

Tehillim / Psalms 67 | ספר תהילים 67

MATSATI.COM Ministry | <http://www.matsati.com>

The Ger Toshav and the Gentile Believer

In this week's study from *Tehillim / Psalms 67:1-7*, the psalm opens saying, א לְמַנְצַח בְּנִגְיֹנֹת מְזֻמֹּר שִׁיר: *For the director of music. With stringed instruments. A psalm. A song. (NASB)* David continues saying, ב אֱלֹהִים יִחַנְנוּ וַיְבָרְכֵנוּ יְיָ אֱתָנוּ סְלָה: *67:1 God be gracious to us and bless us, And cause His face to shine upon us Selah. (NASB)* He appears to be quoting from the Aaronic blessing (*Bamidbar / Numbers 6:22-27*). David desires for the glory of the Lord to be known throughout the earth, ג לְדַעַת בְּאֶרֶץ דְּרָכָה *67:2 That Your way may be known on the earth, Your salvation among all nations. 67:3 Let the peoples praise You, O God; Let all the peoples praise You. (NASB)* The Aramaic Targum states, *67:3 To make known your way in the land, your redemption among all the Gentiles. 67:4 The Gentiles will give thanks in your presence, O God, all the Gentiles will give thanks. (EMC)* What is the significance of the Gentiles giving praise and thanks in the presence of God? Generally, the nations posed a threat to David and to the nation of Israel. David says “*that Your way may be made known,*” and the rabbis translate “*to make known Your way in the land.*” The blessing of His deliverance, will be proclaimed among the nations because of God’s mighty hand to deliver Israel. David continues saying, ה יִשְׁמְחוּ וַיִּרְנְנוּ לְאַמִּים כִּי-תִשְׁפֹּט עַמִּים מִיִּשׂוּר וּלְאַמִּים | בְּאֶרֶץ תִּנְחֵם סְלָה: *67:4 Let the nations be glad and sing for joy; For You will judge the peoples with uprightness And guide the nations on the earth. Selah. (NASB)* When thinking upon the idea of the nations who oppose the nation of Israel and who oppose God, coupled with the Lord’s deliverance and David’s calling out to the Lord to make known among the nations the salvation of God, it is surprising that David says the nations will be glad and sing for joy. The reason being, the nations who are coming against Israel will be destroyed by the hand of the Lord. Is David referring to evil or righteous men in the nations? Are there righteous men who live amongst the nations that God would consider righteous? David concludes His Psalm saying, ו יְיָ יִדְוֶה עַמִּים | אֱלֹהִים יְדוּדֶה עַמִּים כָּלֵם: *67:5 Let the peoples praise You, O God; Let all the peoples praise You. 67:6 The earth has yielded its produce; God, our God, blesses us. 67:7 God blesses us, That all the ends of the earth may fear Him. (NASB)* It could be those who are righteous who live among the nations that David is referring to. With regard to the righteous who live among the nations, is there salvation outside of being joined with Israel? What does it mean to be joined with Israel? Is it possible to take hold of the Salvation of God and not be a part of the nation of Israel? Hopefully these questions and more will be answered within this study.

עברית	Hebrew	ארמי	Aramaic	ελληνικός	Greek
ספר תהלים פרק 67	ספר תהלים פרק 67	ספר טוביה פרק 67	ספר טוביה פרק 67	ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 67	ΨΑΛΜΟΙ 67
א לְמַנְצַח בְּנִגְיֹנֹת מְזֻמֹּר שִׁיר:	א לְמַנְצַח בְּנִגְיֹנֹת מְזֻמֹּר שִׁיר:	א לשבחא בנגינתא תושבחתא ושׁי-	א לשבחא בנגינתא תושבחתא ושׁי-	67:1	67:1 εἰς τὸ τέλος ἐν ὕμνοις ψαλμὸς ᾠδῆς ὁ θεὸς οἰκτιρήσαι ἡμᾶς καὶ εὐλογῆσαι ἡμᾶς ἐπιφάναι τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ ἐφ’ ἡμᾶς διάγαλμα
ב אֱלֹהִים יִחַנְנוּ וַיְבָרְכֵנוּ יְיָ אֱתָנוּ סְלָה:	ב אֱלֹהִים יִחַנְנוּ וַיְבָרְכֵנוּ יְיָ אֱתָנוּ סְלָה:	רתא: ב אלהא יחוס עלנא ויברכי-	רתא: ב אלהא יחוס עלנא ויברכי-	67:2	67:2 τοῦ γνῶναι ἐν τῇ γῆ τὴν ὁδὸν σου ἐν πᾶσιν ἔθνεσιν τὸ σωτήριόν σου 67:3 ἐξομολογησάσθωσάν σοι λαοὶ ὁ θεὸς ἐξομολογησάσθωσάν σοι λαοὶ πάντες
ג לְדַעַת בְּאֶרֶץ דְּרָכָה	ג לְדַעַת בְּאֶרֶץ דְּרָכָה	ננא ינהיר זיו אנפוי עמנא לעלמין:	ננא ינהיר זיו אנפוי עמנא לעלמין:	67:2	67:2 τοῦ γνῶναι ἐν τῇ γῆ τὴν ὁδὸν σου ἐν πᾶσιν ἔθνεσιν τὸ σωτήριόν σου 67:3 ἐξομολογησάσθωσάν σοι λαοὶ ὁ θεὸς ἐξομολογησάσθωσάν σοι λαοὶ πάντες
בְּכָל-גוֹיִם יִשׁוּעַתְךָ: ד יְדוּדֶה עַמִּים	בְּכָל-גוֹיִם יִשׁוּעַתְךָ: ד יְדוּדֶה עַמִּים	ג להודעא לאודעא בארעא אורחך	ג להודעא לאודעא בארעא אורחך	67:2	67:2 τοῦ γνῶναι ἐν τῇ γῆ τὴν ὁδὸν σου ἐν πᾶσιν ἔθνεσιν τὸ σωτήριόν σου 67:3 ἐξομολογησάσθωσάν σοι λαοὶ ὁ θεὸς ἐξομολογησάσθωσάν σοι λαοὶ πάντες
אֱלֹהִים יְדוּדֶה עַמִּים כָּלֵם:	אֱלֹהִים יְדוּדֶה עַמִּים כָּלֵם:	ד יודון קדמך	ד יודון קדמך	67:3	67:3 ἐξομολογησάσθωσάν σοι λαοὶ ὁ θεὸς ἐξομολογησάσθωσάν σοι λαοὶ πάντες
		קומך עממיא אלהא יודון קדמך	קומך עממיא אלהא יודון קדמך	67:3	67:3 ἐξομολογησάσθωσάν σοι λαοὶ ὁ θεὸς ἐξομολογησάσθωσάν σοι λαοὶ πάντες
		עממיא אומיא כולהון:	עממיא אומיא כולהון:	67:3	67:3 ἐξομολογησάσθωσάν σοι λαοὶ ὁ θεὸς ἐξομολογησάσθωσάν σοι λαοὶ πάντες

<p>ה יִשְׁמְחוּ וַיִּרְנְנוּ לְאֲמִים כִּי-תִשְׁפֹּט עַמִּים מִיִּשׁוּר וּלְאֲמִים בְּאֶרֶץ תִּנְחַם סֵלָה: ו יוֹדוּךָ עַמִּים אֱלֹהִים יוֹדוּךָ עַמִּים כָּלֵם: ז אֶרֶץ נִתְנָה: כְּבוֹלָה יִבְרַכְנוּ אֱלֹהִים אֱלֹהֵינוּ: ח יִבְרַכְנוּ אֱלֹהִים וַיִּירָאוּ אֹתוֹ כָּל-אֲפֹסֵי-אֶרֶץ:</p>	<p>ה יחדון וידוצון וירננון אומיא ארום תדין עמיא"עממיא"1# בתירו- צא קשוט ואומיא בארעא תדברינון לעלמין: ו יודון קדמך קומך עמיא עממיא אלהא יודון קדמך קומך עמיא אומיא כולהון: ח ארעא דישראל יהבת איבה יבריך יתן אלהא אלהנא: ט יבריך יתן אלהא וידחלון יתיה כל סיפי ארעא:</p>	<p>67:4 εὐφρανθήτωσαν καὶ ἀγαλλιάσθωσαν ἔθνη ὅτι κρινεῖς λαοὺς ἐν εὐθύτητι καὶ ἔθνη ἐν τῇ γῆ ὀδηγήσεις διάπαλμα 67:5 ἔξομολογησάσθωσάν σοι λαοὶ ὁ θεός ἔξομολογησάσθωσάν σοι λαοὶ πάντες 67:6 γῆ ἔδωκεν τὸν καρπὸν αὐτῆς εὐλογῆσαι ἡμᾶς ὁ θεὸς ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν 67:7 εὐλογῆσαι ἡμᾶς ὁ θεός καὶ φοβηθήτωσαν αὐτὸν πάντα τὰ πέρατα τῆς γῆς</p>
<p>Tehillim / Psalms 67 For the director of music. With stringed instruments. A psalm. A song. 67:1 God be gracious to us and bless us, And cause His face to shine upon us Selah. 67:2 That Your way may be known on the earth, Your salvation among all nations. 67:3 Let the peoples praise You, O God; Let all the peoples praise You. 67:4 Let the nations be glad and sing for joy; For You will judge the peoples with uprightness And guide the nations on the earth. Selah. 67:5 Let the peoples praise You, O God; Let all the peoples praise You. 67:6 The earth has yielded its produce; God, our God, blesses us. 67:7 God blesses us, That all the ends of the earth may fear Him. (NASB)</p>	<p>Toviyah / Psalms 67 67:1 For praise, with melodies; a psalm and a song. 67:2 God will pity us and bless us; he will make the splendor of his face shine on us forever. 67:3 To make known your way in the land, your redemption among all the Gentiles. 67:4 The Gentiles will give thanks in your presence, O God, all the Gentiles will give thanks. 67:5 The nations will rejoice and exult, for you will judge the peoples with honesty, and you will guide the nations in the land forever. 67:6 The peoples will give thanks in your presence, O God, all the peoples will give thanks. 67:7 The land has given its fruit; God, our God, will bless us. 67:8 God will bless us, and all the ends of the earth will fear him. (EMC)</p>	<p>Psalmoi / Psalms 67 For the end, a Psalm of David among the Hymns. 67:1 God be merciful to us, and bless us; and cause his face to shine upon us. Pause. 67:2 That men may know thy way on the earth, thy salvation among all nations. 67:3 Let the nations, O God, give thanks to thee; let all the nations give thanks to thee. 67:4 Let the nations rejoice and exult, for thou shalt judge the peoples in equity, and shalt guide the nations on the earth. Pause. 67:5 Let the peoples, O God, give thanks to thee; let all the peoples give thanks to thee. 67:6 The earth has yielded her fruit; let God, our God bless us. 67:7 Let God bless us; and let all the ends of the earth fear him. (LXX)</p>

