

פְּרִשְׁת
בְּרֵאשִׁית
Parashat Bereshit

*Bereshit / Genesis 1:1-6:8, Isaiah 4:5-43:10
John 1:1-18*

The Power of the Word of the Living God!

The Bible is the Word of the Living God! The Torah, the first five books of the Bible, are awesome from the sense that these are the Word of God, it is profound, and exciting and most importantly it provokes a sense of awe in the power of God. When we see or read something that is exceptional, beyond the ordinary, which speaks to the human experience, and of something greater than we can understand, we get a sense of awe and are able to feel the power of God at work! The beauty of nature is one example, such as the view of the rocky mountains in Colorado, or in Yellow Stone park, or the Grand Canyon, these things inspire and reveal to us the power of God in His creation. The Torah is expressed by the Psalmist in the following way.

Tehillim / Psalms 119:96

צו לְכֹל תִּכְלֶה רְאִיתִי קֶזֶז רְחִבָּה מִצְוֹתֶיךָ מְאֹד:

To all perfection I see a limit, but your commands are boundless.

The psalmists states that the commands of God are exceedingly broad/

wide (רְחֹבָה) speaking of the greatness and power of God's Word as expressed in the creation account, according to *Bereshit / Genesis 1 and 2*. The Psalmist is able to see the perfection and limits of creation, whereas the mitzvot (מִצְוֹתָהּ, commands) of God are limitless (boundless). As a way to interpret the meaning of the psalm, the rabbis look to Zechariah for an explanation.

Talmud Bavli Eruvin 21a:13-14, 17

אָמַר רַב חֲסֵדָא, דְּרִישׁ מְרִי בַר מַר: מַאי דְּכָתִיב "לְכֹל תִּכְלֶה" רְאִיתִי קִצְ רְחֹבָה מִצְוֹתָהּ מְאֹד", דְּבַר זֶה אָמְרוּ דָּוִד וְלֹא פִּירְשׁוּ, אָמְרוּ אִיּוֹב וְלֹא פִּירְשׁוּ, אָמְרוּ יְחִזְקֵאל וְלֹא פִּירְשׁוּ, Rav Hisda said: *Mari bar Mar interpreted homiletically: What is the meaning of that which is written: "I have seen a limit to every purpose; but Your commandment is exceedingly broad" (Psalms 119:96)? This idea with regard to the breadth of the Torah was stated by David, but he did not explain it; it was stated by Job, but he too did not explain it; it was stated by Ezekiel, but he also did not explain it, until Zechariah, son of Berechiah, son of Iddo, came and explained it.*, אָמְרוּ דָּוִד וְלֹא פִּירְשׁוּ, דְּכָתִיב: "לְכֹל תִּכְלֶה רְאִיתִי קִצְ רְחֹבָה מִצְוֹתָהּ מְאֹד". אָמְרוּ אִיּוֹב וְלֹא פִּירְשׁוּ, דְּכָתִיב: "אֲרוּכָה מֵאָרְצַן מִדָּה וּרְחֹבָה מִנִּי". Rav Hisda explains: *This idea was stated by David, but he did not explain it, as it is written: "I have seen a limit to every purpose; but Your commandment is exceedingly broad," i.e., he stated that the Torah is exceedingly broad, but he did not explain how broad. And likewise this idea was stated by Job, but he too did not explain it, as it is written: "Its measure is longer than the earth and broader than the sea" (Job 11:9).*

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עַד שָׁבָא זְכַרְיָה בֶּן עֲדוֹ וּפִירְשׁוּ, דְּכָתִיב: "וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלֵי מֶה אַתָּה רוֹאֶה וַאֲנִי רוֹאֶה מְגִילָה עֹפָה אֲרָכָה עֹשְׂרִים בְּאַמָּה וּרְחֹבָה עֹשֶׂר בְּאַמָּה". וְכִי פִּשְׁטַתָּ לָהּ, הִנֵּיא לָהּ עֹשְׂרִין

בְּעֵשְׂרִין. וּכְתִיב: "הִיא כְּתוּבָה פָּנִים וְאַחֲרָיִם", וְכִי קָלְפָתָ לָהּ,
כְּמָה הָיְתָה לָהּ — אַרְבָּעֵין בְּעֵשְׂרִין.

