

<p>ה אֲשֶׁר-לוֹ הַיָּם וְהוּא עָשָׂהוּ וַיִּבְרָא שֶׁת יָדָיו יִצְרוּ: ו באוּ נִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה וּנְכַרְעָה נְבָרְכָה לְפָנֵי-יְהוָה עֲשֵׂנוּ: ז כִּי הוּא אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֲנַחְנוּ עִם מַרְ- עֵיתוֹ וְצֹאן יָדוֹ הַיּוֹם אִם-בְּקִלּוֹ תִ- שְׁמָעוּ: ח אֶל-תִּקְשׁוּ לְבַבְכֶם כְּמִ- רִיבָה כְּיוֹם מִסָּה בַּמִּדְבָּר: ט אֲשֶׁר נִסּוּנֵי אַבְוֹתֵיכֶם בְּחַגְנוּנֵי גַם-רָאוּ פְעָלָי: י אַרְבַּעִים שָׁנָה אָקוּט בְּדוֹר וְאֲמַר עִם תְּלֵעֵי לְבַב הֵם וְהֵם לֹא-יִדְעוּ דְרָכָי: יא אֲשֶׁר-נִשְׁבַּב- עֲתִי בְּאִפֵּי אִם-יִבְאוּ אֶל-מְנוּחָתִי:</p>	<p>ה די ליה ימא והוא עבד יתיה ויביי- שתא אידוי בריאו: ו איתון ניס- גוד ונגחן נחמיט קדם יהוה דעביד יתנא: ז ארום הוא אלהנא ואנחנא עמיה ועאן רעית אידיה יומא דין אם אין במימריה תקבלון: ח לא תקשון לבכון היך במצותא היך יומא דנסיתון אלהא במדברא: ט די נסיונו יתי אבהתכון בחנו יתי לחוד חמון עובדי: י ארבעין שנין מאסית בדרא דמדברא ואמרית עמא דטעותא בלבהון הינון ואינון לא ידעו אורח: יא דקיימית בת- קוף רוגזי אם אין יעלון לנייה בית מקדשי:</p>	<p>95:5 ὅτι αὐτοῦ ἐστὶν ἡ θάλασσα καὶ αὐτὸς ἐποίησεν αὐτήν καὶ τὴν ξηρὰν αἱ χεῖρες αὐτοῦ ἔπλασαν 95:6 δεῦτε προσκυνήσωμεν καὶ προσπέσωμεν αὐτῷ καὶ κλαύσωμεν ἐναντίον κυρίου τοῦ ποιήσαντος ἡμᾶς 95:7 ὅτι αὐτός ἐστιν ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν καὶ ἡμεῖς λαὸς νομῆς αὐτοῦ καὶ πρόβατα χειρὸς αὐτοῦ σήμερον ἐὰν τῆς φωνῆς αὐτοῦ ἀκούσητε 95:8 μὴ σκληρύνητε τὰς καρδίας ὑμῶν ὡς ἐν τῷ παραπικρασμῷ κατὰ τὴν ἡμέραν τοῦ πειρασμοῦ ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ 95:9 οὐ ἐπείρασαν οἱ πατέρες ὑμῶν ἐδοκίμασαν καὶ εἶδον τὰ ἔργα μου 95:10 τεσσαράκοντα ἔτη προσώχθισα τῇ γενεᾷ ἐκείνῃ καὶ εἶπα ἀεὶ πλανῶνται τῇ καρδίᾳ καὶ αὐτοὶ οὐκ ἔγνωσαν τὰς ὁδοὺς μου 95:11 ὡς ὤμοσα ἐν τῇ ὀργῇ μου εἰ εἰσελεύσονται εἰς τὴν κατάπαυσίν μου</p>
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<p>Tehillim / Psalms 95 95:1 O come, let us sing for joy to the Lord, Let us shout joyfully to the rock of our salvation. 95:2 Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving, Let us shout joyfully to Him with psalms. 95:3 For the Lord is a great God And a great King above all gods, 95:4 In whose hand are the depths of the earth, The peaks of the mountains are His also. 95:5 The sea is His, for it was He who made it, And His hands formed the dry land. 95:6 Come, let us worship and bow down, Let us kneel before the Lord our Maker. 95:7 For He is our God, And we are the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand. Today, if you would hear His voice, 95:8 Do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah, As in the day of Massah in the wilderness, 95:9 'When your fathers tested Me, They tried Me, though they had seen My work. 95:10 'For forty years I loathed that generation, And said they are a people who err in their heart, And they do not know My ways. 95:11 'Therefore I swore in My anger, Truly they shall not enter into My rest.' (NASB)</p>	<p>Toviyah / Psalms 95 95:1 Come, let us sing praise before the Lord, let us shout aloud before the Mighty One of our redemption. 95:2 Let us come before his face with thanksgiving, with hymns let us shout aloud before him. 95:3 For the Lord is the great God, and the great king over every god. 95:4 From whose hand the depths of the earth are suspended, and the strongholds of the mountain height are his. 95:5 His is the sea, and he made it; and his hands created the dry land. 95:6 Come, let us bow down and prostrate ourselves; let us kneel in the presence of the Lord who makes us. 95:7 For he is our God and we are his people and the flock of his hand's pasturing; today, if you accept his word 95:8 Do not harden your heart as in the dispute, as on the day you tested God in the wilderness. 95:9 For your fathers tempted me, they tried me; yet they saw my works. 95:10 Forty years I rejected the generation of the wilderness, and I said, "They are a people with error in their heart, and they do not know my ways." 95:11 For I swore in the harshness of my wrath, "They will not enter the repose of my sanctuary." (EMC)</p>	<p>Psalmoi / Psalms 95 The praise of a Song by David. 95:1 Come, let us exult in the Lord; let us make a joyful noise to God our Saviour. 95:2 Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise to him with psalms. 95:3 For the Lord is a great God, and a great king over all gods: for the Lord will not cast off his people. 95:4 For the ends of the earth are in his hands; and the heights of the mountains are his. 95:5 For the sea is his, and he made it: and is hands formed the dry land. 95:6 Come, let us worship and fall down before him; and weep before the Lord that made us. 95:7 For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. 95:8 To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, according to the day of irritation in the wilderness: 95:9 where your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works. 95:10 Forty years was I grieved with this generation, and said, They do always err in their heart, and they have not known my ways. 95:11 So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest. (LXX)</p>
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In this week's study from *Tehillim / Psalms 95:1-11*, the Psalm opens saying, אֲלֹהֵינוּ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ לְיְהוָה נִרְיָעָה, *O come, let us sing for joy to the Lord, Let us shout joyfully to the rock of our salvation.* (NASB) The Lord is described as the rock of our salvation. What is it about the Rock that saves that we find throughout the Scriptures? Rabbi Yaakov comments upon salvation (ישועה) in the following way:

