

# Teaching *from* Zion

"...for out of Zion shall come forth Torah  
and the word of the Lord from  
Jerusalem." – Isaiah 2:3

# FAMILY

*"Children's children are a crown to the aged, and  
parents are the pride of their children"*

*Proverbs 17:6*



# Netivyah **נתיביה** Teaching from Zion

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### **About Netivyah**

Netivyah in Hebrew means "the Way of the Lord." "The Way" was one of the names by which the early community of believers was known in the Brit Chadashah (New Testament). Paul says, "I worship the God of our fathers in accordance with the Way (which they call a sect). I continue to believe everything that accords with the Torah and everything written in the Prophets." (Acts 24:14 CJB). As followers of "the Way," we believe in the God of Israel, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. We try to be faithful to God's law (the Torah) and to the rest of Scripture—the Prophets and the Writings. We believe that the Messiah promised in God's word is Yeshua (Jesus), the one who "saves His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21).

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# *News from Netivyah*

The subject of this issue of Teaching from Zion is “The Family.” In its basic sense, family comprises persons related to one another by marriage, blood or adoption, but Noah Webster perceived the family as “constituting a fundamental unit in the organization of society.”

The primary purpose of family is physical procreation, but perhaps equally important, family propagates social standards by passing the wisdom of previous generations on to the next one. Family is a dynamic organism that should always be transforming young followers into mature leaders and turning learners into teachers and exemplars. Consequently, the role of each family member can and must develop, or evolve, as those around him develop.

The importance of family immediately becomes clear. At a minimum, it is for children arguably the single most significant and influential force in their lives. From the very beginning, children depend on parents and family members to protect them and provide for their needs. Paul certainly stresses the obligation of providing for one’s household in 1 Timothy 5:8, “Anyone who does not provide for his own, and especially for his household, has denied his faith.”

But more than just offering physical provisions, the family forms children’s first semblances of relationship. The framework of relationship dynamics that they absorb within the family nucleus will become the foundation of all future relationships throughout their lives. So, a healthy family is the very best and most important influence in a child’s formative years.

The Bible speaks about family first in Genesis 1:27-28 saying, “So God created human beings in His own image. In the image of God He created them: male and female He created them. God blessed them and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it...’” This was the first father and mother, and soon afterward, the narrative tells us about their first children. Psalm 127:3 declares that “children are a heritage of the Lord; the fruit of the womb is a reward.”

There are countless verses throughout the Word affirming the purpose and value of the family in our lives as followers of the Messiah Yeshua. Honoring parents, you may recall, is the

first commandment with a blessing. So let us strive to “Keep His decrees and commands, which I am giving you today, so that it may go well with you and your children after you and that you may live long in the land the LORD your God gives you for all time.” (Deut. 4:40)

Because of your faithful prayers and support, Netivyah continues to be on the cutting edge of humanitarian aid in Israel. We are currently feeding 148 struggling families each and every week (amounting to more than 700 people). We are also blessing 20 believing IDF soldiers with Purim gifts, providing academic scholarships to 20 Messianic Israeli students and ministering to Holocaust Survivors in Jerusalem.

Yudah continues to minister and teach the youth both from Roeh Israel and from other congregations in Jerusalem, and we are all carrying on with the distribution of our books, commentaries and Teaching from Zion issues like this one.

In January, Joseph and Daniel traveled to Taiwan and Japan for conferences and teaching. In February, Joseph was blessed with the privilege of speaking at the Lanier Theological Library in Texas and also at the Borough Park Symposium in New York. The latter was considered a divine appointment and will prayerfully bring forth fruit for a new project that Netivyah is hoping to be a part of. There will be more information about that as it develops.

Joseph will take some much-needed rest from travelling in March and April and remain with us for Purim and Pesach (and we are always grateful for that). After Pesach, the world wide speaking and teaching tour will resume, by God’s grace.

Our heavenly Father has blessed Israel with abundant rains this year that have left the Sea of Galilee brimming at its maximum capacity and have caused the desert to bloom, reminding us of the prophecy in Isaiah 35!

We are so grateful to Him and to you, and we pray that this issue on “The Family” will minister to your hearts and to the wellbeing of your whole household. We ask Him to bless you and your families with good physical and spiritual health and that you advance forward in your walk with Him.

*The Netivyah Staff*

# From Whom Can We Learn About a Proper Family?

By Joseph Shulam

Our patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, are our matrix for so many important issues of our faith and obedience to God's commands. We learn faith from Abraham. We learn peaceful coexistence from Isaac. We learn survival and love for his family from Jacob. However, there are things that we must take as negative examples that we, today, must avoid and run away from. As the old Bulgarian proverb says, there are no roses without thorns.

What are the negative things that we don't need to learn from our forefathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob?

"And it came to pass, when he was close to entering Egypt, that he said to Sarai his wife, 'indeed I know that you are a woman of beautiful countenance, therefore it will happen, when the Egyptians see you, that they will say, "this is his wife"; and they will kill me, but they will let you live. Please say you are my sister, that it may be well with me for your sake, and that I may live because of you.'" (Genesis 12:11-13)

There are a few things wrong in this story. This story is right after the great show of faith that Abraham leaves his homeland in obedience to God's command and heads with his family to the land of Canaan, land teeming with seven nations warring with each other.

Just a few verses earlier, God promised Abraham: "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."

Out of selfish fear for his own life, Abraham is teaching his wife Sarah to lie and say that she is his sister, not his wife. This might be according to some scholars only a half lie, or a half truth if you wish. However, the consequences for the fulfillment of God's promises could have been jeopardized, if it were not for Pharaoh's wisdom and fairness.

Abraham did not learn from this event and repeated the same mistake a second

*Abraham, with all of his faith and faithfulness, is a human being and is not immune to sin and making mistakes (even to repeating the same mistake twice).*

time: "Now Abraham said of Sarah his wife, 'she is my sister.' And Abimelech king of Gerar sent and took Sarah. But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, 'indeed you



The Call of Abram (Genesis 12)

are a dead man because of the woman whom you have taken, for she is a man's wife.' But Abimelech had not come near her; and he said, 'Lord, will you slay a righteous nation also? Did he not say to me, "she is my sister"? And she, even she herself said, "he is my brother." In the integrity of my heart and innocence of my hands I have done this.'" (Genesis 20:2-5)

A second time we see that Abimelech king of Gerar, like Pharaoh, discovers through a dream from God that Sarah

is Abraham's wife and not his sister. Abimelech turns out to be more righteous than Abraham in this story. He wants to take Sarah, but the Lord prevents him with a dream that reveals to him that Sarah is actually Abraham's wife.

In conclusion to this first point, Abraham, with all of his faith and faithfulness, is a human being and is not immune to sin and making mistakes (even to repeating the same mistake twice). I am inspired by this weak characteristic of Abraham. I am not upset or discouraged by these

two stories about our greatest example of faith in the word of God. On the contrary, I am encouraged because I see that the Lord is not looking for a perfect man that makes no mistakes. The Lord is looking for a man who can and sometimes does make mistakes but still have a true and honest relationship with God and walk with the Lord and receive God's grace with all his heart and trust God throughout his days.