But nonetheless, Ezekiel did not explain the extent of the Torah, until Zechariah, son of Berechiah, son of Iddo, came and explained it, as it is written: "And he said to me: What do you see? And I said: I see a flying [afa] scroll; the length of it is twenty cubits, and the breadth of it is ten cubits" (Zechariah 5:2). Since the scroll was flying, the implication is that it had two equal sides, so that when you open it, it is twenty by twenty cubits. And it is written: "And it was written inside and outside," i.e., on both sides. And when you peel them apart and separate the two sides, how much is it? Its entire area amounts to forty by twenty cubits, or eight hundred of God's cubits.

In the Talmud, the rabbis say Zechariah, son of Berechiah, son of Iddo, came and explained what the psalmist is trying to say, "And he said to me: What do you see? And I said: I see a flying scroll; the length of it is twenty cubits, and the breadth of it is ten cubits" (Zechariah 5:2). They go on to say, "Since the scroll was flying, the implication is that it had two equal sides, so that when you open it, it is twenty by twenty cubits. And it is written: "And it was written inside and outside," i.e., on both sides. And when you peel them apart and separate the two sides, how much is it? Its entire area amounts to forty by twenty cubits, or eight hundred of God's cubits." This flying scroll that Zechariah saw in a vision was the Torah, and they describe the size of the scroll to be 800 of God's cubits in width. The Gemara continues by commenting, "Who has measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure" (Isaiah 40:12). Their question is if the entire world measures one square span, which is a quarter of one square cubit? The answer is found in the numerical calculation, the earth is one part in three thousand, and two hundred of the Torah. The rabbinic interpretation includes a mathematical construct that leads to the final conclusion that the Torah is 3,200 times larger than the universe.

Based upon this interpretation, the earth can only experience a

small fraction of what the Torah has to offer. This may cause us to envision the Torah to be massive spanning light years in its width, breadth, and depth. More precisely, the Torah, its commands, its depth, the words and ideas contained within as being the Word of the Living God, are significant, massive, dynamic, expansive, and awesome! This is how the rabbis describe the awesomeness of God's Word, His Torah, His instruction! This explains to us that no man is able to master the Torah in the sense that each time we go through the Torah we learn something new. The rabbinic description of the size of the Torah also symbolizes how there is plenty of room for everyone. According to the Rabbis, the Torah is 3,200 times larger than the known universe. This expresses the awe, might, and power of God and of His love having given us these things in our lives by His indwelling Spirit!

The creation account in *Bereshit / Genesis 1* expresses to us the awesome power of God! Today however, there are many who would set the significance of the Creation aside to say the creation account is not truthful, it is only poetic literature and that the Lord God did not speak all of creation into existence and these things are not important for us. The question arises on whether Moshe considered the creation account as historical narrative or not? In order to understand whether Moshe considered the creation account as historical, we have to look at the Hebrew text itself! Grammarians generally attempt to classify a text by syntactic and semantic considerations. Typical Hebrew historical narratives begin with the 1st verb as the qatal perfect from the Qal verbal pattern (qatal, qatel, qatol). The qatal type is the most common of the three where the qatel and qatol are a smaller group of verbs. Verbs of the qatal group are action verbs, and can be either transitive (taking a direct object) or intransitive (not taking a direct object). In English, historical narrative, the verb is placed in form to indicate the time of the action in relation to the time of the occurrence of the event. In Biblical Hebrew verbs do not have tense in the strict sense of the word. Time occurrence is indicated in context by adverbs and the way the sentence is constructed. In Hebrew literature the finite verb indicates aspect, where there are two types of narrative. One, where the speaker or where the writer is an outsider looking at the situation as a complete whole ("perfect") and two, where the writer is

an insider looking at a situation as it develops (“imperfect”). Looking at the Torah we read about the battles and how the text is written (how it is narrated), from the perspective of an outsider who knows the entire situation from beginning to end. Such a writer would use verbs in the qatal perfect. The 1st qatal verb then is followed by the vav consecutive. The perfect followed by the vav consecutive of the perfect connects itself with the tense of the mood of the verb. What happens is the narration begins with the perfect and then follows with the imperfect with vav consecutive. This is the way past events are narrated. For example, ויהי (and it happened) and ויאמר (and he said), or ויעש (and there was), etc.

Examples (vav-consecutive)

Verb Qal (qatal) Perfect

Then follows ויהי (Translated: “and it happened”)

or ויאמר (Translated: “and he said”)

or ויעש (Translated: “and there was”)

or וימצא (Translated: “and he found”)

or ויצעק (Translated: “and he shouted”)

or וישב (Translated: “and he dwelled/sat”)

etc

To study this further, compare the text from *Bereshit / Genesis 1* (Creation account), *Devarim / Deuteronomy 3:1-5* (War with Og king of Bashan), *1 Kings 6* (Construction of the first temple), and *Nehemiah 2* (The Exile return to Israel).