מעניי הישועה - רב יעקב משה חרל"פ - ערכה של הצפיה לישועה עמ' י"א
הצפיה לישועה איננה רק על העתיד, אלא גם בהווה- לצפות לכל שעה שאפשר שתופיע בה הגאולה, לזאת, גם זה בכלל הצפיה לישועה, להכיר ולהאמין כי ראויים המה ישראל להגאל בכל שעה ושעה, שאף אם רבים הם הלקויים מצד החוץ, טהורים ונקיים הם מצד הפנים.

The yearning for salvation isn't only about the future, but also in the present - to scout each hour that the redemption could come. Thus, this is also included in the yearning for salvation: to recognize and to believe that Israel is worthy of being redeemed at any and every moment, that even if the defects are numerous on the outside, they are pure and clean on the inside.

Rabbi Yaakov states that salvation isn't only about the future, it is also about the present. This is the perspective with regard to the Rock that saves, the Rock is unmoving which brings with it both a present day and future expectation of security. In a similar manner, the Lord God in heaven is our Rock, He is unmoving, and we have the security of both a present day and future hope because of the Lord's unmoving and unchanging nature. Rabbi Yaakov believes that Israel is worthy of salvation from her enemies regardless of the number of sins she has on the outside, saying that she is clean on the inside. This draws in the Torah concept of the "circumcision of the heart" such as what the Apostle Paul wrote in *Romans 2:29*. (*Romans 2:27 And he who is physically uncircumcised, if he keeps the Law, will he not judge you who though having the letter of the Law and circumcision are a transgressor of the Law? 2:28 For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh. 2:29 But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God.* NASB) Paul is calling upon a very Torah centric teaching referring to having a pure heart that is separated unto God. These words of Paul to the Romans may be confusing to the person who does not study the Torah and the Tanach annually regarding circumcision. Paul relates circumcision to not just an outward sign of being set apart unto God. If the heart is sinful, then physical circumcision is of no avail. His conclusion is that a circumcised body and a sinful heart are at odds with one another. Paul goes on to discuss how the Holy Spirit of God is able to purify the heart, to work in our lives drawing us back to God's ways according to His Torah and thereby setting us apart unto the Lord God in heaven. Ultimately, a person's heart must change. Paul calls this change "circumcision of the heart" just as the Torah describes the circumcised heart as it is related to the context of obedience and/or disobedience to the command. The Lord has always wanted His people to have a newness of life that is centered in a way of living that is governed by one's love for Him, to know Him and to follow Him, just as Jeremiah said, "Circumcise yourselves to the LORD, circumcise your hearts, you men of Judah and people of Jerusalem, or my wrath will break out and burn like fire because of the evil you have done" (*Jeremiah 4:4*). This is then related to repentance and the inward change to be right with the Lord. These are the things Yeshua the Messiah taught us to do by example (*Matthew 5:17*) and the manner in which we are made right with the Lord, beginning with the changed of our hearts by our faith in the Messiah (*John 3:16, Ephesians 2:8-9*). It is in these things that we are made joyful, in the manner in which the Lord works in our lives to save us. This is why our salvation is not simply a future thing to be attained, but is also a present day reality. In *Vayikra / Leviticus 23*, we are given reason for celebrating the salvation of God.

