

ספר תהילים מט | Tehillim / Psalms 49

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God will redeem my soul from the power of the Grave

This week's study is from *Tehillim / Psalms 49:1-20*, David opens the Psalm saying **א לְמַנְצֵחַ | לְבְנֵי-קִרְחָה** *For the choir director. A Psalm of the sons of Korah.* The psalmist continues saying *49:1 Hear this, all peoples; Give ear, all inhabitants of the world, 49:2 Both low and high, Rich and poor together. 49:3 My mouth will speak wisdom, And the meditation of my heart will be understanding. (NASB)* David makes a plea to all peoples and he specifically states **כָּל-יִשְׁבְּי הָאָרֶץ** which states “*all inhabitants of the world*” but here is an unusual word used as a reference to “*the world.*” He calls the people to listen to the proverb he will sing. David says why fear this enemies who are full of iniquity, those who boast in their riches (*49:5-6*)? He says **ט וַיִּקַּר פְּדִיּוֹן נַפְשׁוֹ וְחָדַל לְעוֹלָם:** *49:8 For the redemption of his soul is costly, And he should cease trying forever. (NASB)* Is he suggesting that there are those who seek to redeem their own souls? He says that such a person should cease from trying and that by doing so he will live eternally and not undergo decay (*49:8-9*). David speaks of the vanity and foolishness of man in trying to make a name for himself (*49:10-13*). He continues saying **טו כִּצְאוֹן | לְשְׂאוֹל שְׂתוּ מוֹת יָרְעֵם וַיִּרְדּוּ בָּם יִשְׂרָיִם | לְבַקֵּר וְצִירִים [וְצוֹרִים]** *49:14 As sheep they are appointed for Sheol; Death shall be their shepherd; And the upright shall rule over them in the morning, And their form shall be for Sheol to consume So that they have no habitation. (NASB)* These Scriptures appear to equate the wicked to sheep ready for slaughter. Death itself will be their shepherd since the wicked, the unrighteous live their lives in a way that is synonymous to the living dead. David says **טז אֵל-אֱלֹהִים יַפְדֶּה נַפְשִׁי מִיַּד-שְׂאוֹל כִּי יִקְחֵנִי סֵלָה:** *49:15 But God will redeem my soul from the power of Sheol, For He will receive me. Selah. (NASB)* He goes on to say that *49:16 Do not be afraid when a man becomes rich, When the glory of his house is increased; 49:17 For when he dies he will carry nothing away; His glory will not descend after him. (NASB)* This may be a connection to *Tehillim / Psalms 47* which speaks of men being shields of the earth, the unrighteous man who is in power ruling over other men, do not fear such men. He concludes saying *49:18 Though while he lives he congratulates himself And though men praise you when you do well for yourself 49:19 He shall go to the generation of his fathers; They will never see the light. 49:20 Man in his pomp, yet without understanding, Is like the beasts that perish. (NASB)* The unrighteous search for their own glory rather than the glory of God, this is exemplified in the comment that the rich look to congratulate themselves but in the end, they will not see the light. Is David's use of the words “*not seeing the light*” the same as our understanding today?

עברית Hebrew	ארמי Aramaic	ελληνικός Greek
ספר תהלים פרק מט	ספר טוביה פרק מט	ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 49
א לְמַנְצֵחַ לְבְנֵי-קִרְחָה מְזֻמָּר: ב שְׂמֵעוּ-זֹאת כָּל-הָעַמִּים הָאֲזִינוּ כָּל- יִשְׁבְּי הָאָרֶץ: ג גַּם-בְּנֵי אָדָם גַּם-בְּנֵי- אִישׁ יַחַד עֲשִׂיר וְאֶבְיוֹן: ד פִּי יִדְבַר חֲקֻמוֹת וְהִגִּיתָ לְבִי תְבוּנוֹת: ה אֲטָה לְמַשְׁלֵל אֲזִנִּי אֶפְתַּח בְּכִנּוֹר חִידָתִי:	א לשבחה על ידהון דבני קרח תושב- חתיא: ב שמעו אחויתא דא כל עממא אציתו כל דיירי ארעא: ג אוף לחוד בני אדם קדמאה אוף בנוי דיעקב כחדא זכאה וחייבא: ד פומי ימלל חוכמתא וריננת ליבא בינא כיונא: ה אצלי למ- תלא למותלא אודני אשרי למפתח בכי- נורא אוחדתתי:	49:1 εις τὸ τέλος τοῖς υἱοῖς Κορε ψαλμός ἀκούσατε ταῦτα πάντα τὰ ἔθνη ἐνωτίσασθε πάντες οἱ κατοικοῦντες τὴν οἰκουμένην 49:2 οἱ τε γηγενεῖς καὶ οἱ υἱοὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ πλοῦσιος καὶ πένης 49:3 τὸ στόμα μου λαλήσει σοφίαν καὶ ἡ μελέτη τῆς καρδίας μου σύνεσιν 49:4 κλινῶ εἰς παραβολὴν τὸ οὖς μου ἀνοιξῶ ἐν ψαλτηρίῳ τὸ πρόβλημά μου 49:5 ἵνα τί φοβοῦμαι ἐν ἡμέρᾳ πονηρᾶ ἢ ἀνομία τῆς πτέρνης μου κυκλώσει με

<p>ו לְמָה אֵיךָ בִּימֵי רַע עֲוֹן עֲקָבִי יְסוּבֵנִי: ז הַבְּטָחִים עַל-חֵילִם וְכָרֵב עֲשָׂרָם יִתְהַלְלוּ: ח אָח לֹא-פָדָה יִפְדֶּה אִישׁ לֹא-יִתֵּן לְאֱלֹהִים כְּפָרוֹ: ט וַיִּקַּר פְּדִיּוֹן נַפְשָׁם וְחֲדָל לְעוֹלָם: י וַיִּחִי-עוֹד לְנֶצַח לֹא יִרְאֶה הַשְּׁחַת: יא כִּי יִרְאֶה חֲכָמִים יָמוּתוּ יַחַד כְּסִיל וְכַעַר יֵאבְדוּ וְעֲזָבוּ לְאַחֲרֵים חֵילָם: יב קָרְבָּם בְּתִימּוֹ לְעוֹלָם מִשְׁפָּנָתָם לְדָר וְדָר קָרְאוּ בְּשִׂמּוֹתָם עַלֵי אֲדָמוֹת: יג וְאָדָם בִּיקָר בַּל- יָלִין נִמְשָׁל בְּבִהְמוֹת נְדָמוֹ: יד זֶה דְּרָכָם כְּסָל לְמוֹ וְאַחֲרֵיהֶם בְּפִיָּהֶם יִרְצוּ סְלָה: טו כְּצֹאן לְשֹׂאֵל שְׂתוֹ מִנֹּת יִרְעֶם וַיִּרְדּוּ בָם יִשְׁרִים לְבַקֵּר וְצִיָּרָם [וְצוֹרָם] לְבָלוֹת שְׂאֹל מִזְבֵּל לוֹ: טז אֶף-אֱלֹהִים יִפְדֶּה נַפְשֵׁי מֵיַד- שְׂאֹל כִּי יִקְחֵנִי סְלָה: יז אֶל-תִּירָא כִּי-יַעֲשֶׂר אִישׁ כִּי-יִרְכָּה כְבוֹד בֵּיתוֹ: יח כִּי לֹא בָמוֹתוֹ יִקַּח הַפֶּל לֹא-יִרְד אַחֲרָיו כְּבוֹדוֹ: יט כִּי-נִפְשׁוּ בְּחַיּוֹ יִבְרָךְ וַיִּוֹדֶךָ כִּי-תִיטֵיב לָךְ: כ תִּבּוֹא עַד-דָּוָר אֲבוֹתָיו עַד-נֶצַח לֹא יִרְאוּ- אוֹר: כא אָדָם בִּיקָר וְלֹא יִבִּין נִמְשָׁל בְּבִהְמוֹת נְדָמוֹ:</p>	<p>ו מטול מה אדחל ביום אסעריות בישא אלהן דחובת סורחני בסופי יחזרינני: ז ווי לחייביא די מתרחצין על נכסיהון ובסגיאות עתריהון משתבחין: ח אחוהי דאשתבא לא מפרק יפרוק גבר רשיעא מניכסוי ולא יהב יתן לאלהא פורקניה: ט ויהיב יקר פורקניה דאלו יחייב הא יקיר קדם ייי פור- רקנא ויפסוק בישותיה ופורענותא לעלם: י וייחי טוב לחיי עלמא לא יחמי דין גהנם: יא ארום ארי יחמון חכימיא רשיעיא דמי- תין מיתותא תנינא ומתדנין בגהנם יתדנון כחדא כסיליא ושטיא ייבדון וישבקון לצ- דיקיא ממונהון: יב בבית קבורתהון ישרון לעלם ולא יקומון ממשכניהון לדרי דריא מטול דאיתברבו דאיתגאו וקנו שום ביש עילוי ארעא: יג וגברא ובר נש חייבא ביי- קרא לא יבית עם צדיקיא אמתיל היך בעיי- רא אשתווא ללמא: יד דין דגן אורחתהון גרם שטותא להון ובסופהון בפומהון יתנון סורחנותהון לעלמא דאתי: טו היך ענא צדיקיא שוו למותא וקטלונון ותברו צדי- קיא חסידיא ופלחי אוריתא ותריציא אלקו מטול הכי גופיהון יהון בלין יתבליין בגהנם מן בגלל דאוישיו ידהון וחבילו בית מדור שכינתיה דיליה: טז אמר דוד ברוח נבואה ברם אלהא יפרוק נפשי מן דין גהנם ארום ילפינני אוריתיה לעלמין ודברינני לחול- קיה לעלמא דאתי: יז על קרח וסיעתיה איתנבי ואמר לא תדחל משה ארום אית- עתר קרח גברא דמצותא ארום יסגי איקר ביתיה: יח ארום לא במותיה יסב כולא לא ייחות בתרוי איקריה: יט ארום נפ- שיה דמשה בחיוהי יברך תתברך לך ויודו- נך צדיקיא ארום תיטיב לפלחין קדמך: כ תיעול דוכרניהון דצדיקיא עד דר אבהתהון ורשיעיא לעלמי עלמא לא יחמון נהורא: כא גברא בר נש חייבא בזמן דאיתיה ביי- קרא לא יתבין ובאסתלקות יקריה מיניה אמתיל לבעירא ואשתווא ללמא:</p>	<p>49:6 οἱ πεποιθότες ἐπὶ τῇ δυνάμει αὐτῶν καὶ ἐπὶ τῷ πλήθει τοῦ πλούτου αὐτῶν καυχώμενοι 49:7 ἀδελφὸς οὐ λυτροῦται λυτρώσεται ἄνθρωπος οὐ δώσει τῷ θεῷ ἐξίλασμα αὐτοῦ 49:8 καὶ τὴν τιμὴν τῆς λυτρώσεως τῆς ψυχῆς αὐτοῦ 49:9 καὶ ἐκόπασεν εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα καὶ ζήσεται εἰς τέλος ὅτι οὐκ ὄψεται καταφθοράν ὅταν ἴδῃ σοφοῦς ἀποθνήσκοντας 49:10 ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ ἄφρων καὶ ἄνους ἀπολοῦνται καὶ καταλείψουσιν ἄλλοτρίοις τὸν πλοῦτον αὐτῶν 49:11 καὶ οἱ τάφοι αὐτῶν οἰκίαι αὐτῶν εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα σκηνώματα αὐτῶν εἰς γενεάν καὶ γενεάν ἐπεκαλέσαντο τὰ ὀνόματα αὐτῶν ἐπὶ τῶν γαιῶν αὐτῶν 49:12 καὶ ἄνθρωπος ἐν τιμῇ ᾧ οὐ συνήκεν παρασυνεβλήθη τοῖς κτῆνεσιν τοῖς ἀνοήτοις καὶ ὠμοιώθη αὐτοῖς 49:13 αὕτη ἡ ὁδὸς αὐτῶν σκάνδαλον αὐτοῖς καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα ἐν τῷ στόματι αὐτῶν εὐδοκῆσουσιν διάψαλμα 49:14 ὡς πρόβατα ἐν ἄδη ἔθεντο θάνατος ποιμαίνει αὐτούς καὶ κατακυριεύσουσιν αὐτῶν οἱ εὐθεῖς τὸ πρωὶ καὶ ἡ βοήθεια αὐτῶν παλαιωθήσεται ἐν τῷ ἄδη ἐκ τῆς δόξης αὐτῶν 49:15 πλὴν ὁ θεὸς λυτρώσεται τὴν ψυχὴν μου ἐκ χειρὸς ἄδου ὅταν λαμβάνῃ με διάψαλμα 49:16 μὴ φοβοῦ ὅταν πλουτήσῃ ἄνθρωπος καὶ ὅταν πληθυνθῇ ἡ δόξα τοῦ οἴκου αὐτοῦ 49:17 ὅτι οὐκ ἐν τῷ ἀποθνήσκειν αὐτὸν λήμψεται τὰ πάντα οὐδὲ συγκαταβήσεται αὐτῷ ἡ δόξα αὐτοῦ 49:18 ὅτι ἡ ψυχὴ αὐτοῦ ἐν τῇ ζωῇ αὐτοῦ εὐλογηθήσεται ἐξομολογήσεται σοὶ ὅταν ἀγαθῶνης αὐτῷ 49:19 εἰσελεύσεται ἕως γενεᾶς πατέρων αὐτοῦ ἕως αἰῶνος οὐκ ὄψεται φῶς 49:20 ἄνθρωπος ἐν τιμῇ ᾧ οὐ συνήκεν παρασυνεβλήθη τοῖς κτῆνεσιν τοῖς ἀνοήτοις καὶ ὠμοιώθη αὐτοῖς</p>
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Tehillim / Psalms 49