א לְמַנְצֵחַ בְּנִינֵי תִזְמוֹר וְשִׁיר: *For the director of music. With stringed instruments. A psalm. A song. (NASB)* David wrote music giving praise to the Lord in thanksgiving for His powerful deliverance and blessings upon his life. 2 Samuel 22 is one such example where David expresses his joy in the Lord's deliverance from the hands of his enemies, and out of the hand of Saul. This week's Psalm opens saying, ב אֱלֹהִים יִתְנַנוּ וַיִּבְרַכְנוּ יָאֵר פְּנֵינוּ אֲתָנוּ, 67:1 *God be gracious to us and bless us, And cause His face to shine upon us Selah. (NASB)* What do these opening words remind us of from the Torah? David appears to be thinking upon God's deliverance of Israel from the Egyptians in the Torah by quoting a line from the Aaronic blessing (*Bamidbar / Numbers 6:22-27*).

Bamidbar / Numbers 6:22-27

6:22 Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 6:23 'Speak to Aaron and to his sons, saying, 'Thus you shall bless the sons of Israel. You shall say to them: 6:24 The Lord bless you, and keep you; 6:25 The Lord make His face shine on you, And be gracious to you; 6:26 The Lord

lift up His countenance on you, And give you peace.’ 6:27 ‘So they shall invoke My name on the sons of Israel, and I then will bless them.’ (NASB)

כב וַיִּדְבֹר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: כג דִּבֶּר אֶל-אַהֲרֹן וְאֶל-בְּנָיו לֵאמֹר כֹּה תִבְרְכוּ אֶת-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
אָמֹר לָהֶם: ס כד יְבָרְכֶה יְהוָה וַיִּשְׁמְרֶה: ס כה יָאֵר יְהוָה | פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וַיְחַנֶּךָ: ס כו יִשָּׂא
יְהוָה | פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וַיִּשֶׂם לָךְ שְׁלוֹם: ס כז וַיִּשְׂמוּ אֶת-שְׁמִי עַל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֲנִי אֲבָרְכֶם:

Most people are familiar with the beginning of the Aaronic blessing which states, “*May the LORD bless you and keep you*” (*Bamidbar / Numbers 6:24-25*). David appears to be quoting from *Bamidbar / Numbers 6:24-25*. Notice David writes, *יְבָרְכֶה יְהוָה וַיִּשְׁמְרֶה* using the words the Lord will “*bless*” and “*keep*” us. The word *bless* (ברך) means “*to kneel*,” and *keep* (שמר) means “*to guard*.” The idea is that the king serves His people, and our King, the Lord in heaven is the one who humbles himself and come to his people. The Lord desires to draw near to us, and similarly, He desires for us to draw near to Him.

Traditionally, the priests blessed the people following the morning sacrifice at the Temple. Today, many synagogues end their service with the Aaronic blessing as a benediction. The Torah defines only the descendants of Aaron were allowed to convey this blessing over the people. In an Orthodox Shul, the leader will ascend to the ark, and lift his hands unto the Lord based upon the Scripture from *Tehillim / Psalms 134:2*, “*Lift up your hands to the holy place and bless the Lord!*” When he ascends to the ark, everyone covers their head and arms with a tallit while privately reciting the blessing, “*Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe, Who makes us holy with the holiness of Aaron, and has commanded us to bless His people Israel with love.*” When finished, the cantor will say, “*Kohanim...*” as a signal to begin. The priest would then place his hands in the form of the letter “*Shin*” and raise his hands up towards heaven. Jewish tradition states the Divine Presence would shine through the fingers of the priest as they blessed the people and no one was allowed to look out of respect for God. It is important to note that the Lord does not command the priests to bless the people using their own words, rather, the Lord provides the exact formulation for the blessing, indicated by the words from the Torah, *כֹּה תִבְרְכוּ אֶת-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל* “*Thus you shall bless the sons of Israel.*” This suggests that Moshe received the command directly from the Lord and the priests are to pass the blessing of the Lord unto the people. This is indicated in *Bamidbar / Numbers 6:27*, *כֹּה יִשְׂמוּ אֶת-שְׁמִי* *6:27 ‘So they shall invoke My name on the sons of Israel, and I then will bless them.’ (NASB)* According to the midrashic literature, in the beginning only God could bless other people. His first blessing was to Adam and Eve saying, “*be fruitful and multiply*” (*Bereshit / Genesis 1:28*). Later the Lord blessed Noah and his sons when they left the ark. The Torah then describes God blessing Abraham the tzaddik, who was then given the ability of blessing others (*Bereshit / Genesis 12:3* “*Who you bless, I will bless*”). The Scriptures tell us that this was then given to Isaac to bless, and then to Jacob (*Bereshit / Genesis 27:30*), who then blessed his twelve sons before he died (*Bereshit / Genesis 48-49*). In the Torah, the Lord later taught Moshe how to bless others, and this would occur through the appointed kohanim. The mitzvah of *birkat kohanim* (“*priestly blessing*”) is unique in that if a kohen is unhappy, he must not recite the blessing. For example, a kohen who is in *aveilut* (אבלות, mourning over the death of a parent) is required to leave during the *birkat kohanim*. Traditionally, the priests blessed the people every morning after the sacrifice at the *mishkan* (and later at the Temple). The *Talmud Bavli Sotah 39a* states that before the kohanim bless the congregation they must make a blessing in which praise is given to the LORD for the honor of blessing the people. The blessing is called *באהבה* *לברך את עמו ישראל באהבה* “*l’varekh et amo Yisrael b’ahava*” (“*to bless His nation Israel with love*”):

Talmud Bavli Sota 39a

Blessed are You, LORD our God, King of the universe, Who makes us holy with the holiness of Aaron, and has commanded us to bless His people Israel with love.

אמר רבי זירא אמר רב חסדא אשר קדשנו בקדושתו של אהרן וצונו לברך את עמו ישראל באהבה

The phrase “with love” is intended to represent the love of the LORD for His people. The point is that as the Lord God blesses us by His mercy and kindness, so too the kohen must seek to display God’s love in this manner. The preparatory blessing is intended to induce a state of kavanah in the heart of the one performing the commandment. According to the sages, the obligation to bless the people “with love” comes from the Torah. This is derived from the verse that immediately precedes the commandment to bless the people which says, פֶּה תְּבָרְכוּ אֶת-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אָמֹר לָהֶם “Thus you shall bless the people of Israel: you shall say to them...” If we consider the Hebrew text, and specifically the Hebrew words, the full verses the defective spellings of the words in the Torah, according to this verse, the word “say” (אָמֹר) is spelled in the full spelling. This has been interpreted to mean the blessing is not to be conducted half heartedly or in an impatient manner. One must be whole-hearted, and sincere in one’s desire to send forth the blessing of God to the people. This indicates the importance of the one who is blessing having a deep desire to see others being blessed. In a similar manner, the one who is receiving the blessing is also to be sincere and whole-hearted in his desire to receive the blessing. Thus, when the priest lifts his hands during the recitation, “May the LORD bless you and keep you...,” the Sages regard this as vital for every blessing that is proclaimed by the kohen.

The text of the Aaronic blessing appears to be organized in three parts:

1. 6:24 The Lord bless you, and keep you; כִּד יְבָרְכֶךָ יְהוָה וַיִּשְׁמְרֶךָ:
2. 6:25 The Lord make His face shine on you, And be gracious to you; כֹּה יֵאָר יְהוָה | פְּנֵי אֱלֹהֵי וַיִּחַנְךָ:
3. 6:26 The Lord lift up His countenance on you, And give you peace. כֹּו יִשָּׂא יְהוָה | פְּנֵי אֱלֹהֵי וַיִּשֶׂם לְךָ שְׁלוֹם:

Things to note while reading the Aaronic blessing, it is phrased in the singular form rather than the plural. This is indicative of a personal application, as opposed to a group or crowd blessing. The phrase, “The LORD lift up His face toward you...” (יִשָּׂא יְהוָה פְּנֵי אֱלֹהֵי) illustrates a parents face shining or smiling upon their child in joy. The repetition of the Lord “lifting up His face” (יְהוָה | פְּנֵי אֱלֹהֵי) indicates the Lord’s compassion and love for His people. As a chosen people today, we are a holy nation, a people of His own possession, and we are to proclaim His glory who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light (1 Peter 2:9). It is also important to note that Yeshua recited the “priestly blessing” over his disciples when he ascended back to heaven, speaking in the 1st person, he said,

Luke 24:45-53

24:45 Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, 24:46 and He said to them, ‘Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, 24:47 and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. 24:48 ‘You are witnesses of these things. 24:49 ‘And behold, I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.’ 24:50 And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. 24:51 While He was blessing them, He parted from them and was carried up into heaven. 24:52 And they, after worshiping Him, returned to Jerusalem with great joy, 24:53 and were continually in the temple praising God. (NASB)

Note that Yeshua says “Teshuvah” for the forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations. Repentance is a leading factor in the forgiveness of sins. Yeshua said to his followers, “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you” (John 14:27 and 20:19). He is the Prince of Peace, as he is prophetically spoken of in Isaiah 9:6 For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government

will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. 9:7 There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will accomplish this. (NASB) In the manner in which we read the Aaronic blessing is to be given, the Gospel account of Yeshua, just before he ascended to heaven says, 24:50 *And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. (NASB)* This blessing he gave over his disciples was Torah based and very familiar, and in doing so, Yeshua was establishing the Torah as a way of life for his disciples. This is what led them to return to the Temple, to worship God and continually praise Him in the Temple in Jerusalem.

