righteous will be pardoned. The Lord will send the righteous to the Garden of Eden (לגן עדן, Paradise) and the wicked to Hell (גיהנם, Gehenna). The midrash states that then the Lord will take the wicked from hell and show them the empty places in Heaven that were reserved for them had they repented, and likewise, the righteous are shown in hell the empty places that were for them had they not turned from their sins. According to the

midrash, “*Rab said, He who puts his faith in a battered idol will not behold God’s goodness, for it is said O how abundant is Your goodness, which You have laid up for them that fear You (Tehillim / Psalms 31:20).*” Our faith and trust is to be in the Lord, not in idols. Regarding the discussion on idols, repentance, and sin, it is interesting what the Apostle Peter says in his second epistle regarding repentance and walking in sin.

### **2 Peter 2:1-22**

*2:1 But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves. 2:2 Many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned; 2:3 and in their greed they will exploit you with false words; their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep. 2:4 For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment; 2:5 and did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, with seven others, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly; 2:6 and if He condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction by reducing them to ashes, having made them an example to those who would live ungodly lives thereafter; 2:7 and if He rescued righteous Lot, oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men 2:8 (for by what he saw and heard that righteous man, while living among them, felt his righteous soul tormented day after day by their lawless deeds), 2:9 then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment, 2:10 and especially those who indulge the flesh in its corrupt desires and despise authority. Daring, self-willed, they do not tremble when they revile angelic majesties, 2:11 whereas angels who are greater in might and power do not bring a reviling judgment against them before the Lord. 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)*

Notice how Peter draws upon the Torah for authority regarding the truth of what he is writing about. He refers to false prophets, angels reserved for judgment, Noah, Sodom and Gomorrah, Balaam, etc. Peter’s point here in *2 Peter 2* is speaking about the ungodly men who do not repent of their sins but follow their lusts and indulge in the flesh and its corrupt desires and despise authority. Peter says that these men escaped the defilements of the world in Yeshua but then become entangled again in the world and the last state is

worse than the first, it would have been better that they did not know the way of righteousness. These men turn away from the commandment of God that was handed to them (i.e. the Torah, God's way of truth and righteousness) and it is interesting that he describes a man who escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ but then turns around and is entangled again and the last state is worse than the first and it would have been better to have not known the way of righteousness. The midrash concludes stating "Rabbi Isaac son of Teradyon said, The sword of the Holy One blessed be He, smites sixteen ways, for in Scripture the sword is spoken to as follows, Turn yourself backwards, or turn to the right, or set yourself forward, or turn to the left, withersoever (ayh) your edge is ready (Ezekiel 21:21), and the numerical value of ayh (אי"ה) is sixteen. Now, if the measure of punishment, in which God limits Himself, smites sixteen ways, how much greater is the measure of God's goodness, which is unlimited." אמר ר' יצחק) בן תרדיון חרבו של הקב"ה יש לה שש עשרה פיות, שנאמר התאחדי הימיני [השימי] השמילי (איה) [אנה] פניך מועדות (יחזקאל כא כא), כמנין אי"ה בגימטריא. ומה אם מדת פורעניות שהיא מועטת יש לה שש עשרה פנים, The rabbis say that God's goodness is unlimited, His mercy is a part of His goodness, therefore one could say that His mercy is unlimited also. Sometimes our lives can feel like what Peter is saying in 2 Peter 2:22, as a dog returns to his vomit or a sow to wallowing in the mire. The point of the midrash and the epistle of Peter is to continually seek the Lord for forgiveness in His Messiah Yeshua and to turn from our sins, to walk in righteousness, and not be overcome by this world, to walk in repentance and being humble before the Lord daily.

Midrash Tehillim 31, Part 8 opens with the Dibur Hamathil (דיבור המתחיל) saying "Blessed be the Lord, for He has shown me His marvelous kindness in a strong city (Tehillim / Psalms 31:22)." The homiletic introduction to the Midrash states "... that is, in wicked Rome." Let's read through Midrash Tehillim 31, Part 8.