For the choir director. A Psalm of the sons of Korah 49:1 Hear this, all peoples; Give ear, all inhabitants of the world, 49:2 Both low and high, Rich and poor together. 49:3 My mouth will speak wisdom, And the meditation of my heart will be understanding. 49:4 I will incline my ear to a proverb; I will express my riddle on the harp. 49:5 Why should I fear in days of adversity, When the iniquity of my foes surrounds me, 49:6 Even those who trust in their wealth And boast in the abundance of their riches? 49:7 No man can by any means redeem his brother Or give to God a ransom for him 49:8 For the redemption of his soul is costly, And he should cease trying forever 49:9 That he should live on eternally, That he should not undergo decay. 49:10 For he sees that even wise men die; The stupid and the senseless alike perish And leave their wealth to others. 49:11 Their inner thought is that their houses are forever And their dwelling places to all generations; They have called their lands after their own names. 49:12 But man in his pomp will not endure; He is like the beasts that perish. 49:13 This is the way of those who are foolish, And of those after them who approve their words. Selah. 49:14 As sheep they are appointed for Sheol; Death shall be their shepherd; And the upright shall rule over them in the morning, And their form shall be for Sheol to consume So that they have no habitation. 49:15 But God will redeem my soul from the power of Sheol, For He will receive me. Selah. 49:16 Do not be afraid when a man becomes rich, When the glory of his house is increased; 49:17 For when he dies he will carry nothing away; His glory will not descend after him. 49:18 Though while he lives he congratulates himself And though men praise you when you do well for yourself 49:19 He shall go to the generation of his fathers; They will never see the light. 49:20 Man in his pomp, yet without understanding, Is like the beasts that perish. (NASB)

Toviyah / Psalms Chapter 49

49:1 For praise; by the sons of Korah; a hymn. 49:2 Hear this declaration, all peoples; give ear, all dwellers on earth. 49:3 Even the sons of the first Adam, even the sons of Jacob together, righteous and sinner. 49:4 My mouth will speak wisdom, and the murmur of my heart is understanding. 49:5 I will incline my ear to a parable, I will begin to open my riddle with the lyre. 49:6 Why should I fear on the day of the visitation of evil, except that the guilt of my sin at my end will encompass me? 49:7 Woe to the sinners, who trust in their possessions, and who boast in the size of their riches. 49:8 A man will by no means redeem his brother, who was taken captive, by his riches; and he will not give to God his price of redemption. 49:9 And he gives his glorious redemption, and his evil will cease, and vengeance forever. 49:10 And he will live again for eternal life; he will not see the judgment of Gehenna. 49:11 For the wise will see the wicked, in Gehenna they will be judged; together fools and the stupid will perish, and they will leave their money to the righteous. 49:12 In their tomb they will abide forever, and they will not rise from their tents for all generations, because they have exalted themselves; and they have acquired an evil name upon the earth. 49:13 And a wicked man will not lodge in glory with the righteous; he is likened to a beast, he is worth nothing. 49:14 This their way has caused folly for them; and in their end with their mouth they will recount their offenses in the world to come. 49:15 Like sheep, they have assigned the righteous to death, and killed them; they have destroyed the righteous and those who serve the Torah, and the upright they have punished; because of this, their bodies will decay in Gehenna, because they extended their hand and wrecked the dwelling place of his Presence. 49:16 David said in the spirit of prophecy, "Truly God will redeem my soul from the judgment of Gehenna, for he will teach me his Torah forever." 49:17 About Korah and his party he prophesied and said, "Do not fear, Moses, because Korah, the man of dispute, has become rich, because the glory of his house will increase." 49:18 For in his death he will keep nothing, his glory will not descend after him. 49:19 For the soul of Moses during his life will bless you; and the righteous will thank you, for you are good to those who worship in your presence. 49:20 The memory of the righteous will come to the generation of their fathers; but the wicked will not see light forever and ever. 49:21 The sinful man, when he is in honor, will have no insight; and when his honor is taken from him, he becomes like a beast and worth nothing. (EMC)

Psalmoi / Psalms 49

For the end, a Psalm for the sons of Core. 49:1 Hear these words, all ye nations, hear-ken, all ye that dwell upon the earth: 49:2 both the sons of mean men, and sons of great men; the rich and poor man together. 49:3 My mouth shall speak of wisdom; and the meditation of my heart shall bring forth understanding. 49:4 I will incline mine ear to a parable: I will open my riddle on the harp. 49:5 Wherefore should I fear in the evil day? the iniquity of my heel shall compass me. 49:6 They that trust in their strength, and boast themselves in the multitude of their wealth— 49:7 A brother does not redeem, shall a man redeem? he shall not give to God a ransom for himself, 49:8 or the price of the redemption of his soul, though he labour for ever, 49:9 and live to the end, so that he should not see corruption. 49:10 When he shall see wise men dying, the fool and the senseless one shall perish together; and they shall leave their wealth to strangers. 49:11 And their sepulchres are their houses for ever, even their tabernacles to all generations: they have called their lands after their own names. 49:12 And man being in honour, understands not: he is compared to the senseless cattle, and is like to them. 49:13 This their way is an offence to them: yet afterwards men will commend their sayings. Pause. 49:14 They have laid them as sheep in Hades; death shall feed on them; and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning, and their help shall fail in Hades from their glory. 49:15 But God shall deliver my soul from the power of Hades, when he shall receive me. Pause. 49:16 Fear not when a man is enriched, and when the glory of his house is increased. 49:17 For he shall take nothing when he dies; neither shall his glory descend with him. 49:18 For his soul shall be blessed in his life: he shall give thanks to thee when thou dost well to him. 49:19 Yet he shall go in to the generation of his fathers; he shall never see light. 49:20 Man that is in honour, understands not: he is compared to the senseless cattle, and is like them. (LXX)

Eleven Psalms are attributed to the Korahites, this week’s study from *Tehillim / Psalms 49:1-20*, is the conclusion of a series of Psalms dedicated to the Korahites spanning from *Tehillim / Psalm 42* and *Tehillim / Psalms 44 - 49*. The Psalm opens saying: **לְמַנְצֵחַ | לְבָנֵי-קֹרַח מְזֻמֹּר: For the choir director. A Psalm of the sons of Korah.**

The psalmist continues saying **ב שְׁמֵעוּ-זֹאת כָּל-הָעַמִּים הָאֲזִינוּ כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל: ג גַּם-בְּנֵי אָדָם גַּם-בְּנֵי-אִישׁ 49:1 Hear this, all peoples; Give ear, all inhabitants of the world, 49:2 Both low and high, Rich and poor together. 49:3 My mouth will speak wisdom, And the meditation of my heart will be under-**

standing. (NASB) Notice how he says שְׁמָעוּ-זֹאת כָּל-הָעַמִּים הָאֲזִינוּ that all the people are to listen, those who have an ear. Having an ear to hear is an important hebraic concept in the Hebrew mind. The Hebrew bible, the Tanach, contains 419,687 words. Of those 419,687 words 8,679 are unique. In order to master competency in reading the Hebrew bible, it is important to be able to recognize a mere 1,903 Hebrew vocabulary words. Because Hebrew has so few words and memorization can be minimized by reason of recognition of the verbal patterns that are available, each Hebrew word is packed full of meaning. The meaning of the words comes out by the way the ancient Hebrew people used these words to describe reality, the world, and God. The way the ancient authors organized their ideas using these words, the way they group the words together, their usage, is in many ways much different than the way we do today. For example, in the Shema (*Shema Yisrael, Adonai Eloheinu, Adonai Echad*) the word shema (שְׁמַע) is often translated as “hear.” However, according to the Hebrew mind, the word shema has a much wider and deeper meaning than simply “to perceive sound.” The word Shema encompasses a whole spectrum of ideas according to the Torah that includes listening, taking heed, and responding with action to what one has heard. For instance, in *Devarim / Deuteronomy 11:13* we read, וְהָיָה אִם-שָׁמַעְתֶּם עֹלְמוֹתַי אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי מְצַוֶּה אֶתְכֶם הַיּוֹם לְאֲהָבָה, יִגְוֹ וְיִקְרָא סֵפֶר הַבְּרִית וְיִקְרָא בְּאָזְנֵי הָעָם, “So if you faithfully obey the commands I am giving you today...” Literally, though, this verse reads, “And it will be if hearing, you will hear...” In addition to this, after Moses recited the covenant to the people of Israel, they responded, וַיֹּאמְרוּ כָּל-אֲשֶׁר-דִּבֶּר יְהוָה נַעֲשֶׂה וְנִשְׁמָע: “We will do everything the LORD has said; we will obey” (*Shemot / Exodus 24:7, NIV*). The Hebrew text states, “All that God had said we will do and we will hear.” The two verbs used here are synonymous to hearing and doing, to be obedient.

