



Genesis

בִּיָּה

B'ezrat HaShem

Messiah Unveiled

Genesis

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Sh'ma! Chazak!

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Dedicated to My Sons,
Joshua, Jeremiah, and Judah

*May you be like Efrayim and Menashe:
Fruitful for Y'shua's Kingdom, and Forgetful of the hard things of life.*



Introduction

Our English Bibles often contain theological biases that obscure some very important truths. One such place is found in 2Corinthians 3:12-16. At issue in this passage is the revelation of Messiah in the ‘Old Testament’ as it is called. Paul uses the account of Moses and the veil that he put over his face to shield the people from ‘the shining’ that was the result of Moses talking face to face with God. The essence of this account is important for our discussion, because it sets the stage for this study, *Messiah Unveiled*.

The passage from Exodus 34 is often misunderstood because of some translator biases found in 2Corinthians 3:12-16, so it bears going through step by step to see what is occurring. Exodus 34:29 says,

“Now it was so, when Moses came down from Mount Sinai (and the two tablets of the Testimony *were* in Moses’ hand when he came down from the mountain), that Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone while he talked with Him.” *Exodus 34:29*

The tablets that Moses is carrying are the second set of tablets, which were written with the finger of God. The first set had been destroyed by Moses when he observed the sin of the golden calf. After much mourning, Moses had followed God’s instructions and once again climbed the mountain to receive this second set of what is commonly called, ‘The Ten Commandments’.

While he was there on the mountain, God again reaffirmed his covenant with the people on behalf of the patriarchs and God’s solemn promises to them. He also revealed to Moses His character. In Exodus 34:5-7 we see God describe Himself to Moses. This experience sets the context for verse 29 which tells us about Moses coming down from the mountain with his face aglow. He had spoken face to face with God. But beloved, there is more to this story.

When the people saw the ‘glow’ on Moses’ face, they were afraid. It says in verse 30,

“So when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come near him.” *Exodus 34:30*

From this, and a mistranslation of 2Corinthians 3, we may have the mistaken belief that Moses then veiled his face – first to keep from frightening the people, and then in an attempt to hide the fact that the glow faded. From this mistaken understanding, we are left with the idea that Moses was dishonest and was attempting the do what so many charlatans and so-called ‘anointed ministers’ do today – to have an *appearance* of the presence of God in their ministry. Beloved, that is not what is occurring here. You need to read more to understand what the ‘glow’ was all about. Verses 31-33 tell us,

“Then Moses called to them, and Aaron and all the rulers of the congregation returned to him; and Moses talked with them. Afterward all the children of Israel came near, and he gave them as commandments all that the LORD had spoken with him on Mount Sinai. And when Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil on his face.” *Exodus 34:31-33*

Did you see that Moses put the veil over his face after He told them what God had said? In other words, as long as he was speaking God’s words, they could see the ‘glow’ on his face. Did the ‘glow’ ever ‘fade’ as we are led to believe? If it did, we have no such account in Scripture – including 2Corinthians 3. A careful analysis of verses 34-35 show us the process that Moses went through,

“But whenever Moses went in before the LORD to speak with Him, he would take the veil off until he came out; and he would come out and speak to the children of Israel whatever he had been commanded. And whenever the children of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses’ face shone, then Moses would put the veil on his face again, until he went in to speak with Him.” *Exodus 34:34-35*

So, when Moses went in to the Tent of Meeting to speak to God, he would take off his veil. After speaking with God, he did not put his veil back on. Rather, he would first come out and tell the people what God said and after speaking God’s words, then he would cover his face.

Scripture tells us that there was some visible evidence upon the face of Moses that revealed he was speaking God’s words, with God’s authority.

What was the ‘glow’ that was on Moses’ face? The Hebrew word is קָרַן which is transliterated as *karan* (spelled *kuf-resh-nun sofit*) and it is a root verb. *Karan* appears only four times in the Hebrew Scriptures; three times in Exodus 34 and once in Psalm 69:31. In Psalm 69 it is describing the horns on an ox’s head. What *karan* is describing in Exodus 34 is not a ‘glow’ but brilliant rays shining from Moses’ face. So we know that Moses did not have a ‘glowing’ skin, but rather something emanating in brilliant rays from his face. This understanding is why so many old paintings of Moses show him with what appears to be ‘horns of light’ on his head.

In 2Corinthians 3, Paul tells us what the *karan* coming from Moses was. Our English Bibles often mistranslate some key words in this passage. In 2Corinthians 3:12-16 we read,

“Therefore, since we have such hope, we use great boldness of speech— unlike Moses, *who* put a veil over his face so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the **end** of what was **passing away**. But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the *veil* is taken away in Messiah. But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart. Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.” *2Corinthians 3:12-16*

Paul is comparing the veil of Moses to a veil that lies over the heart of unbelievers, so that when they read Scripture, they cannot see what God has said. But remember, Moses took off the veil to speak to God, and then when he would come out of the Tent of Meeting he would speak God’s words to the people, and only then cover his face with the veil.

The key to understand what Paul is saying, and what the *karan* was are the two words underlined: ‘end’, and ‘passing away’. The Greek word for ‘end’ is the word *telos*. It quite literally means ‘the point’ or ‘the goal’. The Greek word for the English phrase ‘passing away’ is the word *katagero* and it literally means ‘being rendered ineffective’, or in this context ‘being hidden from view’. Let’s retranslate the passage again with those definitions in mind,

“[Moses] put a veil over his face so that the children of Israel could not *stare* at the *goal* of what was *being hidden*. But their minds were blinded.”

So what is the *goal* of what was being hidden? The *goal* of what is hidden in Scripture is Messiah. He is the point of it all. As Romans 10:4 says,

“For Messiah is the *goal* of the Torah for righteousness to every one that believeth.” *Romans 10:4*

For some, it seems redundant and unnecessary for believers to search the ‘Old Testament’ and the Torah for Messiah, seeing as they already believe. In other words, they don’t need convincing. This is a tremendous misunderstanding of Scripture, and its purpose. Scripture is not about proving or convincing. It is about *karan*. Scripture is not about logic, or proof texts. It is about *karan*. Scripture is not about Greek-styled philosophy or religion. It is about *karan*. *Karan*, you see, is the visible representation of what God has spoken.

Karan is all about Messiah. Hebrews 11:26-27 says,

“[Moses] esteeming the reproach of **Messiah** greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured **as seeing** Him who is invisible.” *Hebrews 11:26-27*

We can even see that in the Hebraic pictograph that the letters *kuf-resh-nun sofit* represent. *Kuf* pictures the holiness of God. *Resh* pictures the mortal head. *Nun* pictures a son or an heir. The *sofit* form of a letter adds emphasis. So we see pictographically *karan* showing the holiness of God resting upon the mortal head of the ultimate Son, Messiah.

Moses, when he was speaking face to face with God in the Tent of Meeting was ‘seeing’ Messiah in the words spoken to him. When Moses came out and spoke God’s words to the people, they could see Messiah shining from His face as they heard God’s words. Numbers 12:8a gives us a further glimpse into this mystery when it says,

“I speak with him [Moses] face to face, even plainly, and not in dark sayings; and he sees the form of the LORD.” *Numbers 12:8*

Messiah is the embodiment of all that was spoken by God – and written down by man. Messiah Y’shua is the Living Word of God. Luke 24:27, 32 says,

“And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He [Y’shua] expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself...And they said to one another, ‘Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?’” *Luke 24:27, 32*

It is all about Him. Every word, every letter, and even the spaces between the letters point to Messiah Y’shua. They do not point to Him in order to convince, or prove that He is Messiah. God’s Word points to Him because it reveals Who He is; and to those who believe it is the foundation of an ongoing love relationship with Him.

How We Will Study

Can we say that we are going to *unveil* Messiah as we move through Scripture? No, we can’t. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to “take away the veil”. Instead, this study is not to convince anyone – it is a study for believers who already know and love Him. It is not to unveil Him in Scripture, it is to see that He is already unveiled. Let us see Him, unveiled in all of His glory. Let the *karan* of His glory permeate our being as we hear His words, and then walk with Him. Such a gaze upon Him will continue to transform us. As Paul concludes his allusion to the *karan* on Moses’ face in 2Corinthians 3:18,

“But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.”
2Corinthians 3:18

For our study, we will begin at the beginning. We will focus primarily on the obvious, but also upon what is not so obvious. We will use Scripture as our primary source, but we will also consult lexicons, dictionaries, ancient commentaries, and other documents for context.

We will try to examine the Hebrew perspective of each passage. We will also be trying to discover the First-through-Second Century view of each passage if we can. Lastly, we will be seeing how the Apostles themselves viewed and used these passages.

A primary focus as well will be to ask ourselves with each passage that we study, “How does this fit into the idea of *Progressive Revelation*?”

Some of the passages we will look at will be very easy to see in their Messianic significance. Others may not be. What is important to remember in all of this is that every word bears Messianic significance, so inclusion or exclusion of any other passages is only a matter of choosing passages that fit best with this study style.

So let us begin.



Genesis 1:1

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”



Introduction

You may be thinking to yourself, “How is this passage Messianic?” Remember, all the words of Scripture point to Messiah Y’shua in some way. Usually, it is in ways we cannot and will not readily see. This verse has a little of the obvious, and a little of the more obscure.

To better see some of the less obvious features of Genesis 1:1, let’s see it in Hebrew:

בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ

Remember, Hebrew reads from right to left. This is how this verse would appear in a Torah scroll, with no vowel points. In a Torah scroll, the first letter (the far right) is enlarged as you see it here. This is the letter *bet*. This enlarged *bet* is important for a number of reasons that we will see.

The first word/phrase of the verse is *b’reshit*, which literally means ‘in beginning’. The letter ב[*bet*] which is seen in the word/phrase *b’reshit* is the preposition *b’* which means ‘in’. *Reshit* means ‘beginning’.

Before we even get into this verse, or the Scripture itself, we are subtly presented with some questions which are voiced by the first word/phrase: ‘in beginning’. What beginning? Before what? And if we can answer that question, what was there before this beginning?

The rest of the verse answers some of those questions: the ‘in beginning’ word/phrase is referring to the beginning of the ‘heavens and the earth’. What was before? We can’t know everything regarding that question, but it does answer that *God was* before this verse. In other words, looking at the verse in Hebrew again, we can see that everything to the *left* of the letter ב[*bet*] comes as after ‘the beginning’, and that God Himself existed before and to the right of the letter ב[*bet*].



Hebrew Perspective

It is from such a perspective that sages from ancient times read this verse. And from such a perspective they wondered, “what is the significance of the first letter of Scripture, the letter *bet*?”

They postulated that the letter *bet* was open toward the rest of the verse, and the rest of Scripture as if the very words of Scripture *came from inside* the letter *bet*. They marveled at the thought of this since the letter *bet* is also a word, which means ‘house’. It is where we get *Bet L’chem* [Bethlehem = ‘house of bread’]. The ancients of course saw the Tabernacle and Temple as the *Bet*, and in fact the usual Hebrew word for the Temple was simply *Bet*.

They wondered at what was not seen to the right of the letter *bet*. There are no letters before the letter *bet*, but they wondered if there was a letter that was invisible.

As it turns out there is a single letter than can fit exactly over and around the letter *bet*. It is the letter *pey*.

The letter **פ** [*pey*] is also a word, and it means ‘mouth’. It was not lost on the ancients that the letter *bet* is a perfect match to fit inside of the letter *pey*.¹ What they said then when they contemplated the importance of the first letter of Scripture being a *bet*, was that there was an invisible ‘mouth’ that spoke the creation into existence, **through** the *bet*.

The *bet* [house] is then a visible representation of the creative Voice that was spoken. Now, *that* sounds interesting.

Did those ancient sages also understand the Messianic significance of such a view? Some certainly did. Among the things that ancient interpreters say existed before Genesis 1:1 are the Torah, the Name of Messiah, and a Voice that says, “Repent you children of men”.²

Another interesting part of Genesis 1:1 is two letters not translated into English. They are the letters **א****ת** (*alef, tav*) which are the 15th and 16th letters of the verse. These are visible on a Torah scroll, but are not translated. They are a grammatical device. The ancient sages understood the grammatical need for these two letters to be found in the verse, but they also found great delight in the fact that they are the first and last letters of the Hebrew alphabet (or *alef-bet*). There have been various ways to look at what this means. Some sages suggested that in this verse God created the *alef-bet* in order to write the Torah. Others suggest that since it appears to represent a range of letters (i.e. first and last letters), and since the middle letter

¹ Luton , L. Grant, *In His Own Words*, (Akron: Beth Tikkun Publishing , 1999), p174

²Ginzberg, Louis, *The Legends of the Jews*, (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1998), p3

of the *alef-bet* is the letter **מ** [*mem*], that the **את** [*alef-tav*] are alluding to the word **אמת** [*emet*] which means, ‘truth’.³

When we look at the Apostolic view of these verses, we may be able to see something else significant about the **את** [*alef-tav*] found in Genesis 1:1.

Read Psalms 33:6. By what ‘agency’ did God create the heavens?

With what (in what) did He make everything in Psalms 104:24?

Read and comment on how Proverbs 8:22-36 relates to the previous verses from Psalms (read Proverbs 8:1 for the context):

Read Psalms 29:3 and relate it if you can to Genesis 1:-2:

Read and comment on Nehemiah 9:6:

³ *Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 104a*, Soncino Edition



First Century Perspective

Targumim (plural of Targum) are ancient Aramaic paraphrases of the Torah and some of the Writings⁴ that likely date to the First or Second Century. They can provide us with glimpses into how Scripture passages were viewed around the time of Y'shua's first coming. Aramaic paraphrases like the Targumim can reveal how First and Second Century scholars viewed a passage, because they interpose commentary in the way they paraphrase a passage.