Isaac, Abraham and Sarah's long-awaited son, follows in his father's

footsteps and makes the very same mistake that his father made:

“So, Isaac dwelt in Gerar. And the men of the place asked about his wife. And he said, ‘she is my sister’; for he was afraid to say, ‘she is my wife,’ because he thought, ‘lest the men of the place kill me for Rebekah, because she is beautiful to behold.’ Now it came to pass, when he had been there a long time, that Abimelech king of the Philistines looked through a window, and saw, and there was Isaac, showing endearment to Rebekah his wife. Then Abimelech called Isaac and said, ‘quite obviously she is your wife; so how could you say, “she is my sister”?’” (Genesis 26:6-9)

Here we see the classic principle (that is not true all the time but is often true), “Like father, like son!” Isaac repeats the very same mistake that his father Abraham made with Sarah his wife.

A more serious problem was with Rebekah deceiving and teaching her son Jacob to deceive his father Isaac. This act of Rebekah could have jeopardized the fulfillment of God’s promises to Abraham and to Isaac.

“Now Rebekah was listening when Isaac spoke to Esau his son. And Esau went to the field to hunt game and to bring it. So Rebekah spoke to Jacob her son, saying, ‘Indeed I heard your father speak to Esau your brother, saying, “Bring me game and make savory food for me, that I may eat it and bless you in the presence of the Lord before my death.” Now therefore, my son, obey my voice according to what I command you. Go now to the flock and bring me from there two choice kids of the goats, and I will make savory food from them for your father, such as he loves. Then you shall take it to your father, that he may eat it, and that he may bless you before his death.’ And Jacob said to Rebekah his mother,

‘Look, Esau my brother is a hairy man, and I am a smooth-skinned man. Perhaps my father will feel me, and I shall seem to be a deceiver to him; and I shall bring a curse on myself and not a blessing.’ But his mother said to him, ‘Let your curse be on me, my son; only obey my voice, and go, get them for me.’ And he went and got them and brought them to his mother, and his mother made savory food, such as his father loved. Then Rebekah took the choice clothes of her elder son Esau, which were with her in

## *The first family story that we learn about Moses is that he didn’t circumcise his son and could not do it himself.*

the house, and put them on Jacob her younger son. And she put the skins of the kids of the goats on his hands and on the smooth part of his neck. Then she gave the savory food and the bread, which she had prepared, into the hand of her son Jacob.” (Genesis 27:5-17)

One of the more curious things in this story is that after all of what we have said about Abraham, the Lord blesses Isaac his son with the same blessings with which He blessed Abraham. In this occasion, the Lord says to Isaac, “And I will make your descendants multiply as the stars of heaven. I will give to your descendants all these lands, and in your

seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because Abraham obeyed my voice and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.” (Genesis 26:4-5)

What can we learn about God and about Abraham and Isaac from this text? God must have forgiven Abraham for his sin with Sarah and Pharaoh. Forgiven and forgotten and not held it against him. This is a great example of how God forgives and how he also does not hold the past and forgiven sins against a person after he is forgiven.

We don’t have the details of God’s forgiving Abraham. We don’t know if Abraham repented, or offered a sin offering. We don’t know if Abraham asked forgiveness from Sarah his wife. All we know is that God didn’t hold the sins of Abraham against Isaac his son. We also know that God describes Abraham to Isaac saying, “Abraham obeyed my voice and kept my charge and my commandments . . .”

I find these stories extremely encouraging because it shows me how the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is the same God that so loved the world that He sent his only begotten Son. I am so encouraged because I see the grace of God and His longsuffering demonstrated in the Torah of Moses. I am so encouraged because in my lifetime I have not seen one family or individual who is perfect and has not sinned against God and man. I am so encouraged because I see God able to use people who are willing to step onto the stage of history knowing their weakness and yet knowing also God’s goodness and mercy.

If I look at the family life of Moses, the great leader and the shepherd of Israel through 40 years of wilderness wondering, what can we learn about family from him? The first family story that we learn about

Moses is that he didn't circumcise his son and could not do it himself. Zipporah the daughter of Jethro the priest of Midian had to take the knife and circumcise the son of Moses. This is one of the strangest stories in the Bible, but it briefly features this Gentile Midianite woman, Zipporah, who is ignored through most of the story

more carefully, we see that his first-born son committed incest with his sister Tamar, and his next son, Absalom, rebelled against his father and was killed by David's most trusted and right-hand man Joab.

One thing that can be said about king David was that, as far as we can see in the word of God, David had several wives, but he actually lived with only one wife at a time. He did not multiply wives to himself. He left the one and joined the next one, but never two at the same time. This might not be a comforting note for David's wives, but it does show some positive characteristics about David and his relationship to women.

The objectives of this article are clear. We read the Bible and we believe every word. It is the word of God. It is inspired, and like Paul says, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for

reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work."(2 Timothy 3:16-17)

We can learn from all the wonderful and faithful things that our patriarchs and heroes have done along the story of salvation, but we can also learn from the mistakes and shortcomings of these great men of God. We can learn to do good from our Biblical heroes, and we can learn from their mistakes. Above all we can learn about the mercy and longsuffering of our Lord, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The Creator

of the world identifies Himself with these men, whose greatness was only one: they allowed themselves to be used as servants of the Most High! The Lord loved them not because they were sinless, or perfect. He loved them because they were faithful to do His will and keep His commandments.

Yes, I believe that God is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow! He is not looking for perfect men with perfect families. He is looking for men who are willing to live and walk with Him wholeheartedly and fully committed to Him and to his every command. Sometimes they fall, and sometimes they make big mistakes. But all the time, they stay and sustain the relationship. Don't be discouraged by your weaknesses and mistakes; take your staff in your hand and follow Him!

This article is not giving you or me a license to do wrong and to not take care of your family. This article is not written to justify the wrongs that you might have done to your family or the wrongs that your family has done to you. On the contrary this article is written to encourage you and tell you that God can use you even though you didn't have a perfect family.

My cure for my own weaknesses is a constant recommitment to and refocusing on trusting the mercy and grace of God to overcome as well as the blood of Yeshua our Savior and Messiah to clean me and fill me with His Spirit in order to use me. God used men like our forefathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Let us not forget that He is the same God today, and He is waiting with open arms to welcome us. He knows us and knows our strength and wellness. Like a great crafter of instruments, He can take a bare piece of wood (representing us and our families) and make out of it a stradivarius violin that makes music for His pleasure.



Abraham tells King Abimelech that Sarah is his sister (Genesis 20)

of the Exodus and apparently was sent to her father's house through the whole escapade with Moses and Aaron in Egypt. Only in chapter 19 of Exodus, Jethro returns Zipporah to Moses just before he goes up to the mountain of Sinai to bring down the Torah. Otherwise, we don't hear much about Zipporah, nor about Moses' and Zipporah's two sons.