<p><b>מדרש תהלים פרק לא סימן ח</b></p> <p>ח ברוך ה' כי הפליא חסדו לי בעיר מצור. זו רומי הרשעה. ואני אמרתי נגזתי. אין נגזתי אלא לשון חיתוך כלי ברזל, כמה דאת אמר מקבות והגרזן (מ"א מלכים א' ו ז). דבר אחר נגזתי מנגד עיניך, במלכות רומי הרשעה. אכן שמעת קול תחנוני. זו יון. אהבו את ה' כל חסידיו. אלו צדיקי ישראל. אמונים נוצר ה'. אלו גרי הצדק. דבר אחר אמונים נוצר ה'. אלו פושעי ישראל, שהם עונין אמן בעל כרחם באמונה, ואומרים ברוך מחיה המתים. דבר אחר אמונים נוצר ה'. אלו ישראל שאומרים ברוך מחיה המתים, ובאמונה עונין אמן, שמאמינים בכל כחם בהקב"ה שמחיה המתים, ועדיין לא בא תחיית המתים, אומרים גואל ישראל, ועדיין לא נגאלו, אומרים ברוך בונה ירושלים, ועדיין לא נבנית, אמר הקב"ה ישראל לא נגאלו אלא לשעה וחזרו ונשתעבדו, והם מאמינים בי שאני עתיד לגואלם, הוי אמונים נוצר ה'.</p>	<p><b>Midrash Tehillim 31, Part 8</b></p> <p>8. Blessed be the Lord, for He has shown me His marvelous kindness in a strong city (Tehillim / Psalms 31:22), that is, in wicked Rome. For in the words I said in my haste, I am cut off (migrazti) from before Your eyes (Tehillim / Psalms 31:22), nigrazti, which comes from the same stem as garzen in "neither hammer nor axe (garzen)" (1 Kings 6:7), can only mean being cut down by an iron weapon. Another comment, I said in my haste, I am cut off from before Your eyes in wicked Rome; You heard the voice of my prayers when I cried to You in Greece. O Love the Lord, all you who worship Him (Tehillim / Psalms 31:24) that is, those who are complete proselytes. Another comment, the Lord preserves those who affirm the faith, that is, preserves even those sinners in Israel who reluctantly yet regularly say Amen, and regularly say Blessed are You, O Lord, who raises the dead. Another comment, The Lord preserves those who affirm the faith, that is, preserves children of Israel who say, Blessed are You O Lord, who raises the dead, although the raising of the dead has not yet come to pass; who say, Blessed are You, O Lord, the Redeemer of Israel, although they have not yet been redeemed; and who say, Blessed are You, O Lord, who rebuilds Jerusalem, although Jerusalem has not yet been rebuilt. Of them the Holy One blessed be He, declares, Only for a little time were the children of Israel redeemed, and then again were they enslaved, but still they affirm their faith in Me, that I will redeem them. Hence The Lord preserves those who affirm the faith.</p>
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What exactly are the rabbis trying to say in this midrash? They speak of the kindness of the Lord by a strong city (Tehillim / Psalms 31:22). The Aramaic Targum states כב בריך יהוה ארום פריש טיבותיה לי בקרתא