The Targumim use a word many times in conjunction with the Person of God and His creative work. It is the Aramaic word *Memra*, [Word]. The Greek equivalent in use by Jewish Philosopher Philo was the word *Logos*.⁵ We will be coming back to that as we move through Scripture, but for now, comment on how Targum Onkelos translates Deuteronomy 33:27:

The habitation of *Elohey* [God] is from eternity, and the world was made by His *Memra* [Word]; and He will drive out thy enemies from before thee, and will say, Destroy.⁶

Comment on how this would fit with the possible importance of the letter *bet* being the first letter of Scripture, and the embodiment of the creative Voice.



Apostolic Perspective

As we noted, the Greek word for 'word' is *logos*. Unlike the some of the Targumim, the Apostolic Scriptures have no problem at all with a visible, and bodily manifestation of God. They deal with the question as if there is no question. Y'shua is quite simply and honestly presented as 'God-with-us'. Nothing can be clearer than John 1:1-18.

Read John 1:1-18 and comment on how this passage fits with the ancient understandings of Genesis 1:1 as well as the Targumim usage of the word *Memra*:

⁴ Psalms, Song of Songs, Ruth, and Lamentations

⁵ Edersheim, Alfred, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, Public Domain), Appendix II p1474ff

Note the similarity of John 1:10 and Onkelos Deuteronomy 33:27 noted previously.

Read and comment on the following passages.

Ephesians 3:9:

Hebrews 1:2:

Hebrews 1:8-10:

Hebrews 11:3:

2Peter 3:5:

1John 1:1:

Remember the *alef-tav* letter combination in Genesis 1:1? The first and last letters in the Greek alphabet are *alpha-omega*. Read Revelation 1:7-13 and Revelation 22:12-16. and comment on how this might relate to the use of *alef-tav* in Genesis 1:1:



Progressive Revelation

This passage presents us with more of a ‘start in the middle’ and work backward progression. It becomes most clear when we examine the First-to-Second Century view of the creative process described in Genesis 1:1. From that and the clear teachings of the Apostolic Scriptures, we can see that from the first word, and the first letter – Y’shua was there.



Conclusion

Summarize what you have learned.



Genesis 3:8-15

“And they heard the sound [voice] of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. Then the LORD God called to Adam and said to him, ‘Where *are* you?’ So he said, ‘I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself.’ And He said, ‘Who told you that you *were* naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?’ Then the man said, ‘The woman whom You gave *to be* with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate.’ And the LORD God said to the woman, ‘What *is* this you have done?’ The woman said, ‘The serpent deceived me, and I ate.’ So the LORD God said to the serpent: ‘Because you have done this, You *are* cursed more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field; on your belly you shall go, and you shall eat dust all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.’”



Introduction

In the introduction to this study we looked at how the *karan* [shining glory] on Moses’ face after speaking to God and then telling the people the words of God was the visible representation of what God had spoken. This overlapping of the visible and the audible are striking throughout Scripture and bear looking into in a deeper way.

In the previous lesson we saw God’s creative power was expressed as *being spoken*. We saw that even though the word ‘voice’ was not used in Genesis 1:1, there is an implication of the Creative Voice of God as a manifestation of His being.

The ontology¹ of God is one that Scripture does not deal with extensively. It is an area that is fraught with danger, because it largely involves the opinions of finite man trying to explain the infinite Almighty God. Our look at the Creative Voice of God as a manifestation of His presence is not an ontological one – it is merely a recognition that if God’s presence is

¹ Ontology is the study of ‘being’. The ontology of God would be a study of the makeup of His being.

manifested, it is worthy of discovering if that manifestation is in fact Messiah. Verse 8 is the first usage of the word for ‘voice’.

This passage also carries in it a more obvious Messianic reference. In the prophecy regarding the Serpent, God makes a promise of a Seed. This promise is the answer to the problem encountered earlier in chapter three: the problem of sin. There are obvious contrasts presented in the first fifteen verses of Genesis 3:

Man listened to other voices **instead of** the Voice of God.

Man was tempted by the visible **instead of** being content with the ‘invisible’ God.

The heel of the Seed would be bruised **but** the Serpent’s head would be crushed.



Hebrew Perspective

The later prohibitions against idolatry and even making images of God highlight the Hebrew perspective regarding a possible *visible* manifestation of God. Paul, the consummate Hebrew thinker says it well in his letter to Timothy where he says,

“Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God Who alone is wise, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.” *1 Timothy 1:17*

The idea of God being invisible is very important to understanding the Hebrew perspective of all Messianic references in Scripture. As we go through this study we will see some of the *apparent* contradictions to this. Note: the TaNaKh itself never says outright that God is ‘invisible’.

Here is verse 8 again with some of the Hebrew words used. In the space provided, paraphrase the verse.

קול

kol = voice (from unused root which means ‘to call aloud’)

פני

panai = face, front (from root *panah* = to turn)

רוח

ruach = spirit, wind (from root *ruach* = to smell, inhale)

“And they heard the *kol* of the LORD God walking in the garden in the *ruach* of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the *panai* of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.” *Genesis 3:8*

Read and comment on how Job 37:1-5 relates to Genesis 3:8 and Genesis 3:10:

Comment how Psalms 29 relates to Genesis 3:8 and Genesis 3:10:



First Century Perspective

Clearly, there is great difficulty with Genesis 3:8 and the phrase, “they heard the voice of the LORD God walking...”. How can one hear a ‘voice’ walking? For this reason, many modern translations smooth out this passage by simply speaking about the “sound of the LORD God walking...” That makes much better sense in English. Unfortunately, it obscures a very important truth which we are beginning to understand: *the Voice is important*.

The Targumim [Aramaic translations of Scripture] of the First and Second Century deal with the apparent problem of a ‘voice’ walking in a rather unusual way. Instead of running away from the idea, they further complicate it with the insertion of another word. The word they insert into Genesis 3:8-10 whenever the word ‘voice’ is used is the word *Memra* [Word]. This word will continue to be important in our study because it is represented in the Greek as *Logos*. *Logos* [Word] of course has obvious Messianic implications to us.

“And they heard the voice of the *Memra* [Word] of the Lord God walking in the garden in the repose of the day...” Genesis 3:8 *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*

“And they heard the voice of the *Memra* [Word] of the Lord God walking in the garden in the evening of the day...” Genesis 3:8 *Targum Onkelos*

“And the *Memra* [Word] of the Lord God called to Adam...” Genesis 3:9 *Targum Jerusalem*

“And he said, The voice of Thy *Memra* [Word] heard I in the garden, and I was afraid, because I am naked; and the commandment which Thou didst teach me, I have transgressed; therefore I hid myself from shame...” Genesis 3:10 *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*

“And he said, The voice of Thy *Memra* [Word] heard I in the garden, and I was afraid...”
Genesis 3:10 *Targum Onkelos*

In Deuteronomy 5:1-29, Moses recounts the experience that the Children of Israel had at Mount Sinai. Read this passage and make special note of the usage of the words, ‘word’, and ‘voice’.

Referencing Deuteronomy 5:1-29, and from parallels of the words ‘word’ and ‘voice’, what do you think the writers of the Targumim were thinking about when they used *Memra* [Word]. What do you think of when you use the phrase ‘Word of God’? Comment on this.



Apostolic Perspective

It is clear that the Apostolic writers always related the promise of a Seed to Messiah. Although they only make veiled reference to Genesis 3:15, they do refer in varying ways to the promise of a Seed to crush the seed of the Serpent. The promise of Genesis 3:15 has the contrasting statements where the Seed of the woman harms the head of the of the Serpent, whereas the Serpent harms the heel of the Seed. Read and comment on the following passages.

Romans 16:20:

Hebrews 2:14-15:



Progressive Revelation

| | |
|--------|--|
| 1:1 | We have seen how God’s creative Voice is a manifestation of His being. We have seen that His Words represent Himself. |
| 3:8-15 | We have seen how the problem of sin cut man off from the Person of God and from His abiding Presence – but that God promised a Seed, which would come from woman and would be bruised by the Serpent and would crush the Serpent’s head. The Seed is Messiah, and He is promised to come from woman. |



Conclusion

Is it possible that the 'Voice' in the Garden was Messiah? Summarize what you learned regarding the *Memra* [Word] and the Voice and how it relates to Messiah.

The promised Seed of Genesis 3:15 is the Messiah, born of a woman in the fullness of time. Summarize what you have learned regarding this promise.



Genesis 9:26-27

“And he said: ‘Blessed *be* the LORD, the God of Shem, and may Canaan be his servant. May God enlarge Japheth, and may He dwell in the tents of Shem; and may Canaan be his servant.’”



Introduction

Genesis 9 presents to us a story, once again, of beginning. This is the beginning of the repopulation of all the earth by the descendants of Noah. The ever increasing wickedness of the inhabitants of the world had to be judged – but God spared Noah, his sons Shem, Ham, and Japheth and their wives. All of mankind descends from these three sons.

God had instituted the Covenant with Noah and his descendants – promising to never destroy the world by flood again. That promise was given to all flesh, and all flesh inherits this promise through the three sons of Noah: Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

Noah’s prophecies for his sons Shem and Japheth stem from the fact that they had honored him, while Ham had not. Noah prophesies concerning Ham’s son Canaan – but the blessings he gives directly to Shem and Japheth. Of all three of the sons, Shem is the one most singled out for blessing.



Hebrew Perspective

Who was the ‘God of Shem’? The Hebrew behind the English word ‘LORD’ is יהוה (*yod-hay-vav-hay*). This is the Tetragrammaton, or the Ineffable Name of God. In Genesis 9:26 we find the first instance of man blessing God. How is it that a man can bless God? It may come as a surprise to some that this is a very common formula for praise found throughout Scripture. To ‘bless God’ is to speak the truth about Him and extol Him for Who He is, and what He has done.

Noah’s ‘blessings’ for his sons Shem and Japheth are couched within the blessing for “the LORD, the God of Shem.” What we are left with are profound prophecies which are primarily focused upon two sets of descendants: the descendants of Shem and the descendants of Japheth.

Some translations make it appear that it will be Japheth (who is enlarged) dwelling in the tents of Shem. However, the Hebrew makes more sense if we understand that the subject of verses 26 and 27 is not Shem at all, but the “LORD, the God of Shem.”

Hebrew poetry uses a *chiastic* formula for its symmetry. When we see parallel phrases, we should try to discover the chiastic construction of a passage. The obvious parallel phrases are the two instances of, “and may Canaan be his servant”. These two parallels can be seen as ‘bookends’. This brings into focus the remaining phrases as being parallel or related, “Blessed be the LORD, the God of Shem,” and “May God enlarge Japheth, and may He dwell in the tents of Shem.” We might look at it this way:

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| <p style="margin: 0;">Blessed <i>be</i> the LORD, the God of Shem</p> | <p style="margin: 0;">and may Canaan be his servant.</p> | |
| <p style="margin: 0;">May God enlarge Japheth, and may He dwell in the tents of Shem</p> | <p style="margin: 0;">and may Canaan be his servant.</p> | |

Or another way might be:

Blessed *be* the LORD, the God of Shem = May God enlarge Japheth / dwell in the tents of Shem

What we begin to see is that Shem is the focus of Noah’s blessing of God. God is the subject, and Shem becomes the object, or the residence of the blessing of God. Proof of this is the

word ‘dwell’. It is the Hebrew **שָׁכַן** (*shin-chaf-nun sofit*, or *sh’kan*). This is only the second reference to this verb in Scripture. The first reference is in Genesis 3:24 where God placed the *cherubim* to guard the Garden. The ancient sages of Israel did not miss the significance of this. Fast-forward to the construction of the Tabernacle in the wilderness. God called it a *mish’kan* (using the same word, *sh’kan* as the root). The Tabernacle had a veil in it, which separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies. On that veil, was embroidered cherubim, as if guarding the way to the ‘Tree of Life’.

The sages pondered this. God ‘dwelling’ in the tents of Shem? God ‘dwelling’ among men? How is it possible, that the infinite and holy God could ‘dwell’ in the tents of Shem, in the midst of sinful men? And what was the relationship to the first usage for *sh’kan* – where God caused angels to guard the way to the Tree of Life?

The concept of the *Sh’kinah* [dwelling Presence] of God comes from this revelation. It is a word that is never directly used in Scripture, but a concept that permeates the pages of the Torah. God’s *Sh’kinah* in the tents of Shem is a foundational Messianic concept. The fact that the *Sh’kinah* was in some way a visible representation of God’s presence cannot be understated when considering the Messianic implications of this passage.

We see that there is a connection between God’s *Sh’kinah* in the tents of Shem and the enlarging of Japheth. Some of the sages thought that this prophesied how the Gentiles would come to Shem’s tent (Tabernacle/Temple) to learn about God.

Read and comment on the following passages, and how they might relate to the concept of the *Sh'kinah* [dwelling Presence] in the tents of Shem.

Exodus 24:16 (*abode, rested*):

Exodus 25:8:

Deuteronomy 12:11:



First Century Perspective

An early Aramaic translation of Genesis 9:26-27 is found in Targum Onkelos, which says,

“Blessed be the Lord the God of Shem, and Kenaan shall be servant unto them. The Lord shall enlarge Yapheth, and he shall make his *Sh'kinah* to dwell in the tabernacles of Shem: and Kenaan shall be servant unto them.” Genesis 9:26-27 *Targum Onkelos*

It becomes plain through this translation that the sages understood the significance of this prophecy of Noah. Noah was singling out Shem as the place where God would place His abiding *Sh'kinah*. Onkelos even goes so far as to make a connection to the Tabernacle and Temple as the place where the *Sh'kinah* would dwell.