We could speak about king David, his family life and his children. From looking in the Biblical narrative about king David, one could get the impression that king David was a big-time lover and a family man, but reading the narrative

# A PARENT'S

By Muriel Stern

We never learn her name, only that she was childless - unable to give birth - which was a tragic plight in those days. It was always assumed to be of the woman's failing. It would not be until thousands of years later that we would learn that it could also be an issue with the husband, but in her case, the infertility was in fact hers, since her husband Manoah had fathered children, just not with her. She was barren; no question about it.

Manoah's wife is not the only one whose story starts like this. There are many other stories like hers - barren women who gave birth to great men who ended up changing history and bringing peace. The Lord changed her fate, made the impossible possible and performed a real miracle. While a barren woman didn't matter much to the people in her society, the Lord saw her and heard her prayers.

We don't know a lot about Manoah's wife. For example, we don't know how long she prayed for a son. But we do know that when the angel of the Lord appeared to her, promised her a son, and gave her very specific instructions, she believed him.

Her husband asked the Lord to let the angel speak to him as well, and the Lord heard his prayers. He sent the angel back

to the woman when she was out in the field again without her husband, and she hurried over to tell him that the angel came again. The angel confirmed to him the story that the woman had told. She knew what was to be done, but the angel told him also, no wine or grapes, no fermented drink, and no unclean food. It was only after an offering was made and after the angel ascended in its blazing flame toward heaven that the husband realized that it was indeed an angel from the Lord. The husband feared for his life since they had seen the Lord. The woman, however, was full of hope, she was to have a son - a son who was going to help deliver Israel from the hands of the Philistines.

Samson, the son of a barren woman, was blessed by the Lord. As instructed, no razor ever touched his head; instead he had seven braids. His parents feared the Lord and followed His commandments.

Some of us had to wait years before the Lord blessed us with children, while others seem to have received them effortlessly. But all of us who have been given the honor and responsibility to raise children intend to do so rightly. We teach our children to fear the Lord; we instruct them with His commandments. Many of us have a certain hope or vision for their future, and we may have even

given them names to represent it.

Our hero Samson had a weakness; pretty women, preferably foreign. It went against what was done and acceptable - against his parent's wishes, against everything he had been taught - but despite all this, the Lord decided to use his 'weakness' to stir things up with the Philistines.

Samson and his parents traveled to Timnah. He got married and there was a big party for his wedding. The Philistines pressured his wife into betraying Samson's trust, and he returned to his father's house without her. Without his knowledge, Samson's wife was given to another man, and he found out when he later went to visit her. In his rage, he burned the harvest of the Philistines, and, in turn, they burned his wife and her father. Then they gathered their troops together planning to capture Samson and kill him. The situation got so bad that his own people came to hand him over to the Philistines.

When we take a moment, right here in the middle of the story, we can't help but ask how we got here. From faithful, God-fearing parents, a barren mother who gave birth by a miracle, dedicated to God from the womb, to this? What happened? How does this fit the Lord's

# J O U R N E Y

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plan? What about his promises? Why is He allowing this?

From the toddler that finds out that he can say 'no' to the teenager that goes against everything she's been taught when her hormones take over, it is an exciting journey to raise a child. It is both a privilege and a challenge. We get just 18 years to teach them everything, and if we do our job right, our children will become their own person.

As believers, we have instructed our children in the ways of the Lord. We've told them His commandments, we've taught them to fear the Lord, we've covered them in prayers from day one, and we've lived by example doing ourselves what we told them to do. We've made mistakes and likely will make more, but as good-willed people, we can honestly say that we have done our best.

But what if our story, too, looks nothing like what we had hoped for? What if that child, for whom you prayed, seems to go against all that she was taught? What

if your son is not living up to the name you gave him? What if they question everything you believe in? What if it is downright embarrassing, and everyone else's children seem to do so much better?

Eventually, Samson defeated the Philistines with a great victory and led the people for twenty years. You'd think he had learned his lesson and would stay away from foreign women, but he could not resist. A single visit to a prostitute in Gaza almost ended his life, and later on, he again fell for the wrong woman. He ended up telling her the secret to his strength, which led to his hair being cut, and then his power left him, he was captured, and he was put to work in a Philistine prison. Once his eyesight was taken from him, apparently he could finally see where his strength really came from. His last courageous act took his life, but also took out all the rulers of the Philistines. He died a hero and was buried in his father's tomb.

I don't know where you are in your parenting journey, whether your children

are still living at home or whether they have left the nest. I don't know how your story looks, but I can tell you that mine is very different from what I thought it would be. The story of Samson might not seem too encouraging from a parenting perspective, but it actually is. The Lord used both Samson's strength and his weakness to bring glory to His name. While many parts of the story are difficult to understand, Samson was his own man - a hero and a leader - and his story ended well.

On the days when I have no idea where my child's story is going, it gives me hope that the Lord is in control and has the final say; that even the things I might see as a weakness in my child can be used for his honor and glory. We serve a God that answered the prayers of a barren, nameless woman, and that same God hears our prayers, too, and will bring to completion what he started in us and in our children.

You can read the full story of Samson in Judges 13:1-16:31.

# FATHERS OF FLOURISHING FAMILIES

By Jared Seltzer

The first commandment in the Bible is to be fruitful and multiply. The first couple dutifully fulfilled this first directive, and what followed was the creation of the first family: a father, a mother and their offspring. This powerful nucleus called a family is the fundamental building block of all functioning societies, and the fitness of that society inescapably follows the general health the families that form it. Firm, stable families express vigorous societies, whereas fragmented families spell societal failure.

The Bible explodes with wise principles for producing strong, healthy families. But Paul, distilling the insight of Tanakh and Jewish wisdom, auspiciously embeds it into his epistles. Perhaps the most densely packed list of prescriptions for success to every member of the family is in Colossians 3:18-21, with another more expounded form in Ephesians 5-6. All too many commentators simplify Paul's collective message down to, "Husbands love, wives submit, and children shall obey (or else)!" But let's consider his message from a fresh perspective.

A family effortlessly compares to a small organization: it consists of a manager and a deputy-manager, whose realm of responsibility teems with contributors, each possessing unique interests, skills, qualities and challenges. Ephesians 4 says that there are many members in the body, and each has a function of its own. Members comprise a physical body, they build the Body of Messiah, and just as much so, they make up the corpus of a family. And the one who bears ultimate responsibility for the outcome of that family is the father.

# *Fathers need to help children grow in maturity by setting healthy boundaries and talking them through any happenings that lend themselves to instruction.*

The role of an organizational manager is to strive for the success of each member in the organization and, ultimately, for the success and productivity of the organization as a whole. Correspondingly, a father's number one priority is the success of the entire family, which entails the success of each family member, a feat whose fruit is readily evident. His family is cooperative, efficient, thriving, dedicated, well-mannered, industrious, helpful and encouraging to others, and it prepares children to start a family of their own, repeating the process.