ויקרא כ"ג:ל"ט-מ"ג

(לט) אך בחמשה עשר יום לחודש השביעי באספכם את תבואת הארץ תחגו את חג יהוה שבועת ימים ביום הראשון שבתון וביום השמיני שבתון. (מ) ולקחתם לכם ביום הראשון פרי עץ הדר כפת תמרים וענף עץ עבת וערבי נחל ושמתם לפני יהוה אלהיכם שבועת ימים. (מא) וחגתם אתו חג ליהוה שבועת ימים בשנה חקת עולם לדרתיכם בחודש השביעי תחגו אתו. (מב) בספת תשבו שבועת ימים כל האזרח בישראל ישבו בספת. (מג) למען ידעו דרתיכם כי בספות הושבתי את בני ישראל בהוציאי אותם מארץ מצרים אני יהוה אלהיכם.

Vayikra / Leviticus 23:39-43

23:39 Mark, on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered-in the yield of your land, you shall observe the festival of the Eternal [to last] seven days; a complete rest on the first day, and a complete rest on the eighth day. 23:40 On the first day you shall take the product of the hadar trees, branches of palm trees, boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook, and you shall rejoice before the Eternal your God seven days. 23:41 You shall observe it as a festival of the Eternal for seven days in the year; you shall observe it in the seventh months a law for all time, throughout the ages. 23:42 You shall dwell in booths seven days; all citizens in Israel shall dwell in booths; 23:43 in order that future generations may know that I made the Israelite people dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am the Eternal your God.

The salvation of the Lord, as it is understood in the present day reality of salvation according to Judaism, is found in the mitzvah on the in-gathering of the grain, and the festival of Succot. The Lord is the One who brings the rains and causes our crops to grow. He is the One who works in our hearts to draw us back to Himself, in worship, adoration, and praise. He is the One who protects us from our enemies, and this is the reason the psalm opens saying, *לכו נרננה ליהוה נריעה לצור ישענו: 95:1 O come, let us sing for joy to the Lord, Let us shout joyfully to the rock of our salvation. (NASB)*

Maimonides has the following to say according to his Mishneh Torah.

משנה תורה, הלכות שביתת יום טוב ו'כ

(כ) כשאדם אוכל ושותה ושמח ברגל לא ימשך ביין ובשחוק וקלות ראש ויאמר שכל מי שיוסיף בזה ירבה במצות שמחה. שהשכרות והשחוק הרבה וקלות הראש אינה שמחה אלא הוללות וסכנות ולא נצטוינו על ההוללות והסכלות אלא על השמחה שיש בה עבודת יוצר הכל שנאמר תחת אשר לא עבדת את ה' אלהיך בשמחה ובטוב לבב מרב כל. הא למדת שהעבודה בשמחה. ואי אפשר לעבוד את השם לא מתוך שחוק ולא מתוך קלות ראש ולא מתוך שכרות.

Mishneh Torah, Rest on a Holiday 6:20

When a person eats, drinks, and celebrates on a festival, he should not let himself become overly drawn to drinking wine, mirth, and levity, saying "whoever indulges in these activities more is increasing his observance of the mitzvah of rejoicing." For drunkenness, profuse mirth, and levity are not rejoicing; they are frivolity and foolishness. And we were not commanded to indulge in frivolity or foolishness, but rather in rejoicing that involves the service of the Creator of all existence. Thus [Deuteronomy 28:47] states, "Because you did not serve the Eternal, your God, with happiness and a glad heart, and with an abundance of prosperity." This teaches us that service [of God] involves joy. And it is impossible to truly serve God while in the midst of levity, frivolity, or drunkenness.

Maimonides warns about the kind of celebration we should be involved in before the Lord, to limit food and drink, and to focus upon our service before the Lord, to study God's Word, and to be happy in the abundance

that He has provided for us. It is impossible to truly serve the Lord God in Joy while living in the midst of levity, frivolity, or drunkenness.

Rashbam states that God's strength is in the mountains.

Rashbam on Numbers 24:8, Part 1

ותועפות הרים לו 95:4 *strength, as in Psalms 95:4*, “*He possesses the strength of mountains.*”

What does it mean that God's strength is that of the mountains, as it pertains to our shouting for joy to the Rock of our salvation? The reasonable conclusion is the mountains are unmovable and therefore by similarity, the strength of God is also unmovable. A solid foundation and a solid wall has the capability of saving lives during war. The parallel is that the Lord God in heaven is our solid foundation and unmoving wall.