Targum Pseudo-Jonathan takes a different tack. This translation understands that in some way God's presence would be found in the tents of Shem (Israel), but the focus is found in Japheth learning of God from Shem. They show this by assuming that Japheth represents Gentile proselytes to Judaism.

“And he said, Blessed be the Lord, the God of Shem, whose work is righteous; and therefore shall Kenaan be servant unto him. The Lord shall beautify the borders of Japheth, and his sons shall be proselyted and dwell in the schools of Shem, and Kenaan shall be a servant to them.” Genesis 9:26-27 *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*

Whether or not we can agree with the view that this is a prophecy of proselytes to Judaism, we can certainly see that the First Century sages saw some Scriptural evidence of Gentiles turning to Israel for the truth of God. We know they saw anecdotal evidence – after all, the court of the Gentiles in the First Century Temple in Jerusalem was twice as big as the court in which only Jews were permitted.

Read and comment on the how the following passages might relate to the enlarging of Japheth in regards to the *Sh'kinah* dwelling in the tents of Shem.

Deuteronomy 4:5-9

Isaiah 2:2-3:

Isaiah 60:3-5:



Apostolic Perspective

The Apostles weighed in heavily on the Messianic understanding of the *Sh'kinah* [dwelling Presence]. Although Genesis 9:26-27 is never directly quoted, the concept of the visible Presence of God being found in Israel and how Gentiles (Japheth) would be drawn to Him is easily connected to the prophecy of Genesis 9:26-27.

We will be coming back to this thought in various forms in the future, but for now, read and comment on the following passages and how they relate to the idea of Japheth being enlarged and the *Sh'kinah* dwelling in the tents of Shem.

Acts 15:14-18:

Amos 9:11-12 (this is what is quoted in Acts 15:16):



Progressive Revelation

| | |
|---------|--|
| 1:1 | We have seen how God's creative Voice is a manifestation of His being. We have seen that His Words represent Himself. |
| 3:8-15 | We have seen how the problem of sin cut man off from the Person of God and from His abiding Presence – but that God promised a Seed, which would come from woman and would be bruised by the Serpent and would crush the Serpent's head. The Seed is Messiah, and He is promised to come from woman. |
| 9:26-27 | We have seen that there is a connection between the previously unconnected thoughts regarding the Voice/Word of God and a visible manifestation of God (<i>Sh'kinah</i>). We have seen that the promised Seed would be found coming from Shem's line. |



Conclusion

Summarize what you have learned and how you think this relates to Messiah Y'shua.



Genesis 12:1-8

“Now the LORD had said to Abram: ‘Get out of your country, from your family and from your father’s house, to a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.’ So Abram departed as the LORD had spoken to him, and Lot went with him. And Abram *was* seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. Then Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his brother’s son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people whom they had acquired in Haran, and they departed to go to the land of Canaan. So they came to the land of Canaan. Abram passed through the land to the place of Shechem, as far as the terebinth tree of Moreh. And the Canaanites *were* then in the land. Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, ‘To your descendants I will give this land.’ And there he built an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him. And he moved from there to the mountain east of Bethel, and he pitched his tent *with* Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; there he built an altar to the LORD and called on the name of the LORD. ”



Introduction

It is not accidental that the accounts of God’s interaction with Abraham are full of Messianic implications and references. Immediately upon introducing Abram, we are presented with God speaking to him – and once again we are brought into the story with the idea of God speaking. Once again, it is the creative Voice of God which speaks prophetically over Abram. Once again we are presented with a picture of the Voice somehow *appearing*.



Hebrew Perspective

Genesis 12:1 has the LORD speaking commands and promises to Abram. Then in verse 7 we see the LORD appearing and speaking to Abram – once again making audible promises.

Let’s start with the Name of the LORD which is mentioned in verse 8. The Name, which is represented in English by the all capital letters ‘LORD’ is the ineffable Name of God. It is a

Name which we cannot be sure of regarding pronunciation. The reason is that it is recorded only as consonants in the Hebrew Scriptures. Any vowels one might insert are purely a guess. The Name is made up of four letters, and hence is also referred to as the Tetragrammaton. The

four letters are יהוה [yod-hay-vav-hay, or YHVH]. Some have sought to pronounce this Name, but its pronunciation has been nothing more than a guess for at least 1,900 years. Some have used the vowel points under the Name found in the Masoretic Hebrew manuscript in order to find a pronunciation for the Name. This stems from some very poor scholarship. In order to honor the Third Commandment (Exodus 20:7), the Masorete scribes used a scribal notation called *kere ketiv*. *Kere* means ‘read’ or ‘say’ and *ketiv* means ‘written’. The Masorettes employed this principle to varying degrees throughout the Hebrew text, and for differing reasons. They had a perpetual *kere ketiv* under the Name of God, using different vowel points than belong under the Name. When they came to the four-letter Name of God, they always used *kere ketiv*. They were in essence saying, “Read יהוה, but say, ‘Adonai [Lord].’” To apply this *kere ketiv*, they used the vowel points for the word ‘Adonai’ [Lord] instead of the actual vowels that belong in the Name.

In about 1520 Galatinus when reading a Masoretic manuscript took the Masorete vowel points under the Name and inserted an ‘a’ and an ‘e’ in between the consonants. Galatinus did not know the Masorete scribal tradition in regard to their vowel markings and their use of *kere ketiv*, so he formulated a word for the Name, which is not even a Hebrew word, nor is it a Hebrew name. This mistake, and the use of the old English ‘j’ is where we get the nonsensical word ‘Jehovah’ – which is neither how the Name of God is pronounced, or spelled.

As for other *supposed* English pronunciation attempts, there is no silent *hay* found in the middle of a Hebrew word (thus the ‘h’ sound in the middle of the Name cannot be silent), and there is no ‘w’ sound in Hebrew that resembles the English ‘w’ sound.

So what does the Name mean? There are several theories, but the most plausible is that it is in some way tied back to God’s declaration to Moses in Exodus 3:14, “I am Who I am”. In

Hebrew the phrase is אֲהִי־אֲשֶׁר־אֲהִי *ehyeh asher ehyeh*. The verb in the phrase (*ehyeh*) comes from the Hebrew root verb *hayah* which is ‘to be’. This *essential statement of being* in connection to the Name gives us a good idea that the Name of God is tied to His essence. Some have suggested that Name’s pronunciation can be derived from the verb *ehyeh*, but once again – that is at best a guess.

In the days when the Temple still stood in Jerusalem, the Name of God was spoken by the High Priest when He addressed God before going into the Holy of Holies on Yom Kippur [Day of Atonement]. It was not spoken in casual conversation. One thing is sure, and that is when our High Priest, Y’shua, returns to Jerusalem – He will teach us more about the Name – and how to pronounce it. When we hear it, like the ancient worshipers did when they heard the Name uttered by the High, we will then say, “Blessed be His Name, Whose Kingdom is forever and ever!”

Verse 7 uses a word in English and Hebrew which at first might seem quite natural the word ‘appeared’. Our theology may have no problems at all with it... but that is because we are here, looking back. In verse 7 it says, “Then the LORD **appeared** to Abram and said...” There it is again, God speaking – but is the Voice somehow visible? Understand the dilemma – God, who is declared as invisible⁸, appears and speaks to Abram. The word for ‘appeared’ is the word **וַיֵּרָא** *vayera*. It comes from the root verb *ra’ah*, which is always tied to seeing and sight. Was God visible to Abram? The usage of the verb *vayera* indicates that God was in some way *visibly manifesting* Himself as He was speaking. This word alone in relationship to God makes this a Messianic passage.

Read Deuteronomy 12:3-4 and comment on how it might relate to the Name of God and why His Name is to be treated with reverence:

Read and comment on what Psalms 102:12-16 teaches regarding the connection between ‘the Name’ of God and His ‘appearing’ (verse 16 uses *vayera* = appear):



First Century Perspective

In ancient times, the Name of God was used daily in the Temple. When the assault on Jewish culture intensified during the time of Hellenism, pious Jews began to be more reserved in the use of the Name because of the way that some Hellenized Jews casually treated God’s Name. By the time of the First Century, a system of circumlocution (name substitution) was in use. The word “Adonai” [Lord] was substituted for the Name of God. As early as the Septuagint (270 BCE) this was common. Other substitutions for God’s Name were:

- *HaMakom* ‘The Place’ (i.e. where His Name was, the Temple)
- *HaShem* ‘The Name’
- *Shamayim* ‘Heaven’ (e.g. ‘the Kingdom of Heaven’)

The most common circumlocution was ‘Lord’. In the Septuagint, the Greek word *Kurios* was used every time the translators translated the ineffable Name of God.

⁸ 1Timothy 1:17; 6:16

Read Joel 2:32 and comment on the Name of God. Note: the Hebrew for 'LORD' is the letters *Yod-Yay-Vav-Hay*. The Septuagint substitutes *Kurios* for the Name.

Now compare where this verse is quoted in the Apostolic Scriptures in Romans 10:13 – again, the Apostolic Scriptures use *Kurios* for a circumlocution for the Name of God (rendered 'LORD' in English):



Apostolic Perspective

The Apostolic Scriptures never try to solve the mystery behind the invisible God, appearing visibly to Abraham – because those Scriptures are founded upon a premise that God came in human form as Y'shua. Neither did they try to resolve the issue of how God's Voice was manifested in some way – because they understood that Y'shua spoke with God's Voice.

Read the following passages and comment on how they may relate to God's 'invisible' nature, and yet how He appears to men.

Romans 1:19-20:

Colossians 1:15-16:

1Timothy 1:17:

Hebrews 11:25-27:

Invisible and without form?

Beginning around the First Century, the idea that God is invisible began to become a principle tenant of Judaism. The idea was based upon good evidence such as Exodus 33:20; Deuteronomy 4:15; and Isaiah 46:5 etc. – but there is never a direct statement in the TaNaKh that He cannot be visible, or take form.

In the 12th Century, the great sage Rambam⁹ codified what are called ‘The 13 Principles of Faith’ [*Ani ma'amin*]. These are the so-called principles of Judaism. This was put into poetry and song and is part of the daily morning synagogue service called the ‘*Yigdal*’.

The third principle is, “I believe with complete faith that the Creator, blessed be His name, is incorporeal; that He is free from all anthropomorphic properties; and that He has no likeness at all.”

Notice, God has gone from being ‘invisible’ in some way – to having no anthropomorphic properties or form in this statement of faith. We will keep a watch out for issues surrounding this as we go through this study, but it at least appears that some of this is coming from reactions to Y’shua’s followers who said that God took on form in the Person of Y’shua the Messiah.

Regarding the practice of circumlocution of the Name of God, comment on the significance of the following passages (note: the English circumlocution ‘Lord’ comes from the Greek ‘*Kurios*’ which in turn is what was used as a Greek substitute for the Holy Name of God represented by the four letters, *Yod-Hay-Vav-Hay*). It may be important to note that the word ‘*Kurios*’ as it is used in the Septuagint, does not usually refer to a title, but is a substitute for the Name of God. This is the background for the writers of the Apostolic Scriptures. Surely they would have treated the word ‘*Kurios*’ more as a substitute for the Holy Name of God instead of as a title.

Luke 4:18:

John 9:36-37:

Acts 2:36:

⁹ Rambam (Rabbi Moses ben Maimon, or Maimonides, 1135-1204 CE)

Philippians 2:10-11:



Progressive Revelation

| | |
|---------|--|
| 1:1 | We have seen how God's creative Voice is a manifestation of His being. We have seen that His Words represent Himself. |
| 3:8-15 | We have seen how the problem of sin cut man off from the Person of God and from His abiding Presence – but that God promised a Seed, which would come from woman and would be bruised by the Serpent and would crush the Serpent's head. The Seed is Messiah, and He is promised to come from woman. |
| 9:26-27 | We have seen that there is a connection between the previously unconnected thoughts regarding the Voice/Word of God and a visible manifestation of God (<i>Sh'kinah</i>). We have seen that the promised Seed would be found coming from Shem's line. |
| 12:1-8 | We have seen that Abraham, a descendant of Shem, begins to call on the Name of God, and that God appears (i.e. manifests) Himself to Abraham. Abraham hears His Voice. |



Conclusion

Summarize what you have learned about the relationship between the Name of God, and His appearing.



Genesis 15

“After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, ‘Do not be afraid, Abram. I *am* your shield, your exceedingly great reward.’ But Abram said, ‘Lord GOD, what will You give me, seeing I go childless, and the heir of my house *is* Eliezer of Damascus?’ Then Abram said, ‘Look, You have given me no offspring; indeed one born in my house is my heir!’ And behold, the word of the LORD *came* to him, saying, ‘This one shall not be your heir, but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir.’ Then He brought him outside and said, ‘Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them.’ And He said to him, ‘So shall your descendants be.’ And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness. Then He said to him, ‘I *am* the LORD, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to inherit it.’ And he said, ‘Lord GOD, how shall I know that I will inherit it?’ So He said to him, ‘Bring Me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon.’ Then he brought all these to Him and cut them in two, down the middle, and placed each piece opposite the other; but he did not cut the birds in two. And when the vultures came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away. Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, horror *and* great darkness fell upon him. Then He said to Abram: ‘Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land *that is* not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years. And also the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterward they shall come out with great possessions. Now as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites *is* not yet complete.’ And it came to pass, when the sun went down and it was dark, that behold, there appeared a smoking oven and a burning torch that passed between those pieces. On the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying: ‘To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates—the Kenites, the Kenezites, the Kadmonites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites, and the Jebusites.’”