David opens the Psalm saying, ב אֱלֹהִים יִתְנַנְּנוּ וַיִּבְרַכְנוּ יְאָר פְּנֵיו אֲתַנְּנוּ סְלָה: 67:1 *God be gracious to us and bless us, And cause His face to shine upon us Selah. (NASB)* According to Tehillim / Psalms 67:2-4, David desires for the glory of the Lord to be known throughout the earth, ג לְדַעַת בְּאֶרֶץ דְּרָכָה בְּכָל-גּוֹיִם, 67:2 *That Your way may be known on the earth, Your salvation among all nations. 67:3 Let the peoples praise You, O God; Let all the peoples praise You. (NASB)* The Aramaic Targum states, 67:3 *To make known your way in the land, your redemption among all the Gentiles. 67:4 The Gentiles will give thanks in your presence, O God, all the Gentiles will give thanks. (EMC)* What is the significance of the Gentiles giving praise and thanks in the presence of God? There are a couple of places in the Neviim section of the Tanach that describe the last days and the holy mountain of the Lord (see Isaiah 2, Micah 4).

Isaiah 2:1-5

2:1 *The word which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. 2:2 Now it will come about that In the last days The mountain of the house of the Lord Will be established as the chief of the mountains, And will be raised above the hills; And all the nations will stream to it. 2:3 And many peoples will come and say, ‘Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, To the house of the God of Jacob; That He may teach us concerning His ways And that we may walk in His paths.’ For the law will go forth from Zion And the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. 2:4 And He will judge between the nations, And will render decisions for many peoples; And they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, And never again will they learn war. 2:5 Come, house of Jacob, and let us walk in the light of the Lord. (NASB)* א הדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר חָזָה יִשְׁעִיָּהוּ בֶן-אֲמוֹץ עַל-יְהוּדָה וִירוּשָׁלַם: ב וְהָיָה | בְּאַחֲרֵית הַיָּמִים נִכּוֹן יִהְיֶה הַר בֵּית-יְהוָה בְּרֵאשִׁית הַהָרִים וְנִשְׂאָ מִגְבְּעוֹת וְנִהְרֹו אֵלָיו כָּל-הַגּוֹיִם: ג וְהָלְכוּ עַמִּים רַבִּים וְאָמְרוּ לָכוּ | וְנִעְלָה אֶל-הַר-יְהוָה אֶל-בֵּית אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב וְיִרְנוּ מִדְּרָכָיו וְנִלְכְּהָ בְּאַרְחֻתָיו כִּי מִצִּיּוֹן תֵּצֵא תוֹרָה וְדִבְרַי-יְהוָה מִירוּשָׁלַם: ד וְשָׁפַט בֵּין הַגּוֹיִם וְהוֹכִיחַ לְעַמִּים רַבִּים וְכִתְתוּ חַרְבוֹתָם לְאֵתִים וְחִנִּיתוּתֵיהֶם לְמִזְמָרוֹת: ה לֹא-יִשָּׂא גּוֹי אֶל-גּוֹי חָרֵב וְלֹא-יִלְמְדוּ עוֹד מִלְחָמָה: ו בֵּית יַעֲקֹב לָכוּ וְנִלְכְּהָ בְּאוֹר יְהוָה:

Micah 4:1-8

4:1 *And it will come about in the last days That the mountain of the house of the Lord Will be established as the chief of the mountains. It will be raised above the hills, And the peoples will stream to it. 4:2 Many nations will come and say, ‘Come and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord And to the house of the God of Jacob, That He may teach us about His ways And that we may walk in His paths.’ For from Zion will go forth the law, Even the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. 4:3 And He will judge between many peoples And render decisions for mighty, distant nations. Then they will hammer their swords into plowshares And their spears into pruning hooks; Nation will not lift up sword against nation, And never again will they train for war. 4:4 Each of them will sit under his vine And under his fig tree, With no one to make them afraid, For the mouth of the Lord of hosts has spoken. 4:5 Though all the peoples*

walk Each in the name of his god, As for us, we will walk In the name of the Lord our God forever and ever. 4:6 'In that day,' declares the Lord, 'I will assemble the lame And gather the outcasts, Even those whom I have afflicted. 4:7 'I will make the lame a remnant And the outcasts a strong nation, And the Lord will reign over them in Mount Zion From now on and forever. 4:8 'As for you, tower of the flock, Hill of the daughter of Zion, To you it will come Even the former dominion will come, The kingdom of the daughter of Jerusalem. (NASB)

Isaiah prophesied that the mountain of the house of the Lord will be established as the head of mountains (יְהִי הַר בֵּית-יְהוָה בְּרֹאשׁ הַהָרִים). When we think about the mountain of the Lord, mountains have been used as a means for drawing nearer to the Lord. The illustration of the mountain draws us back to a Torah context, in the last days, the mountain of God will be raised up higher than the other mountains, and the nations will seek the Lord at this mountain, the eyes of the people will be upon this mountain and have a desire to draw near to God. Isaiah says, 2:3 *And many peoples will come and say, 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, To the house of the God of Jacob; That He may teach us concerning His ways And that we may walk in His paths.'* For the law will go forth from Zion And the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. (NASB) In this prophecy of the last days, the people are seeking the Lord to walk in His ways, and in His paths. This is similar to *Shemot / Exodus 24:17-18* which states, 24:17 *And to the eyes of the sons of Israel the appearance of the glory of the Lord was like a consuming fire on the mountain top. 24:18 Moses entered the midst of the cloud as he went up to the mountain; and Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights.* (NASB) We are told in *1 Kings 3:1* *Solomon made an alliance with Pharaoh king of Egypt and married his daughter. He brought her to the City of David until he finished building his palace and the temple of the Lord, and the wall around Jerusalem. 3:2 The people, however, were still sacrificing at the high places, because a temple had not yet been built for the Name of the Lord. 3:3 Solomon showed his love for the Lord by walking according to the instructions given him by his father David, except that he offered sacrifices and burned incense on the high places. 3:4 The king went to Gibeon to offer sacrifices, for that was the most important high place, and Solomon offered a thousand burnt offerings on that altar. 3:5 At Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon during the night in a dream, and God said, "Ask for whatever you want me to give you."* (NIV) Here we find the people in the time of King Solomon were sacrificing at the high places (in the mountains), since the Temple of the Lord had not been built. It is interesting that nothing is stated concerning the Ark of God being in the city of David as opposed to the Tabernacle being in Gibeon. We are told that Gibeon was the most important high place. Why was Gibeon the most important high place? Gibeon was located in the territory of Benjamin (*Joshua 18:25*), and it was one of the cities for the Levites (*Joshua 21:17*). The city is also the place where God made the sun stand still during Israel's war with the Amorites. (*Joshua 10:12*) In *1 Chronicles 9:35-39*, Jeiel is mentioned as the "father of Gibeon" and is an ancestor of King Saul. The fight between the soldiers of Joab and those of Abner took place beside the Pool of Gibeon (*2 Samuel 2:12*). It was also in this area that David conquered the Philistines (see *2 Samuel 5:25* and *1 Chronicles 14:16*). After David became king of Israel, a three year drought made him ask the Lord for the reason of the drought. The Lord indicated that He was angry at Saul for massacring the Gibeonites with whom Israel had made a covenant in the Lord's name. David then spoke to the Gibeonites and asked them how he shall repay them. The Gibeonites asked for seven of Saul's male descendants to be given to them to kill. David handed over Armoni and Mephibosheth, two of the sons of Saul and the five sons of Merab (Saul's daughter) to the Gibeonites, and they were put to death (they were hanged). David saved Jonathan's son Mephibosheth from this peril because of his covenant with Jonathan (*2 Samuel 21:1-9*).

The idea of people making sacrifices at the high places is disconcerting by reason of the negative association we are given of the high places to places of pagan worship in the MT. The description that is given here indicates that the high places were not necessarily connected to pagan worship, but reflected the non-centralized worship that was taking place in Israel, with the Ark of God in the city of David, the Tabernacle in Gibeon, and the statement that Gibeon was the most important high place in Israel at that time. We are told in *1 Kings 3*, that this high place was the most important high place, suggesting that this was a legitimate place of worship. In addition to this, we are told that the Ohed Moel (Tent of Meeting) made by Moshe and

the bronze altar for burnt offerings, crafted by Bazelel (*Shemot / Exodus 38:1-2, 2 Chronicles 1:5*) were located at Gibeon (*1 Chronicles 21:29*). It might be with the death of Eli and his sons, and the final removal of Eli's descendant, Abiathar, the fourth in descent from Eli (*1 Samuel 23:6*) and the last of Eli's House. Abiathar was the only one of the priests to escape from Saul's massacre, he fled to David at Keilah, taking with him the ephod (*1 Samuel 22:20 and 23:6, 9*). Abiathar was of great service to David, especially at the time of the rebellion of Absalom (*2 Samuel 15:24-35 and 20:25*). In *1 Kings 4:4*, Zadok and Abiathar are found acting together as priests under Solomon. In *1 Kings 1:7-25*, however, Abiathar appears as a supporter of Adonijah, and in *1 Kings 2:22-26* it is said that he was deposed by Solomon and banished to Anathoth. It may be that the Tabernacle was moved from Shilo to this location in Gibeon following the death of the priests that occurred at Shilo by the command of Saul at the hand of Doeg.