Grasping the wider meaning of having ears to “shema” (שְׁמַע, *hear*) yields insights to other biblical mysteries such as in the Psalms. In the psalms, David pleads, אֲמִזְמוֹר לְדוֹד יְהוָה | שְׁמַע תְּפִלָּתִי הָאֲזִינָה אֵלַי - מִזְמוֹר לְדוֹד יְהוָה | שְׁמַע תְּפִלָּתִי הָאֲזִינָה אֵלַי 143:1 *A psalm of David. LORD, hear my prayer, listen to my cry for mercy; in your faithfulness and righteousness come to my relief. (NASB)* In *Tehillim / Psalms 143*, the Psalmist wasn’t accusing God of being deaf or disinterested. Rather, he was calling on God to take action, and not to simply listen to his words. When the angel appeared to Zechariah to announce that his wife Elizabeth was pregnant with a son and he was to call his name John, he declared that their prayer had been heard. The Lord God answered the barren couple’s prayerful longings to have a child. (see *Luke 1:13*) Understanding the word shema also helps us see why Yeshua often concluded his teaching with the words “*He who has ears to hear, let him hear!*” There are a number of ways to interpret the meaning of giving ear to hear as noted in a previous Psalm study (see *Tehillim / Psalms 41*). What we can say based upon the meaning of “shema” is, “*You have heard my teaching, now take it to heart and obey it!*” Yeshua wants us to be doers of his words, not just hearers only (*James 1:22*).

In *Tehillim / Psalms 49:1-2*, David says, בְּשָׁמְעוּ-זֹאת כָּל-הָעַמִּים הָאֲזִינוּ כָּל-יֹשְׁבֵי הָאָרֶץ: גַּם-בְּגֵי אֶדְוִם וְגַם-בְּגֵי אֶרְוִם וְגַם-בְּגֵי אֶרְוִם וְגַם-בְּגֵי אֶרְוִם 49:1 *Hear this, all peoples; Give ear, all inhabitants of the world, 49:2 Both low and high, Rich and poor together. 49:3 My mouth will speak wisdom, And the meditation of my heart will be understanding. (NASB)* David pleads to all peoples to listen and obey and he specifically states כָּל-יֹשְׁבֵי הָאָרֶץ which translates as “*all inhabitants of the world.*” Here he uses an unusual word in reference to “*the world.*” The word קְהֵל (*kheled*, “world”) is a rare noun and occurs in *Tehillim / Psalms 17:14* and *Isaiah 38:11*. Here the word קְהֵל to describe the earth may be used to describe the earth because it is old and rusty. The Sages explained that it is because “*the weasel which frequents dry land but is not found in the sea, (Hul. 127a) Whatever is on the dry land is found in the sea, except the weasel.*” They use the word as a reference to dry land. The Hebrew lexicon states קְהֵל as an infinitive is defined as “*age, duration of life, the world, weasel, mole, perhaps an extinct, animal, exact meaning unknown.*” David’s use of the word may be that he is describing a people in a dry and desolate land, possibly to those who are without God’s wisdom which is found in the Scriptures. This may be why he continues saying that his mouth speaks wisdom and the meditation of his heart is understanding.

ב שמעו אחויתא דא כל עממיא אציתו כל דיירי ארעא: ג אוף לחוד בני אדם: ד פומי ימלל חוכמתא ורינגת ליבא בינא כיונא: 49:2 Hear this declaration, all peoples; give ear, all dwellers on earth. 49:3 Even the sons of the first Adam, even the sons of Jacob together, righteous and sinner. 49:4 My mouth will speak wisdom, and the murmur of my heart is understanding. (EMC) The rabbis use the word ארעא to translate the word קְהֶלֶד (*kheled*). The word ארעא is Aramaic and it corresponds to the word “*eretz*” (אֶרֶץ) which means “*earth*” or “*land*.” Notice how the rabbis describe the high, the low, the rich and the poor (49:2) to be the sons of the first Adam, even the sons of Jacob together, righteous and sinner. The idea of the “*first Adam*” does this suggest the coming of a “*second Adam*?” The Jewish Encyclopedia on the word “*Adam*” states “*two points of view regarding man’s nature presented in the two Biblical stories of man’s creation; and they are brought out more forcibly in the Haggadah. Both worlds, heaven and earth, were to have a share in man’s creation; hence the host of angels were consulted by the Lord when He said, ‘Let us make man’ (Genesis i. 26, Midrash Genesis Rabba viii.). His body reached from earth to heaven [or from one end of the world to the other] before sin caused him to sink (Hag. 12a, Talmud tractate Sanhedrin 38b). He was of extreme beauty and sunlike brightness (B. B. 58a). His skin was a bright garment, shining like his nails; when he sinned this brightness vanished, and he appeared naked (Targum Yer. Gen. iii. 7; Midrash Genesis Rabba xi.). The garments made by God made for Adam were not of skin, but of light (Gen. R. xx.), and Adam was the first to receive the promise of resurrection (Midrash Genesis Rabba xxi. 7, after Psalms xvii. 15)”* What is interesting is that the rabbis reference the first Adam and his sons, and Jacob with his sons. We know that in many instances, children grow up to be similar to their parents. The first Adam gave birth to sinful men, the second (Jacob) to righteousness and a righteous people. Could this be a rabbinic allusion to the Apostle Paul’s words to the Corinthians in *1 Corinthians 15:39-52*:

1 Corinthians 15:39-52

15:39 All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one flesh of men, and another flesh of beasts, and another flesh of birds, and another of fish. 15:40 There are also heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is one, and the glory of the earthly is another. 15:41 There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory. 15:42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a perishable body it is raised an imperishable body 15:43 it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; 15:44 it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. 15:45 So also it is written, ‘The first man, Adam, became a living soul.’ The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. 15:46 However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural; then the spiritual. 15:47 The first man is from the earth, earthy; the second man is from heaven. 15:48 As is the earthy, so also are those who are earthy; and as is the heavenly, so also are those who are heavenly. 15:49 Just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we will also bear the image of the heavenly. 15:50 Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. 15:51 Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, 15:52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. (NASB)

The rabbinic understanding of Adam, the concept of two worlds, heaven and earth, God clothing him in glory, he was sunlike having the brightness of the sun, and that Adam was the first to receive the promise of the resurrection. Note Paul’s statements to the Corinthians, heavenly and earthly bodies, glory of varying degrees, sunlike, stars, moon, and the resurrection of the dead, and he is tying all of these things together in the context of *15:45 So also it is written, ‘The first man, Adam, became a living soul.’ The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. (NASB)* Paul says “also it is written,” where is this written as Paul is claiming? The

phrase “*The first man, Adam, became a living soul. The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.*” is not found in the Torah, the Prophets, or the Writings. Where did Paul get this from? Whether this was something that was purely inspired by the Holy Spirit or not, he makes a reference to something that is written. Could this be a teaching from the Sages regarding Tehillim / Psalms 49, from the Aramaic Targum that states 49:3 *Even the sons of the first Adam, even the sons of Jacob together, righteous and sinner (EMC)*? This is definitely a possibility.

David proceeds to say that he inclines his ear to a proverb and expresses his riddle upon the harp. Do the following verses describe a riddle or proverb?

Masoretic Text

Tehillim / Psalms 49:4-14

49:4 I will incline my ear to a proverb; I will express my riddle on the harp. 49:5 Why should I fear in days of adversity, When the iniquity of my foes surrounds me, 49:6 Even those who trust in their wealth And boast in the abundance of their riches? 49:7 No man can by any means redeem his brother Or give to God a ransom for him 49:8 For the redemption of his soul is costly, And he should cease trying forever 49:9 That he should live on eternally, That he should not undergo decay. 49:10 For he sees that even wise men die; The stupid and the senseless alike perish And leave their wealth to others. 49:11 Their inner thought is that their houses are forever And their dwelling places to all generations; They have called their lands after their own names. 49:12 But man in his pomp will not endure; He is like the beasts that perish. 49:13 This is the way of those who are foolish, And of those after them who approve their words. Selah. Selah. 49:14 As sheep they are appointed for Sheol; Death shall be their shepherd; And the upright shall rule over them in the morning, And their form shall be for Sheol to consume So that they have no habitation. (NASB)

Aramaic Targum

Toviyah / Psalms Chapter 49:5-15

49:5 I will incline my ear to a parable, I will begin to open my riddle with the lyre. 49:6 Why should I fear on the day of the visitation of evil, except that the guilt of my sin at my end will encompass me? 49:7 Woe to the sinners, who trust in their possessions, and who boast in the size of their riches. 49:8 A man will by no means redeem his brother, who was taken captive, by his riches; and he will not give to God his price of redemption. 49:9 And he gives his glorious redemption, and his evil will cease, and vengeance forever. 49:10 And he will live again for eternal life; he will not see the judgment of Gehenna. 49:11 For the wise will see the wicked, in Gehenna they will be judged; together fools and the stupid will perish, and they will leave their money to the righteous. 49:12 In their tomb they will abide forever, and they will not rise from their tents for all generations, because they have exalted themselves; and they have acquired an evil name upon the earth. 49:13 And a wicked man will not lodge in glory with the righteous; he is likened to a beast, he is worth nothing. 49:14 This their way has caused folly for them; and in their end with their mouth they will recount their offenses in the world to come. 49:15 Like sheep, they have assigned the righteous to death, and killed them; they have destroyed the righteous and those who serve the Torah, and the upright they have punished; because of this, their bodies will decay in Gehenna, because they extended their hand and wrecked the dwelling place of his Presence. (EMC)

Septuagint

Psalmoi / Psalms 49:4-14

49:4 I will incline mine ear to a parable: I will open my riddle on the harp. 49:5 Wherefore should I fear in the evil day? the iniquity of my heel shall compass me. 49:6 They that trust in their strength, and boast themselves in the multitude of their wealth— 49:7 A brother does not redeem, shall a man redeem? he shall not give to God a ransom for himself, 49:8 or the price of the redemption of his soul, though he labour for ever, 49:9 and live to the end, so that he should not see corruption. 49:10 When he shall see wise men dying, the fool and the senseless one shall perish together; and they shall leave their wealth to strangers. 49:11 And their sepulchres are their houses for ever; even their tabernacles to all generations: they have called their lands after their own names. 49:12 And man being in honour, understands not: he is compared to the senseless cattle, and is like to them. 49:13 This their way is an offence to them: yet afterwards men will commend their sayings. Pause. 49:14 They have laid them as sheep in Hades; death shall feed on them; and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning, and their help shall fail in Hades from their glory.