Introduction

We have seen in the first few chapters of Genesis, the unfolding redemptive plan of God has been mostly glimmers of hope and fleeting references to a personal manifestation of God. Genesis 15, when examined is stunning in its sudden revelation.

Several focal points are especially Messianic. There are phrases and words used, that when followed through Scripture, show themselves to be keys to a better understanding of the revelation of Messiah in the Hebrew Scriptures. Here are the words that we will draw from:

- Word / Shield
- Lord GOD
- House
- Seed
- Smoking oven / burning torch



Hebrew Perspective

Previously, we saw some interesting features of the Holy Name of God, the Tetragrammaton. A most interesting feature of Genesis 15 is evident only in the Hebrew. In the English of Genesis 15:2, the two words ‘Lord GOD’ are used. The English translation is that the English translators have up until this point used the scribal tradition of *kere ketiv* [say/write] with regard to the Tetragrammaton. If you remember, the ancient scribes used a system of circumlocution to encourage the reader to not say the Holy Name out loud. What was written was the four letters of a *yod*, a *hay*, a *vav*, and a *hay*. Under those consonants, the scribes placed the permanent *kere ketiv* in the form of vowel points. The vowel points were for the word ‘*Adonai*’ [Lord]. Thus the reader, when they came to the Holy Name, would say, ‘*Adonai*’. The English translators took this tradition to another level. Instead of writing the four letters, they substituted ‘LORD’ in all capital letters. This informed the reader that the Hebrew behind the word was in fact the Holy Name.

When we get to Genesis 15:2, the translators have a problem – the actual word ‘*Adonai*’ is used next to the Holy Name. The problem is that if they followed their translation consistently, it would say, “Lord LORD,” which is difficult rendering. Following the scribal tradition of circumlocution (word substitution), they simply write ‘Lord GOD’. The ‘GOD’ is in fact a substitution for the Holy Name in this case. Here is the way it looks in a Torah scroll (remember, it reads from right to left):

יהוה

The Holy Name

אדני

Adonai [Lord]

What is the significance of this word arrangement? This is the first time this word combination is used in Scripture. This word combination is used in other places in Scripture, but not very often. We need to investigate to see if there is some connection between these passages, and if it is a Messianic connection. Genesis 15 is a passage where Abram voices concern over no heir for his house; and where God promises an heir, a land, descendants, and redemption for those descendants.

With those things in mind, read and comment on any possible connection between the passages that uses this word combination. Make note of who is speaking and what the topic of passage is.

Genesis 15:8:

Deuteronomy 9:26:

Joshua 7:7:

2Samuel 7:18 (Read 7:8-29 for context):

Isaiah 28:16:

Isaiah 61:1 (compare Luke 4:18-19):

Ezekiel 39:25-29:

Another interesting word in Genesis 15 is the word ‘house’. It represents the Hebrew word *beit*. It is pronounced the same as the letter *bet* that we looked at as the first word used in Torah in Genesis 1:1. This can mean ‘house’ like a dwelling place, a school, or a dynasty.

Go back and note in the previous Scripture list the following passages that also include the word *beit* [house] in it.

- Genesis 15
- 2Samuel 7
- Ezekiel 39

What do you think the significance of this further relationship to these passages?

The word used in Genesis 15:3, 5, 13, and 18 for ‘seed’ is the Hebrew *zera*. The masculine noun *zera* זֵרָה, comes from a Hebrew root verb. Hebrew is a verb-based language. The meaning of a noun generally is better understood by knowing the root verb. In this case, the verb is *zara*, which means, ‘to sow’. So the promise in Genesis 15, which is rendered ‘descendants’ or ‘seed’ in English concerns something that is sown. The word is often used to describe offspring or an heir. An interesting feature of this word is that like the English ‘seed’ is it a singular collective. That means that its form in the singular and the plural is the same. In Genesis 15, the use of the word *zera* [seed, descendants] is usually translated into English in the plural. Should it be the singular? Watch the progression of thought in the following passage from Genesis 15:3-6:

- Then Abram said, ‘Look, You have given me no offspring [*zera* **singular or collective**]; indeed one born in my house is my heir! [**singular**]
- This one shall not be your heir [**singular**], but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir [**singular**].’
- Then He brought him outside and said, ‘Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them.’ And He said to him, ‘So shall your descendants [*zera* **singular or collective**] be.’
- And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.

The rendering of “So shall your descendants [*zera*] be” following the instruction to count the stars is why the English translators chose to render the word *zera* as the plural ‘descendants’. There are a couple of hints in this passage, that all by themselves point to something far

deeper than the promise of many descendants – which was truly a promise given to Abraham. The most marked however is found in verse 6 where it says, “And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.” What did He believe the LORD for? An heir, descendants, or a Seed? We will see when we get to the Apostolic perspective that this Hebrew wording is something that caught the Apostle Paul’s eye as well.

Another Hebrew phrase set that we want to look at is the phrase from verse 17, “behold, there appeared a **smoking oven** and a **burning torch** that passed between those pieces.” The focus here is the ‘smoking oven and burning torch’ which passes between the pieces of the animals that have been split. In covenant practices, it was the ones making the covenant that walked between the pieces of an animal that had been split in two. This was to signify a blood covenant. In this case, Abram is asleep – and it is simply a ‘smoking oven and burning torch’ that passes between the pieces. The next verse tells us that it was the LORD who made a covenant with Abram. The ‘smoking oven and burning torch’ somehow was a manifestation of God. Here is that phrase in Hebrew:

תָּנֹר עֵשֶׂן וְלִפִּיד אֵשׁ or, *tanur* [furnace] *ashan* [smoke] *v’lapid* [and lamp] *aish* [fire].

The combinations of these four words are not used again in Scripture, but we can learn much about them where they are used alone or in various combinations. Read and comment on the following uses of these words (note the context of the passages).

Exodus 3:2 (fire = *aish*):

Exodus 13:21 (fire = *aish*):

Exodus 20:18 (lightning = *lapid* [lamp]; smoking = *ashen*, from *ashan*) Note: ‘thunderings’ is literally ‘voices’.

Isaiah 4:5 (fire = *aish*; smoke = *ashan*):

Song of Solomon 3:6 (smoke = *ashan*):

Daniel 10:5-6 (lamp = *lapid*; fire = *aish*):



First Century Perspective

One interesting reversal of words from Targum Onkelos is found in Genesis 15:1. For some reason, the Aramaic translation does not use the word *memra* as in ‘the word of the LORD’ and then changes the word for ‘shield’ into the word *Memra* [Word]. In this we see the Targumim continuing to make a connection between the Person of God and the ‘Word’ [*Memra*].

“After these things the word [*pithgama*] of the Lord came to Abram in prophecy, saying, Fear not, Abram: My Word [*Memra*] shall be thy strength, and thy exceeding great reward.”

Interesting as well is the way that Targum Pseudo-Jonathan translates verse 15:6. The New King James Version says,

“And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him [Abram] for righteousness.”

Targum Pseudo-Jonathan says,

“And he believed in the Lord, and had faith in the Word [*Memra*] of the Lord, and He reckoned it to him for righteousness, because he parleyed not before him with words.”



Apostolic Perspective

In the Apostolic Scriptures, it is primarily the Apostle Paul that draws repeatedly from the life of Abraham. We also see the Apostolic Scriptures proving the ‘righteousness by faith’ principle in reference to Abraham – specifically Genesis 15:6: “And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.”

Read and comment on the relationship between Galatians 3:16 and what you learned about ‘the Seed’ in Genesis 15:5:

Read John 8:56 and comment on any relationship you see to Genesis 15:5-6:

Reread Daniel 10:5-6 and then comment on how it may relate to Revelation 1:10-17:



Progressive Revelation

| | |
|---------|--|
| 1:1 | We have seen how God’s creative Voice is a manifestation of His being. We have seen that His Words represent Himself. |
| 3:8-15 | We have seen how the problem of sin cut man off from the Person of God and from His abiding Presence – but that God promised a Seed, which would come from woman and would be bruised by the Serpent and would crush the Serpent’s head. The Seed is Messiah, and He is promised to come from woman. |
| 9:26-27 | We have seen that there is a connection between the previously unconnected thoughts regarding the Voice/Word of God and a visible manifestation of God (<i>Sh’kinah</i>). We have seen that the promised Seed would be found coming from Shem’s line. |
| 12:1-8 | We have seen that Abraham, a descendant of Shem, begins to call on the Name of God, and that God appears (i.e. manifests) Himself to Abraham. Abraham hears His Voice. |
| Ch 15 | We have seen the promise of a Seed given specifically to Abram (First from Eve, then through Shem, now through Abraham). We have seen that God can manifest Himself in described terms of a smoking oven and a lamp of fire. |



Conclusion

Summarize what you have learned regarding the Seed in this study of Genesis 15.



Genesis 18:1-3; 13-14; 22

“Then the LORD appeared to him [Abraham] by the terebinth trees of Mamre, as he was sitting in the tent door in the heat of the day. So he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing by him; and when he saw *them*, he ran from the tent door to meet them, and bowed himself to the ground, and said, “My Lord, if I have now found favor in Your sight, do not pass on by Your servant.”

And the LORD said to Abraham, ‘Why did Sarah laugh, saying, “Shall I surely bear *a child*, since I am old?” Is anything too hard for the LORD? At the appointed time I will return to you, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son.’

Then the men turned away from there and went toward Sodom, but Abraham still stood before the LORD.”



Introduction

By the time we get to Genesis 18, the God of the Universe has chosen Abram out of Chaldea. He has established a eternal covenant with him – promising blessing, descendants, a land, and a Seed. It is now time for making those promises visible – to manifest them. For that, the God of the Universe ‘shows up’. As we saw in Genesis 12, the English phrase, “and He appeared” grabs our attention and demands that we dig deeper into this passage.

As we have seen with progressive revelation, with each passage we see an exponential revelation – always giving us more depth and detail. In this passage God revisits the promises previously made to Abraham and begins to show how they will be fulfilled. Specifically, He reiterates the promise of:

- A blessing to the Nations through Abraham
- Multiple descendants
- A son of promise – one who prefigures the ultimate Descendant – the Seed.

The Genesis 18 account says that the LORD (*yod*, *hay*, *vav*, and *hay*) appeared to Abraham. Then it tells us that Abraham sees three men and he runs to meet them. Then we are told that

Abraham speaks to one of the men and address him as ‘Adonai’ [Lord]. We are going to focus on this one spokesman of the three. Who is he, and how is he related to the way the passage begins, “Then the LORD appeared to him...” Does this one spokesman explain the word ‘appeared’?



Hebrew Perspective

In the Sixth Century, schools of scribes called Masoretes began the painstaking task of formalizing and standardizing the vowel and punctuation markings for the Hebrew text of the TaNaKh. Because Aramaic was predominately used, there was a desire to link the text of the TaNaKh with the correct pronunciation. The Masorete scribal traditions and their attention to detail preserved the text of the TaNaKh with remarkable purity. They included letter and word counts in the margins of the text. Remarkably, at times they listed the total number of times a given word or interest is used in the TaNaKh – over a thousand years before the computer Bible was created.

Prior to the Masoretes, the Hebrew of the TaNaKh contained only consonants, and looked like the Hebrew text you have read so far in this study. Two Masorete schools became dominant in the scribal tradition: the Ben Asher family, and the Ben Naftali family. Eventually, the Ben Asher family became the primary scribal school. The oldest complete Hebrew manuscript is from the Ben Asher family and is called the Leningrad Codex and is dated to 916 CE.

Attesting to the accuracy of the Masorete scribes; when the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered, there was remarkable consistency to the Masorete texts. All modern English Bibles use the Masoretic Text for the TaNaKh.

We previously saw that the Masoretes used a system of *kere ketiv* (read, say/write) which allowed them to essentially create marginal notes for the text. The example we saw previously was where the permanent *kere ketiv* was used with regard to the Holy Name, where the vowel points printed under the four consonants told the reader to pronounce the Name as ‘ADONAI’, instead of using the four consonants.

The Masoretes were so careful with the text that they made use of marginal notes such as *kere ketiv* and *tikkun sofrim* [scribal repair] rather than ‘fixing’ the text to match their traditions or theology. The Masoretes faithfully transmitted the text – showing it side squarely with the idea that the passage of Genesis 18 is a visible manifestation of God. The implications of this cannot be understated.

This portion of Scripture was titled *Vayera* by the ancient sages. Literally, it means ‘And He Appeared’. ‘Appeared’ comes from the root verb *ra’ah*. In the *nifal* form as it is here, it always means to ‘make visible’. The question for us, is how does God make Himself visible in Genesis 18? We see in the First Century perspective that this causes great problems for Judaism’s way of dealing with the idea of the invisible Person of God. Virtually all the later sages see the three men in Genesis 18 simply as angels. They are trying to disconnect the ‘appeared’ with the verses that follow and Abraham speaking to that same Someone.

Enter the Masorete scribes. In faithfulness to the text, they spell the word ‘Adonai’ in verse 3 in a way that tells us that the One to Whom Abraham is speaking is not simply a ‘lord’ but is the LORD Himself.