The Psalm continues saying, ב נְקַדְמָה פָּנָיו בְּתוֹדָה בְּזִמְרוֹת נְרִיעַ לֹ: ג כִּי אֵל גָּדוֹל יְהוָה וּמֶלֶךְ גָּדוֹל עַל-כָּל-,
:לוֹ: ד אֲשֶׁר בְּיָדוֹ מְהַקְרִי-אֶרֶץ וְתוֹעֲפוֹת הָרִים לֹ: 95:2 *Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving, Let us shout joyfully to Him with psalms. 95:3 For the Lord is a great God And a great King above all gods, 95:4 In whose hand are the depths of the earth, The peaks of the mountains are His also. (NASB)* The psalmist calls for us to come before the Lord and give thanks for all that He has done. His power, as Lord over all, is described as “*King who is above all gods.*” Does this statement give credence to the existence of other gods? Similarly, this draws to memory the Scripture from *Devarim / Deuteronomy 10:17*.

Devarim / Deuteronomy 10:17

10:17 *‘For the Lord your God is the God of gods and the Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God who does not show partiality nor take a bribe. (NASB, יז כִּי יְהוָה*
אֱלֹהֵיכֶם הוּא אֱלֹהֵי הָאֱלֹהִים וְאֲדֹנֵי הָאֲדֹנִים הָאֵל הַגָּדֹל הַגִּבֹּר וְהַנּוֹרָא אֲשֶׁר לֹא-יִשָּׂא פָנִים וְלֹא יִקַּח שֹׁחַד:)

The question then is, “*What does it mean that God is the God of gods and Lord of lords?*” Does this give credence to the existence of other gods? We know there is only one Lord and God over all, the Scriptures clearly describe the Lord God in heaven as the one true God. Sometimes however, the Scriptures reference other gods and lords. For example, in *Devarim / Deuteronomy 10:17* the Lord is described as above the other gods and lords. The emphasis is on Lord God's supremacy and His greatness and might, as being strong and unmovable as the mountains. When we read the Scriptures that say the Lord is God of gods, this is in reference to the Lord God of Israel who is more powerful and greater than any of the so called gods of the nations. The verse does not teach the existence of other gods, but that the gods of the nations are only wood and stone, and cannot speak, hear, or see. Rather, the Lord God of Israel says, “*I am the LORD, and there is no other; apart from me there is no God*” (*Isaiah 45:5*). The prophet Isaiah also says in *Isaiah 43:11* ‘*I, even I, am the Lord, And there is no savior besides Me. 43:12 ‘It is I who have declared and saved and proclaimed, And there was no strange god among you; So you are My witnesses,’ declares the Lord, ‘And I am God. 43:13 ‘Even from eternity I am He, And there is none who can deliver out of My hand; I act and who can reverse it?’ (NASB)* The Lord alone is worthy of worship (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 10:21*), idols have no power, “*All the gods of the nations are worthless*” (*1 Chronicles 16:26, Tehillim / Psalm 96:5*). *Tehillim / Psalm 97:7* adds, “*All who worship images are put to shame, those who boast in idols.*” These and many other passages note that there is only one God where to worship any other god is an exercise in futility. The term “*Lord of lords*” is a reference to God's greatness over and above all other leaders or anyone who holds a place of authority and power. In the Apostolic Writings, the phrase “*Lord of lords*” is used also in reference to Yeshua the Messiah. Paul teaches about Yeshua to Timothy in *1 Timothy 6:15* saying “*he who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords.*” (*ESV*) *Revelation 17:14* also speaks of Yeshua's return, saying, “*He is Lord of lords and King of kings.*” *Revelation 19:16* also adds, “*On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: king of kings and lord of lords.*” It is interesting in the title “*Lord*

of lords” we are given a description of the unique power of God which provides insight into the nature of His Messiah as well. The Lord God of Israel, our Father in heaven is the One called “*Lord of lords*” in *Devarim / Deuteronomy 10:17* and the Apostolic Writings title the Son of God (Yeshua the Messiah) as the one having authority and power over all speaking of him also as the King of kings and Lord of lords. The Lord God in heaven is powerful, and so is His Messiah Yeshua. This is why in the Acts of the Apostles, we are told in *Acts 4:12* ‘*And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.*’ (NASB)

Saying the Lord is all powerful draws a parallel to His creation and His having power over all the earth, even to its depths. The psalmist draws in this context saying, ה אֲשֶׁר-לוֹ הַיָּם וְהוּא עָשָׂהוּ וַיִּבְרָא יְדֵיו יִצְרוּ: 1, 95:5 *The sea is His, for it was He who made it, And His hands formed the dry land. 95:6 Come, let us worship and bow down, Let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.* (NASB) We kneel before the Lord because we recognize the power of God and His ability to save us and to overcome anything, absolutely anything! Note how the rabbis relate the Lord, His power to create and form the dry lands, to our worship and adoration of the Lord, our bowing down and kneeling before Him, our Maker.