He calls the people to listen to the proverb he will sing. Does *Tehillim / Psalms 49:4-14* sound like a proverb? Why does he call this a proverb and/or a riddle? The reason might be found by studying the Aramaic Targum and the book of Proverbs. The Aramaic Targum speaks of the wise and the wicked. The wicked are foolish men who trust in their wealth. While reading through the book of proverbs, we see that King Solomon is speaking about different kinds of people, what they believe, how they treat the commandments of God, and how they interact with others. In *Mishley / Proverbs 1-9*, we find five different kinds of people (i) the wise, (ii) the wicked, (iii) the fool, (iv) the simple, and (v) the scorner. According to the Scriptures, the wise man is the one who is wise unto salvation (*2 Timothy 3:15, Mishley / Proverbs 8, James 1:5, 3:14-18*). A wise person listens to wise instruction, especially what is found in the Scriptures (*Mishley / Proverbs 1:5, 4:7-13, 4:20-23, 22:17-21, etc*). Wise people fear the Lord (*Mishley / Proverbs 1:7*). Wisdom leads to life, security, hope in the Lord, long life, and directing our foot steps away from evil. Wise people associate with wise people (*Mishley / Proverbs 12:26 and 13:20*). The wise flee from sin, discipline their speech, and Scripture says that the Lord makes promises to the wise (*Mishley / Proverbs 3:35, 10:1, 15:20, 12:18, James 4:13-18*). The unwise on the other hand are characterized as the foolish, the wicked. The wicked are described in the Tanach as worthless people (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 13:13, Judges 19:22, 1 Samuel 25:25, and 1 Kings 21:10, 13*) and that every part of their bodies is devoted to evil. This might suggest that the body language of the wicked communicates evil (*Romans 3:10-18*). The unwise mouth is perverse, the Torah speaks of being crooked and twisted, and signals his companions that it is time to do evil (winks with his eyes) and motions with his fingers, the wicked are skillful in plotting evil. The wicked practice many sins, pride, lying and deception, devising wicked schemes, mischief, tempting others into sinful ways (*Mishley / Proverbs 5:5*), to break God's commands (*Mishley / Proverbs 1:10-16*), and sow discord among the brethren. The truly godly person sows seeds of unity, peace, joy, love, and the fruit of the Spirit. The way of the righteous leads to eternal life, and the righteous do not presume to be able to redeem themselves but rely and trust in the Lord to redeem them from their sins.

David asks the question, why should he fear his enemies who are full of iniquity, those who boast in their riches (*49:5-6*)? Is there anything that we should fear as believers in Yeshua? What do the Apostolic Scriptures say regarding fear and what one should really be afraid of? The author of the book of Hebrews states the following:

Hebrews 10:26-29

10:26 For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, 10:27 but a terrifying expectation of judgment and the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries. 10:28 Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. 10:29 How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God,

and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace? (NASB)

The author of Hebrews is stating that if one continues in willful sin after having received the truth, there is no longer a sacrifice for sins for such a person, and all that remains is a terrifying expectation of judgment and fire. The Aramaic Targum and the Septuagint state what he should fear is the guilt of his sin at the end that encompasses him. The wicked trust in their wealth, their possessions, and the boast of the size of their riches. Could these wicked men be boasting saying “*look at how righteous I am because of how the Lord is blessing me?*” when in truth his own wickedness is blinding him since he is trusting in his wealth as a sign of God’s favor rather than trusting in the Lord Himself?

David says: וַיִּקַּר פְּדִיּוֹן נַפְשָׁם וְחַדְלָ לְעוֹלָם: 49:8 *For the redemption of his soul is costly, And he should cease trying forever. (NASB)* Is he suggesting that there are those who seek to redeem their own souls? It could be that the wicked who boast in their riches believe it is possible to deliver themselves by their own hands. Note how the Targum states 49:8 *A man will by no means redeem his brother, who was taken captive, by his riches; and he will not give to God his price of redemption. (EMC)* The rabbis who translated the Targum do not appear to be thinking on the salvation of the soul when David says “*the redemption of the soul is costly.*” It appears that the wicked man is held captive by his own wealth and that it is impossible to redeem one from this kind of captivity. A man is unable to rescue another from his (personal) riches, or that one is not able to save from the grave, he could not by his wealth preserve him in life. The point is to show how powerless and valueless wealth is in regard to the things that are most important to a man’s welfare, life, and even his own soul before God. The parable or riddle that David appears to be referencing in the psalm is with regard to the wicked who follow their own folly and do not follow the wisdom of God that is found in the Scriptures.

He continues saying that such a person should cease from trying (to deliver his soul) and that by doing so he will live eternally and not undergo decay (49:8-9). David speaks of the vanity and foolishness of man in trying to make a name for himself (49:10-13). The rabbis say 49:12 *In their tomb they will abide forever; and they will not rise from their tents for all generations, because they have exalted themselves; and they have acquired an evil name upon the earth. 49:13 And a wicked man will not lodge in glory with the righteous; he is likened to a beast, he is worth nothing. (EMC)* This section of the Psalm appears to be alluding to the resurrection.

The resurrection is the doctrine that in a future age the dead will rise from their graves to live again. This doctrine does in fact appear frequently in Jewish eschatology, where it is associated with the doctrine of the Messiah and the immortality of the soul. There are only two biblical references to the resurrection of the dead in the Tanach and they are found in the book of Isaiah and Daniel. Biblical scholars believe these to be from a later date which has been influenced by the Persian period.

Isaiah 26:19

26:19 Your dead will live; Their corpses will rise. You who lie in the dust, awake and shout for joy, For your dew is as the dew of the dawn, And the earth will give birth to the departed spirits. (NASB)

Daniel 12:2

12:2 ‘Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt. (NASB)

The Scriptures speak of the dead rising in both cases from Isaiah and Daniel. Based upon the rabbinic literature, there is no systematic doctrine on the resurrection, any more than there is a systematic doctrine for any other theological topic. The Jewish Encyclopedia states the following:

“The ancient peoples, the early Hebrews believed that the dead go down into the under-

world and live there a colorless existence (comp. Isa. xiv. 15-19; Ezek. xxxii. 21-30). Only an occasional person, and he an especially fortunate one, like Enoch or Elijah, could escape from Sheol, and these were taken to heaven to the abode of Yhwh, where they became angels (comp. Slavonic Enoch, xxii.). In the Book of Job first the longing for a resurrection is expressed (xiv. 13-15), and then, if the Masoretic text may be trusted, a passing conviction that such a resurrection will occur (xix. 25, 26). The older Hebrew conception of life regarded the nation so entirely as a unit that no individual mortality or immortality was considered. Jeremiah (xxxi. 29) and Ezekiel (xviii.) had contended that the individual was the moral unit, and Job's hopes are based on this idea."

Note that according to the Scriptures, the term used to express the idea of sharing in the world to come, in the future life, is expressed by the phrase "to inherit the land." This is implied by Yeshua's words in *Matthew 5:5* and David's words in *Tehillim / Psalms 37:11*, the meek and the humble will inherit the land. The issue at hand is whether these Scriptures are referencing the present age or the age to come? The reason being because the wicked are the ones who usually are in power (who rule over the people) and the righteous are persecuted for their righteousness. To be consistent with the Psalm, the promises that are made to the righteous, the humble, the wise, the fulfillment of the promises in some cases are going to be fulfilled in the world to come when the Lord dwells in our midst and we see Him face to face. But as the Scriptures are saying here from the Psalm and Proverbs, those who are meek and humble before God are wise. The Aramaic Targum states *49:11 For the wise will see the wicked, in Gehenna they will be judged; together fools and the stupid will perish, and they will leave their money to the righteous. 49:12 In their tomb they will abide forever, and they will not rise from their tents for all generations, because they have exalted themselves; and they have acquired an evil name upon the earth. 49:13 And a wicked man will not lodge in glory with the righteous; he is likened to a beast, he is worth nothing.* (EMC) The Targum translation brings us back to this concept of the world to come and the resurrection. Rabbinic Judaism holds the resurrection to be a very important concept for national survival while at the same time having the concept of the Messiah with the belief in the immortality of the soul which appeals to the individual's need to be assured that one survives death. In Judaism, salvation has both a national and individual basis. From the biblical text we know the Sadducee opposed the belief of the resurrection which is the ultimate fulfillment of salvation by God, the redemption of the Body. As the psalm states we absolutely cannot redeem our own souls, it is only the Lord who can do so and according to the Apostolic Writings, Yeshua the Messiah laid his life down so that we could have life everlasting. Reading the Aramaic Targum, who do you think it was that translated the Targum having such strong overtones of the resurrection?

טו כְּצֹאֵן | לְשֹׂאֵל שְׂתוּ מָוֶת יִרְעוּ וַיִּרְדּוּ בָּם יִשְׂרָיִם | לְבָקָר וְצִיֹּרִים [וְצוֹרִים], 49:14 *As sheep they are appointed for Sheol; Death shall be their shepherd; And the upright shall rule over them in the morning, And their form shall be for Sheol to consume So that they have no habitation.* (NASB) These Scriptures appear to equate the wicked to sheep ready for slaughter. Death itself will be their shepherd since the wicked, the unrighteous live their lives in a way that is synonymous to the living dead, those who are dead to God and to others since they are living for themselves (selfishness and pride). David says 49:15 *But God will redeem my soul from the power of Sheol, For He will receive me. Selah.* (NASB) Only the Lord has the power to redeem the soul from the power of the grave. The Aramaic Targum has a slightly different interpretation in the translation of the psalm, טו היך ענא צדיקיא שוו למותא וקטלונון ותברו צדיקיא חסידיא ופלחי אוריתא ותריציא אלקו, מטול הכי גופיהון יהון בלין יתבליין בגהנם מן בגלל דאושיתו ידהון וחבילו בית מדור שכינתיה דיליה: טז אמר דוד ברוח נבואה ברם אלהא יפרוק נפשי מן דין גהנם ארום ילפינני אוריתיה לעלמין ודברינני לחולקיה לעלמא 49:15 *Like sheep, they have assigned the righteous to death, and killed them; they have destroyed the righteous and those who serve the Torah, and the upright they have punished; because of this, their bodies will decay in Gehenna, because they extended their hand and wrecked the dwelling place of his Presence. 49:16 David said in the spirit of prophecy, "Truly God will redeem my soul from the judgment of Gehenna,*