The Masorete text of Genesis 18:3 writes the ‘my Lord’ in this way:

יְהוָה } [Adonai = Alef, Dalet, Nun, Yod]

The vowel point under the *nun* [ן] is the vowel *kametz* **ֿ**. The normal way to spell ‘my Lord’ is by using a *patach* **ַ** (יְהוָה) under the *nun*. Why is this important? Because the Masoretes placed an explanation in the margin of the text that explains the spelling of the word ‘Adonai’ [My Lord] with a *kametz* is done 134 times in the TaNaKh without an accompanying Divine Name as we saw in Genesis 15:2. To the point: the Masorete scribes, because of their faithfulness to the text, record that the ‘My Lord’ in Genesis 18:3 is actually speaking to ADONAI, God Himself – all in opposition to the general view of the sages of the same time period. Look up the following uses of the word ‘Adonai’ [My Lord] which are spelled with a *kametz* and comment on whether by context you can determine if it refers to God.

Genesis 18:27:

Genesis 18:31:

Exodus 4:10:

Exodus 15:17:

Isaiah 6:1, 8:

Now compare the above usages of ‘Adonai’ spelled with a *kametz* to the usage of ‘adonai’ spelled differently. Is God the person being referred to as ‘lord’ or ‘master’?

Genesis 42:10 (lord, or master):

Genesis 33:8 (lord, or master):

1Samuel 1:25-26:

There are many times in the TaNaKh that ‘*adonai*’ [lord] is spelled with a *patach*, and in each case it is clear by context that the word refers to someone other than God. The vowel *kametz* in the word ‘*Adonai*’ is the Masoretic way to indicate that this word is *kadosh*, or holy.

Now let’s look at the idea of this One who is speaking to Abraham as being *visible*.

The Masoretes have given us a clue that this One speaking to Abraham is a visible manifestation of God Himself – ADONAI.

Read and comment on the following passages and how they use the word *ra’ah* [rendered *vayera*, or ‘and He appeared’] in the *nifal* form. Make note whether you think something appears visible with the eyes or not.

Genesis 1:9:

Genesis 22:14:

Genesis 26:2 (He *ra’ah* [appeared] to Abraham, and now Isaac!):

Genesis 35:9 (and now Jacob!):

Do you think that when Genesis 18:1 says that the LORD appeared to Abraham, that God was visible to Abraham in some way? From your study so far, in what form did He appear?

Verse 22 says something in the English which seems quite innocuous. It says, “Then the men turned away from there and went toward Sodom, but Abraham still stood before the LORD.”

What makes this phrase interesting, once again, is the scribal actions on the part of the Masoretes. The Hebrew text says, “while ^{hwhy} stood before Abraham.” The Masoretes retained the original in their scribing of Genesis 18:22. In the marginal notes they wrote a *tikkun sofrim* (scribal repair), that said that the reader should read this the other way around, namely, “while Abraham stood before ADONAI.” Tim Hegg, regarding this instance of *tikkun sofrim*,

“... the scribes reasoned that the greater does not stand before the lesser, and thus the switch. This very *tiquenne sophrim*, however, shows that the long-standing tradition of this text was that the Almighty did, in fact, appear to Abraham in the form of a man.”¹⁰

Virtually every Bible, included Hebrew texts, use the *tikkun sofrim*, and not the actual Hebrew wording. The actual wording which has God standing before Abraham is rejected by translators – instead they use the Masorete marginal note.

Comment on the significance of the actual Hebrew wording of Genesis 18:22 in view of what you have learned about Who Abraham was addressing in 18:3, when he said, ‘My Lord’.



First Century Perspective

Modern Christian theologians have no problem whatsoever with a theophany, or a visible human manifestation of God. In the time around the First Century and following that began to be an issue. As we have seen previously in our study, some Jews began to see greater and greater distance between the Person of God, and the manifestation of God in the world at various times. They came up with methods to create this distance. By the time of the middle ages, Jewish sages approached the issue of God’s manifest Presence from a mystical way. Jewish sages like Ramban¹¹ and Rashi¹² ignored the Masorete vowelization and simply said that none of the ‘three men’ in Genesis 18:1 were God – just His emissaries¹³.

The Targumim were written as these ideas were just being formulated in Judaism, so they do an incomplete job of erasing the principle that God has revealed Himself in human form.

¹⁰ Hegg, Tim, *Messiah In Tanach*, (Tacoma: torahresource.com, 2003), p31

¹¹ Ramban is Rabbi Moses Ben Nachman (1194-1270 CE).

¹² Rashi is Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki (1040-1105 CE).

¹³ Rambam (Rabbi Moses ben Maimon, or Maimonides, 1135-1204 CE) , however sided with the Masoretes and said that ‘My Lord’ referred to the Divine Name.

Targum Pseudo-Jonathan is generally the most paraphrased. Notice how it deals with the issue of God appearing to Abraham.

“AND the glory of the Lord was revealed to him in the valley of Mamre;” Genesis 18:1
Targum Pseudo-Jonathan

Targum Onkelos is only slightly better.

“AND the Lord was revealed to him in the Vale of Mamre.” Genesis 18:1 *Targum Onkelos*

Philo of Alexandria (20 BCE – 50 CE) was greatly influenced by Plato. Philo used an amalgamation of Scripture and Greek philosophy to arrive at his theology. Philo and others like him likely had a tremendous effect upon the way later Judaism would view the issue of the manifestation of God in visible form. Alfred Edersheim writes,

“The distinction between the unapproachable God and God as manifest and manifesting Himself, which lies at the foundation of so much in the theology of Philo in regard to the ‘intermediary beings’ - ‘Potencies’ - and the Logos, occurs equally in Rabbinic theology, though there it is probably derived from a different source. Indeed, we regard this as explaining the marked and striking avoidance of all anthropomorphisms in the Targumim.”¹⁴



Apostolic Perspective

Genesis 18:13-14 records how God promises a son to come from Abraham and Sarah. Remember, they had acted on their own in attempting to fulfill the promise of a son by using Hagar in Genesis 16. The New King James version delicately tells us in Genesis 18:11:

“...Sarah had passed the age of childbearing.”

The Hebrew tells us how to know this. It says,

“... the manner of women had ceased to be with Sarah.”

In other words, to put it bluntly, Sarah had long since ceased menstruating. We know that it was physically impossible for her to have children, not because she is ‘too old’ – but because her body had ceased functioning in a reproductive way.

¹⁴ Edersheim, Alfred, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, Public Domain), Appendix II p1475

Read Genesis 18:13-14 and comment on the importance of this in relation to the ‘son of promise’:

Read and comment on the following passages and how they relate to Genesis 18:13-14 and the revelation of Messiah.

Romans 4:19-22:

Romans 9:8-9:

Hebrews 11:11-12:



Progressive Revelation

| | |
|---------|--|
| 1:1 | We have seen how God’s creative Voice is a manifestation of His being. We have seen that His Words represent Himself. |
| 3:8-15 | We have seen how the problem of sin cut man off from the Person of God and from His abiding Presence – but that God promised a Seed, which would come from woman and would be bruised by the Serpent and would crush the Serpent’s head. The Seed is Messiah, and He is promised to come from woman. |
| 9:26-27 | We have seen that there is a connection between the previously unconnected thoughts regarding the Voice/Word of God and a visible manifestation of God (<i>Sh’kinah</i>). We have seen that the promised Seed would be found coming from Shem’s line. |
| 12:1-8 | We have seen that Abraham, a descendant of Shem, begins to call on the Name of God, and that God appears (i.e. manifests) Himself to Abraham. Abraham hears His Voice. |

| | |
|-------|--|
| Ch 15 | We have seen the promise of a Seed given specifically to Abram (First from Eve, then through Shem, now through Abraham). We have seen that God can manifest Himself in described terms of a smoking oven and a lamp of fire. |
| Ch 18 | We have seen that God manifested Himself in human form to Abraham. We have seen that the Seed was revealed as not only fulfillment of a promise – but that it is prefigured in a miraculous way: to Abraham and Sarah who physically could not have children. |



Conclusion

Summarize what you have learned about God being manifested in human form. Do you see this as an important revelation, and if so, why?

What is the Messianic significance to Abraham and Sarah having a son by way of a miracle, specifically the miracle of having a son *although it was a biological impossibility*?



Angel of the LORD

Genesis 16:7-10, 13; 16:7-10, 13; 22:11-12; 15-18; 31:11,13; 48:15-17



Introduction

The phrase, ‘the Angel of the LORD, or ‘the Angel of God’ is found 75 times in the TaNaKh. One might think that such references are simply references to an angelic being who acts as a spokesman for God, but the passages in which those phrases are used differ from other angelic visitation passages. There are three such passages in Genesis. The first time this phrase is used in Scripture is in Genesis 16, where the Angel of the LORD speaks to Hagar, the handmaiden of Sarah.



Hebrew Perspective

The English phrase ‘Angel of the LORD’ itself seems to indicate that that this person is an ‘angelic being’. The Hebrew word for ‘angel’ does not carry that connotation.

The Hebrew word for angel is *mal’ak*. It is simply a messenger or an emissary. Look up the following passages and note whether by context the ‘messengers’ or ‘angels’ are human or angelic beings.

Genesis 16:7-11:

Genesis 32:1-3 (note ‘angels’ in verse 1 is the same word as ‘messengers’ in verse 3):

Joshua 6:17:



Textual Analysis

Read the following passages which use the ‘Angel of the LORD’ or the ‘Angel of God’ phrase’, and then answer the questions that follow. Note that every time ‘LORD’ is presented it is the Holy Name of God, the Tetragrammaton.

Genesis 16:7-10, 13: “Now the **Angel of the LORD** found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, by the spring on the way to Shur. And He said, ‘Hagar, Sarai’s maid, where have you come from, and where are you going?’ She said, ‘I am fleeing from the presence of my mistress Sarai.’ **The Angel of the LORD** said to her, ‘Return to your mistress, and submit yourself under her hand.’ Then the **Angel of the LORD** said to her, ‘I will multiply your descendants exceedingly, so that they shall not be counted for multitude.’

Then she called **the name of the LORD who spoke to her**, You-Are- the-God-Who-Sees; for she said, ‘Have I also here seen Him who sees me?’”

What does the ‘Angel of the LORD’ command her to do?

What does the ‘Angel of the LORD’ promise her?

Based upon the last verse, Who does Hagar think she has seen and spoken to?

Genesis 22:11-12; 15-18: “But the **Angel of the LORD** called to him from heaven and said, ‘Abraham, Abraham!’ So he said, ‘Here I am.’ And He said, ‘Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only *son*, from Me.’

Then the **Angel of the LORD** called to Abraham a second time out of heaven, and said: ‘By Myself I have sworn, **says the LORD**, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only *son*— blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which *is* on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.’”

The 'Angel of the LORD' commanded Abraham to not sacrifice Isaac. What did God previously command him to do?

Was the 'Angel of the LORD' in a position to receive a burnt offering? Is it right for anyone to receive a burnt offering other than God?

When the 'Angel of the LORD' called out to Abraham a second time, Who does the text say is speaking?

What does the 'Angel of the LORD' promise because of the obedience of Abraham?

Genesis 31:11,13; 48:15-17: “Then the **Angel of God** spoke to me in a dream, saying, “Jacob.” And I said, “Here I am.”

“**I am the God** of Bethel, where you anointed the pillar *and* where you made a vow to Me. Now arise, get out of this land, and return to the land of your family.””

“And he [Jacob] blessed Joseph, and said, ‘God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, **the God** which fed me all my life long unto this day, **the Angel** which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth.’”

How does the 'Angel of God' identify Himself to Jacob?

When Jacob, recounted what was done for him, what did he credit the 'Angel' with doing for him?

Read Daniel 10:10-21 and then answer the following questions.

Was the 'one in the appearance of a man' able to be delayed in delivering the message to Daniel?

Did he seem speak with the same authority as the 'Angel of the LORD' we saw in the passages in Genesis?



Conclusion

Summarize what you have learned about the 'Angel of the LORD'. Do you think this has Messianic implications?



Genesis 22:1-18

“Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham, and said to him, ‘Abraham!’ And he said, ‘Here I am.’ Then He said, ‘Take now your son, your only *son* Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.’ So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son; and he split the wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him.

Then on the third day Abraham lifted his eyes and saw the place afar off. And Abraham said to his young men, ‘Stay here with the donkey; the lad and I will go yonder and worship, and we will come back to you.’ So Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid *it* on Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife, and the two of them went together. But Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, ‘My father!’ And he said, ‘Here I am, my son.’ Then he said, ‘Look, the fire and the wood, but where *is* the lamb for a burnt offering?’ And Abraham said, ‘My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering.’ So the two of them went together.

Then they came to the place of which God had told him. And Abraham built an altar there and placed the wood in order; and he bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, upon the wood. And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. But the Angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, ‘Abraham, Abraham!’ So he said, ‘Here I am.’ And He said, ‘Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only *son*, from Me.’ Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind *him was* a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son.

And Abraham called the name of the place, The-LORD-Will-Provide; as it is said *to* this day, ‘In the Mount of the LORD it shall be provided.’ Then the Angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time out of heaven, and

said: ‘By Myself I have sworn, says the LORD, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only *son*— blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which *is* on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.’”



Introduction

This portion of Scripture is called ‘the *Akeidah*’ in Judaism. *Akeidah* means ‘binding’, for in this passage Abraham takes his son Isaac and binds him as preparation for sacrifice. There are numerous lessons to be drawn from this passage, and like all of Scripture, if we simply treat it only as descriptive and historical we will err greatly. This passage is about Messiah, and it is about living. Some of the implications are plain and on the surface, others are deeper still. Here are some obvious Messianic connections:

- The *Akeidah* teaches the plain principle of substitutionary sacrifice wherein the ram is sacrificed instead of Isaac.
- It takes place on the mountains of Moriah – which is where Golgotha is located.
- It pictures a father, offering his ‘only’ son – because of love.