Ein Yaakov on the Talmud Bavli Ketubot 1:1

KETHUBOTH (Fol. 5) Bar Kapara expounded: “Great are the acts of the righteous, even more so than the act of creating heavens and earth, for concerning the act of [creating] heavens and earth it is written (Is. 48, 13) My hand also hath laid the foundation of the earth, and My right hand spanned the heavens; but concerning the acts of the righteous it is written (Ex. 15:17) The place, O Lord, which Thou hast wrought for Thy residence, the sanctuary, O Lord, which Thy hands have established.” An objection was raised by a certain Babylonian whose name was R. Chiya (Ps. 95:5) And whose hands (in plural) have formed the dry land. [Hence also in creation both hands were employed ?] “However, it is written Yado (his hand),” came the reply. But it is written Yatzaru (they formed). Whereupon R. Nachman b. Isaac explained that this refers to the fingers, as it is written (Ib. 8, 4) When I behold the heavens, the work of Thy fingers. Another objection was raised (Ib. 19, 2) The heavens relate the story of God; and the expanse telleth of the works of His hands. The passage means thus : What tells the important work of the righteous? The expanse. And by what means? Through the rains.

Akeidat Yitzchak 15:2

Bar Kapparah, in Ketuvot 5 explained that the deeds of the righteous are greater than the creation of heaven and Earth. It is written “Also My hand set the foundations of the earth, and My right hand spanned the heavens.” Concerning the deeds of the righteous however, it is written “the sanctuary of G’d which Your hands (pl) have established.” (Exodus 15:17) A Babylonian by the name of Rabbi Chiyah objected, saying that it is written in Psalms 95:5 “His hands have fashioned the land masses.” Rabbi Nachman explained that this refers to His fingers, since it says “when I behold the heavens, the work of Your fingers.” (Psalms 8:4) Another objection was raised; it says “the heavens proclaim the glory of G’d and the expanse of the sky, the work of His hands. (Psalms 19:2) The passage means “what tells the important work of the righteous? the skies. By what means? By means of the rainfall.”

Ein Yaakov opens with the works of righteousness and states that the work of righteousness is greater than the act of creating the heavens and the earth. The rabbis argue over this interpretation, and conclude that the creation directs us to the works of righteousness in the expanse, through the rains. This is the logical conclusion based upon Parashat Bekhukotai (*Vayikra / Leviticus 26*). Living our lives for the Lord God in heaven, to walk in His statutes and commandments brings forth his blessing and that blessing is found in the way of rainfall. Akeidat Yitzchak follows with the same interpretation on the creation directing us to

understand from the beginning the Lord sought for us to walk righteously before Him. This draws with it a very important concept found in Paul's letter to the Ephesians, according to *Ephesians 2:1-16*.

Ephesians 2:1-16

2:1 And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, 2:2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. 2:3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. 2:4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 2:5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 2:6 and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 2:7 so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. 2:8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; 2:9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. 2:10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them. 2:11 Therefore remember that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called 'Uncircumcision' by the so-called 'Circumcision,' which is performed in the flesh by human hands 2:12 remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. 2:13 But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. 2:14 For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, 2:15 by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace, 2:16 and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity. (NASB)

Note how Paul speaks of being dead in trespasses and sin being described as our former ways that following the way of the world, which is the spirit of disobedience that is paralleled to the evil spirits which are said to be working in the sons of disobedience. Paul is describing those who do not seek the Lord God in heaven or His Messiah Yeshua. They are sons of the evil one who was disobedient from the beginning, and such persons have a spirit within them that walks in the ways of disobedience, ungodliness, and wickedness. He describes this as the lust of the flesh, the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and that those who live in this way are the children of wrath. Paul then says that God through His mercy and because of His great love, saved us in the Messiah (Christ) and raised us up with Him and seated us in heavenly places. The idea is that our Father has raised us up out of the world, He has separated us from the deadness of living according to the flesh. This raising up was not based upon our works, so that we might boast. Paul's point is that in this new position the Lord has placed us in the Messiah, is to cause us to leave our former ways. He clarifies this saying *2:10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works (maasim tovim), which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them. (NASB)* The Lord has worked in our lives, raising us up, we are His craftsmanship, we are created in the image of the Messiah for good works (maasim tovim). Paul parallels the creation of God with maasim tovim, the works of righteousness. He goes on to say that the non-Jewish person was formerly separate, but now in the blood of the Messiah has been drawn near. Paul concludes in *Ephesians 2:13-16* of this enmity of the flesh with the Torah. The flesh does not want to obey God's Word, as Paul describes previously as trespasses and sin, the lust of the flesh, the desires of the flesh and of the mind. The enmity between the flesh and the Torah is related to this spirit of disobedience Paul is speaking of, and our desire to live for ourselves as opposed to living for the Lord in heaven. Paul then describes the amazing thing that God has done in our lives, that is paralleled to the creative process He is working in our lives in the Messiah Yeshua. He says, *2:15 by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is*