for he will teach me His Torah forever.” (EMC) The rabbis say that the Lord God will redeem the soul from the judgment of Gehenna by teaching His Torah. What is meant by the “judgment of Gehenna?” According to the Apostolic Writings, James said in *James 3:6*, the tongue is a fire, it is set on fire by Gehenna. *Tehillim / Psalms 49* states that the children of Gehenna are those who trust in their own wealth. In *Matthew 23*, Yeshua says you generation of vipers how can you escape the judgment of Gehenna. Based upon these texts, the judgment of Gehenna is not based upon “obeying” the Torah but “violating” the Torah. Today Paul’s words of being “under the Law” taken from *Romans 2:12, Galatians 3:23 and 4:5*. Obeying the Torah prevents the judgment of Gehenna according to the Aramaic Targum. In *Matthew 23*, Yeshua speaks to the crowd of people saying that the scribes and Pharisees seat themselves in Moshe’s seat, they teach the Torah but do not do according to the Torah, they are hypocritical. They tie up heavy burdens but do not lift the burden themselves. They broaden their phylacteries and lengthen their tzitzit. They love the place of honor and the chief seats. They are prideful and seek the praise of men. According to Yeshua in *Matthew 23*, the judgment of Gehenna is the man that loves the darkness and the ways of unrighteousness. The Lord God allows them to have their own way. He turns them over to the path of wickedness, and they practice evil, loving the darkness and hating the light. In our previous Psalms studies we have learned that the Torah is considered the light of God. It is not too much of a stretch to say that this is also the understanding of the Apostles if we study the epistles of John and Peter. Here in the Targum translation we are told that the Lord redeems man from the judgment of Gehenna by teaching him His Torah, which means that He is teaching man His righteous and holy ways. The Septuagint translates this psalm to say, ὡς πρόβατα ἐν ᾄδῃ ἔθεντο θάνατος ποιμαίνει αὐτούς καὶ κατακυριεύουσιν αὐτῶν οἱ εὐθεῖς τὸ πρωὶ καὶ ἡ βοήθεια αὐτῶν παλαιωθήσεται ἐν τῷ ᾄδῃ ἐκ τῆς δόξης αὐτῶν 49:15 πλὴν ὁ θεὸς λυτρώσεται τὴν ψυχὴν μου ἐκ χειρὸς ἄδου ὅταν λαμβάνῃ με διάψαλμα 49:14 *They have laid them as sheep in Hades; death shall feed on them; and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning, and their help shall fail in Hades from their glory. 49:15 But God shall deliver my soul from the power of Hades, when he shall receive me. Pause. (LXX)* It is fascinating how the rabbis translate “death being their shepherd” to “death feeding on them.” In the Masoretic text we have death leading the unrighteous and in the Septuagint death is feeding on the unrighteous as a food source like a fire consumes chaff. David says the Lord will redeem his soul from Sheol, whereas the Septuagint states God will deliver his soul from the power of Hades. In Midrash Tehillim 23, Part 7, saying the chastisement of God will occur in Gehenna (Hell) and the Lord God will cool the fires of hell. (זו דינה של גיהנם, שהוא) (מצנן לי גיהנם. שבטך). In Midrash Tehillim 23, Part 7, the rabbis say the Lord will tame down the fires of Hell (Gehenna) so His people are not destroyed, and refer to the afflictions that take place in exile and the Lord rescuing Israel. In Midrash Tehillim 32, Part 4 the rabbis say the following:

If you keep the Torah, I will keep your body, as it is said, He keeps all his bones, not one of these precepts is broken (Tehillim / Psalms 34:21). Rabbi Eliezer son of Jacob taught in the name of rabbi Phinehas son of Jair that the Holy One blessed be He said, I made the inclination to evil. Watch that it bring you not to sin. Should it bring you to sin, take care to repent, and I will relieve you of your sin, as is said, I have made, and I will lift up; I Myself will carry, and will deliver you (Isaiah 46:4) from the punishment of Gehenna. Hence it is said Blessed is he whose transgression is lifted up, and whose sin is pardoned (Tehillim / Psalms 32:1). (Midrash Tehillim 32, Part 4)

Midrash Tehillim 32, Part 4, the midrash speaks of the inclination to evil and that should you sin one should repent and the Lord will relieve us of our sin and lift us up and the Lord Himself will carry and deliver us from the punishment of Gehenna (Hell). Other midrashim states that the Lord Himself will go down into Hell to deliver His people. The concept of God delivering the soul from the power of Hades is well attested to in the rabbinic literature and all of Scripture.

David goes on to say, 49:16 *Do not be afraid when a man becomes rich, When the glory of his house is increased; 49:17 For when he dies he will carry nothing away; His glory will not descend after him. (NASB)* This may be a connection to *Tehillim / Psalms 47* which speaks of men being shields of the earth,

the unrighteous man who is in power ruling over other men, do not fear such men for their end is death and they will not be resurrected to eternal life. David concludes saying *יֵט כִּי-נִפְשׁוֹ בְּחַיּוֹ יִבְרַךְ וַיְוַדֶּה כִּי-תִיטֵיב* *49:18 Though while he lives he congratulates himself And though men praise you when you do well for yourself 49:19 He shall go to the generation of his fathers; They will never see the light. 49:20 Man in his pomp, yet without understanding, Is like the beasts that perish. (NASB)* The Aramaic Targum states, *יֵט אַרוֹם נִפְשִׁיהּ דְּמִשָּׁה, בְּחַיּוּהִי יִבְרַךְ תַּתְּבַרְךְ לֶךְ וַיְוַדֶּנֶךְ צְדִיקָא אַרוֹם תִּיטֵיב לְפַלְחִין קְדָמְךָ: כ תִּיעוֹל דּוֹכְרַנִּיהוֹן דְּצְדִיקָא עַד דְּר אֲבַהֲתָהוֹן וְרִשְׁעִיא לְעַלְמֵי עַלְמֵיא לֹא יַחְמוֹן נְהוּרָא: כֹּא גְבַרָא בְר נִש חֵיבָא בְזִמְנ דְּאִיתִיהּ בִּיקְרָא לֹא יַתְבִּין וּבְאַסְתַּלְקוֹת: 49:19 For the soul of Moses during his life will bless you; and the righteous will thank you, for you are good to those who worship in your presence. 49:20 The memory of the righteous will come to the generation of their fathers; but the wicked will not see light forever and ever. 49:21 The sinful man, when he is in honor, will have no insight; and when his honor is taken from him, he becomes like a beast and worth nothing. (EMC)* The Septuagint states, *49:18 ὅτι ἡ ψυχὴ αὐτοῦ ἐν τῇ ζωῇ αὐτοῦ εὐλογηθήσεται ἐξομολογήσεται σοι ὅταν ἀγαθὴν αὐτῷ 49:19 εἰσελεύσεται ἕως γενεᾶς πατέρων αὐτοῦ ἕως αἰῶνος οὐκ ὄψεται φῶς 49:20 ἄνθρωπος ἐν τιμῇ ὧν οὐ συνῆκεν παρασυνεβλήθη τοῖς κτήνεσιν τοῖς ἀνοήτοις καὶ ὁμοιώθη αὐτοῖς 49:18 For his soul shall be blessed in his life: he shall give thanks to thee when thou dost well to him. 49:19 Yet he shall go in to the generation of his fathers; he shall never see light. 49:20 Man that is in honour; understands not: he is compared to the senseless cattle, and is like them. (LXX)* The unrighteous search for their own glory rather than the glory of God, this is exemplified in the comment that the rich look to congratulate themselves but in the end, they will not see the light. The point is that the unrighteous do not see the truth (the light) of God because they are so involved in personal success, pride, and selfishness. *Tehillim / Psalms 49* appears to speak of pride in the sense that men falsely pretend to know God's will when they do not. Such men think their way is as good or better, they trust in their wealth and think that they do not need the Lord (see *1 Timothy 6:3-6* and *James 4:6-10*) or worse yet claim there is no God (*Tehillim / Psalm 14:1*). As we read in *Matthew 23*, some of the worst cases of sinful pride can be seen among the religious leaders who act in hypocrisy and who presume to go before others “*in God's name.*” A man's own selfishness causes him to excessively focus on himself and so much so like it says in the psalm, *49:21 The sinful man, when he is in honor, will have no insight; and when his honor is taken from him, he becomes like a beast and worth nothing. (NASB)* This attitude will prevent a person from experiencing the joys of sharing, giving and having genuine, good quality relationships. The approach we should take from this psalm is to consider ways in which we can overcome the selfishness in our own minds. We can make the conscious decision to change our mind set. Decide to think, focus, and plan to do good to others and not serve only ourselves. Try to understand the importance of honoring people as opposed to revering things or money over people. Try to think about how people and genuine relationships are more important and valuable than having money and material possessions. The apostle Paul wrote how to overcome selfishness saying, “*whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.*” Yeshua also set the ultimate example of His sacrifice for us. Since selfishness is the seeking our own lusts and desires regardless of its impact on others, this is sin that must be overcome. With the help of the Holy Spirit and self determination, we can avoid seeking our own pleasures, and instead seek the good of others and putting Yeshua the Messiah first in our lives. This will manifest the kind of love the Lord desires for us to have in our lives, which “*suffers long and is kind*” and “*does not seek its own.*”

Rabbinic Commentary

The Rabbinic Commentary (Midrash) on *Tehillim / Psalms 49* has 3 parts. Reading through the Midrash we will be looking at Part 1, 2, and 3. Let's begin by outlining *Midrash Tehillim Chapter 49, Part 1, 2, and 3.*

Outline of Midrash Tehillim / Psalms, Chapter 49, Part 1, 2, and 3

Part 1

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the **דיבור המתחיל** (Dibur Hamathil) saying “*For the leader; a Psalm of the sons of Korach. Hear this, all you peoples (Tehillim / Psalms 49:1).*”
- The **פתיחתא** (Petihata) “*the homiletic introduction*” to the Midrash says “These words are to be considered in the light of what Scripture says elsewhere, Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun (Ecclesiastes 11:7).”
- The **משל** (mashal) “*the parable,*” goes on to explain the **פתיחתא** (Petihata), the rabbis go on to discuss the opening words of the Psalm for the Sons of Korach in contrast to the light, the sun, and the word of the Lord.
- The **נמשל** (Nimshal) “*expansion on the parable*” expands upon the **משל** (mashal), the rabbis expand upon the parable saying the light is the light of Torah and the rewards for diligently studying the Torah of God.
- The Concluding phrase says “*Give ear, all you inhabitants of kheled (Tehillim / Psalms 49:2), kheled means the world. And why is the world kheled? Because in the time to come the corrosion (khaludah) of the wicked will show on their faces.*”