:31:22 *Blessed be the Lord, for he has exhibited his kindness to me in the walled city.* (EMC) and the Septuagint states 31:21 εὐλογητὸς κύριος ὅτι ἐθαυμάστωσεν τὸ ἔλεος αὐτοῦ ἐν πόλει περιοχῆς 31:21 *Blessed be the Lord: for he has magnified his mercy in a fortified city.* (LXX) The Lord exhibits his kindness in the walled city and magnifies his mercy in a fortified city, the midrash states that this city is “wicked Rome.” The Lord cuts off our enemies even when we find ourselves in their midst, in their cities. The rabbis go on to say “Another comment, I said in my haste, I am cut off from before Your eyes in wicked Rome; You heard the voice of my prayers when I cried to You in Greece. O Love the Lord, all you who worship Him (Tehillim / Psalms 31:24) that is, those who are complete proselytes.” A spin is placed on the parable to say David was saying he is cut off before God’s eyes in Rome but the Lord heard his prayers, it is interesting that they say the Lord hears the prayers of the one who is a “complete proselyte.” The term “proselyte” is an Anglicization of the Koine Greek term προσήλυτος (proselytos), as used in the Septuagint for “stranger,” a “new-comer to Israel,” or a “sojourner in the land,” and in the Apostolic Writings is used as a reference to a first century convert to Judaism (see *Matthew 23:15, Acts 2:10, 6:5, and 13:43*). The Greek term προσήλυτος (proselytos) is a translation of the Hebrew phrase גר תושב (*ger toshav*, see *Strongs H1616 for list of references in the Torah*). Proselyte today has the more general meaning in English of a new convert to any particular religion or doctrine, also known as Proselytism. There are two kinds of proselytes in Rabbinic Judaism (i) *ger tzedek* (righteous proselytes, proselytes of righteousness, religious proselyte, devout proselyte) and (ii) *ger toshav* (resident proselyte, proselytes of the gate, limited proselyte, half-proselyte). A “righteous proselyte” (*ger tzedek*, גרִי הַצְדֵק) is a gentile who has converted to Judaism, is bound to all the doctrines and precepts of Judaism, and is considered a full member of the Jewish community. They are to be circumcised as adults (note this is different from a *brit milah*) and immersed in a mikvah should they wish to eat of the Passover sacrifice. The gate proselyte (*ger toshav*) is only someone who lives in the land of Israel and follows only some of the precepts in the Torah. So, the rabbis are commenting on the minimum requirements for one to receive God’s kindness, those whom the Lord preserves are those who are complete converts to Judaism. The rabbis continue saying “Another comment, the Lord preserves those who affirm the faith, that is, preserves even those sinners in Israel who reluctantly yet regularly say Amen, and regularly say Blessed are You, O Lord, who raises the dead.” Is it logical to say that the Lord preserves those who affirm the faith by “reluctantly saying Amen” and “Blessed are you O Lord who raises the dead?” It seems that the rabbis are referring to the Amidah (תפילת העמידה, *Tefilat HaAmidah* “The Standing Prayer”), also know as the Shmoneh Esreh (שמונה עשרה, “The Eighteen,” in reference to the original number of constituent blessings, there are now nineteen), the central prayer of the Jewish liturgy. Their short comment of affirming the faith and saying “Amen” seems to suggest that they are referring to the Amidah and the reference to the second prayer of the Amidah to say “Blessed are you O Lord who raises the dead.” The affirmation of the faith seems to be related to seeking the Lord in prayer and persevering even in the midst of troubles. This seems to be the idea in the concluding phrase to Midrash Tehillim 31, Part 8 which states “Of them the Holy One blessed be He, declares, Only for a little time were the children of Israel redeemed, and then again were they enslaved, but still they affirm their faith in Me, that I will redeem them. Hence The Lord preserves those who affirm the faith.” What is interesting is the idea that of the Lord hearing a gentiles prayer and the rabbinic thought that one needed to be a complete proselyte to Judaism. It is interesting that this is where the Greek verb ioudaizō (ἰουδαῖζω “live according to Jewish customs”) comes from. This term is most widely known from its single use in the Greek New Testament in *Galatians 2:14* where the Apostle Paul publicly challenges Peter for compelling gentile converts to become like the Jews or to “judaize” at Antioch. This is an interesting rabbinic concept because it helps us to understand *Galatians 5* regarding circumcision of the new Gentile believers.

### **Galatians 5:1-26**

5:1 *It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery. 5:2 Behold I, Paul, say to you that if you receive circumcision, Christ will be of no benefit to you. 5:3 And I testify again to every man who receives circum-*

cision, that he is under obligation to keep the whole Law. 5:4 You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace. 5:5 For we through the Spirit, by faith, are waiting for the hope of righteousness. 5:6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but faith working through love. 5:7 You were running well; who hindered you from obeying the truth? 5:8 This persuasion did not come from Him who calls you. 5:9 A little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough. 5:10 I have confidence in you in the Lord that you will adopt no other view; but the one who is disturbing you will bear his judgment, whoever he is. 5:11 But I, brethren, if I still preach circumcision, why am I still persecuted? Then the stumbling block of the cross has been abolished. 5:12 I wish that those who are troubling you would even mutilate themselves. 5:13 For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. 5:14 For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' 5:15 But if you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another. 5:16 But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. 5:17 For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please. 5:18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law. 5:19 Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, 5:20 idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, 5:21 envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 5:23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. 5:24 Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 5:25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. 5:26 Let us not become boastful, challenging one another, envying one another. (NASB)

The interesting thing is that in rabbinic Judaism, according to Midrash Tehillim 31, Part 8, in order for God to hear one's prayer a person needed to be a complete convert, a "righteous proselyte" (ger tzedek, גרי הצדק). Based upon the teaching of the rabbis, Peter was doing what he knew regarding Gentile converts and when the Jews come and his withdrawing from the Gentiles, he was essentially getting pressure from his friends to follow the traditions rather than the teachings of Yeshua. Paul said that it is by faith we are saved, not by the work of the flesh. He uses the concept of circumcision because this is the key to being a ger tzedek, (גרי הצדק) a righteous proselyte. Paul however argues that one does not enter into a relationship with the Lord by man's teachings which are paralleled to the works of the flesh, rather, we enter into a relationship with the Lord by faith like Abraham. Paul then parallels the works of the flesh to the uncleanness that proceeds from the heart, which is listed in *Galatians 5* as anger, jealousy, immorality, sensuality, idolatry, outbursts, drunkenness, etc. He said that he was not teaching against circumcision (see *Galatians 5:11*) and remember that Paul had Timothy circumcised (see *Acts 16:1-3*) therefore Paul was not speaking against the Torah, or against circumcision, he was speaking against relying upon the flesh for entering into the kingdom of God and for salvation. The main issue was regarding tradition and whether God would work in the life of a Gentile convert if they did not become a "complete proselyte" (ger tzedek, גרי הצדק) according to rabbinic Judaism.