In an age of cheap sex, gender identity, and role confusion, men are asked to be effeminate yet are expected to act adolescent, and women prefer to (or must out of necessity) clutch the reins of the family. But the holiness of God is incompatible with such cultural norms that embrace dysfunction and brokenness. The body of believers should not imitate the ways of the world, but rather it needs to stand out and shine as imitators of God, starting with the fathers. Paul delivers dads several powerful ways to accomplish this: love, do not provoke, do not threaten, and be consistent and fair.

Inextricably, the father of the family is to love as Messiah loved (Ephesians 5:25). If anyone needs clarification on this then study Yeshua's behavior. Yeshua healed the sick, so the father should bind his child's wounds in love. Yeshua fed the hungry, so the father should provide food for the table. Yeshua preached the message of the Kingdom and corrected error, so a father should speak with instructive wisdom. Yeshua cast out demons and rebuked haughtiness, so a father should skillfully eliminate insubordination. Yeshua interceded for his disciples, so the father should defend his family against false accusations. Yeshua took kind exception to faithfulness, so a father needs to show compassion and encouragement at every possible opportunity. And ultimately,

Yeshua sacrificed His precious life in love for the whole world, so every father himself should be prepared to pay the ultimate price to protect his family.

The head loves, protects and provides, but there are other equally essential imperatives incumbent upon him. The head must be fair, consistent, and firm. A father is not to incite anger; he nurtures and admonishes his children with patience (Ephesians 6:4). If you see a failed father, you see someone who withheld or gave improper discipline, encouragement and affection, a man guilty of abuse, neglect, or partiality. How long would you continue working for a dunce boss that repeatedly drove you to anger or neglected you, be it intentionally or even inadvertently? How would you react to a supervisor at work that plays favorites, constantly changes his mind, or caves to every breeze of challenge that blows his way? Any rational person would quit! But can a child "resign" from his family?

Sadly, children run away from home at an alarming rate (nearly three million cases per year in the United States alone). Discouragement and anger are powerful forces of themselves, let alone in the maladroit hands of impressionable children; they can shatter families. Fathers, do not make the faux pas blunder of recapitulating the less-than-



perfect tactics of your dad. Ephesians 6:9, speaking to masters concerning their servants, exhorts giving up the use of threats and favoritism. How much more precious are children than servants that you should not threaten and incoherently discipline them? Rather, fathers need rise to new heights—to Biblical standards—and mirror our heavenly Father by being nurturing and instructive as well as firm, fair, and consistent.

The Polish American criminologist Sheldon Glueck extensively researched juvenile delinquency and reported four basic observations of healthy families. Brace yourself for the first one. The father's discipline was firm, fair and consistent. The latter three, too, are insightful: the mother constantly knows the whereabouts and activities of her children and is with them as much as possible, the children see affection both from and between their parents, and the family spends quality time all together.

(even from within the congregation), all the while eschewing concentrated effort toward setting a positive parental example to his children. Just remember that children do not remember and emulate what you say, but rather what you do. How do you treat friends, business partners, the maid, mailman and cashier? Your children need you to succeed, and they are watching you. So, treat elders as fathers and mothers, and treat younger people as brothers and sisters (1 Timothy 5:1-3). Your children will follow in your footsteps.

Yes, Ephesians does exhort children to obey their parents (6:1-3), but it would be so much easier and more natural for them to do so under stable and encouraging leadership. Fathers need to help children grow in maturity by setting healthy boundaries and talking them through any happenings that lend themselves to instruction. He promotes maturity mentally with

respective roles and duties, too, in order for the larger organism to succeed. True, good leadership generally generates and emboldens robust followership, but the deputy-manager and contributors need to engage, jump on-board, and take up their posts; basically, to “fall in!” This is the actual meaning of the Greek verb *hypotasso* that is famously (or infamously) interpreted as “submit”.

The phrase “wives submit to your husbands” too often precedes a rustle of cynical scoffs. The reason for these scoffs is simple. Somebody in the familial organism hasn't been doing his (or her) job. Maybe dad's fickle or uninvolved, maybe mom's overbearing or unhinged. Possibly someone hasn't been loving, helpful, dedicated or encouraging enough. But fatherly failures and motherly misdeeds aside, this word “submit” is hardly an expletive or a handicap. Rather, it is a matter of structural diligence.

## ***God is the Head of Messiah, Yeshua is the Head of His people, and in just the same manner, the scriptures assign to the father the responsibility of being the head of his family.***

Christian psychiatrist Paul Meier supports this conclusion adding that the key to a proper parent-child relationship boils down to these five things: parents love each other, they love their children, they are consistent, they provide a good parental example, and there is a man at the head of the home. These are the shoes for parents, especially the father as the trendsetter, to fill.

It is tempting for a man to preoccupy himself with the musings of his peers

wisdom, discretion, instruction and knowledge; physically by protecting them; socially in teaching them what to share, when, and how, with humility; and spiritually in developing into a faithful servant of God.

This father and husband has an indispensable obligation to leadership, trendsetting, encouraging and providing, but as anyone who has ever worked for another person knows, it is imperative that all of his family members fill their

The verse previous to “wives submit” actually calls all believers to submit to one another out of reverence for Messiah (Ephesians 5:21). Additionally, Romans 13:1 invokes collective submission to governing authorities. Titus 2:9 requires servants to submit to their masters (in modern terms, employees to an employer, if you will). Demons submitted to those whom Messiah sent out (Luke 10:17), and Yeshua himself submitted to His earthly parents (Luke 2:51). The



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scriptures virtually burst at the seam with examples of righteous submission.

Do not mistake submission with oppression. It does not mean “be intrinsically inferior to” or “be a doormat or wallflower”, nor is it subterfuge for domination. God forbid! Rather, it announces, “Fall in!” It is a military term signaling each person, intrinsically valuable and equal in God’s eyes, to take up their positions within a chain of command to effectively accomplish a mission. What would happen if this were not the case; if bosses submitted to employees, masters submitted to slaves, and Yeshua submitted to whims of ours? In a phrase, chaos would ensue. But God is not the author of chaos. God is the Head of Messiah, Yeshua is the Head of His people, and in just the same manner, the scriptures assign to the father the responsibility of being the head of his family.

Besides this exhortation, though, the heart of every man longs for, and indeed needs, cooperation and encouragement from his team. He struggles with plenty of challenges outside of the home without adding more from within his

own walls. He especially yearns for a preeminent helper and partner with a can-do mindset who sticks with him through thick and thin. In God’s infinite wisdom, he created the woman. The woman, a creature as mysterious and confusing to a man as she is indispensable, is the natural encourager, comforter, and faithful companion.

The wife inspires the husband to meet and surpass his goals, cautions him against unbridled risk, assists him where she is able and brings a soft, feminine counterpoise to countless facets of the home. But she is human and suffers exhaustion like anyone else with the stresses of duty. So, in case you didn’t know, husbands, her fuel is your heartfelt love. Now, women receive (and express, for that matter) love in various ways, and the husband needs to determine which is right in his situation to avoid misplaced or misunderstood affection. Does your wife like spending quality time together, or maybe your warm embrace? Perhaps your words of affirmation and encouragement, acts of service, or surprise gifts? Whatever the case, it is the husband’s mission to learn his wife’s most effective channels of love, and to

love her dearly, protect her and provide for her. By doing so, he reinvigorates and empowers his chief supporter and helper, who subsequently will continue to build him up, and so the cycle upward goes.