Part 2

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the **דיבור המתחיל** (Dibur Hamathil) saying “*Both the sons of a great man, and the sons of a righteous man (Tehillim / Psalms 49:3).*”
- The **פתיחתא** (Petihata) “*the homiletic introduction*” to the Midrash says “*Who are meant by the sons of a great man?*”
- The **משל** (mashal) “*the parable,*” goes on to explain the **פתיחתא** (Petihata), the rabbis the meaning of the sons of a great man comparing the sons of the righteous with the sons of the wicked.
- The **נמשל** (Nimshal) “*expansion on the parable*” expands upon the **משל** (mashal), the rabbis expand upon the parable drawing a parallel to those who go down to Gehenna, that those who are rich in Torah and poor in Torah go down to Gehenna alike.
- The Concluding phrase says “*Therefore, the sons of Korah said, Since such is the requital for neglect of Torah, we will be diligent in the study of the Torah.*”

Part 3

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the **דיבור המתחיל** (Dibur Hamathil) saying “*My mouth will speak wisdom, and the meditation of my heart will be understanding (Tehillim / Psalms 49:4).*”
- The **פתיחתא** (Petihata) “*the homiletic introduction*” to the Midrash says “*Here wisdom and understanding have the same force as in the words For this is your wisdom and your understanding (Devarim / Deuteronomy 4:6).*”
- The **משל** (mashal) “*the parable,*” goes on to explain the **פתיחתא** (Petihata), the rabbis discuss Tehillim / Psalms 49 regarding fearing the wicked, trusting in wealth, redeeming a man, etc.
- The **נמשל** (Nimshal) “*expansion on the parable*” expands upon the **משל** (mashal), the rabbis expand upon the parable to list and discuss those men who were wicked, who trusted in wealth, and perish in Gehenna.
- The Concluding phrase says “*Aaron blessed Korach’s soul, nevertheless when it will go to the generation of his fathers, it and they will never see the light (Tehillim / Psalms 49:20), meaning that Korach and his assembly will have no portion in the world to come. And why not? Because Korach who lived in honor, had no understanding and so he perished.*”

Midrash Tehillim 49, Part 1 opens with the dibur hamathil (דיבור המתחיל) saying “*For the leader; a Psalm of the sons of Korach. Hear this, all you peoples (Tehillim / Psalms 49:1).*” The homiletic introduction to the Midrash states “*These words are to be considered in the light of what Scripture says elsewhere, Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun (Ecclesiastes 11:7).*” The rabbis quote from *Ecclesiastes 11:7* which states that it is a pleasant thing for the eyes to behold the sun. What are the rabbis suggesting saying that the light is sweet and looking into the sun is pleasant? We know that if we gaze at the sun, we can damage our eyes. Let’s look at context of *Ecclesiastes* chapter 11.

Ecclesiastes 11:1-12:3

11:1 Cast your bread on the surface of the waters, for you will find it after many days. 11:2 Divide your portion to seven, or even to eight, for you do not know what misfortune may occur on the earth. 11:3 If the clouds are full, they pour out rain upon the earth; and whether a tree falls toward the south or toward the north, wherever the tree falls, there it lies. 11:4 He who watches the wind will not sow and he who looks at the clouds will not reap. 11:5 Just as you do not know the path of the wind and how bones are formed in the womb of the pregnant woman, so you do not know the activity of God who makes all things. 11:6 Sow your seed in the morning and do not be idle in the evening, for you do not know whether morning or evening sowing will succeed, or whether both of them alike will be good. 11:7 The light is pleasant, and it is good for the eyes to see the sun. 11:8 Indeed, if a man should live many years, let him rejoice in them all, and let him remember the days of darkness, for they will be many. Everything that is to come will be futility. 11:9 Rejoice, young man, during your childhood, and let your heart be pleasant during the days of young manhood. And follow the impulses of your heart and the desires of your eyes. Yet know that God will bring you to judgment for all these things. 11:10 So, remove grief and anger from your heart and put away pain from your body, because childhood and the prime of life are fleeting. 12:1 Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come and the years draw near when you will say, ‘I have no delight in them’; 12:2 before the sun and the light, the moon and the stars are darkened, and clouds return after the rain; 12:3 in the day that the watchmen of the house tremble, and mighty men stoop, the grinding ones stand idle because they are few, and those who look through windows grow dim; (NASB)

Ecclesiastes 11:7 opens saying “*the light is pleasant*” which suggests that one may walk by the light, or that this light is a reference to the day. To “*see the sun,*” suggests that we are alive in this world and are able to enjoy the light of the sun. The idea may be related to life, prosperity, and peace with God that is connecting to doing good and enjoying righteousness in this life. The context of *Ecclesiastes 11* seems to make a contrast between the light and the darkness, the day and the night, the blessing of God in the day whereby we are able to work, and by night we are unable to work. Remember also how the light of the day is paralleled to righteousness and the dark the unrighteousness in both the Apostolic Writings and the rabbinic literature. Mankind finds the light to be beneficial to live, to serve, and to behold things in this world so he does not stumble. The rabbis often interpret the light as the light of Torah. Is it any surprise that this is the case if we take the context of what it means to walk by the light of God? We find also elsewhere in the Scriptures the use of seeing the light (*Job 33:28, Mishley / Proverbs 6:23, and 2 Peter 1:19*). In both the Tanach and the Apostolic Writings we find an interesting connection between redemption, life, the light, and the Lord God Almighty.

Job 33:28

33:28 כַּחַ כְּהַ נְפֹשִׁי [נִפְשׁוֹ] מִצְעָבִר בְּשַׁחַת וְחַיְתִי [וְחַיְתוֹ] בְּאֹר תַּרְאָה: *‘He has redeemed my soul from going to the pit, And my life shall see the light.’ (NASB)*

Mishley / Proverbs 6:23

כי נר מצוה ותורה אור ודרך חיים תוכחות מוסר: 6:23 For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching is light; And reproofs for discipline are the way of life (NASB)

2 Peter 1:19

1:19 So we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts. (NASB)

Job states that the Lord has redeemed his soul from the pit and as a result his life sees the light. Note how he says *פָּדָה נַפְשִׁי* “ransom / redeem my life” redemption is connected to *וַיִּחַיֵּתִי* “my life” seeing the light. Job says “his life” rather than “his heart,” or “his soul,” providing us with insight on the light and our lives seeing that light, the light of God. There is a connection between truth, and righteousness to living righteously before God. In proverbs, Solomon said that the mitzvah (מִצְוָה) and the Torah (תּוֹרָה) are light, the mitzvah is a lamp, the Torah is a light, and the way of life is to discipline one’s life in morality and ethics (מוֹסֵר). Solomon says explicitly that the Torah is a light, it is interesting how the NASB translates Torah to be “instruction,” which is consistent with the root meaning of Torah as the “instruction” of God to His people. The apostle Peter utilizes this analogy of the light in his epistle in 2 Peter 1:19, in which he says that we are to pay attention to the prophetic word, the prophetic word behaves as a lamp shining in a dark place.

The “day” draws a parallel to Ecclesiastes and to the midrash that one is able to walk and not stumble and the morning star is a reference to Yeshua. Taking all of these things into context, the light enlightens the darkened mind of man, showing men their sinfulness, (*one of the purposes of the Torah*) the light reveals the insufficiency of our righteousness, and the revelation of the Messiah (Christ) who renews our hearts, for the glory of God and his people. Our Savior, redeemer, righteousness, peace, pardon, and salvation, all of these things are made known by the light of God, His truth, and the Lord empowering us to walk in His ways, not in a fleshly manner (*in a spiritual manner, see Romans 7 and 12*) but in a righteous and holy manner that comes only by the Spirit of God indwelling each of us.

The midrash continues saying the following:

Rabbi Isaac and rabbi Abba son of kakhana differed in their comments on this verse. Rabbi Isaac said, How sweet is the light of the world to come. Blessed is the man of good deeds, for he will see the light, as it is said They that love Him are as the sun when he goes forth in his might (Judges 5:31). But rabbi Abba son of Kakhana said, How sweet are the words of Torah which is like light, as it is said The commandment is a lamp, and the law is a light (Mishley / Proverbs 6:23). (Midrash Tehillim 49, Part 1)

In this part of the midrash, the rabbis differ in their opinions regarding the meaning of “sweet is the light” and “the goodness for the eyes to see the sun.” The first opinion is that the light is the light of the world to come. The light of the world to come is drawn into context of the man who does good deeds, he will shine as the light, as the sun that shines forth. Note that Yeshua says something similar in *Matthew 13:43*, the righteous will shine as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father. Remember also Paul’s words of the righteous who shine in the world to come will shine with differing intensities which draws us back to the idea that the magnitude of luminescence (the glory) that shines forth is dependent upon the righteous life here on earth. (*1 Corinthians 15:35-58, Philippians 2:14-16*) Both Yeshua and Paul may be using a midrashic understanding of the glory of the sun to set forth or describe the glory of the saints, both in soul and body, in the world to come. The righteous are connected to the one who loves God, he will do and live in a righteous manner. The second opinion is that the light is a reference to the words of the Torah, the rabbis refer to *Mishley / Proverbs 6:23*. The idea is that joy comes from obeying the word of God, there is great joy (Simcha) in serving God in the manner in which He instructed us. Simcha (שִׂמְחָה) is a Hebrew word that brings with it

several meanings. The word “*simcha*” literally means “*gladness, or joy.*” The word is derived from root word “*sameyach*” (שמח) which means “*glad or happy.*” The concept of *simcha* has an important meaning in Jewish philosophy which expresses the joy or happiness one has for having the ability to serve God. (e.g. the ability to work, see *Devarim / Deuteronomy 8:18.*) The use of the word is generally as a reference to a festive occasion or to celebrate a happy occasion, such as for weddings, a Bar or Bat Mitzvah, a Brit Milah, an engagement, and most significantly as a reference to *Simcha Torah*, the Joy of Torah, which is a Jewish holiday that celebrates and marks the conclusion of the annual cycle of public Torah readings, and the beginning of a new cycle. *Simchat Torah* is a component of the Biblical Jewish holiday of *Shemini Atzeret* (“*Eighth Day of Assembly*”), following immediately after the festival of *Sukkot* in the month of *Tishrei* (*mid-September to early October*). During this celebration, the Torah scroll is taken out of the ark and read at night. In the morning, the last parashah of *Deuteronomy* and the first parashah of *Genesis* are read in the synagogue. This is a festive time when God made a covenant with His people at the mountain of Sinai and the worshipers are allowed to leave their seats to dance and sing with the Torah scroll in a joyous celebration that can last for several hours.