1 Chronicles 21:26-22:1

21:26 Then David built an altar to the Lord there and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. And he called to the Lord and He answered him with fire from heaven on the altar of burnt offering. 21:27 The Lord commanded the angel, and he put his sword back in its sheath. 21:28 At that time, when David saw that the Lord had answered him on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite, he offered sacrifice there. 21:29 For the tabernacle of the Lord, which Moses had made in the wilderness, and the altar of burnt offering were in the high place at Gibeon at that time. 21:30 But David could not go before it to inquire of God, for he was terrified by the sword of the angel of the Lord. 22:1 Then David said, 'This is the house of the Lord God, and this is the altar of burnt offering for Israel.' (NASB)

The mention of the Tent of Meeting at Gibeon underscores the continuity of the Tabernacle and Israel's sacrificial system that was set up by Moshe, Israel was serving the Lord God in the manner in which He designed. It is interesting to note the Ark of God being located in the city of David, while the Tabernacle and altar stood at Gibeon. However, these details of Solomon going to Gibeon to offer sacrifices, makes it clear that the high place at Gibeon was a legitimate and sacred place prior to the construction of the Temple in Jerusalem. In the Scriptures, the "high places" were given a negative connotation, but only following the completion of the Temple in Jerusalem. The construction of the Temple in Jerusalem seems to have inaugurated a time of centralized worship, which was anticipated according to the Torah in *Devarim / Deuteronomy 12:13-14*, however before the Temple there was a sort of decentralized worship occurring. Following the construction of the Temple, the high places were then associated with the worship of foreign deities, idolatry, and syncretism (the combining of the sacred and the profane). *1 Kings 3* mentions that Solomon offered 1000 sacrifices upon the altar indicating his reverence of the Lord God at the start of his rule as king of Israel. In addition, Solomon also offered a large number of sacrifices in the dedication of the Temple.

In His Psalm, David sought for the glory of the Lord to be known throughout the earth saying, **ג לְדַעַת**, *67:2 That Your way may be known on the earth, Your salvation among all nations. 67:3 Let the peoples praise You, O God; Let all the peoples praise You. (NASB)* The Aramaic Targum states, *67:3 To make known your way in the land, your redemption among all the Gentiles. 67:4 The Gentiles will give thanks in your presence, O God, all the Gentiles will give thanks. (EMC)* Generally, the nations posed a threat to David and to the nation of Israel. When there is peace on every side, we know that the Lord's is at work in the hearts of men. David says "that Your way may be made known," and the rabbis translate "to make known Your way in the land." The way of the Lord is peace, righteousness, holiness, and justice, note these are the mitzvot found in the Torah. The blessing of His deliverance, will be proclaimed among the nations because of God's mighty hand to deliver Israel.

David continues saying, **ה יִשְׂמְחוּ וַיְרַנְּנוּ לְאֲמִים כִּי-תִשְׁפֹּט עַמִּים מִיִּשׁוּר וּלְאֲמִים | בְּאֶרֶץ תִּנְחַם סְלָה:** *67:4 Let the nations be glad and sing for joy; For You will judge the peoples with uprightness And guide the nations on the earth. Selah. (NASB)* When thinking upon the idea of the nations who oppose the nation of Israel and who oppose God, coupled with the Lord's deliverance and David's calling out to the Lord to

make known among the nations the salvation of God, it is surprising that David says the nations will be glad and sing for joy. The reason being, the nations who are coming against Israel will be destroyed by the hand of the Lord. Is David referring to evil or righteous men in the nations? Are there righteous men who live amongst the nations that God would consider righteous? The righteous Among the Nations (חסידי אומות העולם, khassidey umot ha-olam) translated literally means the “*piety of faith (plural) of the world’s*,” is an honor given by the State of Israel to describe non-Jews who risked their lives during the Holocaust to save Jews from extermination by the Nazis. A more ancient parallel to the חסידי אומות העולם “*Pious People of the World*” is the “*Ger Toshav*” (גר תושב) a term in Judaism for a gentile living in the Land of Israel who observes the Noahide Laws along with certain religious and cultural traditions under Jewish law. Such a person commonly called a righteous gentile or a חסידי אומות העולם “*Pious People of the World.*” The Noahide Laws are the Seven Laws of Noah (שבע מצוות בני נח, “*Sheva mitzvot B’nei Noach*”), are a set of moral imperatives that, according to the Talmud, were given by God as a binding set of laws for the “*children of Noah*,” another term for all of humanity. Any non-Jewish person who keeps these laws is regarded as a righteous gentile, and is assured of a place in the world to come, the final reward of the righteous according to *Maimonides Mishneh Torah, Hilkhos M’lakhim 8:14*. The seven Noahide laws as traditionally enumerated are as follows:

Noahide Laws

1. Do not deny God.
2. Do not blaspheme God.
3. Do not murder.
4. Do not engage in incestuous, adulterous or homosexual relationships.
5. Do not steal.
6. Do not eat of a live animal.
7. Establish courts/legal system to ensure law and justice.

The rabbinic concession is that the seven laws were given to the sons of Noah, however, they disagree on precisely which laws were given to Adam and Eve. Six of the seven laws are exegetic-ally derived from passages in Genesis (see *Talmud Bavli, Sanhedrin 56a and 56b*). For example,

Talmud Bavli Sanhedrin 56b

Whence do we know this? — R. Johanan answered: The Writ saith: And the Lord God commanded the man saying, of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat. (Gen. II, 16) And [He] commanded, refers to [the observance of] social laws, and thus it is written, For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment. (Gen. XVIII, 19) The Lord — is [a prohibition against] blasphemy, and thus it is written, and he that blasphemeth the name of the Lord, he shall surely be put to death. (Lev. XXIV, 16) God — is [an injunction against] idolatry, and thus it is written, Thou shalt have no other gods before Me. (Ex. XX, 3) The man — refers to bloodshed [murder], and thus it is written, Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed. (Gen. IX, 6) Saying — refers to adultery, and thus it is written, They say, If a man put away his wife, and she go from him, and became another man’s. (Jer. III, 1) Of every tree of the garden — but not of robbery. Thou mayest freely eat — but not flesh cut from a living animal. (<http://www.halakhah.com>)

A ger toshav is a Gentile who accepts the authority of the Torah and the Rabbis upon himself, but specifically as applied to Gentiles. Note the concept here is that the Lord God provides leniency towards the Gentiles in the sense that one may accept only a portion of the Torah and are allowed to disregard the rest. Christianity

has for the most part accepted this approach, that these Noahide Laws are the only requirements of God that are binding upon the non-Jewish person. It is interesting however, in the Talmudic discussions regarding the ger toshav, there are other differing opinions (see *Talmud Bavli Avodah Zarah 64b*) as to what the ger toshav accepts upon himself (see *Talmud Bavli Sanhedrin 56a, 56b*). The alternate opinions state that the ger toshav must abstain from idolatrous practices that are detailed in *Devarim / Deuteronomy 29:09-30:20*, and to uphold all the 613 commandments according to the rabbinical enumeration, except for the prohibition against eating kosher animals that died by means other than ritual slaughter. Note the importance of the words “*ritual slaughter*,” indicate that these animals are kosher based upon Parashat Kedoshim mandate (*Vayikra / Leviticus 19*). In addition, the ger toshav is obligated to any prohibition not involving kareth (*the term kareth means “cutting off,” and is derived from the Hebrew verb karat meaning “to cut off”*). There are both informal and formal concepts on the ger toshav in the rabbinic literature. In the formal sense, the accepted legal definition is the ger toshav must accept the seven Noahide Laws before a rabbinical court of three. Such a person then receives certain legal protections and privileges from the community, and there is a Biblical obligation to render him aid when in need. The informal sense has ger toshav accept the Noahide Law on his own. In the case of the one who accepts the Seven Mitzvot of Noah, though not before a beit din, such a person is known as a *chasidei umot ha’olam* (חסיד אומות העולם), a “*Pious Person of the World*.” There is also a rabbinic discussion among the halakhic authorities as to which of the rules regarding a ger toshav would apply in the informal case. It is important to note that the formal making of a ger toshav have been discontinued due to the cessation of the Year of Jubilee, therefore, there are no formal geirim toshvim (plural) extant today. However, it may be argued that there are a large number of “*informal*” ones under the idea of the חסיד אומות העולם “*Pious People of the World*” even when the Jubilee Year is not observed. Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneersohn states that the status of ger toshav will continue to exist, even in the Messianic era. This is based on the statement in Rambam’s *Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Melachim 12:5* that states “*the entire world’s (kol ha’olam) occupation will be nothing but to know God.*” In its plain meaning, he asserts the phrase *kol ha’olam* includes Gentiles. The proof text he uses is from Rambam’s *Mishneh Torah 11:4* which deals with the Messianic era, where a similar term is used “*ha’olam kulo*,” meaning “*the world in its entirety*,” which refers specifically to the Gentiles. In the *Mishneh Torah Hilchot Melachim 12:5*, Maimonides changes the topic to the Jewish people by using the term “*Israel*,” stating “*Therefore, the Jews will be great sages and know the hidden matters, grasping the knowledge of their Creator according to the full extent of human potential*,” indicating that Jew and Gentile will co-exist in the time of the Messiah. Could this be the understanding that the Apostle Paul had when he wrote to the Gentiles that there is no difference between Jew and Gentile in the Messiah? (see *Romans 10:12, Galatians 3:28, Colossians 3:11*)

Romans 10:11-13

10:11 For the Scripture says, ‘Whoever believes in Him will not be disappointed.’ 10:12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on Him; 10:13 for ‘Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved.’ (NASB)

Galatians 3:26-29

3:26 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. 3:27 For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 3:29 And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s descendants, heirs according to promise. (NASB)

Colossians 3:10-12

3:10 and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him 3:11 a renewal in which there is no distinction between Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but

Christ is all, and in all. 3:12 So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; (NASB)

The rabbinic understanding of the ger toshav, and the חסיד אומות העולם “Pious People of the World” most likely is what Paul was thinking upon when he wrote what he did to the Romans, the Galatians, and Colossians. Take for example what he wrote to the Colossians.