It is too easy for spouses to succumb to playing the blame game or to show love (or Biblical submission) only conditionally. Tragically, such behavior leads to a hasty and downward spiral. “He doesn’t do this, so I won’t do that. Now she doesn’t do that, so I won’t do this.” This is negativity that thrives on negativity, the solution of which appears in the person of Messiah who loved even the most despicable among us in our filth and mire. Be like Yeshua. Sever the negative trend, be a father and husband, and embrace your duty. Take your God-ordained position as the head of your family and fulfill your calling honorably, dedicated to being firm, fair and consistent, and then watch your team “fall in” under your stable leadership and develop into a strong, flourishing family.



# FAMILY

## From the Physical to the Spiritual

By Charity Singer

**P**icture the scenario. You're running late. The morning has gotten away from you, and now it's time to get out the door. You grab your keys, jump into the car, and drive away. That seems like a manageable enough situation. But now imagine you're running late, the morning has gotten away from you, and it's time to get out the door, but you have two (or more) children to also get out the door, also. You've asked them multiple times to "get their socks and shoes on!"

and "find your coat and hat!" "Does anyone have to go to the bathroom!?" You've already put the socks and shoes on one child, but now you notice that both the socks and the shoes are off and nowhere to be found. What?! You ask yourself, again, "Why does this happen all the time? Is my family the only one that can't seem to get out the door on time? Why is this so stressful?"

Most of us have been in this situation

before. The expectations we place on ourselves and our families are extraordinary. The expectations to get everything done, get everyone out the door, make everyone happy and be in control. The expectation to work a full-time job (or jobs) and cook well rounded, healthy meals, and make sure your children are participating in all the "right" activities. Are my children healthy? Are my children happy? Am I doing everything right? Is my family perfect??

No. The answer is no. It will always be no. So, does that mean we stop trying? Does that mean we give up, put in less effort? Again, no. Cultivating a happy, healthy family takes hard work, endless perseverance, love, and faith. It takes help from our friends, our community and, often times, even strangers. It takes a complete trust that if we are faithful and we put God at the center of our families, God will in turn provide for our families, protect our families, and nurture our families.

So how do we put God at the center of our family? What does the Bible tell us we can do, and how can we implement that into our own lives? Arguably, the most important building block of a strong family begins with a strong marriage. The Bible has much to say about marriage, and although the practice of marriage in Biblical times was different than in today's modern society, the major tenets remain. Marriage comes from God.

The concept of marriage is so important that it is introduced in the first chapter of the first book in the Bible. As we see in Genesis 1:28, "God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.'" God's plan for creation was for men and women to marry and have children. A man and a woman would form a "one-flesh" union through marriage (Genesis 2:24), and they with their children become a family, the essential building block of human society. Seems simple enough, right?

Yet so many marriages end in divorce.

Rather than discussing the myriad of reasons a marriage may dissolve, let's look briefly at the Biblical origins of marriage. The creation of Eve from Adam's rib is a remarkable event.

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So remarkable, in fact, that the bible devotes four whole verses to it. That's it, four. At first glance, it would seem like something this momentous should receive a lot more "air" time. But what if we viewed these four verses as God did? What if we trusted in God's plan and knew that his creation of Eve was divine, a perfect match for Adam? God saw that Adam was lonely and decided to form a partner for him. This act of love was extraordinary and should be remembered daily in every marriage. What if every husband and wife viewed each other as an extraordinary love gift from God? What if every man and

woman lived a God-centered life where they trusted that God would find them an extraordinary match? Isaiah 62:5 says, "...as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so will your God rejoice over you." If we put our trust in God, putting him at the center of our faith, perhaps the success of marriage would be much greater.

In many situations, the natural progression of marriage is having children and starting a "family." When we talk about having children, the concept of "one flesh" again becomes very important. It is the fundamental characteristic of a Godly marriage. In God's eyes, the ideal for marriage is that the two become one in purpose. They share the same values, the same goals, the same outlook. With God's help, they work together to build a strong, Godly family and raise their children to be Godly people. This is no small task. Those of us who are parents know that the pressures of daily life, society and, in some cases, basic time can easily become overwhelming. In some cases, it may feel as if you are stuck in survival mode. The pressures that come with parenting are enormous. This is yet another reason that choosing a partner according to God's criteria is so important. God has warned us about this and has prepared us.

We see this played out in the scriptures when Abraham makes his chief servant swear that he will find a wife for Isaac that is not from the Canaanites where they live, but in his "home" country (Genesis 24: 3-4). We see it again in Deuteronomy 7, when God commands the Israelites not to intermarry with

the nations whom they have conquered saying, “Do not intermarry with them. Do not give your daughters to their sons or take their daughters for your sons, for they will turn your sons away from following me to serve other gods...” Perhaps most importantly, Paul tells us in II Corinthians 6, “Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in

that the pressures of marriage and family will be enormous. He is reminding us that choosing our partner is perhaps the single most important decision we will make for our family. It is not a decision to be taken lightly, and we must remember to seek God’s guidance every step of the way.

We now turn to the social aspect of family. It is important to note that the Bible has

saved Noah from the flood, it wasn’t an individual-case salvation, but a salvation for him, his wife, his sons and his sons’ wives. In other words, his family was saved (Genesis 6:18). When God called Abraham out of Haran, He called him and his family (Genesis 12:4-5). The sign of the Abrahamic covenant (circumcision) was to be applied to all males within one’s household, whether sons or part of the

## *God understands that being part of a community and an extended family is not only a reality, but a necessity.*

common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? As God has said, ‘I will live with them and walk among them and I will be their God, and they will be my people.’” Clearly, God is giving us good instruction. He knows

a much more communal sense of people and family than Western culture today is generally willing to admit. Today’s Western society views citizens more as individuals than people in the Middle East do and definitely more so than the people of the ancient near East did. When God

household servant staff (Genesis 17:12-13). In other words, God’s covenant with Abraham was familial, not individual.

The importance of family can also be seen in the provisions of the Mosaic covenant. For example, two of the Ten



Commandments deal with maintaining the cohesiveness of the family. The fifth commandment regarding honoring parents is meant to preserve the authority of parents in family matters, and the seventh commandment prohibiting adultery protects the sanctity of marriage. From these two commandments flow all of the various other stipulations of the Mosaic Law which seek to protect marriage and the family. The health of the family was so important to God that it was included in the national covenant of Israel.