Midrash Tehillim 31, Part 9 opens with the Dibur Hamathil (דיבור המתחיל) saying "In commenting on the passage Then will you return and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serves God, and him that serves Him not (Malachi 3:17-18)." The homiletic introduction (פתיחה, Petihta) to the Midrash states "Rabbi Akha son of Ada said that the words between the righteous and the wicked mean between him who has faith and him who has no faith, that he who serves God is he who is willing to serve God's need, and that he that does not serve Him is he who is not willing to serve God's need." What does it

mean to serve God's need? Think about the covenant that we have made with God, this is an agreement that has been made in blood and we believe the Lord has also made this with us today in Yeshua the Messiah. According to the Covenant agreement, we - God's People - have special duties and responsibilities that are commanded by God, for example, the people of God are to establish a just society, walk in righteousness and holiness, and serve only the Lord God Almighty. Therefore, when thinking about serving God's needs, we do so according to His Holy Word, the Scriptures, and not based solely upon personal opinion. The midrash says that by obeying the Torah we can serve God's needs, and state *"Thus a man should not make the words of Torah an edged tool for his own use, nor make them a crown to crown himself."* Have you ever used the Torah, or any part of the Word of God, to cut someone down? The midrash says not to use the Word as an edged tool to cut nor to make a crown for yourself. It is easy to conclude that they are talking about pride. Reading further in the midrash rabbi Samuel states *"Between him that serves God and him that serves Him not means, Between him who repeats his chapter one hundred and one times and him who repeats it only one hundred times. The Lord repays the others who would act proudly (Tehillim / Psalms 31:24) refers to such of the disciples who study Torah not for the sake of heaven, but for the sake of doing themselves proud in this world, and to such others who expect a reward in this world for their study of the Torah. But as for them who occupy themselves with the Torah and hope for the reward in the world to come."* The contrast that is drawn between the righteous who repeats a chapter from the Torah 101 times verses the unrighteous who repeats a chapter of Torah 100 times, suggests that the righteous person loves God's Word and does not keep count of the number of times he has read the Torah, verses the unrighteous who counts it as a burden to read the Torah and keeps an exact count for the purpose of pride. The explanation of this parable is that one reads for the hope of the world to come and the other hopes for exaltation in this world for their study of God's Word. Have you ever thought in that way before regarding studying God's Word? Midrash Tehillim 31, Part 9 concludes saying *"Of sin, it is written, My strength fails because of my iniquity (Tehillim / Psalms 31:11); of wayfaring, it is written He weakens my strength in the way (Tehillim / Psalms 102:24); of fasting, it is written My knees are weak through fasting (Tehillim / Psalms 109:24); of the oppressor's rule, it is written He has made my strength to fail, the Lord has delivered me into their hands, from whom I am not able to rise up (Lamentations 1:14). Rabbi Tanchuma said, Trouble also makes a man's strength fail, for it is written, By reason of the disquieting of my heart my heart pants, my strength fails me (Tehillim / Psalms 38:9, 11)."* David speaks of not being ashamed, of pride, and of sin in *Tehillim / Psalms 31*; the rabbis parallel this to *Tehillim / Psalms 102:24* that sin (iniquity) causes a man's strength to fail. Indeed sin does make a man's strength to fail by reason of the loss of restfulness of ones heart and our relationship with God. The Apostle Paul said in *Galatians 5:24* *Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 5:25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. 5:26 Let us not become boastful, challenging one another, envying one another. (NASB)* Our study of God's Word should be led from an innocent heart with a desire to draw near to the Lord, not one of pride. Have you put to death the flesh along with this passions and desires? Even the rabbis speak of the importance of recognizing the failings of the flesh in pride, and serving ourselves rather than serving the Lord. This week let's take time to meditate on how we can serve God more in Yeshua the Messiah and server ourselves less. Let's pray!

Heavenly Father,

We thank You for the mercies you have shown us daily. We ask Lord to help us to serve You more. Help us to be more service minded and to walk less and less in the flesh each day. We Thank You Lord for giving us Your Word to teach us Your ways, and for revealing the truth of Your Word and the Messiah Yeshua. Thank You for sending Your son Yeshua that we may enter into Your salvation by faith. Thank You Lord

for paying the covenant price for the forgiveness of our sins. Lord restore to use the joy of Your salvation. Help us to dedicated our lives to You each day, fill us with Your presence Lord each day. We praise Your Holy Name and give You all of the honor, and the glory, and the praise forever and ever.

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

Be Blessed in Yeshua, Christ our Messiah!

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



## Notes