The deeds of the fathers are portents for the sons. This principle is played out again and again in Scripture. We see the events of the Patriarchs as foreshadows of the things that come to be mirrored in their descendants. One way we see that is in what we call ‘typology’. Typology uses biblical types to teach principles about those who would follow at a later time. An example of typology is here in Genesis 22, in which the *Akeidah* pictures the ‘binding’ of Y’shua on the mountains of Moriah (Golgotha). Isaac, then is a type of the Messiah in this picture.



Hebrew Perspective

The word *akeidah* [binding] comes from the verb used in Genesis 22:9, אָקַד *akad* [bound]. This is the only time in Scripture this particular word (22:9) is used in this way. The related adjective *akod* tells us more of why the sages chose to call this passage ‘the *Akeidah*’ and what that name really means. *Akod*, means ‘striped’. The word used in the following passages.

Genesis 30:35 (ringed, striped):

Genesis 30:39 (ringed, striped):

What we learn is this ‘test’ of Abraham, the *Akeidah*, is about the ‘striping of Isaac’. It is named the *Akeidah* for the marks left on his wrists and feet.

Read Isaiah 53:4-9 and comment on how it relates to the marks of binding and the sacrifice of Isaac (note ‘stripes’ here is not the same word as Genesis 22:9):

In Genesis 22:8, in answer to Isaac’s question about seeing wood and fire but no lamb for sacrifice, Abraham says, “And Abraham said, My son, God will **provide** himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together.”

The word for ‘provide’ comes from the Hebrew root word *ra’ah*. We have seen this word before. It shares the same root verb as we saw in Genesis 12 and 18 specifically where God ‘appeared’ to Abraham. Here in verse 8 we see that Abraham is trusting God for a visible manifestation (i.e. provision) of a lamb. God indeed shows Abraham the ram in the thicket.

A word with the same root verb is seen when Abraham in verse 13. It is rendered ‘looked’. It says, “And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and **looked**, and behold behind *him* a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son.”

It is repeated twice in verse 14. Once where Abraham names the place, ADONAI-*yir’eh*. [ADONAI will visibly manifest] and “in the Mount of the LORD it shall be *yeraeh* [visibly manifested].”

What do you think will be ‘visibly manifested’ in the Mount of the LORD?

As for where that ‘ram’ was, verse 13 says that Abraham “lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, behind *him*, a ram...” There is an interesting word that caught the eye of many an ancient sage of Israel. The King James Version renders it ‘behind *him*’ – indicating the ram was physically behind Abraham. The Hebrew word used is אַחַר *achar*. It is an adverb, and usually refers to *time*. As referring to time, it is usually rendered ‘afterwards’, or ‘later’. A Hebrew phrase that contains this word is *achareit yomim* [last days]. The sages in typical fashion offer several conflicting opinions for the meaning of this word.

A clue about this word can be found when comparing it to what the sages said regarding the ‘ram’ that Abraham sacrificed in place of his son Isaac. In the Mishnah, in Pirkei Avot 5:4 the sages offer their opinion of things that were decreed ‘in the twilight’ between the Sixth Day of Creation and the Seventh day. This ‘twilight’ period in their minds represents a period outside one of time. Of the ten things that they say were decreed, was the ‘ram’ that Abraham sacrificed instead of Abraham. Although this cannot be substantiated from Scripture, it indicates that the sages saw that this ‘ram’ was somehow both in time, and somehow had an existence in another time. With that in mind, read and comment on the following Scriptures.

1Peter 1:18-20:

John 8:56-58:

If the ‘ram’ that Abraham saw was later, do you think that this may have been what Y’shua was alluding to in John 8:56-58?



Apostolic and First Century Perspective

Anytime Y’shua’s followers saw the phrase, “on the third day” in the TaNaKh, they paid attention. They learned this from Y’shua Himself, when He used the typology of the Jonah account (three days in the belly of a fish) to refer to His death and resurrection. There is an interesting passage in Hebrews 11 that draws from the *Akeidah* to point to Y’shua.

“By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten *son*, of whom it was said, “*In Isaac your seed shall be called,*” concluding that God *was* able to raise *him* up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense.” *Hebrews 11:17-19*

The writer of Hebrews knows what Abraham’s thought process was. The idea of death and resurrection was what he was drawing from the Genesis 22 account. One reason may be the usage of the word behind the English phrase, ‘figurative sense’. Verse 19 seems to say that Abraham reasoned that God could raise Isaac from the dead – and that he was dead in a figurative sense. This is true, but the word used for ‘figurative sense’ is the Greek word *parabole*. Literally, the verse could be translated, “...concluding that God *was* able to raise

him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a parable.” In fact, the sages had always considered that Isaac actually died for a brief instant and was resurrected when the Angel of the LORD called out – and they had such a story or parable. Although Scripture gives no indication of this, it does show that the account of the binding of Isaac was always considered to be an account of death and resurrection, at least in a figurative sense, if not in reality.

Read Hebrews 11:17-19 again and write out your thoughts about the connection between the Seed of promise and resurrection.



Progressive Revelation

| | |
|---------|--|
| 1:1 | We have seen how God’s creative Voice is a manifestation of His being. We have seen that His Words represent Himself. |
| 3:8-15 | We have seen how the problem of sin cut man off from the Person of God and from His abiding Presence – but that God promised a Seed, which would come from woman and would be bruised by the Serpent and would crush the Serpent’s head. The Seed is Messiah, and He is promised to come from woman. |
| 9:26-27 | We have seen that there is a connection between the previously unconnected thoughts regarding the Voice/Word of God and a visible manifestation of God (<i>Sh’kinah</i>). We have seen that the promised Seed would be found coming from Shem’s line. |
| 12:1-8 | We have seen that Abraham, a descendant of Shem, begins to call on the Name of God, and that God appears (i.e. manifests) Himself to Abraham. Abraham hears His Voice. |
| Ch 15 | We have seen the promise of a Seed given specifically to Abram (First from Eve, then through Shem, now through Abraham). We have seen that God can manifest Himself in described terms of a smoking oven and a lamp of fire. |
| Ch 18 | We have seen that God manifested Himself in human form to Abraham. We have seen that the Seed was revealed as not only fulfillment of a promise – but that it is prefigured in a miraculous way: to Abraham and Sarah who physically could not have children. |
| Ch 22 | We have seen that the binding of Isaac, who was a child of promise, prefigured One of Isaac Descendants – Y’shua Himself. We were given a more complete picture of what the redemptive plan regarding the Promised Seed would look like. |



Conclusion

Write out the parallels that you have seen between the *Akeidah* and the Crucifixion of Y'shua. Include Scripture references where appropriate.



Genesis 28:10-22; 31:11, 13

“Now Jacob went out from Beersheba and went toward Haran. So he came to a certain place and stayed there all night, because the sun had set. And he took one of the stones of that place and put it at his head, and he lay down in that place to sleep. Then he dreamed, and behold, a ladder *was* set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it.

And behold, the LORD stood above it and said: ‘I *am* the LORD God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants. Also your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread abroad to the west and the east, to the north and the south; and in you and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed. Behold, I *am* with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you.’

Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, ‘Surely the LORD is in this place, and I did not know *it*.’ And he was afraid and said, ‘How awesome *is* this place! This *is* none other than the house of God, and this *is* the gate of heaven!’

Then Jacob rose early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put at his head, set it up as a pillar, and poured oil on top of it. And he called the name of that place Bethel; but the name of that city had been Luz previously. Then Jacob made a vow, saying, ‘If God will be with me, and keep me in this way that I am going, and give me bread to eat and clothing to put on, so that I come back to my father’s house in peace, then the LORD shall be my God. And this stone which I have set as a pillar shall be God’s house, and of all that You give me I will surely give a tenth to You.’”

Genesis 31:11, 13: “Then the Angel of God spoke to me in a dream, saying, “Jacob.” And I said, “Here I am.” And He said... I *am* the God of Bethel, where you anointed the pillar *and* where you made a vow to Me. Now arise, get out of this land, and return to the land of your family.’ ”



Introduction

With Abraham, we saw that God appeared to him, and yet we are not always given a complete picture of what the whole experience was like for Abraham. In chapter 18 we saw that Abraham seems remarkably nonplussed with the idea of speaking to God in a form that seems to be human.

With Jacob, we are going to see that his ‘God-encounters’ will begin with a dream, and a remarkable sight that is a first for Scripture. A description of God ‘standing’ at the top of a ladder between heaven and the earth.

In Genesis 28, and its companion passage in chapter 32, we are introduced to a new word and a new concept so far in the Torah: the word ‘Anointed’, or ‘Messiah’.



Hebrew Perspective

There are a couple of key words used in these passages – and several are used for the first time.

In verse 18 we read that Jacob set a stone at his head for a pillow. After his dream of the ladder and hearing God’s promises, he sets that stone up as a pillar and then anoints the stone with oil. The word for stone is *eben*. It comes from the root verb *banah*, which means to build. Hence we see the importance of this memorial stone figured in its purpose: to build something. Read and comment on the following passages and what you think of the significance of *eben* here in Genesis 28.

Genesis 28:22:

Genesis 35:14:

Genesis 49:22-26:

Psalms 118:19-22: (also compare Genesis 28:17 uses the same word for gate: *sha'ar*):

Zechariah 4:6-7:

The next word we want to look at is oil. Jacob anointed this stone with oil. The first mention of the Hebrew word *shemen* is found here in Genesis 28:18. Read the following passages and make note of what the oil is used for.

Exodus 27:20:

Exodus 30:25-27:

Leviticus 2:1:

1Samuel 16:10-13:

The last word we want to focus on is the word for ‘anoint’. It is not used in Genesis 28, but it is used when Jacob recounts later in chapter 31 what happened at Bethel when he anointed the pillar with oil. The first usage for the verb ‘anoint’ is found in Genesis 31:13. The root for this word is **מָשַׁח** or *mashach*. It is from this word, the English transliteration of ‘Messiah’ comes. As you have seen already, this word is associated with the oil [*shemen*] that is used for anointing.

Read and comment on the following passages and how they may relate to Messiah.

Psalms 89:20:

Isaiah 61:1:



First Century Perspective

The Targumim have issues with anyone ‘seeing God’ – even in a dream. It is no wonder then that when recounting what Jacob saw in his dream of the ladder, they soften the shock somewhat by using the word ‘glory’ for what Jacob saw.

“AND Jakob went forth from Beersheva, and went to Haran; and he arrived at a place, and lodged there, because the sun had gone. And he took of the stones of the place, and set his pillow, and lay down in that place. And he dreamed: and, behold, a ladder was planted in the earth, and the head of it reached unto the height of heaven; and, behold, the angels of the Lord ascended and descended upon it; and, behold, **the Glory of the Lord** stood above it, and He said, I am the God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Izhak. The land where thou sleepest, unto thee will I give it, and unto thy sons. And thy sons shall be many as the dust of the earth, and shall prevail to the west and to the east, and to the north and to the south; and through thee shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed, and through thy sons. And, behold, My Word shall be for thy help, and I will keep thee in every place whither thou goest, and I will bring thee again to this land; for I will not leave thee until I have done what I say to thee. And Jakob awoke from his sleep, and said, Verily **the Glory of the Lord** dwelleth in this place, and I knew it not.” *Genesis 28:10-16 Targum Onkelos*

We can see that even in the First Century Judaism may have been trying deal with the idea that God could not have visible form. Hence, Targum Onkelos makes it something intermediary (God’s Glory) that is seen. But what does the Scripture say in Genesis 28:13 say?



Apostolic Perspective

Go back and read your comments in the ‘Hebrew Perspective’ of this lesson. Make special note of the passages that relate to the Stone [*eben*] and then read the following passages and comment on their significance to Jacob setting up the pillar of stone and anointing it with oil.

Matthew 21:42:

Mark 12:10-11:

Luke 20:17:

Acts 4:11:

Ephesians 2:20-22:

1Peter 2:4-8:

Now read your comments in the ‘Hebrew Perspective’ of this lesson regarding oil [*shemen*] and anointing [*mashach*, Messiah]. Read the following passage (a quote from Isaiah 61:1) and comment on the significance of anointing with oil with regard to Messiah.

Luke 4:18:



Progressive Revelation

| | |
|---------|--|
| 1:1 | We have seen how God’s creative Voice is a manifestation of His being. We have seen that His Words represent Himself. |
| 3:8-15 | We have seen how the problem of sin cut man off from the Person of God and from His abiding Presence – but that God promised a Seed, which would come from woman and would be bruised by the Serpent and would crush the Serpent’s head. The Seed is Messiah, and He is promised to come from woman. |
| 9:26-27 | We have seen that there is a connection between the previously unconnected thoughts regarding the Voice/Word of God and a visible manifestation of God (<i>Sh’kinah</i>). We have seen that the promised Seed would be found coming from Shem’s line. |
| 12:1-8 | We have seen that Abraham, a descendant of Shem, begins to call on the Name of God, and that God appears (i.e. manifests) Himself to Abraham. Abraham hears His Voice. |

| | |
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| Ch 15 | We have seen the promise of a Seed given specifically to Abram (First from Eve, then through Shem, now through Abraham). We have seen that God can manifest Himself in described terms of a smoking oven and a lamp of fire. |
| Ch 18 | We have seen that God manifested Himself in human form to Abraham. We have seen that the Seed was revealed as not only fulfillment of a promise – but that it is prefigured in a miraculous way: to Abraham and Sarah who physically could not have children. |
| Ch 22 | We have seen that the binding of Isaac, who was a child of promise, prefigured One of Isaac Descendants – Y’shua Himself. We were given a more complete picture of what the redemptive plan regarding the Promised Seed would look like. |
| Ch 28 & 31 | We have seen that the Jacob took a stone and anointed it with oil. The promised Seed is named as coming from Jacob now – and in regard to that Seed there is a foreshadowing of the Stone with that is anointed with oil – picturing first David, and then the Heir of David’s Throne: Messiah Y’shua Himself. |



Conclusion

Summarize what you learned regarding the anointing of the Stone at Bethel and how it might relate to Messiah.