Those of you reading this who have families can appreciate that the idea of losing yourself as an individual when you have a family is not a foreign one. The countless nights awake with a sick child, the countless hours worrying about the physical, mental and psychological wellbeing of your children, and the fact that, once you are married, you now have a whole new set of family members in the form of in-laws and other extended family, all bring a different perspective. From the perspective of a parent, the transition from individual to communal seems like an easy one. It is an expectation, right? But the truth is that we need each other. We need our community, and we need to trust, rely, and depend on one another. No matter what stage in life you are in, you always have something to share, and you always have something to learn from others. God understands that being part of a community and an extended family is not only a reality, but a necessity. Galatians 6 tells us to “carry each other’s burdens.” Hebrews 10 says, “Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another.”

The theological concept of family is also important. During His ministry, Yeshua questioned some prevailing notions of what it meant to be part of a

family: “While Yeshua was still talking to the crowd, his mother and brothers stood outside, wanting to speak to him. Someone told him, ‘Your mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to you.’ He replied to him, ‘Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?’ Pointing to his disciples, he said, ‘Here are my mother and my brothers. For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother’” (Matthew 12:46-50). Of course, Yeshua is not saying that biological family isn’t important; He is not dismissing His mother and brothers. But what He is doing is making the point that in the Kingdom of Heaven, the most important family connection is spiritual, not physical. This is a truth made explicitly clear in John’s Gospel, when John says, “Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God” (John 1:12-13).

When we are born physically, we’re born into a physical family, but when we are “born again,” we are born into a spiritual family. To use Pauline language, we are adopted into God’s family (Romans 8:15). When we are adopted into God’s spiritual family, God becomes our Father. This spiritual family is not bound by ethnicity, gender or social standing. As Paul says, “You are all sons of God through faith in Messiah Yeshua, for all of you who were baptized into Messiah have clothed yourselves with Messiah. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Messiah Yeshua. If you belong to Messiah, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Galatians 3:26-29).

So, what does the Bible say about family? The physical family is the

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most fundamental building block of human society, and as such, it should be nurtured and protected. But more important than this is the new creation that God is making in Messiah, which is comprised of a spiritual family made up of all people who call upon Yeshua as Savior. This is a family drawn “from every nation, tribe, people and language” (Revelation 7:9), and the defining characteristic of this spiritual family is love for one another: “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another” (John 13:34-35).

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# Raising a Family of Faith in Israel

By Keren Nahum

It is an amazing thing to raise a family of faith in Israel, but it can be challenging, too. For the most part, faith is a matter of choice. The matter of choosing to live by faith is an education that starts at home. Living in Israel offers plenty of opportunities to trust and rely in faith for God's providence. It is a wonderful place to teach young children about the Bible; living in the Land of the Bible gives them firsthand experience in a real way.

Let's take a look at the God-given Biblical holidays and Shabbat as learning tools in the Land. Throughout the week, everyone looks forward to Shabbat here in Israel. It is a day for setting aside valuable family time. The children look forward to a day off from school and can enjoy a festive family Friday evening and Saturday afternoon meal to which we invite guests at times. Everyone in Israel can feel the oncoming of Shabbat. Shop keepers tell their patrons "Shabbat Shalom" already from Thursday. On Friday afternoons, when walking through residential

neighborhoods, one can "smell" Shabbat from all of the cooking and preparations.

Another fantastic festival example is Passover. Preparation for Passover begins a whole week before, and the children have that week before Passover as vacation to help participate in the holiday preparation. Grocery stores close off all the products that contain leaven, and we clean our homes, as do our friends and neighbors. Here we can visibly see and understand what it means to "clean out" the leaven. I have observed that, as time passes, more and more people want to join in and become part of a greater whole.

It is also such a privilege to visit the "Mt. of Olives" as a family and see where Yeshua wept over Jerusalem. As believers we can join in and ask God how we can be a tool in His hands as we too "weep" over Israel and the ways of the world. It is powerful to be able to take the children to the Garden Tomb, to get a visual of where Yeshua might have been buried and



*The school and national holidays revolve around the Biblical holidays, so everyone takes part in one fashion or another.*

realize that He is not among the dead but among the living! Another great place to visit is the Galilee where Yeshua called his disciples, calmed the storm, and saved Peter from his lack of faith. Nazareth, where Yeshua spent His childhood, and Bethlehem, His birthplace, are also places where the land is an eyewitness of the Biblical events, even if we as Israeli citizens cannot legally visit them. The land of Israel is the perfect schoolbook and takes learning and understanding our Master to much deeper levels.

Here in Israel, unlike Europe and the United States, the Bible is taught from Kindergarten all the way through high school. Religion is not just a subject in school here; it is a way of life. The school and national holidays revolve around the Biblical holidays, so everyone takes part in one fashion or another. There are many different kinds of schools in Israel. You have ultra religious, national religious and secular schools. In secular schools, during the seventh grade, students learn about the three monotheistic religions.

Unfortunately, the system is often biased, and Messianic Jews are still not fully accepted here. This can be hard for children and can create division that leaves them feeling excluded; “us versus them” in a way. It is difficult since the children want to be a part, yet also want to keep the identity they receive from home. It can be a serious challenge for children and their families. The children go on field trips visiting Christian sites and hearing about their faith, but they also visit mosques and Druze people to hear their points of view also.

It is truly exciting to watch our children on their path of discovering the Bible at school. It can certainly conjure up lively discussions around the dinner table! In short, Israel is an amazing place for children; a place to fulfill prophecy by just living and being in the Land.

May God give each family and child the wisdom and courage to choose to follow our Master Yeshua in His footsteps.

# A DAUGHTER OF THE HOLOCAUST

an excerpt from the book

By Melanie Webster

I was born on December 7, 1956, and yet, as the title of this book says, I am “a daughter of the Holocaust”. You ask, “how can that be if the Holocaust took place between the years of 1939 and 1945? To my own shock and amazement, having been raised by my dad who is a Holocaust survivor, I feel like I have lived through the Holocaust myself. The same emotional and psychological effects that my dad has taken away from his time in the concentration camp, has become part of my personality as well as the personality of my siblings. I always wondered why a dark cloud was always over my head. A spirit of doom and gloom hovered around me. My siblings and I have taken on an identification of being miserable. We were taught that the world is a horrible and scary place. Unintentionally, my dad instilled fear in us. He was very overprotective. If we were out and did not call him, he became distorted with worry thinking something terrible had happened to us. After all these years (I am now 51 years old), I have learned the name of what my siblings and I have experienced living with my dad. It is called, “secondary post-traumatic stress syndrome”. I will elaborate on this in a later chapter.

As a young child, I remember at home hearing my dad wailing in his sleep as he had nightmares about the Holocaust. I recently asked him what some of those nightmares were about. He would dream about how emaciated he was, about the stripped jacket and pants he had to wear. He would try in his dream to get out of

this “gehemum” (Yiddish for “hell”). He would picture the bunks he had to sleep in. A bunk consisted of three shelves of flat boards that were only big enough for 2 or three men on each shelf. They had to squeeze 6 or 7 men on each shelf of the bunk. The men were of all different sizes. Some men carried disease or would vomit or have diarrhea as they lay very tightly next to you. My dad said, “It was torture”. He would ask himself, “Why do I deserve this life? Only because I was born a Jew? What did I do? Why me?” My mom would have to wake him up to stop the horrible nightmare from continuing. My mom died when I was thirteen years old. So, when the dreams recurred and I heard my dad wailing again in his sleep, I would yell to him from my bedroom to wake him up and help stop the nightmare. The wails were heart wrenching. As young children, it was beyond our comprehension as to the horrors that my dad and his family faced.