The midrash continues saying the following:

Blessed is the man who sees the Halakhah glistening like snow. And why blessed? Because there is no end of reward for the study of Torah. Again and again the Holy One blessed be He, returns to reward the children of Israel because they labored diligently at Torah, giving them for their labor the nations of the earth, We merit this reward because we are diligent in the study of Torah. What did you use to say to us? You labor in vain. But now see how great is the reward given for study of Torah. See how many good things are done for us on its account, for in Hear this, all you peoples, the word “this” clearly refers to Torah as in the verse, This is the Torah (Devarim / Deuteronomy 4:44). (Midrash Tehillim 49, Part 1)

It is interesting how the rabbis describe Halakhah as “*glistening like snow*” and equate Halakhah to the reward for the study of the Torah. The rabbis say that Israel labored in the study of Torah and their reward is to inherit the earth. The reward is based upon the diligent study of Torah. Halakhah, as we know, is comprised of the practical application of the commandments (*mitzvot*) in the Torah, as it has been developed within the rabbinic literature. According to the Talmud Bavli Tractate *Makot*, there are 613 *mitzvot* in the Torah; also known as the *Taryag mitzvot* תרי"ג מצוות. According to Rambam’s *Mishneh Torah*, there are 248 positive *mitzvot* which correspond to the parts of the body, and 365 negative *mitzvot* given in the Torah. The rabbinic understanding of the commandments is that the positive commands require an action to be performed and are considered to bring a person closer to God. The negative commands are to be avoided, violations of the negative commands causes one to become distant from the Lord (*we all should be in agreement with that since sin has the inherent property of separation from God*). In striving to be closer to God, one attempts to live in accordance with God’s wishes, to live according to the testimony of God, His Holy Words. The rabbis of *Midrash Tehillim 49, Part 1* classify the Torah and Halakhah as pure (*glistening like snow*), righteous, and holy. *Midrash Tehillim 49, Part 1* concludes saying, “*Give ear, all you inhabitants of kheled (Tehillim / Psalms 49:2), kheled means the world. And why is the world kheled? Because in the time to come the corrosion (khaludah) of the wicked will show on their faces.*” Earlier in the study we learned that the word קְהֶלֶד (*kheled*, “*world*”) is a rare noun, an unusual word, and occurs in *Tehillim / Psalms 17:14* and *Isaiah 38:11*. David uses the word קְהֶלֶד to describe the earth becoming rusty and old. The rabbis describe the wicked becoming rusty and old in their faces. It might be said then that the Torah of God maintains us as new, fresh, and pleasant before the Lord and before others. Sin on the other hand wears one down, and wears one old, so much so that it becomes obvious to all by the outward appearances.

Midrash Tehillim 49, Part 2 opens with the *Dibur Hamathil* (דיבור המתהיל) saying “*Both the sons of a great man, and the sons of a righteous man (Tehillim / Psalms 49:3).*” The homiletic introduction to the Midrash says “*Who are meant by the sons of a great man?*” The entire midrash states the following:

<p>מדרש תהלים פרק מט סימן ב</p> <p>ב גם בני אדם גם בני איש. מהו גם בני אדם. אלו בני אברהם דכתיב ביה האדם הגדול בענקים (יהושע יד טו), גם לרבות בני ישמעאל ובני קטורה. בני איש, בני נח, דכתיב ביה איש צדיק (בראשית ו ט). דבר אחר אלו שבעים אומות, שעתידין לירד לגיהנם. יחד עשיר ואביון. עשיר בתורה ואביון בתורה, כולם יורדין לגיהנם, עשיר בתורה, זה דואג ואחיתופל, ולפי שלא שמרו את התורה, נפלו מגדולתן וירדו לגיהנם, ואף על פי שראשי סנהדראות היו. ואביון בתורה, כל מי שיש סיפק בידו ולא למד, לפיכך אמרו בני קרח הואיל וכן הוא מתן שכרה של תורה, נעסוק בתורה.</p>	<p>Midrash Tehillim 49, Part 2</p> <p>2. Both the sons of a great man, and the sons of a righteous man (Tehillim / Psalms 49:3). Who are meant by the sons of a great man? The sons of Abraham, of whom it is written the great man among the Anakim (Joshua 14:15). The word both is meant to include the sons of Ishmael and the sons of Keturah. The sons of a righteous man are the sons of Noah, of whom it is written, Noah was a righteous man (Bereshit / Genesis 6:9). Or the phrase refers to the seventy nations which will go down to Gehenna. The words at the end of the verse, Rich and poor together (Tehillim / Psalms 49:3), mean that he who is rich in Torah and he who is poor in Torah may alike go down to Gehenna. For He who is rich in Torah refers to such as Doeg and Ahithophel. Although they were heads of the Sanhedrin, yet because they kept not the Torah, they fell from their greatness and went down into Gehenna. He who is poor in Torah, refers to any man who had in hand the opportunity to study Torah, refers to any man who had in hand opportunity to study, but did not. Therefore, the sons of Korah said, Since such is the requital for neglect of Torah, we will be diligent in the study of the Torah.</p>
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The midrash states that *Tehillim / Psalms 49:3* referring to “the sons of a great man,” is a reference to the sons of Abraham of whom it is written the great man among the Anakim (*Joshua 14:15*). The Anakim are a group of very tall (large) people who were descended from Anak mentioned in the Tanach. According to the Scriptures, they dwelt in the southern part of the land of Canaan, near Hebron (*Bereshit / Genesis 23:2, Joshua 15:13*). According to *Bereshit / Genesis 14:5-6* the Anakim inhabited the region that was later known as Edom and Moab in the days of Abraham. Their name comes from a Hebrew root meaning of “strength” or “stature.” In *Devarim / Deuteronomy 2:11*, the Anakim are called a branch of the Rephaim, which is perhaps a generic term and *Bamidbar / Numbers 8:22* classifies as part of the Nephilim (*The Jewish Encyclopedia, <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/1453-anakim>*). In the book of Numbers, the twelve spies describe them as having a formidable appearance and identify them as the Nephilim, the giants (see *Bamidbar / Numbers 6:4 and 13:33*). The Scriptures indicate that Joshua expelled them from the land, except for a remnant that survived in the cities of Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod (*Joshua 11:22*). This is most likely the origins of the Philistine giants whom David encountered (*2 Samuel 21:15-22*), they were the descendants of the Anakim. Why do the rabbis compare “the sons of Abraham” to the Anakim? In the book of Joshua we read *14:15 Now the name of Hebron was formerly Kiriath-arba; for Arba was the greatest man among the Anakim. Then the land had rest from war. (NASB)* Here in the prophets, the Anakim appear to be the last to hold out in the Promised Land against Israel. When Joshua defeated the Anakim, the land had rest from war. This comparison may be related to the strength of Israel, and the strength of the nations, that the Lord God is our strength. The context of the Psalm (*Tehillim / Psalms 49:3*) is with regard to the righteous. The strength of Israel, is her righteousness. Under this same concept, the apostle Paul said that “the wages of sin is death” (*Romans 6:23*). In the midrashic literature, the rabbis often ask the question “what is the strength or force” of a phrase or word. The strength of sin is death based upon Paul’s words to the Romans. Similarly we may ask, what are the wages of life? What is the strength of life? The Torah says that righteousness is life. The wages of life is righteousness, a life that is lived in righteousness! Note that in *Romans 6:23* we read “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord,” the gift of God is life, the Lord gives us His righteousness and holiness, He makes us to be righteous and holy in the Messiah. As a result of this, we are called to live in that righteousness and holiness, the life the Lord has given us in the Messiah. Because of these things, we take the Scriptures as the standard by which we are able to discern between righteousness and unrighteousness, we can know what disobedience is according to the Torah and live our lives, by the power of the Spirit, according to God’s will

and plan for us. That is we make the conscious choice to live in the justice, truth, and righteousness of God.

Another rabbi states that the word “both” is meant to include both the sons of Ishmael and of Keturah. According to the Jewish Encyclopedia we read the following:

Abraham's second wife, whom he married after the death of Sarah (Gen. xxv. 1; I Chron. i. 32). She was the ancestress of sixteen tribes, among which were Arabian and Midianite ones. In I Chron. i. 32 Keturah is called “the concubine of Abraham,” and, probably for this reason, she is identified in the Midrash (Gen. R. lxi., quoted also by Rashi) and in the Palestinian Targumim with Hagar, who was the first concubine of Abraham. The Midrash explains the name “Keturah” as based on her acts, which were pleasant like frankincense.

Both Ismael and Keturah represent those who were not the sons of the promise (the son of the promise was Isaac). The reason why the rabbis make this statement may be because of the way David wrote his psalm in the Masoretic text, גַּם-בְּנֵי אָדָם גַּם-בְּנֵי-אִישׁ יַחַד עֲשִׂיר וְאַבְיֹן: 49:2 *Both low and high, Rich and poor together. (NASB)* David is not making a distinction between men, or between the righteous and the unrighteous. He says both low and high, rich and poor together. Consequentially, in the Aramaic Targum, the rabbis do make a distinction between the righteous and the unrighteous, גַּ אֹרְף לַחֹד בְּנֵי אָדָם קְדָמָה אֹרְף בְּנֵי: 49:3 *Even the sons of the first Adam, even the sons of Jacob together, righteous and sinner (EMC)* The context of the verse is that all men are accountable before God, no man can redeem his brother or give to God a ransom for him (*Tehillim / Psalms 49:7*), the inward thoughts of men are that they are secure, or that their houses will dwell forever (*Tehillim / Psalms 49:11*), but this is not the case, our hope is in the Lord, He is our strength and our salvation. Midrash Tehillim 49, Part 2 concludes saying “Therefore, the sons of Korah said, Since such is the requital for neglect of Torah, we will be diligent in the study of the Torah.” The point is that our goal in life should be to draw near to the Lord. To rest in His peace and in His ways which are life giving and refreshing. His ways preserve our life (*Tehillim / Psalms 119*). Midrash tehillim 49, Part 2 states *He who is poor in Torah, refers to any man who had in hand the opportunity to study Torah, refers to any man who had in hand opportunity to study, but did not.* Today there are so many people seeking the Lord but I am afraid that the primary reason is to “get or receive” something. “I want healing,” “I want to speak in tongues,” “I want, I want, I want, etc.” Yeshua said to seek first the kingdom of God and then all of these things shall be added unto you. (*Matthew 6:33*) What the rabbis are trying to say is in regard to two types of people, (i) those who had opportunity to study and draw near to the Lord but did not, and (ii) those who did have opportunity and took that opportunity to do so. Today there are very few people who seek to simply draw near to the Lord, to read the Word of God, to pray, and the rest in His presence like David so often describes in the Psalms. Our approach in our spiritual life should be to seek His face, to pray, to draw near to Him. This appears to be the meaning of the statement in the midrash that says “For He who is rich in Torah refers to such as Doeg and Ahithophel. Although they were heads of the Sanhedrin, yet because they kept not the Torah, they fell from their greatness and went down into Gehenna.” Here we find people who are leaders, but they fell from their greatness because they did not place their life in God’s hands, drawing near to Him and walking in His ways. Their own selfish desires led them to the grave and the midrash says Gehenna, to Hell. Our primary focus in life should be to draw near to the Lord and then all these things will be added unto us.