Colossians 2:20-3:9

2:20 If you have died with Christ to the elementary principles of the world, why, as if you were living in the world, do you submit yourself to decrees, such as, 2:21 ‘Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch!’ 2:22 (which all refer to things destined to perish with use) in accordance with the commandments and teachings of men? 2:23 These are matters which have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body, but are of no value against fleshly indulgence. 3:1 Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 3:2 Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. 3:3 For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 3:4 When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory. 3:5 Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. 3:6 For it is because of these things that the wrath of God will come upon the sons of disobedience, 3:7 and in them you also once walked, when you were living in them. 3:8 But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth. 3:9 Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices, (NASB)

Paul speaks of worshiping angels (idolatry), to fleshly indulgence (immorality), to not lie, or steal, etc, Paul is drawing us back to the Torah command. While reading *Colossians 2:20-22*, this must be kept in mind that Paul is not speaking against the Torah command, rather, he is trying to say what good is the command if one lives with fleshly indulgence? We cannot live with partial obedience (3:6), all of one’s life must be consistent in the sense that one does not have “hidden sin” in the eyes of God for He sees all!

David concludes His Psalm saying, אֲרָץ נְתַנָּה בְּבוּלָהּ בְּרַכְנוּ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל | יְיָ אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל יְדוּבָה עַמִּים כָּלֵם: ז אֲרָץ נְתַנָּה בְּבוּלָהּ בְּרַכְנוּ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: אֲרָץ: 67:5 *Let the peoples praise You, O God; Let all the peoples praise You. 67:6 The earth has yielded its produce; God, our God, blesses us. 67:7 God blesses us, That all the ends of the earth may fear Him. (NASB)* David is very likely referring to the righteous who live among the nations (both Jew and Gentile). With regard to the righteous who live among the nations, is there salvation outside of being joined with Israel? What does it mean to be joined with Israel? According to Paul (*Galatians 3:26-29*) in the Messiah we are joined with Israel (*Romans 11*) and we are obligated to obey all of God’s Torah (*Colossians 2:20-3:12*). Paul, like some of the rabbis in the Talmud, believes in One Torah for all people. Therefore, even in the Messiah Yeshua, it is important to take hold of God’s Salvation by faith, and live out our salvation by being obedient to His command (see *John 10 and 14*). Faith is the composition of two things, (i) a belief in the Lord, in the Messiah, and in the Scriptures, and (ii) practice, we live what we believe. Faith is not authentic if these two things are not coupled together. This is what Yeshua meant when he said in *Luke 20:35 But those who are considered worthy of taking part in the age to come and in the resurrection from the dead will neither marry nor be given in marriage. (NASB)* Yeshua did not say “just believe in me and you will be saved.” Yeshua understood and taught that faith includes both belief and practice. True faith is that which is lived out, we are not to live two separate lives. If one has two separate lives, then be warned based upon what Yeshua said in *Matthew 7*, there are those who come before Me on that great day and I will tell them, depart from Me I never knew you, worker of lawlessness (anomia).

Rabbinic Commentary

The Rabbinic Commentary (Midrash) on *Tehillim / Psalms 67* has 2 part. Reading through the Midrash we will be looking at Part 1 and 2. Let's begin by outlining *Midrash Tehillim Chapter 67, Parts 1 and 2*.

Outline of Midrash Tehillim / Psalms, Chapter 67, Part 1 and 2

Part 1

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the **דיבור המתחיל** (Dibur Hamathil) saying “*For the leader; with string music. A Psalm, a song. God be merciful unto us, and bless us (Tehillim / Psalms 67:1-2).*”
- The **פתיחתא** (Petihta) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “*These words are to be considered in the light of what Scripture says elsewhere, Surely the Lord’s mercies are not consumed, surely His compassions fail not (Lamentations 3:22).*”
- The **משל** (mashal) “*the parable,*” goes on to explain the **פתיחתא** (Petihta), the rabbis comment upon David’s words speaking about the Lord God who is merciful and compassionate, who does not allow His people to be totally consumed and destroyed.
- The **נמשל** (Nimshal) “*expansion on the parable*” expands upon the **משל** (mashal), the rabbis expand upon the mashal stating how Greece will fall at the hand of Levi, which is the work of the Lord God in heaven.
- The Concluding phrase says, “*And so, too, bless the children of Israel, as it is said, God be merciful unto us, and bless us. If You do bless us, You will make Your strength and Your way known among the nations, as is said, That Your way may be known upon the earth, Your salvation among all nations (Tehillim / Psalms 67:3).*”

Part 2

- The Midrash introduces the Psalm with the **דיבור המתחיל** (Dibur Hamathil) saying “*The Holy One blessed be He, does not save Israel because of their good deeds, but only to make His strength known and to make His great name known. As Asaph said, Through Judah will God be known; His name will be great through Israel (Tehillim / Psalms 76:2).*”
- The **פתיחתא** (Petihta) the homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “*And as Asaph also said, You are the God that does wonders; You have made known Your strength among the peoples (Tehillim / Psalms 77:15).*”
- The **משל** (mashal) “*the parable,*” goes on to explain the **פתיחתא** (Petihta), the rabbis comment upon David’s words saying that the Lord is known by His strength amongst His people.
- The **נמשל** (Nimshal) “*expansion on the parable*” expands upon the **משל** (mashal), the rabbis expand upon the mashal by the nations seeing the strength of the Lord to deliver Israel, they will confess God’s justice.
- The Concluding phrase says, “*the Holy One blessed be He, will bring forth the righteousness of the children of Israel to the light, as it is said, And He will bring forth your righteousness as the light (Tehillim / Psalms 37:6); and as it is written, And the nations will see your righteousness, and all kings your glory (Isaiah 62:2); and as it is also written, The Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations (Tehillim / Psalms 61:11).*”

Midrash Tehillim 67, Part 1 opens with the **דיבור המתחיל** (Dibur Hamathil) saying “*For the leader; with string music. A Psalm, a song. God be merciful unto us, and bless us (Tehillim / Psalms 67:1-2).*” The homiletic introduction to the midrash states, “*These words are to be considered in the light of what Scripture*

says elsewhere, *Surely the Lord's mercies are not consumed, surely His compassions fail not (Lamentations 3:22).*” David’s words calling out to the Lord God in heaven to be merciful, according to the midrash, is a reference to what Scripture states, the Lord is merciful, and His compassions do not fail. In many places throughout the Tanach, we find references to the mercy, the lovingkindness, and the grace (חַסֵּד) of God towards His people. Why is it today in Christianity we continue to hear music artists such as Lauren Daigle in her song titled “*How Can It Be*” singing and saying “*there is only grace now?*” Where does this concept of “*there is only grace now*” come from? This comes from the general idea that God is different in the OT as opposed to what we read in the NT. This concept of the Lord God that is supposed to be derived from the Tanach, is due to the general illiteracy of Christians on what is written in the Bible, specifically in the Torah, the Prophets, and the Writings. At the center of this belief of the Lord God changing is a fundamental misunderstanding of what both the Tanach and the Apostolic Writings reveal about the nature of God. The general statements that are made is “*The God of the Old Testament is a God of wrath while the God of the New Testament is a God of love.*” The misconception is not necessarily extinguished when one gets on a yearly bible reading schedule because this concept of God has been so established in the minds and hearts of most believers by way of faulty doctrine. A careful comparison of both the Tanach and the Apostolic Writings however reveals that God is not different from one testament to the other, God’s wrath and His love are revealed in both testaments in a very consistent fashion. For example, the Lord God is declared to be compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in love and faithfulness throughout the Tanach.

Short Survey of the Scriptures

Shemot / Exodus 34:5-7

34:5 The Lord descended in the cloud and stood there with him as he called upon the name of the Lord. 34:6 Then the Lord passed by in front of him and proclaimed, ‘The Lord, the Lord God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; 34:7 who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished, visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations.’ (NASB)

Bamidbar / Numbers 14:17-20

14:17 ‘But now, I pray, let the power of the Lord be great, just as You have declared, 14:18 ‘The Lord is slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, forgiving iniquity and transgression; but He will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generations. 14:19 ‘Pardon, I pray, the iniquity of this people according to the greatness of Your lovingkindness, just as You also have forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now.’ 14:20 So the Lord said, ‘I have pardoned them according to your word; (NASB)

Devarim / Deuteronomy 4:30-32

4:30 ‘When you are in distress and all these things have come upon you, in the latter days you will return to the Lord your God and listen to His voice. 4:31 ‘For the Lord your God is a compassionate God; He will not fail you nor destroy you nor forget the covenant with your fathers which He swore to them. 4:32 ‘Indeed, ask now concerning the former days which were before you, since the day that God created man on the earth, and inquire from one end of the heavens to the other. Has anything been done like this great thing, or has anything been heard like it? (NASB)

Nehemiah 9:15-19

9:15 ‘You provided bread from heaven for them for their hunger, You brought forth water from a rock for them for their thirst, And You told them to enter in order to possess The land

which You swore to give them. 9:16 'But they, our fathers, acted arrogantly; They became stubborn and would not listen to Your commandments. 9:17 'They refused to listen, And did not remember Your wondrous deeds which You had performed among them; So they became stubborn and appointed a leader to return to their slavery in Egypt. But You are a God of forgiveness, Gracious and compassionate, Slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness; And You did not forsake them. 9:18 'Even when they made for themselves A calf of molten metal And said, 'This is your God Who brought you up from Egypt,' And committed great blasphemies, 9:19 You, in Your great compassion, Did not forsake them in the wilderness; The pillar of cloud did not leave them by day, To guide them on their way, Nor the pillar of fire by night, to light for them the way in which they were to go. (NASB)

Tehillim / Psalms 86:3-6, 15

86:3 Be gracious to me, O Lord, For to You I cry all day long. 86:4 Make glad the soul of Your servant, For to You, O Lord, I lift up my soul. 86:5 For You, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive, And abundant in lovingkindness to all who call upon You. 86:6 Give ear, O Lord, to my prayer; And give heed to the voice of my supplications! (NASB)