ספר דברים פרק ג

א וּנְפֹן וַנַּעַל דָּרָה הַבָּשָׁן וַיֵּצֵא עֹג מֶלֶךְ-הַבָּשָׁן לִקְרֹאתָנוּ הוּא
 וְכָל-עַמּוֹ לְמַלְחָמָה אֲדָרְעִי: ב וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵלַי אַל-תִּירָא אֹתוֹ כִּי
 בְיָדִי נִתְּתִי אֹתוֹ וְאֶת-כָּל-עַמּוֹ וְאֶת-אַרְצוֹ וְעָשִׂיתָ לוֹ כַּאֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתָ
 לְסִיחֹן מֶלֶךְ הָאֲמֹרִי אֲשֶׁר יוֹשֵׁב בְּחִשְׁבוֹן: ג וַיִּתֵּן יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ בְּיַד-
 דָּנוּ גַם אֶת-עֹג מֶלֶךְ-הַבָּשָׁן וְאֶת-כָּל-עַמּוֹ וַנַּכְהוּ עַד-בְּלִתֵּי הַשָּׂאִיר-
 לוֹ שְׂרִיד: ד וַנִּלְכַּד אֶת-כָּל-עָרָיו בְּעֵת הַהוּא לֹא הָיְתָה קְרִיָּה אֲשֶׁר

לא-לקחנו מאתם ששים עיר כל-חבל ארגב ממלכת עוג בפשון: ה
כל-אלה ערים בצרות חומה גבהה דלתים וברית לבד מערי הפרזי
הרבה מאד:

ספר מלכים א פרק ו

א ויהי בשמונים שנה וארבע מאות שנה לצאת בני-ישׂראל
מארץ-מצרים בשנה הרביעית בחדש זו הוא החדש השני למלך
שלמה על-ישׂראל ויבן הבית ליהוה: ב והבית אשר בנה המלך
שלמה ליהוה ששים-אמה ארכו ועשרים רחבו ושלושים אמה
קומתו: ג והאולם על-פני היכל הבית עשרים אמה ארכו על-פני
רחב הבית עשר באמה רחבו על-פני הבית: ד ויעש לבית חלוני
שקפים אטמים: ה ויבן על-קיר הבית יצוע [יציע] סביב את-
קירות הבית סביב להיכל ולדביר ויעש צלעות סביב: ו היצוע
[היציע] המתחנה חמש באמה רחבה והתיכנה שש באמה רחבה
והשלישית שבע באמה רחבה כי מגרעות נמן לבית סביב חוצה
לביתו אחז בקירות הבית: ז והבית בהבנתו אבן שלמה מסע
בנה ומקבות והגרזן כל-פלי ברזל לא-נשמע בבית בהבנתו:

ספר נחמיה פרק ב

א ויהי | בחדש ניסן שנת עשרים לארתחשסתא המלך יין לפניו
ואשא את-היין ואתנה למלך ולא-הייתי רע לפניו: ב ויאמר
לי המלך מדוע | פניך רעים ואתה אינך חולה אין זה פי-אם רע
לב ואיך הרבה מאד: ג ואמר למלך המלך לעולם יחיה מדוע
לא-גרעו פני אשר העיר בית-קברות אבתי חרבה ושעריה אכלו
באש: ד ויאמר לי המלך על-מה-זה אתה מבקש ואתפלל
אל-אלהי השמים: ה ואמר למלך אם-על-המלך טוב ואם-ייטב
עבדך לפניה אשר תשלחני אל-יהודה אל-עיר קברות אבתי
ואבננה: ו ויאמר לי המלך והשגל | יושבת אצלו עד-מתי יהיה
מהלכה ומתי תשוב וייטב לפני-המלך וישלחני ואתנה לו זמן: ז
ואומר למלך אם-על-המלך טוב אגרות ותנו-לי על-פתוות עבר
הנהר אשר יעבירוני עד אשר-אבוא אל-יהודה:

ספר בראשית פרק א

א בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ: ב וְהָאָרֶץ
הָיְתָה תְהוֹ וּבְהוּ וְחֹשֶׁךְ עַל-פְּנֵי תְהוֹם וְרוּחַ אֱלֹהִים מְרַחֶפֶת עַל-פְּנֵי
הַמַּיִם: ג וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהי-אור וַיְהי-אור: ד וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים
אֶת-הָאֹר כִּי-טוֹב וַיַּבְדֵּל אֱלֹהִים בֵּין הָאֹר וּבֵין הַחֹשֶׁךְ: ה וַיִּקְרָא
אֱלֹהִים | לְאֹר יוֹם וְלַחֹשֶׁךְ קָרָא לַיְלָה וַיְהי-עֶרֶב וַיְהי-בֹקֶר יוֹם
אֶחָד: פ ו וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהי רְקִיעַ בְּתוֹךְ הַמַּיִם וַיְהי מְבַדֵּיל
בֵּין מַיִם לְמַיִם: ז וַיַּעַשׂ אֱלֹהִים אֶת-הַרְקִיעַ וַיַּבְדֵּל בֵּין הַמַּיִם אֲשֶׁר
מִתַּחַת לְרְקִיעַ וּבֵין הַמַּיִם אֲשֶׁר מֵעַל לְרְקִיעַ וַיְהי-כֵן: ח וַיִּקְרָא
רָא אֱלֹהִים לְרְקִיעַ שָׁמַיִם וַיְהי-עֶרֶב וַיְהי-בֹקֶר יוֹם שֵׁנִי: פ ט
וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יִקְוּ הַמַּיִם מִתַּחַת הַשָּׁמַיִם אֶל-מְקוֹם אֶחָד וְתִרְאֶה
הַיַּבְשָׁה וַיְהי-כֵן: י וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים | לַיַּבְשָׁה אָרֶץ וּלְמְקוֹה הַמַּיִם
קָרָא יַמִּים וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים כִּי-טוֹב: יא וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים תִּדְשָׂא הָאָרֶץ
דְּשָׂא עֵשֶׂב מִזְרִיעַ זָרַע עֵץ פְּרִי עֹשֶׂה פְרִי לְמִינוֹ אֲשֶׁר זָרַעוּ-בוֹ
עַל-הָאָרֶץ וַיְהי-כֵן: יב וַתּוֹצֵא הָאָרֶץ דְּשָׂא עֵשֶׂב מִזְרִיעַ זָרַע
לְמִינֵהוּ וְעֵץ עֹשֶׂה-פְרִי אֲשֶׁר זָרַעוּ-בוֹ לְמִינֵהוּ וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים כִּי-טוֹב:
יג וַיְהי-עֶרֶב וַיְהי-בֹקֶר יוֹם שְׁלִישִׁי: פ יד וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהי
מְאֹרֶת בְּרְקִיעַ הַשָּׁמַיִם לְהַבְדִּיל בֵּין הַיּוֹם וּבֵין הַלַּיְלָה וְהָיוּ לְאֹתוֹת
וּלְמוֹעֲדִים וּלְיָמִים וּשְׁנָיִם: טו וְהָיוּ לְמְאֹרֶת בְּרְקִיעַ הַשָּׁמַיִם
לְהָאִיר עַל-הָאָרֶץ וַיְהי-כֵן: טז וַיַּעַשׂ אֱלֹהִים אֶת-שְׁנֵי הַמְּאֹרֶת
הַגְּדֹלִים אֶת-הַמְּאֹר הַגָּדֹל לְמַמְשֶׁלֶת הַיּוֹם וְאֶת-הַמְּאֹר הַקָּטָן
לְמַמְשֶׁלֶת הַלַּיְלָה וְאֶת הַכּוֹכָבִים: יז וַיִּתֵּן אֹתָם אֱלֹהִים בְּרְקִיעַ
הַשָּׁמַיִם לְהָאִיר עַל-הָאָרֶץ: יח וְלְמַשֵּׁל בַּיּוֹם וּבַלַּיְלָה וּלְהַבְדִּיל בֵּין
הָאֹר וּבֵין הַחֹשֶׁךְ וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים כִּי-טוֹב:

When we examine by actually studying how these texts are related grammatically (via the Vav-Consecutive), it becomes very evident the creation account is written in a historical narrative. This draws out a very important aspect about those who claim *Bereshit / Genesis 1* is not real, or is only poetic, or is the way the ancients described evolutionary processes (i.e. day-age (gap) theory, etc). These claims illuminate the lack of faith in the Word and Power of God! The reason this is so significant of a problem in matters of faith is due to something Yeshua said concerning Himself!