Midrash Tehillim 49, Part 3, opens with the Dibur Hamathil (דִּבְרוּר הַמַּתְחִיל) saying “My mouth will speak wisdom, and the meditation of my heart will be understanding (*Tehillim / Psalms 49:4*).” The homiletic introduction” to the Midrash states, “Here wisdom and understanding have the same force as in the words For this is your wisdom and your understanding (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 4:6*).” Here we find a core hermeneutic principle which is utilized frequently in the midrashic literature. We often get the phrase “these words are to be considered in the light of what Scripture says elsewhere,” or “what is the force of these words,” etc. The idea is to get the “Strength,” “Force,” or “Importance” of a particular phrase or word. This hermeneutic places a high priority to God’s word first. How often do we look at a particular scripture,

phrase, or word and base our understanding upon personal opinion rather than placing a priority on the word of God helping to interpret the meaning? The rabbis ask what is the force of “*wisdom and understanding*” that is connected to *Devarim / Deuteronomy 4:6*? This provides us with a picture of the grammato-logical world of the rabbis, which always brings an interpretation into the context of the Scriptures. Let’s look at *Devarim / Deuteronomy 4:5-7*.

Devarim / Deuteronomy 4:5-7

4:5 ‘See, I have taught you statutes and judgments just as the Lord my God commanded me, that you should do thus in the land where you are entering to possess it. 4:6 ‘So keep and do them, for that is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes and say, ‘Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.’ 4:7 ‘For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as is the Lord our God whenever we call on Him? (NASB)

The mount that speaks wisdom, and the meditation of the heart (*Tehillim / Psalms 49:4*) is brought into the context of *Devarim / Deuteronomy 4:5-7* with regard to being taught the statutes and judgments of the Lord, to do and to keep them. The Torah describes this as our wisdom and understanding in the sight of the people who hear all of these statutes and then make the statement ‘*Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.*’ The strength of the David’s statement of wisdom and understanding, is the nations will proclaim how great are the people whose god is so near as the Lord our God when we call on Him. When we call upon the Lord, He is there, He hears us, and He responds just like we discussed earlier on the word “*shema*” (שמע) which is often translated as “*hear,*” and according to the Hebrew mind, the word *shema* has a much wider and deeper meaning than simply “*to perceive sound.*” The word *Shema* encompasses a whole spectrum of ideas according to the Torah that includes listening, taking heed, and responding with action to what one has heard. This brings into context a whole different meaning of Yeshua’s words that state “*he who has ears to hear let him hear.*” This also adds a new dimension to our understanding of how the Lord our God in heaven hears and responds to our call.

The midrash continues saying the following:

I will incline my ear to a parable (Tehillim / Psalms 49:5), to the parables of Torah. I will open my dark saying upon the harp, I will explain it in the songs the Levites sang during their watches in the Temple. Wherefore will I fear in the days of evil? Because the iniquity of my heels compasses me about (Tehillim / Psalms 49:6). The congregation of Israel said, Why will I be afraid on the days of evil, that is, on the day of judgment? Because of the iniquity of my heels which I directed into the ways of transgression that now compass me about. They that trust in your wealth (Tehillim / Psalms 49:7) is to be interpreted as in the commentary on Tehillim / Psalms 46. Another comment, the words They that trust in their wealth allude to Korach and his assembly. Oh, it will surely not redeem a man, What did their wealth avail them, for they could not redeem themselves with it? Oh, Alas, for them who went down alive into the pit. They and all that was theirs. Their soul would have been made precious by redemption (Tehillim / Psalms 49:9), Had Korach and his assembly repented, their souls would have been precious in the eyes of the Holy One blessed be He, and He would have forbore to punish them, and they would have inherited the world, that is, the world to come. And he would also have caused them to live forever, they would have had their share in the resurrection of the dead. Hence, said the Sages, the murmurers in the wilderness as well as the assembly of Korach have no share in the world to come. For he sees that wise man die, such men as Datan and Aviram who were wise to do evil. Another comment, For he sees the wise men die and leave their wealth to others. Such wise men were the murmurers in the wilderness who left their wealth to Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, and to Joshua, the son of Nun, for it is said Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, remained alive of

The force, strength, or importance of “*wisdom and understanding*” is to incline the ear to the parables of the Torah. Are there parables in the Torah? A parable, written in Greek παραβολή, is the usual way in which the Septuagint renders of Hebrew word “*mashal*” (משל). Studying the word “*mashal*” (משל), and its usage in the biblical texts, there is no distinction that is made in usage between parable, allegory, and fable. All of these are forms of the mashal and operate in the same function, to illustrate a spiritual truth and for instruction. In the Scriptures, a story-mashal is often introduced by the words “*like*” or “*as*,” and the parable is related in terms drawn from ordinary experiences for the purpose of making a principal point. The allegory-mashal is a more artificial narrative having individual features which are independently figurative. This kind of parable takes on the characteristics of a kind of riddle (e.g. *Ezekiel 17:3–10*). Other biblical forms of the parable may come as a prophetic oracle where a metaphor is extended to a lengthy description (e.g., *Isaiah 1:5–6, Hosea 2:2–15, 7:8–9, 11–12, Joel 4:13, and Jeremiah 25:15–29*). The rabbis made extensive use of parables as a method of teaching in the Talmud, and especially in the Midrash. Yeshua, in his parables, was employing a well-established rabbinic form of conveying ethical and moral lessons. In our midrash, the rabbis speak of the “*wisdom and understanding*” in terms of the psalm, why fear the days of evil, one should fear by reason of the iniquity one commits; those who trust in wealth alludes to Korach and his assembly; what man is able to redeem himself or another man, their wealth cannot save them; because of one’s sins one will go down to the pit and a reference to Korach and his assembly going down alive to the grave, etc. This is contrasted to the one who repents, if Korach and his assembly would have repented they would have lived and have inherited the world to come. The rabbis reference Caleb and Joshua as having lived and entering into the Promised Land, they inherited the world to come by reason of the differences between the wilderness and the Land God had promised to His people. Again the world to come is analogized by the inheritance of the Promised Land. The midrash continues providing proofs that Korach and his assemble will not enter into the world to come “*Because by their tithes they proclaimed themselves above mankind (Tehillim / Psalms 49:12), for it is said of them they were the lofty ones of the congregation, self proclaimed above the assembly, men of name (Bamidbar / Numbers 16:2). But man abides not in honor (Tehillim / Psalms 49:13) alludes to Korach, who during all the time he was honored as head of all the children of Levi, did not keep to the way of the Lord.*” Notice how the removal of their place was because of their pride and their pride is connected to their tithe. There appears to be a form of greed, covetousness and pride that is connected to tithing. Korach’s pride led him to not keep the way of the Lord, he did not keep the “*wisdom and knowledge*” as the comparison is drawing us back to the Torah. The midrash continues saying the following:

He is like the beasts, who have no understanding, hence are like a company of wicked men. This is the way of them (Tehillim / Psalms 49:14), of wicked men who put their confidence and their trust in their wealth, and of whom, after they perish, the children of Israel says, Woe unto them, unto the wicked, for such and such a thing came upon them. They who set death as though Israel were sheep will go down to the netherworld (Tehillim / Psalms 49:15). The nations of the earth who slaughtered Israel like sheep, to set death upon them was to hallow the Name, will go down to the netherworld. But in the morning the upright will have dominion over them and rule them. When the twilight of Israel will have been made dawn, the upright will rule the nations of the earth. And their form will outlast the netherworld, because of the habitation which is His (Tehillim / Psalms 49:15). Gehenna will wear away but the wicked of the nations will not wear away. And why not? Because they laid their hands upon the Temple, His habitation. But God will redeem my soul from the power of the netherworld (Tehillim / Psalms 49:16) because we, the sons of Korach, were not in the counsel of Korach. He will receive me forever alludes to the words, They became a sign (Bamidbar / Numbers 26:10), which prove that God made it possible for them to stay aloft in space. Be not afraid when one is made rich (Tehillim / Psalms 49:17), as Korach was. (Midrash Tehillim 49, Part

One's trusting in wealth is connected to pride and not walking in God's ways. The midrash states that those who do such things will go down to the grave, they will not live, and most importantly they will not inherit the world to come. What does it mean to walk in God's ways? There are several people described as "*walking with God*" in the Scriptures. The first such person (Enoch) is described in *Bereshit / Genesis 5:24*. The second person described in the Torah is Noah who is said to have been "*a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked faithfully with God*" (*Bereshit / Genesis 6:9*). The minor prophet Micah (6:8) gives us a glimpse of what the Lord wants for our lives saying, "*He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.*" When we walk in God's ways we are walking in His footsteps. Like a father who walks in the snow and his son is following, his son tries to place his feet in the snow foot prints. In a similar manner, we are to walk in the same foot prints of the Lord God Almighty. When we follow Yeshua, we are supposed to walk in His foot steps. The imagery is that our attention is focused upon the person we are trying to draw near to and walk with.

Midrash Tehillim 49, Part 3 concludes saying, "*Aaron blessed Korach's soul, nevertheless when it will go to the generation of his fathers, it and they will never see the light (Tehillim / Psalms 49:20), meaning that Korach and his assembly will have no portion in the world to come. And why not? Because Korach who lived in honor, had no understanding and so he perished.*" The point if this midrash is taken from the psalm that the unrighteous appear to search for their own glory rather than the glory of God. This is emphasized in the midrash on the idea that regardless of Aaron having blessed Korach, their unfaithfulness led them to the grave (Gehenna, Hell). Korach and his assembly looked to congratulate themselves as important men, but in the end, they will not see the light. The point is that the unrighteous do not see the truth (the light) of God because they are so involved in personal success, pride, and selfishness. Walking in God's ways according to the Torah takes our focus off of ourselves and places our attention and focus upon the Lord God Almighty and Yeshua His Messiah! *Tehillim / Psalms 49* appears to speak of pride in the sense that men falsely pretend to know God's will when they do not. Such men think their way is as good or better, they trust in their wealth and think that they do not need the Lord (see *1 Timothy 6:3-6* and *James 4:6-10*). This should be a glaring reminder for us to examine our lives, to eliminate pride in our lives as best possible, and to walk in the foot steps of Yeshua and seek the Lord by faith for the salvation of our souls. In this way we will be counted worthy to partake in the world to come. Let's Pray!

Heavenly Father,

We thank You for the mercies You have shown us each day, drawing us to repentance, and to humble seek You for our salvation. Your ways are righteous and pure, help us to walk in them so that we can bring glory to Your name in our lives, so that we can focus upon serving you and not serving ourselves and our own desires. We glorify You and give You Praise for always drawing us back to you and because You have always kept Your promises! Lord deliver us from sin in our lives and increase our faith. Empower us by Your Spirit to walk in Your ways and to follow Yeshua the Messiah. Help us to live spirit filled lives. We desire to live holy and righteous lives because You have separated us as holy unto Yourself. You have demonstrated the greatness of Your love for us in Your Son Yeshua the Messiah. Thank You Lord for sending Your son Yeshua that we may enter into the covenant of peace that You have promised to Your people. Help us to grow in our faith, to walk in the spirit, and apply these truths to our lives. 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 we 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