86:15 But You, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious, Slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness and truth. (NASB)

Tehillim / Psalms 108:3-5

108:3 I will give thanks to You, O Lord, among the peoples, And I will sing praises to You among the nations. 108:4 For Your lovingkindness is great above the heavens, And Your truth reaches to the skies. 108:5 Be exalted, O God, above the heavens, And Your glory above all the earth. (NASB)

Tehillim / Psalms 145:7-10

145:7 They shall eagerly utter the memory of Your abundant goodness And will shout joyfully of Your righteousness. 145:8 The Lord is gracious and merciful; Slow to anger and great in lovingkindness. 145:9 The Lord is good to all, And His mercies are over all His works. 145:10 All Your works shall give thanks to You, O Lord, And Your godly ones shall bless You. (NASB)

Joel 2:12-14

2:12 'Yet even now,' declares the Lord, 'Return to Me with all your heart, And with fasting, weeping and mourning; 2:13 And rend your heart and not your garments.' Now return to the Lord your God, For He is gracious and compassionate, Slow to anger, abounding in lovingkindness And relenting of evil. 2:14 Who knows whether He will not turn and relent And leave a blessing behind Him, Even a grain offering and a drink offering For the Lord your God? (NASB)

These are only a few verses which demonstrate the mercy and grace of God in the Tanach. It is taught that in the New Testament, God's lovingkindness (רַחֲמֵי), His mercy and grace, are manifest in a greater way through the fact that "God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16). However, throughout the Torah, the Prophets, and the Writings, we also see the Lord God dealing with Israel in the same way a loving father deals with his children. When they willfully sinned against Him turning from His commands and worshiping idols, the Lord would punish them. Yet, each time He would also deliver them once they had repented of their idolatry and sin. This is the same way in which the Lord God deals with His children today according to the New Testament. For example, *Hebrews 12:6* tells us that "the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes

everyone he accepts as a son.” We find passages from the Apostolic Writings on the Lord’s punishment being the same as what is described in the Tanach.

2 Thessalonians 1:5-12

1:5 This is a plain indication of God’s righteous judgment so that you will be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which indeed you are suffering. 1:6 For after all it is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, 1:7 and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, 1:8 dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. 1:9 These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, 1:10 when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed for our testimony to you was believed. 1:11 To this end also we pray for you always, that our God will count you worthy of your calling, and fulfill every desire for goodness and the work of faith with power, 1:12 so that the name of our Lord Jesus will be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ. (NASB)

Hebrews 10:26-31

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? 10:30 For we know Him who said, ‘Vengeance is Mine, I will repay.’ And again, ‘The Lord will judge His people.’ 10:31 It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God. (NASB)

These Scriptures are consistent with David’s words in *Tehillim / Psalms 50* of standing in the presence of the Lord God which states, ב מִצִּיּוֹן מְקַלֵּל-יִפִּי אֱלֹהִים הוֹפִיעַ: ג יבֹא אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֵל-יִחְרַשׁ אֵשׁ-לִפְנֵי תֹאכַל וּסֹ, 50:2 *Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God has shone forth. 50:3 May our God come and not keep silence; Fire devours before Him, And it is very tempestuous around Him. 50:4 He summons the heavens above, And the earth, to judge His people (NASB)* In 2 *Thessalonians*, Paul speaks of Yeshua returning with His angels as a consuming fire, and praying for believers that the Lord God would count us worthy of our calling and of the work of faith. The author of *Hebrews* speaks of willful sin, and those who willfully sin there is no hope for which he says, *10:30 For we know Him who said, ‘Vengeance is Mine, I will repay.’ And again, ‘The Lord will judge His people.’ 10:31 It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God. (NASB)* These Scriptures are speaking of the Lord pouring out his judgment upon sin. In a similar manner, throughout the Tanach we see God’s judgment and wrath poured out on sin. In the Apostolic Writings we see the wrath of God also “*being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness*” (*Romans 1:18*). Based upon this analysis of the Scriptures, the Lord God is clearly no different in the Old Testament than He is in the New Testament. God by His very nature is immutable (unchanging). Throughout the Scriptures we see various aspects of God’s nature, and in both the Tanach and the Apostolic Writings we see His love, mercy, and grace revealed in certain passages of Scripture more than other aspects, and yet the Lord God Himself does not change. This is why the Rabbis in the midrash state, *Surely the Lord’s mercies are not consumed, surely His compassions fail not (Lamentations 3:22)*. As we read and study the Scriptures, it becomes clear that God is the same throughout the entire Bible. In the Scriptures we see how a loving, merciful, and just God deals with disobedient and sinful men in all kinds of situations. Throughout the Bible we also see the Lord God lovingly and mercifully calling His people to draw near, not because they

deserve it, but because He is a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness and truth. We also see a holy and righteous Lord who is the Judge of all those who disobey His Word and refuse to worship Him and obey his commands, turning instead to worship gods of their own creation such as what we read in Romans chapter 1.

Because of the Lord's righteous and holy character, all sin must be judged. Yet, He has also provided a payment for sin and a way of reconciliation so that we can escape His wrath. This wonderful truth may be found in verses like *1 John 4:10* "This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins." In addition, the Torah was given "to make us wise unto salvation" (*2 Timothy 3:15*). The point of making us wise is for the purpose of applying that wisdom to our lives to live in righteousness and truth. Studying all of Scripture, it is evident that the Lord God "does not change like shifting shadows" (*James 1:17*), and in a similar manner, as the midrash states, "Surely the Lord's mercies are not consumed, surely His compassions fail not (*Lamentations 3:22*)."

The midrash continues saying the following:

We know that the mercies of the Holy One blessed be He, abide and that they are not consumed, because when the nations of the earth said, Come and let us cut them off from being a nation (Tehillim / Psalms 83:5), His compassions for us did not fail. Hence, it is said, Surely the Lord's mercies are not consumed, surely His compassions fail not. No more, every morning You renew and raise us up, as is said, They are new every morning (Lamentations 3:23). The end of the verse, Great is Your faithfulness, refers to Your faithfulness in what You did promise to our fathers, After we went down before Babylon, You foresaw the kingdom of Greece, he began to pray. For what did he pray? That Greece should fall at the hand of the tribe of Levi. And Moshe said, Bless, Lord, his might (Devarim / Deuteronomy 33:11).

יודעים אנו שרחמיו של הקב"ה קיימים שלא תמו שאומות העולם אמרו לכו ונכחידם מגוי (תהלים פג ה), ולא תמו רחמיו עלינו, ולכן חסדי ה' כי לא תמנו, ולא עוד אלא שהיית מחדשינו ומעמידנו בכל בוקר, שנאמר חדשים לבקרים רבה אמונתך (איכה שם ג' כג), האמונה שדברת עם אבותינו, באנו בבבל העמדתנו חדשים והלכה לה, כשראה משה רבינו מלכות יון התחיל להתפלל, למה, היא נופלת ביד שבטו של לוי, שנאמר ברך ה' חילו (דברים לג יא) (*Midrash Tehillim 67, Part 1*)

The proof text the rabbis use comes from *Tehillim / Psalms 83:5*, the nations say to themselves, "Come and let us cut them off from being a nation," however, the Lord's compassions do not fail and He delivers Israel. (*Bamidbar / Numbers 22:2-25:9*) This reminds us of Bilam's attempts at cursing the nation of Israel. Balak king of Moab saw what the children of Israel had done to the Amorites and both he and the people of Moab were afraid and anxious about Israel's presence. As a result, Balak asks for help from Bilam. Now Bilam was well known according to Balak indicated by the statement he makes concerning Bilam saying, "For I know that he whom you bless is blessed, and he whom you curse is cursed." (*22:6*). According to the Torah, Bilam was a man who had the ear of the Lord God in Heaven. He had a reputation that he could hear from God. As the story goes, at the persistence of Balak, Bilam travels with the men from Balak and God's anger burned against Bilam. The Angel of the Lord stood in the way of Bilam's donkey to slay him. Bilam is very persistent; three times he turns to continue on his way being unaware that his life was in eminent danger. These Scriptures are important for giving us wisdom, since being disobedient to the command is paralleled to being in eminent danger because we do not know at what point God's mercy might run out for the one who ignores repentance in the midst of his or her sins. The Lord tarries for the purpose of our repentance and turning from the ways of sin. If we continue to sin without regard for repentance, the Lord's mercy will cease.

In *Bamidbar / Numbers 22:28*, the Scriptures say that God opened the donkey's mouth, *כח ויפתח יהוה את-פה הַחֲמֹר וַיֹּאמֶר לְבִלְעָם מַה-עָשִׂיתִי לָךְ כִּי הִפְתִּיתָנִי זֶה שְׁלֹשׁ רְגָלִים:* *God opened the mouth of the donkey, and it said to Bilam, "What have I done to you, that you hit me these three times.* While reading this text, it is noteworthy the word the donkey uses to describe Bilam striking him three times. In the Torah, the

word that is generally used for “times” in the case of repetition is “Pe’amim” (פעמים), however, when the donkey spoke he used the word “regalim” (רגלים) which generally denotes the “Festivals.” What is the Lord trying to tell us by inspiring this donkey to speak to Bilam saying “Shelosh Regalim” (שלוש רגלים) regarding the three times Bilam struck him?

בכ קרפ רבדמב רפס Bamidbar / Numbers 22:21-22, 34-35

22:21 So Balaam arose in the morning, and saddled his donkey and went with the leaders of Moab. 22:22 But God was angry because he was going, and the angel of the Lord took his stand in the way as an adversary against him. Now he was riding on his donkey and his two servants were with him.