the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace, (NASB) The Lord has caused the flesh which was once at enmity with the Torah, to become at peace with the Torah command. The Lord has enabled and empowered His people to live what we were created for maasim tovim (good works). Paul is teaching a Torah centric theology here. He describes this as 2:16 and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity. (NASB) Note in Ephesians 2:15, Paul says making the two into one new man. He is speaking of the individual, and of the community of believers. The Lord has empowered us to overcome sin and to live a victorious life, to find Joy in the Torah of God, and to be joined with Israel in our service to God. Therefore, Paul is writing in a very rabbinic fashion, paralleling the creation of God and works of righteousness, the very thing we were created for from since the beginning, of the power of God which enables us to live for the Lord according to His Torah, and the Joy of being a part of the family of God as adopted sons of Israel.

The rabbis go on to describe these things in the following way:

Pesikta Rabbati 6:1

Another explanation. “And all the work that king Solomon had wrought in the house of the Lord was finished.” (Melachim I 7:51) What does ‘all the work’ mean? It was built by itself, rising and floating up – thus it does not say when the house was built, but rather “And the house, when it was in building...” (Melachim I 6:7) “...was built of stone finished at the quarry (masa)...” (ibid.) What does ‘finished at the quarry’ (masa nivne) mean? R’ Brechia said: the stone picked itself up (nosah atzma), rose up and was built by itself. This is what Shlomo said in his song “I have surely built You a house to dwell in...” (Melachim I 8:13) He says ‘I have surely built’, meaning ‘I built a building and the stones rose up and flew into place themselves’. If you are shocked that the Holy One would do such a thing for a single righteous person, “And a stone was brought and placed on the mouth of the pit...” (Daniel 6:18) And where did they get a rock in Bavel? Our Rabbis said that it rolled all the way from the land of Israel and came in an instant. So if the Holy One did such a thing for flesh and blood, are you surprised that He would do so for the building of a house to the Holy One?

Shney Luchot HaBrit Terumah, Torah Ohr 109

This is similar to the reply Elijah is quoted to have given the person who questioned him about the date of the redemption. He told his questioner: היום, אם בקולו תשמעו, “This very day, if you will hearken to His voice” (Psalms 95:6). This is the sentiment G’d expresses through Jeremiah 31:8 when He describes Himself as הייתי לישראל לאב, “I am always prepared to be a true father of Israel, just as I used to be.” This is the reason the Midrash quotes only the half of the verse which speaks about Israel building a Sanctuary for G’d, i.e. hearkening to His voice. The remaining difficulty is that since this verse speaks about the construction of the Tabernacle, why does the Torah not describe it as such and prefers to call it מקדש?

Chofetz Chaim Preface 4

And, in truth, not against Him (Gd forbid) is our complaint, but against ourselves; for it [the redemption] is not beyond His powers, viz. (Isaiah 59:1-2): “Behold, the L-rd’s hand is not too short to save, and His ear is not too heavy to hear. But your sins have made a separation between you and your G-d, and your transgressions have hid [His] face from you, from hearing.” And we find (viz. Sanhedrin 98a) that in the days of R. Yehoshua ben Levi he was told (viz. Tehillim 95:6) that the Messiah would come “today, if you hearkened to His voice” — even though the time of the exile decreed for Israel (one thousand years, corresponding to the one thousand year “day” of the Holy One Blessed be He, had not yet passed [viz. Chida, Petach Einyayim, Sanhedrin, Ibid.]) In spite of this, the power of repentance would have

annulled the decree. How much more so, more than eight hundred years after the end of that [one-thousand-year] “day”, [should the Messiah come if we repented]! The fault is ours alone — that with our many sins we do not allow Him to repose His Shechinah in our midst.

The Peskita Rabbati 6:1 speaks of the building of the Solomon’s Temple as it is connected to the Psalm which says, באו נִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה וְנִכְרָעָה וְנִבְרָכָה לְפָנֵי-יְהוָה עַשְׂנוּ: 95:6 *Come, let us worship and bow down, Let us kneel before the Lord our Maker. (NASB)* The idea is that the Temple was built by itself in the sense that the Lord God has created the foundation stone, where the stone miraculously picked itself up and was built by itself from the quarry. The rabbis say that the stones picked themselves up and flow into place, all for the sake of one righteous person. A parallel to Daniel and the rock that covered the pit, the rabbis say the stone rolled all the way from Israel, drawing us consistently back to the Land and to the people. This sounds a lot like what Paul was describing to the Ephesians. Through the mercy of God, He has done something miraculous, building up within us upon the foundation stone of Yeshua the Messiah which the Lord God in heaven sent in a miraculous event. When we place our faith in God’s Messiah, these foundation stones fly into place and assemble themselves, all by the power of God, and both our lives and our bodies become a sanctuary, a place of worship to bring glory to God, and to function as both the rabbis and Paul writes that from the beginning we were created for maasim tovim (good works), the good works of righteousness.