As we grew up through our teenage years, my dad did not speak to us about the horrors of the Holocaust. What he did share with us was what his life was like before Hitler invaded Poland, and, eventually, also his life--forever.

My father was born on April 12, 1922 in Plonsk, Poland. He was the third of four children. The eldest was his brother Aaron, then his sister Miriam whom they called Mannia, my dad Moishe, and finally, his brother Solomon. His dad’s name was Israel Sol, whose family followed Orthodox

Judaism, and his mom's name was Nicha Sol, whose maiden name was Lazenski. My paternal grandfather, Israel, was a tailor and my grandmother, Nicha, was a seamstress. My grandmother Nicha Lazenski Sol had twelve siblings. The small town of Plonsk in Poland where they lived consisted mostly of my father's aunts, uncles and cousins. Needless to say, it was a huge family. My great-grandmother Lazenski lived to the ripe old age of 103 in that little town after giving birth to 13 children. My dad refers to her as "my Bubba". In her younger days she sold fruit for a living at her store in town.

He remembers visiting her home every day as a young child with his mother. They loved spending time together. He would run errands for his grandmother, and she would give him goodies and some coins to spend. My dad said when the Germans entered Poland, they took his grandmother to the hospital and he never saw her again. He only has a picture of her to remember her by. His mother Nicha's oldest sister who came to the United States way before the war saved the picture. Nicha hardly knew this sister because she was the youngest of 13 children. There was a big age difference between the oldest and the youngest child. As my dad looks at the picture of his grandmother Lazenski, it brings back many fond memories of being with her.

From birth to the age of seventeen, my father had a wonderful childhood. He was very close to his parents, especially his mother, his siblings and all his relatives. They would have memorable picnics together and frequent visits to each other's homes. My dad would speak of all the Jewish holidays when the family would get together. He spoke of all the great cooking his mother and grandmother prepared. In those days there was no such thing as a refrigerator. All the food was kept cool in the

basement of the house in cooler boxes. As a result, all the food was bought and prepared fresh almost daily. There was no such thing as chemical additives to extend the shelf life of the food they ate. To this very day, my dad likes to go to the supermarket, meat store and produce store every few days to buy fresh food. He does not like to keep food too long in the refrigerator or freezer, and he eats very little food with preservatives in them. At eighty-six years old, my father is very disciplined in his eating habits. This was instilled in him as a child growing up in Poland.

In spite of the great family life my dad experienced as a child, outside the home was a totally different story. There was a great deal of anti-semitism from the Polish Catholics in his town. The Catholic children went to school in the morning and the Jewish children went to school in the afternoon. They were not allowed to go to school together or to mingle. When they passed each other going to and from school, the Polish children would call the

When my father arrived at Auschwitz, his friends and family members from his town realized how horrific their situation was. My father said he watched as many of his friends ran to the electrified wire gates that enclosed them and committed suicide. They knew that they were not going to be able to take the conditions in the camps, so they killed themselves. The thought crossed my dad's mind as well, however, he decided he was going to fight for his life. He said to himself, "Hitler is not going to kill me, I am going to survive". This he did by taking many risks and having much "mazel" (Yiddish for "blessing").

My father says he was liked by many of the German soldiers, and he really didn't know why. He was given many indoor jobs to do so he did not have to work in the freezing cold with little clothing. He shared a story of him and his friend having to clean a German commander's office one day. While cleaning they found a large stack of cigarettes in the desk draw. They decided to take some of

***My dad often asks throughout his life, "Why did I survive, and the rest of my family didn't?" He has a deep sense of guilt that he lived.***

Jewish children "Christ Killers". They would then proceed to beat up the Jewish children. My father tells the story of one young boy that beat him up every day. He would run home to his mother crying every day. She would say "if you stand up to him once and fight back, he will never bother you again". So that's what my father did, and that young boy never did bother my father again. I think this was one lesson my father learned that was instrumental in helping survive the concentration camp.

the cigarettes because they were a great bargaining chip to trade for food. When two officers came in to check on my dad and his friend, they noticed that the stack was tilted, and some cigarettes were missing. The two officers proceeded to beat them up very badly. Then one officer pointed his gun at my father's head ready to shoot him on the spot. The other officer pushed his hand away and said, "leave him alone". My father's life was spared; that is "mazel".

My dad was 17 years old when Hitler invaded Poland in September of 1939. His parents were both 40 years old. His sister, Miriam, was 20 years old and his younger brother, Solomon, was 16 years old. His older brother, Aaron, left Poland a few years before the invasion to go to Palestine to help establish a Zionist State with the likes of Golda Meir, and David Ben-Gurion who actually was born in my father's hometown of Plonsk, Poland in 1898. My dad said that David Ben-Gurion went to school with his grandmother Lazenski.

When the news came that Hitler crossed the border into Poland, thousands of Jewish young people started on foot to go to Russia to escape the Nazis. The older people could not make the trip, but they sent their children on to "freedom". My dad, his sister and younger brother were also going to make the trip to Russia by foot, leaving my grandparents behind. My dad shared that as they were leaving the house his mother cried and cried. At that moment he describes his older sister as slamming the door to the house shut saying, "we're not going anywhere". They could not leave their parents alone to deal with the Nazis. So, as a family, minus the older brother Aaron, they stood together to face the Nazis. My dad and his siblings loved their parents too much to leave them knowing that they probably would never see them again. Remembering his mother's tears was very difficult for my dad. He loved and respected his mother so much. The trauma of that day is so vivid to him, even at 86 years old. It is as if it happened yesterday.

Before the transports started to the concentration camps, the Nazis placed all the Jews in my dad's town into a ghetto. There were beatings, harassment and humiliation at the hands of the Nazis. My dad related a story that on one of the

High Holy Days, Rosh Hashanah, in his town, all the men were in the synagogue praying when the Nazis demanded that they leave the building and come into the courtyard. They proceeded to force every male to run back and forth, up and down the courtyard for hours, for no reason until they fell down from exhaustion. My father remembers watching his father do this knowing he was not a well man. It was heart wrenching for him.

Since my father and his family were orthodox Jews, they attended synagogue in his town every Sabbath. He described the building as very large and very beautiful. When the Germans came to his town, he remembers them coming into the synagogue, taking the Torah Scroll out of the building into the courtyard and then proceeding to trample on the scroll and then to tear it to pieces. My father, my grandfather and the other orthodox men of the synagogue watched in horror as their foes desecrated and destroyed the Word of God. In the Jewish faith, if the Torah touches the ground, it is no longer usable and must be destroyed by fire. They stood in shock and wondered how God could allow these Nazis to do this to His Word. They were crying out to God to cut off their hands and feet to stop them from doing what they were doing. Many of the orthodox men that witnessed this act turned away from God as a result. They were disheartened and lost faith.