• • •

22:34 Balaam said to the angel of the Lord, ‘I have sinned, for I did not know that you were standing in the way against me. Now then, if it is displeasing to you, I will turn back.’ 22:35 But the angel of the Lord said to Balaam, ‘Go with the men, but you shall speak only the word which I tell you.’ So Balaam went along with the leaders of Balak. (NASB)

• • •

We read the following from Targum Pseudo Jonathan on Bamidbar / Numbers 22. The Aramaic Targum has the following to say on the incident:

Targum Pseudo Jonathan, Numbers 22

“... And the ass saw the angel of the Lord, and fell under Bilam; and Bilam’s wrath was strong, so that he smote the ass with his staff. - Ten things were created after the world had been founded at the coming in of the Sabbath between the suns, - the manna, the well, the rod of Moshe, the diamond, the rainbow, the cloud of glory, the mouth of the earth, the writing of the tables of the covenant, the demons, and the speaking ass. And in that hour the Word of the Lord opened her mouth, and fitted her to speak: and she said to Bilam. What have I done to thee, that thou hast smitten me these three times? And Bilam said to the ass, Because thou hast been false to me; if there was now but a sword in hand, I would kill thee. And the ass said to Bilam, Woe to thee, Bilam, thou wanting-in-mind when me, an unclean beast, who am to die in this world, and not to enter the world to come, thou art not able to curse; how much less (canst thou harm) the children of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, on account of whom the world hath been created, but whom thou art going to curse! So hast thou deceived these people, and hast said, This is not my ass, she is a loan in, my hand, and my horses remain in the pasture. But am I not thine ass upon whom thou hast ridden from thy youth unto this day? And have I been used to do thus with thee? And he said, No. And the Lord unveiled the eyes of Bilam, and he beheld the angel of the Lord standing in the way, his sword unsheathed in his hand; and he bowed, and worshiped on his face.”

In the middle of the narrative the rabbis add a comment on the ten things God created after the word had been founded at the coming of the Shabbat. The ten things are (i) manna, (ii) the well (water), (iii) the rod of Moshe, (iv) the diamond, (v) the rainbow, (vi) the cloud of glory, (vii) the mouth of the earth, (viii) the writing of the tables of the covenant, (ix) the demons, and (x) the talking donkey. Notice that the rabbis list food and water, the rod which is a symbol of power, wealth / money (diamond) the covenant and the glory of God, destruction (“the mouth of the earth” e.g. Parashat Korach), evil spirits and then the donkey that spoke. Why do you think these things are added into the Targum translation? Bilam’s reason for beating the donkey was because he would not obey him. The beast responds pointing out the faulty logic Bilam has

to disobey the Lord and Bilam having no sword to destroy the donkey. Considering the list of ten things, what the Lord has created man is not able to change. The way the Lord has saved Israel and worked in her deliverance, the covenant He has made with her, all of these things can be drawn out of the context of the beast speaking “*Shelosh Regalim*” (שְׁלוֹשׁ רִגְלָיִם) and man not having the authority to change what God has established. The parallel is that though Bilam desires to curse and destroy Israel, he is unable to do so because the world itself was created on behalf of the righteous, the children of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. As we have studied previously, in your walk before the Lord God, are you counted as one of the righteous, in the Messiah Yeshua, and a child of Abraham?

The rabbis of the Mishnah teach the following in *Mishnah Avot 5:22*:

Mishnah Pirkei Avot 4:28

Rabbi Elazar HaKappar says, “Jealousy, lust, and the desire for honor remove a man from the world.”

Mishnah Pirkei Avot 5:22

Those who have an evil eye, an arrogant spirit, and an insatiable soul are pupils of the wicked Bilam.

According to the Mishnah, the evil eye is synonymous to jealousy and the arrogant spirit to the desire for honor, and the insatiable soul to lust. Bilam had an evil eye to do harm to Israel and in the process to be honored by men and get wealthy at the same time for cursing Israel. Consider also what the donkey said to Bilam asking him why he struck him “*Shelosh Regalim*” (שְׁלוֹשׁ רִגְלָיִם)? According to the Torah, the Shelosh Regalim are Pesach, Shavot, and Sukkot.

1. **Pesach** - According to the Torah, Passover was the first time when Israel was drawn away from the idols of Egypt and brought under God’s protection. The matzah (unleavened bread) is a symbol of the poor and humble of spirit. This typifies the rejection of the path of Bilam who was arrogant, prideful, and an idolater.
2. **Shavuot** - Is the time the Torah was given to Israel at the mountain of Sinai. This represents the nation turning from sin and from the ways of the world and receiving God’s love, mercy, and covenant. In preparation for the receiving of the Torah, one was told to separate themselves (consecrate) for three days. This typifies the rejection of the path of Bilam and his desires of lust, wealth, and fame.
3. **Sukkot** - This is the festival in which we set in booths, setting aside our differences in wealth and riches and come together to celebrate the deliverance of the Lord. This typifies the rejection of the path of Bilam which corresponds to jealousy and the evil eye.

The Shelosh Regalim describe God’s plan for our lives, He delivered us from a life of sin and idolatry, He gave his Torah to guide us in how to turn from sin and towards His ways, and then He (the Lord) comes to dwell in our midst, to dwell among us, and to help us to live for Him. In the narrative from Bamidbar / Numbers, the beast spoke and the Lord opened Bilam’s eyes and he was able to see the angel of the Lord standing against him with his sword drawn. The Lord stands against evil men who seek to do harm to others, and who follow the path of Bilam. Are you following the path of Bilam today? Does your walk and faith demonstrate that you take your relationship with God seriously? What about prayer; do we understand prayer according to the Bible or do we understand prayer like Bilam understood prayer? In *Bamidbar /*

Numbers 22:34-35, the Hebrew text is written in the past tense, Bilam says “*Khatati*” (קָטַאתִי) “*I have sinned*” and “*ki lo yadati*” (כִּי לֹא יָדַעְתִּי) “*because I did not know.*” The verb tense indicates that Bilam recognized his sin and says, רַע בְּעֵינַיִךְ אֲשׁוּבָה לִי “*now if it is evil in your sight then I will ashu- vah.*” The word “*ashuvah*” is from the same root for “*Teshuvah*” meaning to turn, repent, go in a different direction. Bilam recognized his sin and is repenting, “*turning back,*” “*turning away*” from the sin that he was committing. An interesting point is that Bilam was not given the Torah, so his repenting and turning was not in the way God wanted. This might be one explanation for the Lord seeking to kill Bilam after having given him permission to go with Balak since he was still walking in his own ways. The most interesting aspect of the text from the Torah is that even though Bilam was seeking God’s will and praying, He failed to understand the purpose of drawing close to the Lord God Almighty in mercy and truth. Based on the text, Bilam believed that through prayer and by his actions, he would be able to force God to do his will. Bilam failed to understand that the function of prayer is not to influence God but rather to change the nature of the one who prays. According to the Scriptures we know that prayer is not intended to manipulate God into giving us our own way, but to be in His will. Yeshua spoke of this in *Matthew 6:5-14*, saying that when we pray, we are not to be like the hypocrites, who love to stand and be known of men. He taught his disciples to pray saying, “*Our Father who art in Heaven, holy is Your Name, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven ...*” (*Matthew 6:9-13*). In addition to this, if we walk in the path of Bilam, arrogant, prideful, having a lust for wealth and fame, being jealous and having the evil eye, regarding sin in our hearts, will the Lord hear our prayers? Bilam did not know the truth and he followed the path of destruction all the way up until the end. Based upon the narrative in Parashat Balak, a donkey can see God’s will, but a greedy person will always look for a way around it. The Apostle Paul’s exhortation to the believers in Thessalonica on the will of God is given in *1 Thessalonians 4:1-8*.

1 Thessalonians 4:1-8

4:1 Finally then, brethren, we request and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us instruction as to how you ought to walk and please God (just as you actually do walk), that you excel still more. 4:2 For you know what commandments we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus. 4:3 For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality; 4:4 that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, 4:5 not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God; 4:6 and that no man transgress and defraud his brother in the matter because the Lord is the avenger in all these things, just as we also told you before and solemnly warned you. 4:7 For God has not called us for the purpose of impurity, but in sanctification. 4:8 So, he who rejects this is not rejecting man but the God who gives His Holy Spirit to you. (NASB)

Paul says the will of God is to sanctify ourselves by abstaining from sexual immorality and not to live in lustful passion like the Gentiles do who do not know God. He also says we should not transgress and defraud our brothers because the Lord sees and avenges in all these things. Lustful passion can come in many forms, as in the case of Bilam, arrogance, pride, desiring wealth and fame, jealousy and having the evil eye towards a brother. According to the Scriptures, God’s truth is believing in Yeshua the Messiah which is followed by an obedient lifestyle (abiding in the Messiah). The way, the truth, and the life is found in Him, and the fruit of this life in Him is found in the Holy Spirit that is given to overcome our lustful passions and turn from the path of Bilam to God’s ways of righteousness, justice, and truth!

The rabbis said in the midrash that His compassions do not fail. They also say, *Great is Your faithfulness, refers to Your faithfulness in what You did promise to our fathers, After we went down before Babylon, You foresaw the kingdom of Greece, he began to pray. For what did he pray? That Greece should fall at the hand of the tribe of Levi. And Moshe said, Bless, Lord, his might (Devarim / Deuteronomy 33:11)*. Does it seem strange that the midrash speaks of Greece falling at the hand of the tribe of Levi? The Levites were not called to go out in war before Israel. Their inheritance was to minister before the Lord continually, and

yes, to also be present during war time, but continuing in the presence of the Lord in their duties. Why do the rabbis say it is at the hand of the tribe of Levi that Greece will fall? Remember the Torah and how God delivered Israel from Egypt at the hand of Moshe and Aaron. The Lord sent those leaders from the tribe of Levi to speak the word of the Lord to the foreign nation. The Lord God Almighty moved and destroyed an entire nation. The midrash is speaking of our having faith, belief, and trust in the Lord God in heaven to deliver and even to destroy a nation on our behalf. Note that destruction may also be thought in the sense of turning a man, men, and a nation away from sin and towards the Lord. This is the destruction of one's former life, one's former ways of sin. The Lord turning one from his former ways may also be paralleled to the destruction of an entire nation, and the raising up of a nation, men, or a man unto Himself. Midrash Tehillim 67, Part 1 concludes saying, "And so, too, bless the children of Israel, as it is said, God be merciful unto us, and bless us. If You do bless us, You will make Your strength and Your way known among the nations, as is said, That Your way may be known upon the earth, Your salvation among all nations (Tehillim / Psalms 67:3)." Ultimately, the midrash is directing our attention to the Lord, to His Mercy and Grace, and to His strengthening power to transform our lives for His glory, and so that His ways are made known upon the earth and God's salvation being proclaimed among all the nations.