Genesis 32:24-30

Then Jacob was left alone; and a Man wrestled with him until the breaking of day. Now when He saw that He did not prevail against him, He touched the socket of his hip; and the socket of Jacob's hip was out of joint as He wrestled with him. And He said, "Let Me go, for the day breaks."

But he said, "I will not let You go unless You bless me!"

So He said to him, "What *is* your name?"

He said, "Jacob."

And He said, "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed."

Then Jacob asked, saying, "Tell *me* Your name, I pray."

And He said, "Why *is* it *that* you ask about My name?" And He blessed him there.

So Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: "For I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved."



Introduction

When we read what Jacob says in Genesis 32:30, "...I have seen God face to face..." we are left to ponder how it is possible that a man has seen God face to face. Next, we are left with the troubling concepts of Jacob wrestling with One described as a 'Man' and how he was able to restrain him by wrestling with him until the dawn approached. Who is it that Jacob wrestled with, and why is this a Messianic passage?

As we have seen, any passage that deals with a visible manifestation of God, or His Voice, has Messianic implications. But is this One with Whom Jacob wrestled God? Could it be Messiah?

There is no question by the plain reading of the text, that Jacob believes he has wrestled and ‘seen’ God. There is no question by the plain reading that the ‘Man’ renames him Israel because Jacob had struggled with God and man and had prevailed. The ‘Man’ is One Who can bless, and can rename. He is God. – and as a ‘Man’ He is likely Messiah Himself.

This One Who wrestles with Jacob does not want to be seen in the light of day. Read Exodus 33:20 and John 1:18 and comment on the possible connection to Genesis 32.



Hebrew Perspective

‘Jacob’ in Hebrew is **יעקב** [*Ya’akov*]. It literally means to ‘take by the heel’. Esau, in Genesis 27:36, uses Jacob’s name in a play on words where he says that Jacob had taken his birthright and his blessing ‘by the heel’. This is where the view of Jacob as the ‘deceiver’ comes from. This is not God’s view. God told Rebecca that Jacob would be the one who inherited the birthright and the blessing (Genesis 25:23). What is better seen in the name *Ya’akov*, is the grasping of the heel and not letting go.

Jacob desired two things, and we see them throughout his life. We see them repeated in his life and defining him.

- He wanted to be the heir of Abraham and Isaac – i.e. the birthright.
- He wanted to be the recipient of the Promises made to Abraham and Isaac – i.e. the blessing.

What is interesting is how Jacob goes about getting those. He contends with Esau in the womb for them. He purchases the birthright from Esau with his own hands (the stew). He deceives his father for the blessing. He then receives in a dream the promise of the birthright and the blessing from God Himself. When we get to Genesis 32 we are seeing what, in effect, is the culmination of all of Jacob’s struggles in seeking those two things. Jacob finally learns that is God that he must grasp and never let go of. What he learns is that the things that he is desiring are found in a single Person – Messiah. The purpose of the birthright and the purpose of the blessing was always the promised Seed.

The key to this understanding is the linking of the two words: Jacob’s name, *Ya’akov*, and the word for ‘wrestle’ which is the word **אבק** [*abak*]. This is not the usual word for ‘wrestle’ in Hebrew. Remember, one of Jacob’s sons was named Naftali, which comes from the root which means ‘to twist’.

Instead, the word, *abak*, ‘wrestle’ comes from a root verb which means ‘to kick up dust’. This word is used only in this passage. It gives us a dramatic picture – one which tells us a most important fact about this night in Jacob’s life. You see, Jacob had ‘seen God’ in a dream before – but this was no dream, and no spiritual metaphor. Jacob and ‘the Man’ *kicked up dust* in their grappling that night. You cannot *kick up dust*, with someone who does not physically exist. This One, is not a apparition, a vapor, an emanation, or any other device used to escape the theological implications. This One is a physical being described as a ‘Man’.

Jacob *kicked up dust* with God, and would not let go. He finally had gotten it right. When he asks to be blessed by Him, he receives a distinguishing mark – the touched thigh. The distinction was now made between *Ya’akov*, who goes about trying to achieve the birthright and promise by his own effort, the *Ysra’el*, who grabs hold of Messiah and won’t let go.

That distinguishing mark, the limp caused by the touched thigh is explained in the word for ‘thigh’. It is the word *yarek*, which is translated ‘thigh, side, or loins’.

Read the following passages and comment on the use of the word *yarek*.

Genesis 24:2-3 (thigh – first usage):

Genesis 46:26 (body, loins):

Genesis 47:28-29:

Judges 3:16:

Psalms 45:3:

It is the *yarek*, where a man places his sword, and it can be the inner thigh where the source of paternity is. The *yarek* is seen as the source of a man’s strength and his foundation.

In your own words, describe the significance of the touching of Jacob’s thigh and giving him a limp.

God renames Jacob ‘Israel’. This is the word **יִשְׂרָאֵל** [*Ysra’el*]. It is a contraction. The ‘El’ portion is ‘God’. The *Ysra* part is told in the play on words that God pronounces when he names him.

“... Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed.” *Genesis 32:28(KJV)*

The word for ‘power’ used here is the word *sarah*. It means ‘to exert oneself, or to persist, or to contend’. It is related to the word *sarar*, which means ‘a prince who rules with power’. Comment on the usage of this word in Isaiah 32:1 (rule = *sarar*):



First Century Perspective

We have seen in previous passages where by late in the First Century, Judaism was struggling with anything that appeared to be a physical manifestation of God. We have seen that this could be a result of the introduction of philosophy into Judaism (e.g. Philo of Alexandria), or a reaction to the fact that the followers of Y’shua publicly declared Him to be God in human flesh. It is not surprising then, that from the First Century and on, this passage has been explained in many conflicting ways – and yet not in the obvious literal way: the ‘Man’ Who wrestled with Jacob was a physical manifestation of God Himself.

Rashi¹⁵ said that it was Esau’s ‘guardian angel’ who came to kill Jacob. Other sages said that it was the angel Michael. Some of these ideas are expressed in the Targumim. One thing that all of the various theories expressed in traditions and legends have in common: it can’t be God Himself. On the other hand, the followers of Y’shua would have had no problem at all with that idea, as we will see.

“And Jakob remained alone; and a Man wrestled with him till the morning ascended. And he saw that he prevailed not with him, and he touched the hollow of his thigh, and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was dislocated in wrestling with him. And he said, Let me go; for the morning ascendeth. And he said, I will not let Thee go, unless Thou bless me. And He said to him, What is thy name? And he said, Jakob. And He said, Thy name shall be no longer Jakob, but Israel; for a prince art thou before the Lord, and with men, and thou hast prevailed. And Jakob asked Him, and said, Show me now Thy Name! And He said, Why dost thou ask My Name? And He blessed him there. And Jakob called the name of the place Peniel: because I have seen the Angel of the Lord face to face, and my soul hath been saved!”

Genesis 32:24-30 Targum Onkelos

¹⁵ Rashi is Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki (1040-1105 CE).

Targum Pseudo-Jonathan goes to extraordinary lengths to explain the event – even to the extreme of adding a lengthy account to verse 24:

“And Jakob remained alone beyond the Jubeka; and an Angel contended with him in the likeness of a man. And he said, Hast thou not promised to give the tenth of all that is thine? And, behold, thou hast ten sons and one daughter: nevertheless thou hast not tithed them. Immediately he set apart the four firstborn of the four mothers, and there remained eight. And he began to number from Shimeon, and Levi came up for the tenth.

Michael answered and said, Lord of the world is Thy lot. And on account of these things he (Michael) remained from God at the torrent till the column of the morning was ascending.”

Genesis 32:24 Targum Pseudo-Jonathan

Lost of course is Jacob’s own understanding of the event – herein he tried to explain the inexplicable:

“So Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: ‘For I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.’” *Genesis 32:30*



Apostolic Perspective

The followers of Y’shua knew that Scripture revealed that God indeed presented Himself in some way to certain men. They knew that since Y’shua was God in a human body, that the TaNaKh must also contain hints of this.

Read Numbers 12:8 and comment on what Moses *saw*.

Now read and comment on the following passages and how they relate to Jacob’s declaration, “For I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.” (Genesis 32:30b).

John 1:18:

2Corinthians 4:6:

Colossians 1:15:

Hebrews 11:24-27:

Who do you think Moses saw in Numbers 12:8? Who do you think Jacob saw at the ford at Jabbok?

Read Hebrews 11:21 and comment on what you think the point of this verse is in relation to what you have seen in Genesis 32 (i.e. *leaning* on his staff?).

Lastly, one is left pondering the Name of ‘the Man’ of Genesis 32:24-30. The way that the answer is given with a question makes it seem that the answer should be obvious. It is, if we are willing to accept it. Read Hosea 12:4-5 and comment on how it relates to what we have been studying.



Progressive Revelation

| | |
|---------|--|
| 1:1 | We have seen how God’s creative Voice is a manifestation of His being. We have seen that His Words represent Himself. |
| 3:8-15 | We have seen how the problem of sin cut man off from the Person of God and from His abiding Presence – but that God promised a Seed, which would come from woman and would be bruised by the Serpent and would crush the Serpent’s head. The Seed is Messiah, and He is promised to come from woman. |
| 9:26-27 | We have seen that there is a connection between the previously unconnected thoughts regarding the Voice/Word of God and a visible manifestation of God (<i>Sh’kinah</i>). We have seen that the promised Seed would be found coming from Shem’s line. |
| 12:1-8 | We have seen that Abraham, a descendant of Shem, begins to call on the Name of God, and that God appears (i.e. manifests) Himself to Abraham. Abraham hears His Voice. |
| Ch 15 | We have seen the promise of a Seed given specifically to Abram (First from Eve, then through Shem, now through Abraham). We have seen that God can manifest Himself in described terms of a smoking oven and a lamp of fire. |
| Ch 18 | We have seen that God manifested Himself in human form to Abraham. |

| | |
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| | We have seen that the Seed was revealed as not only fulfillment of a promise – but that it is prefigured in a miraculous way: to Abraham and Sarah who physically could not have children. |
| Ch 22 | We have seen that the binding of Isaac, who was a child of promise, prefigured One of Isaac Descendants – Y’shua Himself. We were given a more complete picture of what the redemptive plan regarding the Promised Seed would look like. |
| Ch 28 & 31 | We have seen that the Jacob took a stone and anointed it with oil. The promised Seed is named as coming from Jacob now – and in regard to that Seed there is a foreshadowing of the Stone with that is anointed with oil – picturing first David, and then the Heir of David’s Throne: Messiah Y’shua Himself. |
| 32:24-30 | We have seen that the promised Seed is what Jacob was ultimately seeking. We saw that he received the blessing not only from his father Isaac, but directly from God Himself – and that he saw God ‘face to face’ although in predawn light. |



Conclusion

Write an argument for the fact that Genesis 32 is showing a manifestation of God in human form. Use only the text of Genesis 32:24-30 as your proof text.



Isaac and Jacob as Midrash



Introduction

In the account of the *Akeidah* [the binding of Isaac] we have already seen the dramatic typology in Scripture, whereby Messiah is prefigured in these His ‘ancestors’ (of the flesh).

When we read the Apostolic Scriptures we see this type of correlation being done by the writers. Paul, for instance, in 1 Corinthians 10:1-4 compares Messiah to the Rock in the wilderness that provided water for the children of Israel. In Galatians 4 he compares those who follow Messiah to the ‘son of the freewoman’ (Sarah) and those who reject Him as ‘sons of the bondwoman’ (Hagar). There are many more such patterns. This typology is best described as *midrash*, which simply means ‘to seek out’. It is the search for an even deeper meaning to a given text. A good *midrash* begins by saying, “This is what the text plainly means, but is there deeper meaning that both supports the plain meaning, and possibly gives greater insight into the overall plan of God.”

We are going to do some *midrash*. We have been doing that in each passage we studied, but this time you are going to create the *midrash* by joining texts together – or as Rabbi Hillel would encourage us to, ‘string pearls’.

We will look at the lives and experiences of Isaac, Jacob and Joseph and make note of where they resemble what we as followers of Y’shua already know about Him as the Messiah.

Remember as you do this exercise – the accounts of Isaac and Jacob have profound meaning and application in the most literal sense. Never diminish the plain meaning when searching for something deeper.



How Does Isaac Resemble Messiah?

Follow the Scripture passages and join the thoughts (the first string is done for you).

Genesis 15:4-6; Genesis 18:9-14 – compare to Isaiah 7:13-14; Matthew 1:20-23:

Isaac resembles Messiah: *By being born as a biological impossibility.*

Genesis 21:3-4 – compare to Luke 2:21:

Isaac resembles Messiah:

Genesis 22:1-18 – compare to John 3:16; Romans 5:10; Romans 8:32:

Isaac resembles Messiah:

If Isaac resembles Messiah, then who does Rebecca resemble?