Sheny Lichot Habrit speaks of the day of redemption, which is connected to listening and hearing the voice of God, which is synonymous to being obedient to His word. They conclude with a question on the Mikdash (mikdash) masculine (plural indefinite מִקְדָּשִׁים, singular construct מִקְדָּשׁ, plural construct מִקְדָּשִׁים) meaning a consecrated thing or place, especially, a palace, sanctuary, the hallowed part, holy place, or sanctuary. The rabbis question why the Temple is called “*This very day, if you will hearken to His voice*” and yet it is referred to as the Mikdash? The reason may be found in the interpretation on the body becoming a sanctified place in the Messiah Yeshua, to be a sanctuary for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit of God, and a place where many maasim tovim are performed. Note that the body becoming a sanctuary does not do away with the Temple in Jerusalem.

The commentary Chofetz Chaim also speaks of the redemption of God and His ability to save His people and to hear their prayers. The rabbis say our sins separate us from the Lord, and that the Messiah would come today if we would listen to His (God’s) voice. Note the parallel to the teaching found in the Apostolic Writings. If we place our faith in the Messiah Yeshua, he will come to dwell in our hearts, he will come today, immediately, and redemption will be found Today, right now, instantaneously! These concepts found in the Apostolic Writings are very rabbinic, and may easily be derived from a Jewish and rabbinic context. Again the rabbis are drawing upon the concept of “*today, if you hearkened to His voice*” and the power of repentance which annuls the spiritual consequence of violating the Torah command. Our sins cause his Shechinah glory to leave, and so we are called to repentance and obedience, turning our lives back to the Lord God and His ways. This is exactly what the psalmist is trying to say as he continues in his Psalm saying, כִּי הוּא אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאַנְחָנוּ עִם מְרִעִיתוֹ וְצֹאן יָדוֹ הַיּוֹם אִם-בְּקִלּוֹ תִשְׁמָעוּ: 95:7 *For He is our God, And we are the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand. Today, if you would hear His voice, (NASB)* This psalm is quoted in *Hebrews 3:15* while it is said, “**TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE, DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS, AS WHEN THEY PROVOKED ME.**” (NASB) The position we find ourselves in with regard to these Scriptures is the hardening of the heart. Have you ever found yourself in a position where you know you should be feeling something, but don’t? You know what the Scriptures say, but maybe your heart doesn’t feel the way Scripture says it should. Similar to how calluses toughen our skin’s exterior to numb physical sensation, we have the ability to build walls around our hearts that prevent us from being in tune with the emotions that are supposed to lead us towards the Lord and which may also hinder the role of the Spirit in our lives to make changes in our lives. The hardness of the heart is a very important question we should be asking ourselves daily because it can have devastating consequences in the long term. *Mishley / Proverbs 4:23* states “*Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life.*” The Scriptures teach us the condition of our heart will determine how our lives will turn out. For example, if a person

has unresolved anger, it is highly likely he or she will become an angry person who does angry things and lashes out at others and hold long term grudges. Therefore, it is very important for us today to search our hearts, and to listen to the voice of God through His word, and change our lives to obey His word. Seek the Lord God our Father in heaven in the name of His Messiah Yeshua, and ask for help and the empowering of the Holy Spirit to move and work in your life in order to bring glory to His Name! This is what the Scriptures speak of concerning who we are, and what God expects from us and our lives.

Tehillim / Psalms 95 concludes saying, אֲשֶׁר נִסּוּנִי ט מִסָּה בַּמִּדְבָּר: ז אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם בְּחַגְנוּנִי גַם-רָאוּ פְעֹלֹתַי י אַרְבָּעִים שָׁנָה | אָקוּט בְּדוֹר וְאִמַּר עִם תַּעֲיִ לִבָּב הֵם וְהֵם לֹא-יִדְעוּ דְרָכַי: יא אֲשֶׁר-: 95:8 *Do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah, As in the day of Massah in the wilderness,* 95:9 *‘When your fathers tested Me, They tried Me, though they had seen My work.* 95:10 *‘For forty years I loathed that generation, And said they are a people who err in their heart, And they do not know My ways.* 95:11 *‘Therefore I swore in My anger, Truly they shall not enter into My rest.’ (NASB)* Ein Yaakov commentary on the Talmud Bavli Sanhedrin 11 has the following to say concerning the generation of the wilderness.