Midrash Tehillim 67, Part 2 opens with the Dibur Hamathil (דיבור המתחיל) saying "The Holy One blessed be He, does not save Israel because of their good deeds, but only to make His strength known and to make His great name known. As Asaph said, Through Judah will God be known; His name will be great through Israel (Tehillim / Psalms 76:2)." The homiletic introduction to the midrash states, "And as Asaph also said, You are the God that does wonders; You have made known Your strength among the peoples (Tehillim / Psalms 77:15)." The entire midrash states the following:

<p>ב נמיס זס קרפ מילהת שרדמ והישעמב לארשיל עישומ ה"בקה ניא גה ומש עידוהלו ותרובג עידוהל אל מיהלא הדוהיב עדונ רמא פסא נכו, לוד רמואו, (ב וע מילהת) ומש לודג לארשיב דזוע מימעב תעדוה אלפ השוע לאה התא תעדוהש זועה המ, (זט זע מילהת מש) דעורזבו דזועב מלאגל, מלועב דתרובג מילהת מש) ומש נעמל מעישויו רמואו ה"בקהש, ותרובג עידוהל המל, (ח וק מיוגה ורמאיש לוכי, לארשי תא עישומ רמאנש, ול מידומ אל, מינפ מהל אשונ מלוק מימע דודוי מיהלא, מימע דודוי זומ ה"בקהש המל, (ו קוספ ז"ס מילהת) רמאנש, הרואל לארשי לש מתקדצ איצ (ו זל מילהת מש) דקדצ רואכ איצוהו זובכ מיכלמ לכו דקדצ מיוג וארו ביתכו מיהלא ה' נכ ביתכו, (ב בס היעשי) דד מש) מיוגה לכ דגנ הלהתו הקדצ חמציי (אי אס והיעשי)</p>	<p>Midrash Tehillim 67, Part 2 2. <i>The Holy One blessed be He, does not save Israel because of their good deeds, but only to make His strength known and to make His great name known. As Asaph said, Through Judah will God be known; His name will be great through Israel (Tehillim / Psalms 76:2). And as Asaph also said, You are the God that does wonders; You have made known Your strength among the peoples (Tehillim / Psalms 77:15). What is meant by the words Your strength? In that you redeem Israel by Your strength and by Your arm, You make Your might known in the world. Another Psalm says, Nevertheless He saved them for His name's sake (Tehillim / Psalms 106:8). Why? To make His might known. It might be supposed that when the Holy One blessed be He, saves the children of Israel, the nations will say, God is partial to them. But in truth, the nations will acknowledge God's justice, as is said, The nations will acknowledge You, all of them (Tehillim / Psalms 67:6). Why? Because the Holy One blessed be He, will bring forth the righteousness of the children of Israel to the light, as it is said, And He will bring forth your righteousness as the light (Tehillim / Psalms 37:6); and as it is written, And the nations will see your righteousness, and all kings your glory (Isaiah 62:2); and as it is also written, The Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations (Tehillim / Psalms 61:11).</i></p>
--	---

Why does Asaph say, "Through Judah will God be known; His name will be great through Israel?" The reason Asaph makes this statement is by reason of the Davidic Covenant. The Davidic Covenant refers to God's promises to David through Nathan the prophet which is found in 2 Samuel 7 and summarized in

1 Chronicles 17:11–14 and *2 Chronicles 6:16*. In this covenant, the Lord God said that through the line of David, He would bring His Messiah. From the lineage of David and the tribe of Judah the Messiah would come and would establish a kingdom that would endure forever. This is why Asaph states, “*through Judah will God be known.*” The Davidic Covenant is considered unconditional because the Lord does not place conditions of obedience upon its fulfillment meaning that the surety of the promises rests solely on God’s faithfulness to David. The Davidic Covenant centers on several key promises that are made to David, the Lord affirms the promise of the land that He made to Abraham and at Sinai. This promise is seen in *2 Samuel 7:10*, where the Lord says through the prophet, “*I will provide a place for my people Israel and will plant them so that they can have a home of their own and no longer be disturbed. Wicked people will not oppress them anymore.*” The Lord promises that David’s son will succeed him as king of Israel and that this son (Solomon) would build the temple, *2 Samuel 7:12-13* “*I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, your own flesh and blood, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name.*” The promise continues and expands saying, “*I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever*” (*7:13*), and “*Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever*” (*7:16*). The promise that David’s son Solomon would be blessed and build the temple becomes the promise of an everlasting kingdom. According to the promise given to David, another “*Son of David*” would rule forever and build a lasting House. This is a reference to the Messiah, where Yeshua is called the Son of David in *Matthew 21:9*. The idea that David’s “*house,*” “*kingdom,*” and “*throne*” will be established forever is significant because it shows that the Messiah will come from the lineage of David and that He will establish a kingdom from which He will reign. The manner in which the promise is written seems to summarize the intent the Lord God has in the Messiah Yeshua. The covenant is summarized by the words “*house,*” promising a dynasty in the lineage of David; “*kingdom,*” referring to a people who are governed by a king; “*throne,*” emphasizing the authority of the king’s rule; and “*forever,*” emphasizing the eternal and unconditional nature of this promise to David and to Israel. In addition, others (the prophets and disciples) refer back to this covenant in the books of *Jeremiah 23:5, 30:9, Isaiah 9:7, 11:1, Luke 1:32, 1:69, Acts 13:34, and Revelation 3:7.*

Midrash Tehillim 67, Part 2 continues saying the following:

And as Asaph also said, You are the God that does wonders; You have made known Your strength among the peoples (Tehillim / Psalms 77:15). What is meant by the words Your strength? In that you redeem Israel by Your strength and by Your arm, You make Your might known in the world. Another Psalm says, Nevertheless He saved them for His name’s sake (Tehillim / Psalms 106:8). Why? To make His might known. It might be supposed that when the Holy One blessed be He, saves the children of Israel, the nations will say, God is partial to them. But in truth, the nations will acknowledge God’s justice, as is said, The nations will acknowledge You, all of them (Tehillim / Psalms 67:6). Why?

The midrash states that the Lord redeemed Israel by His own strength for the purpose of making known His might to the world for His name’s sake. He saved Israel for His name’s sake. Does the Lord continue to function in this manner today? If we are to believe the Scriptures that the non-Jew is graft into Israel, then according to the Apostolic Writings, the Lord does function in the same manner and as the previous midrash states “*If You do bless us, You will make Your strength and Your way known among the nations, as is said, That Your way may be known upon the earth, Your salvation among all nations (Tehillim / Psalms 67:3).*” The Lord is continuing to function in the same manner as He has in the past; He is delivering His people Israel for His name’s sake and for His glory. Take for example the following Scriptures from the Apostolic Writings.

Matthew 10:22

10:22 and you will be hated by all for my name’s sake. but the one who endures to the end will be saved. (ESV)

Matthew 19:29

19:29 And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands, for my name's sake, will receive a hundredfold and will inherit eternal life. (ESV)

Matthew 24:9

24:9 "Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake. (ESV)

Mark 13:13

13:13 And you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved. (ESV)

Luke 21:12

21:12 But before all this they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors for my name's sake. (ESV)

Luke 21:17

21:17 You will be hated by all for my name's sake. (ESV)

Acts 9:16

9:16 For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name." (ESV)

Romans 1:5

1:5 through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations, (ESV)

1 John 2:12

2:12 I am writing to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven for his name's sake. (ESV)

3 John 1:7

1:7 For they have gone out for the sake of the name, accepting nothing from the Gentiles. (ESV)

Yeshua states that for the sake of the Name (His name) we will endure trials and tribulations, and we will be hated to the point of persecution and death. In this way, the Lord is glorified and He makes known His name and His might in our faith. Midrash Tehillim 67, Part 2 concludes saying, "*the Holy One blessed be He, will bring forth the righteousness of the children of Israel to the light, as it is said, And He will bring forth your righteousness as the light (Tehillim / Psalms 37:6); and as it is written, And the nations will see your righteousness, and all kings your glory (Isaiah 62:2); and as it is also written, The Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations (Tehillim / Psalms 61:11).*" Notice how the midrash speaks of righteousness, the children of Israel, the light, and the nations seeing. This again brings us back to the idea that Faith is the composition of two things, (i) belief - in the Lord, in the Messiah, and in the Scriptures, and (ii) practice - we live what we believe, our lives shine forth righteousness in the Messiah. Faith is not authentic if these two things are not coupled together. This is what Yeshua meant when he said in *Luke 20:35*, "*those who are considered worthy of taking part in the age to come and in the resurrection from the dead*" Yeshua did not say "*just believe in me and you will be saved.*" He understood and taught that faith includes both belief and practice. If we are practicing our faith, we will suffer for His name's sake.

Have you suffered for His name's sake? Let's Pray!

Heavenly Father,

We glorify and praise Your Holy Name because great and mighty are Your works in the hearts of man to draw him to repentance. We praise Your Holy Name for strength and faith because these are the things that we credit to You being present in our lives. We thank You for keeping our feet on the path of righteousness and truth according to Your Word (the Scriptures). Thank You for the words of the Rabbis according to the Midrashim which help us to think about how we should be living our lives. Please create in us a deep respect, fear, and love for You Lord, coupled with a desire to dwell in Your presence and to pray. Thank You for giving us the faith to believe in Yeshua the Messiah! Please have mercy on us, forgive us for our sins. We 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!

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

Notes