Genesis 24:34-38; 24:57-67 – compare to 2Corinthians 11:2; Revelations 19:7-9; 21:3:

Isaac resembles Messiah:

Rebecca resembles Messiah's Bride:

Genesis 24:59-60 – compare to Matthew 16:18b:

Rebecca resembles Messiah's Bride:

Can you think of any other ways in which Isaac resembles Messiah?



How Does Jacob Resemble Messiah?

Genesis 25:26 – compare to Genesis 3:15; Romans 16:20-21:

Jacob resembles Messiah:

Genesis 25:21-34; 27:28-29 – compare to 1Corinthians 15:20-25; 44-47 (follow the birth order):

Jacob resembles Messiah:

At a second level, take the preceding verses and then add to them this sting:

Genesis 32:28; 25:30 – compare to Isaiah 63:1-4; Revelation 19:11-16:

Jacob resembles Messiah:

Genesis 28:12-14 (in Hebrew verse 12 can also read, “...ascending and descending on *him*”) – compare to **John 1:49-51:**

Jacob resembles Messiah:

Can you think of any other ways that Jacob resembles Messiah?



Conclusion

Summarize what you have learned about comparing Isaac and Jacob to Y’shua the Messiah.



Joseph as Midrash



Introduction

The entire account of Joseph is remarkable in its typology of Messiah. No matter how deep one goes, it seems that there is more. Judaism, although not applying the typology to Y'shua the Messiah, has long recognized the Messianic implications of the Joseph account. For instance, Chafetz Chaim¹⁶ was drawn to Joseph's revelation of himself to his brothers in Egypt where Genesis 45:1-4 records,

“Then Joseph could not restrain himself before all those who stood by him, and he cried out, ‘Make everyone go out from me!’ So no one stood with him while Joseph made himself known to his brothers. And he wept aloud, and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard *it*. Then Joseph said to his brothers, ‘I *am* Joseph; does my father still live?’ But his brothers could not answer him, for they were dismayed in his presence. And Joseph said to his brothers, ‘Please come near to me.’ So they came near. Then he said: ‘I *am* Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt.’”

Chafetz Chaim, in commenting on this passage, said,

“When Joseph said, ‘I am Joseph,’ God’s master plan became clear to the brothers; everything that happened for the last twenty-two years fell into perspective. So, too, will it be in that time to come when God will reveal Himself and announce, ‘I am HaShem!’ The veil will be lifted from our eyes and we will comprehend everything that transpired throughout history.”¹⁷

Think about that as you read these passages.

“But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart. Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.” *2Corinthians 3:15-16*

“And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for *his* only *son*, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn.” *Zechariah 12:10*

“For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.” *Romans 11:25*

¹⁶ Chafetz Chaim is Rabbi Israel Meir HaCohen Kagan (1838-1933) – a great teacher of Torah principles, who lived as a common man, and taught God’s Word to common men.

¹⁷ *Stone Tanach*, p115.

If we follow Chafetz Chaim's insight into Joseph's declaration, "I am Joseph" – and to put it another way, "I am Y'shua" – we must then ask, "If Jacob resembles Y'shua the Messiah, then who do Joseph's brothers resemble?" Keep that in mind as we string our passages together in a *midrash*.

Remember as you do this exercise – the account of Joseph has profound meaning and application in its most literal sense. Never diminish the plain meaning when searching for something deeper.



How Does Joseph Resemble Messiah?

Follow the Scripture passages and join the thoughts.

Genesis 37:9-11 – compare to Revelation 12:1, 5; Philippians 2:9-10:

Joseph resembles Messiah:

Genesis 37:13-17 – compare to Matthew 15:24; John 1:11:

Joseph resembles Messiah:

Genesis 37:18-20 – compare to Luke 19:14; Luke 20:13-15:

Joseph resembles Messiah:

Genesis 37:24; 37:24 – compare to Psalms 88:5-6; Ps 22:18; Matthew 27:57-60:

Joseph resembles Messiah:

Genesis 37:26-28 – compare to Matthew 26:14-15:

Joseph resembles Messiah:

Genesis 37:28 – compare to Psalms 30:3; Jonah 2:4-6; Matthew 12:39-40:

Joseph resembles Messiah:

**Genesis 37:36 – compare to Luke 18:32; Romans 11:11; Deuteronomy 32:21;
Deuteronomy 26:5:**

Joseph resembles Messiah:

Genesis 41:46 compare to Luke 3:23:

Joseph resembles Messiah:

Genesis 41:55-56 – compare to Psalms 22:27-29; Psalms 72:8-16:

Joseph resembles Messiah:

Genesis 41:41; 42:8; Malachi 1:11 – compare to Romans 11:25:

Joseph resembles Messiah:

Genesis 42:14-20 – compare to Hebrews 4:12:

Joseph resembles Messiah:

Genesis 45:1-11 – compare to Jeremiah 31:33-37; Isaiah 61:6-9; Zechariah 12:10; Romans 11:25-26:

Joseph resembles Messiah:

“Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!” *Romans 11:33*



Conclusion

Compile your *midrash* that explains Messiah Y’shua in the life of Joseph into a few paragraphs.



Genesis 49:1; 8-12

And Jacob called his sons and said, ‘Gather together, that I may tell you what shall befall you in the last days:

‘Judah, you *are he* whom your brothers shall praise; your hand *shall be* on the neck of your enemies; your father’s children shall bow down before you. Judah *is* a lion’s whelp; from the prey, my son, you have gone up. He bows down, he lies down as a lion; and as a lion, who shall rouse him? The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh comes; and to Him *shall be* the obedience of the people. Binding his donkey to the vine, and his donkey’s colt to the choice vine, he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes. His eyes *are* darker than wine, and his teeth whiter than milk.’”



Introduction

As Genesis closes, we are left with a prophecy. It is a prophecy that Jacob gives in the form of a blessing on his fourth son Judah. This passage is not Messianic on the surface level, but from the most ancient of times it has been seen as prophetic about Messiah coming from the tribe of Judah.

This passage is the beginning of a string of passages that declare the monarchy of Israel to be from the tribe of Judah alone. We see specifically that the Davidic dynasty is the fulfillment of this string of passages beginning here. Since we know the Davidic line points to the ultimate ‘Son of David’, that is Y’shua the Messiah, we are compelled to dig deeper into this first of prophecies regarding the line of Messiah being from the tribe of Judah.

Of the line of Judah, we see four main descriptives:

- The scepter will not depart
- Nor a lawgiver from between his feet
- Until Shiloh comes
- To Him shall be the obedience of the people



Hebrew Perspective

As is the case with so many of our key words, the first usage for ‘scepter’ is here in Genesis 49:10. The Hebrew is the word, שֵׁבֶט [shebet]. It comes from a root which means ‘to branch off’. It is best seen as the tribal standard. The word *shebet* can be used in place of the word ‘tribe’. Here are some other references to the word ‘*shebet*’.

Psalms 2:8-9 (rod):

Psalms 45:6:

The word ‘lawgiver’ is the word חֲקַק [chakak]. It literally means, ‘one who gives statutes’. It comes from the word *chok*, which is a royal decree or statute, which requires obedience without understanding. In other words, “just because the king said so”. Genesis 49:10 is the first usage of *chakak*. Read and comment on the following passages and *chakak* [lawgiver].

Psalms 60:7:

Isaiah 33:22:

Isaiah 49:16 (the word ‘engraved’ is the word *chakokikh* from the same root as *chakak*):

What does the phrase, “between his feet” mean? One possible explanation can be found by examining the following passages.

Deuteronomy 28:57:

2Samuel 11:8-11 (wash the feet = lie with wife):

The word ‘*Shiloh*’ as found in NASB and KJV is an interesting word. This is the only usage in the TaNaKh, and it appears in English as a proper name in those versions. There is a *tikkun soferim* [scribal repair] in the Hebrew text here. The Masorete scribes wrote that the word is *shilah*. In the margin however they say that it is to be pronounced *shiloh*.

In other versions such as NIV and RSV the phrase with the word *shilah* is rendered “to whom it belongs”. Is the proper word *shiloh* or *shilah*? There is dispute on this, but the understanding of a proper name of *Shiloh* is the most recognized. If so, the etymology of the word *Shiloh* would no doubt be from the verb *shalah* [to rest, to prosper].

Read Psalms 122:6-9 and comment on the connection between *shalah* (rendered ‘prosper’ in verse 6) to *shalom* [peace] and the Prince of Peace [*Sar Shalom*] in Isaiah 9:6.

When we read, “and to him shall be the obedience of the people,” we need to understand that the word ‘people’ is plural. In English we normally denote a single people or nationality in the collective singular. Here the Hebrew more literally says, “and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples.” The word for ‘peoples’ is the word **עַמִּים** [*amim*]. Read and comment on the following passages and the use of the word *amim*. In each case, watch for the word ‘people’ and note that in Hebrew it is plural.

Psalms 47:1-4:

Isaiah 2:1-3:

Isaiah 11:10

Note: the Hebrew word for obedience can also mean ‘purged’ or ‘blameless’.



First Century Perspective

Because the followers of Y'shua used the prophetic blessing of Judah here in Genesis 49 as a proof text for Y'shua being Messiah, many commentators in Judaism began to move away from the interpretation of this passage as being Messianic. This did not happen until after the First Century however and the Targumim reflect the ancient understanding that Genesis 49:8-12 as referring to the Messiah.

“Kings shall not cease, nor rulers, from the house of Jehuda, nor sapherim [judges] teaching the law from his seed, till the time that the King the Meshiha [Messiah], shall come, the youngest of his sons; and on account of him shall the peoples flow together How beauteous is the King, the Meshiha [Messiah]who will arise from the house of Jehuda! He hath girded his loins, and descended, and arrayed the battle against his adversaries, Slaying kings with their rulers; neither is there any king or ruler who shall stand before him. The mountains become red with the blood of their slain; his garments, dipped in blood, are like the outpressed juice of grapes. How beautiful are the eyes of the king Meshiha [Messiah], as the pure wine! He cannot look upon what is unclean, nor on the shedding of the blood of the innocent; and his teeth, purer than milk, cannot eat that which is stolen or torn; and therefore his mountains are red with wine, and his hills white with corn, and with the cotes of flocks.”

Genesis 49:8-12 *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*

“...there shall be no king that may cut him off. He who exerciseth dominion shall not pass away from the house of Jehuda, nor the saphra [judges] from his children's children for ever, until the Meshiha [Messiah]come, whose is the kingdom, and unto whom shall be the obedience of the nations (or, whom the peoples shall obey). Israel shall pass round about in his cities; the people shall build his temple, they will be righteous round about him, and be doers of the law through his doctrine. Of goodly purple will be his raiment, and his vesture of crimson wool with colour. His mountains shall be red with his vineyards, and his hills be dropping with wine; his valleys shall be white with corn, and with flocks of sheep.

Genesis 49:8-12 *Targum Onkelos*



Apostolic Perspective

The early followers of Y'shua saw Genesis 49:8-12 as most certainly speaking of Messiah and specifically prophesying of His second coming. Read and comment on the following passages.

Romans 15:12 (quoting Isaiah 11:10):

Hebrews 7:14:



Progressive Revelation

| | |
|------------|---|
| 1:1 | We have seen how God's creative Voice is a manifestation of His being. We have seen that His Words represent Himself. |
| 3:8-15 | We have seen how the problem of sin cut man off from the Person of God and from His abiding Presence – but that God promised a Seed, which would come from woman and would be bruised by the Serpent and would crush the Serpent's head. The Seed is Messiah, and He is promised to come from woman. |
| 9:26-27 | We have seen that there is a connection between the previously unconnected thoughts regarding the Voice/Word of God and a visible manifestation of God (<i>Sh'kinah</i>). We have seen that the promised Seed would be found coming from Shem's line. |
| 12:1-8 | We have seen that Abraham, a descendant of Shem, begins to call on the Name of God, and that God appears (i.e. manifests) Himself to Abraham. Abraham hears His Voice. |
| Ch 15 | We have seen the promise of a Seed given specifically to Abram (First from Eve, then through Shem, now through Abraham). We have seen that God can manifest Himself in described terms of a smoking oven and a lamp of fire. |
| Ch 18 | We have seen that God manifested Himself in human form to Abraham. We have seen that the Seed was revealed as not only fulfillment of a promise – but that it is prefigured in a miraculous way: to Abraham and Sarah who physically could not have children. |
| Ch 22 | We have seen that the binding of Isaac, who was a child of promise, prefigured One of Isaac Descendants – Y'shua Himself. We were given a more complete picture of what the redemptive plan regarding the Promised Seed would look like. |
| Ch 28 & 31 | We have seen that the Jacob took a stone and anointed it with oil. The promised Seed is named as coming from Jacob now – and in regard to that Seed there is a foreshadowing of the Stone with that is anointed with oil – picturing first David, and then the Heir of David's Throne: Messiah Y'shua Himself. |
| 32:24-30 | We have seen that the promised Seed is what Jacob was ultimately seeking. We saw that he received the blessing not only from his father Isaac, but directly from God Himself – and that he saw God 'face to face' although in predawn light. |
| 49:8-12 | In Genesis 49, we saw that from the tribe of Judah would come: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A Ruler and King ▪ A Lawgiver would come from Judah's offspring ▪ His name will be <i>Shiloh</i> [rest, prosperous] ▪ All the peoples of the earth will be purged and made obedient to Him. |

Notice the progression: The promised Seed: from Eve to Shem to Abraham to Isaac to Jacob to Judah – and from there, One of Judah’s Descendants.



Conclusion

Take some time to prayerfully summarize what you have learned from this study from Genesis.



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