Ein Yaakov on Sanhedrin 11:129

The generation of the desert has no share, etc. Our Rabbis were taught: The generation of the desert had no share in the world to come, as it is written (Num. 14) In the wilderness shall they be spent, etc., i.e., in the wilderness, refers to this world ; and therein shall they die, refers to the world to come, and it is also written (Ps. 95:11) So that I swore in My wrath, that they should not enter into My rest. Thus says R. Akiba. R. Eliezer, however, says: “They have a share in the world to come, as it is said (Ib. 50, 5) Gather unto Me My pious servants. But how shall the verse I swore in My wrath be explained? I retract from it because it was sworn while I was in anger.” R. Joshua b. Karcha says: “The verse cited by R. Eliezer was said only concerning the future generations. Gather together unto Me My pious servants, refers to the righteous who are to be found in every generation. Who make a covenant, refers to Chaniah, Mishael, and Azariah, who delivered themselves to [be thrown into] the kiln. Sacrifice, refers to R. Akiba and his colleagues, who had delivered themselves to be slain because of the words of the Torah.” R. Simon b. Menasia says: “They (the generation of the desert), will have a share in the world to come, as it is said (Isa. 35:10) And come to Zion with song.” Rabba b. Chana said in the name of R. Jochanan : “R. Akiba has departed from his [usual] kindness (i.e., his harsh opinion does not agree with hirality shown elsewhere), for it is said (Jer. 2:2) I remember unto thee the kindness of thy youth, the love of thy espousals, thy going after Me in the wilderness, through a land that is not sown. Now since we see that even their descendants will benefit from their reward, how much more so they themselves!”

Ein Yaakov states that the generation of the wilderness has no share in the Olam Haba, and that the wilderness refers to this world and its desires. The Scriptures call the people stiff necked (*Shemot / Exodus 32:9, Acts 7:51*) hard, and rebellious. The pious ones are referred to those who offer their lives up in service to the Lord, as “*Chananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, who delivered themselves to [be thrown into] the kiln.*” Note the rabbis say they delivered themselves, where Scripture states it was the Lord God in heaven who delivered them. Why do they say they delivered themselves? The concept here is that they were willing to deliver themselves up to be killed for the sake of God’s word. They humbled themselves, they stood for truth and life with God’s help. So in essence, by their faith they were delivered. There is a truth to the statement that “*Chananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, who delivered themselves to [be thrown into] the kiln.*” Do you have that kind of faith and devotion to God’s Word in your life today? I hope and pray that all of God’s people would lay down their lives for the sake of truth, and life in the Messiah Yeshua and faith and devotion to God’s word.

The Mishnah Megillah is the tenth Tractate of Mishnah in the Order Moed. It and its Gemara deal with

the laws of Purim and offers exegetical understandings to the Book of Esther. The Megillah also includes laws concerning the public reading of the Torah and other communal synagogue practices. The Megillah also has the following to say concerning the righteous and the wicked.

Mishnah Megillah 17b:52

And when the transgressors have disappeared, the horn of the righteous will be exalted, as it is written, “All the horns of the wicked also will I cut off, but the horns of the righteous shall be exalted” (Psalms 95:11). And “righteous converts” are included with the righteous, as it says, “Before the hoary head rise up, and honor the face of the elder”, and the text goes on, “And if a stranger sojourns with you” (Leviticus 19:32).

The Mishnah Megillah speaks of when the Lord causes the wicked to perish, the righteous will flourish or raise up. The Mishnah also speaks of “righteous converts” who are included with the righteous, indicating that the Lord is actively seeking those who formerly were unrighteous to turn from their unrighteousness and towards Him for salvation from their sins. The key to the psalm is to have a willing heart, and the desire to seek the Lord all the days of our lives.

Devarim / Deuteronomy 4:29

4:29 But from there you will seek the LORD your God, and you will find Him if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul. (NKJV)

1 Chronicles 16:10-11

16:10 Glory in His holy name; Let the hearts of those rejoice who seek the LORD! 16:11 Seek the LORD and His strength; Seek His face evermore! (NKJV)

1 Chronicles 28:9

28:9 As for you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve Him with a loyal heart and with a willing mind; for the LORD searches all hearts and understands all the intent of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will cast you off forever. (NKJV)

Hebrews 11:6

11:6 But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. (NKJV)

Again, the key to the psalm and a major theme found throughout Scripture is to have a willing heart, and the desire to seek the Lord all the days of our lives. Let's Pray!

Heavenly Father,

We thank You for Your mercy. Lord help us daily to seek and serve You. In the midst of persecution, Lord help us to have the strength to stand for truth and life, to have faith in Yeshua and devotion to Your Word. We thank You Lord for Your continued faithfulness to Your promises. Thank You Lord for giving us the faith to believe in Yeshua the Messiah and for always calling our hearts back to You! Please have mercy on us, forgive us for our sins. 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