John 5:46-47

5:46 *'For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me, for he wrote about Me. 5:47 'But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?'* (NASB)

Consider the weightiness of Yeshua's words here in relation to the Torah. Yeshua spoke about the truthfulness of the Torah in relation to who he is, if we do not believe what Moshe wrote, this leads to problems in faith when believing in both what Yeshua said and in who He is (*i.e. His purpose of laying down his life for ours*). The Scriptures describe how Yeshua came to earth to live a perfect life, being innocent then to die a criminal's death, and to rise again three days later, all because *"God so loved the world"* (John 3:16). In addition to this, we are told anyone who believes that Yeshua is Lord and that He was raised from the dead will have *"everlasting life"* (Romans 10:9). John chapter 5 makes some very significant claims about Yeshua and His purpose! But what does believing in the creation account have to do with believing in Yeshua? These things are related due to our being able to have faith believing God is powerful enough to do these things as His Word states them to be true. The significance of the creation account is connected to having faith in Yeshua's words according to *Bamidbar / Numbers 17*.

Bamidbar / Numbers 17:16-24

וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר:
דַּבֵּר אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְקַח מֵאֵתֶם מִטֵּה מִטֵּה לְבַיִת
אָב מֵאֵת כָּל־נְשִׂיאֵהֶם לְבַיִת אֲבוֹתָם שְׁנַיִם עָשָׂר מִטּוֹת אִישׁ
אֶת־שְׁמוֹ תִּכְתֹּב עַל־מִטְּהוֹ:
וְאֵת שְׁם אֶהֱרֹן תִּכְתֹּב עַל־מִטְּה לְגִי בִי
וְהִנַּחְתֶּם בְּאֶהֱל מוֹעֵד לְפָנַי הָעֵֿ־
The LORD spoke to Moses, saying: Speak to the Israelite people and take from them—from the chieftains of their ancestral houses—one staff for each chieftain of an ancestral house: twelve staffs in all. Inscribe each man's name on his staff, there being one staff for each head of an ancestral house; also inscribe Aaron's name on the staff of Levi.

Do you believe Aaron's staff budding like this is possible? Do you believe God is able to do these things as they are written in the Torah? Note how when believing one part of the Bible is not real, this leads to having to believe other parts of the Bible are also not real (i.e. *Bamidbar / Numbers 17*) If one believes this is impossible, how could one believe God raised Yeshua from the dead? Wouldn't bringing a stick back to life be easier than bringing the human body back to life? This is how and why what we believe about the creation account is directly related to our faith in Yeshua as the Messiah of God! We must believe all of God's Word, and we believe because we have faith in a Powerful Creator God who is faithful (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 7:9, 1 Corinthians 1:9, 2 Timothy 2:13, Hebrews 10:23, 11:11, Revelation 3:14*).

The conclusion is we either have a Reliable Record in God's Word or we don't! We have faith because we believe in God's Word because the Lord God Almighty Himself claims to be faithful to us and to His covenant. He promised that his Word would never pass away (*Isaiah 40:8 and Matthew 24:35*). We know the Lord God never fails us (*Joshua 21:45*). Because of these things, we regard the Word of God, the Scriptures, as reliable, sufficient, and true because the Word has been given to us from God! Moreover, the Lord God of Israel has proven Himself true over and over again according to the Scriptures. His power was demonstrated through the power of His Word creating all that we know! Throughout Scripture we read eye witness accounts of the Lord fulfilling His promises. We also know that operational science (observable, testable, and repeatable experimentation) is consistent with Scripture. Note that evolutionary theory and the tests and experiments involved, are based heavily upon the presupposition that evolution was the only way by which we were created. What we are studying here is how the basis of our faith comes from God, and His Word (*Romans 10:17 "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." NASB*) Faith in the RELIABILITY of God's Word is absolutely important, and necessary for us to believe in Yeshua, who He was, and His purpose of laying His life down for our behalf. Our faith in Yeshua is not based just upon this, but also upon whether the Lord God of Israel has the power to raise Yeshua from the dead to live forever. This connects us to having faith in God's ability as Creator to bring life to that which was dead (i.e. *the creation account*). The Word

of the Torah, the written Words of Moshe, do we believe what Moshe wrote of the Messiah? Do we believe what He wrote of the creation and the power of God to give life to the dead? The Torah is filled with miracle after miracle, and the question is do we believe these things that are written about God and His power? If we do not, or if we doubt, can we expect that same power to live and work in and through us? It all comes down to faith, and the question of whether we believe God's Word or not? Do we really believe in Yeshua the Messiah, and in the reliability of God's Word which speaks of these things?