The Germans entered Poland in 1939. Prior to this invasion, the Jews of the town of Plonsk lived and worked intermingled with the Polish people of the town. Day by day, family-by-family, the Germans rounded up the Jews, took them from their homes and placed them in a Nazi-secured, closed off part of town (a ghetto). They had to leave their homes with little or none of their belongings. Two and three families were forced to

live in one apartment. Very little food was allowed into the ghetto to feed the Jewish people forced to live there. They were required to wear a yellow patch, in the shape of a Jewish star, identifying them as Jews. The Nazis would frequently beat and harass and even kill many Jewish people at random. Under these conditions, the Jews were forced to do hard labor for the Germans. Many Jews died in the ghetto either by the gun or by the terrible living conditions forced upon them. In the ghetto they had the opportunity to bury their dead in the Jewish cemeteries. This occurred from the years 1939 to 1942.

In 1942, the Germans closed the ghetto in my father's town. All the remaining Jews, my father's family included, were taken to the train station. They were forced into cattle cars and transported to the Auschwitz-Birkenau Concentration Camp. This concentration camp was on the border between Poland and Germany. Birkenau was on the Polish side and Auschwitz was on the German side. My dad was appalled that Poland allowed the Nazis to build the camp and the crematorium.

My father frequently remembers and shares the story of a young woman named Shalamas. They went to school together. Her parents had a store next to his grandmother Lazenski's fruit store. When the Germans would go from store to store to find out who the Jews were, they would not believe that Shalamas was Jewish. My dad speaks of how very, very beautiful she was. She had blonde hair and blue eyes. She looked like she was part of the German "Arian race". They did finally throw Shalamas into the cattle cars with my father and the rest of the Jews. My dad said when she came out of the cattle car, she was not the same. Shalamas did not survive long after that cattle car ride. My dad constantly repeats

how beautiful Shalomas was and how the Nazis destroyed such beauty.

When they got off the cattle cars after the transport, my father says there were two lines forming. One line he says was for life and labor and the other line was for death and extermination. At this point, he, his brother and his sister were separated from their parents. Both his parents, who were 40 years old, were too old to work, so they were sent to their death. My dad could not describe the devastating effect that this experience had on him and his siblings. He shared an account of a 36-year-old man who was pleading with the German soldiers to let him get on the line for labor. This man could not understand why he was on the line for death. He felt he was strong enough to work. All his pleading was to no avail. The German soldiers would not let him get off the line he was on and he went to his death. Then my father added, those on the line for labor would work just to die from disease or lack of food. The fate of every Jew was the same in the eyes of the Nazis.

My eldest son Jason Andrew Webster wrote the following poem for an assignment he had in the sixth grade.

### ***“My People, My Blood”***

*My people were murdered. By a man who had no heart. For my people, my blood. Thinking of himself and power. He wiped out a nation. And left my people with nothing but. A nightmare of torture and death. Their families killed before their eyes. But some still live with that memory. And wish they were like the members. Of my people, my blood.*

I was totally amazed that he sat at the dining room table and wrote this poem in literally less than ten minutes. I was amazed because I feel at his age of

11 years old, not knowing that much about the Holocaust, Jason captured the essence of how my dad felt about the Holocaust. My dad often asks throughout his life, “why did I survive, and the rest of my family didn’t?” He has a deep sense of guilt that he lived, and his family members died horrible deaths. Many survivors of the Holocaust have this same sense of guilt.

In spite of my dad’s feelings, he did survive the Holocaust. When he entered Auschwitz, my dad, along with all the other Jews in the camp, stood on a long line to get a number tattooed on his arm. They all considered it “the death number” thinking the end was near once given the tattoo. He was no longer referred to by his birth name but by the number on his arm. It was just another way for the Nazis to dehumanize the Jews. The number on my dad’s arm is 84420. If you add up these numbers, the total is 18. In the Jewish faith, the number “18” is the numerical value of the Hebrew word “chai” which means “life”. My mother always told my dad that he survived the concentration camp because he was given that number on his arm.

At the end of the war, when the Germans knew they were defeated, many of the soldiers dropped their weapons and ran away so as not to be captured by the allied forces. Many of the Jews in the camp took up the guns and started killing any German soldiers they could. My dad said he was too weak to do that. Many of the Jews also raided nearby homes outside the gates of the camp and stole food and jewelry from the people in the homes. My dad did not do this either. He said, “stealing from the Germans will not bring my parents and siblings back from the dead.” He did not want anything that belonged to the Germans.

As the war was coming to an end, the Nazis took my dad and the other prisoners from Auschwitz-Birkenau in Poland to Mauthausen Concentration Camp in Austria by train. They were finally liberated from Mauthausen in 1945. In Austria, the liberated prisoners were given food and a place to sleep. The Austrians took the guns away from the prisoners who were killing the Germans. They said, “it was enough killing”. They wanted to stop the killing. From Austria, those liberated were taken to Munich where the Red Cross was going to help them find any surviving family.

After a few days in Munich, General Dwight David Eisenhower arrived to see first-hand what had happened. My dad saw Eisenhower and listened to him as he spoke to all the liberated prisoners. Eisenhower told them that the horror is now over, and that it is time to build a new life and to look to the future.

My husband and I went to visit the Holocaust Museum in Washington D.C. Engraved on one of the walls as you enter the museum is a quote by Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower. It is as follows: “The things I saw begs description... The visual evidence and the verbal testimony of starvation, cruelty and bestiality were so overpowering... I made the visit deliberately, in order to be in a position to give first-hand evidence of these things if ever, in the future, there develops a tendency to charge these allegations to propaganda.”

Thank God for Eisenhower’s insight and interest in the plight of the Jew after the war to be a source of living, “outside” proof that the Holocaust really did happen. This book is a source of living, “inside” proof that the Holocaust really did happen. It is the account of my father’s horrific experience in the Holocaust and the effect on him and his offspring.

# T H E FAMILY

## def • i • ni • tions

By Joseph Shulam

**F**or more than a decade, I have been teaching that the most significant victim of the 20th Century were not the 37 million casualties of World War I nor the 70-85 million people who were killed in World War II. The biggest and the most significant number of casualties were the families that were destroyed not only by wars, but by divorce, abandonment, abuse and the like. I am old enough to remember well my family life. Far from being perfect, it was a family. It was a tribe. It was a bonded cooperative of care for the branches and the buds (children), and each branch was an extension of the main root of grandparents, uncles, first cousins, second cousins, third cousins, nieces, and nephews. There were the celebrations and the tragedies that united the whole family, clan, tribe, corporation, or whatever you want to call this conglomerate of people who love each other and some who love each other and can't stand each other at the same time. Yes, the Shulam tribe, the family, La Cosa Nostra! This was most evident when there was a tragedy, a death in the family, an attack on the family, a

real need in the family. The hardship moments were the demonstration of what a family ought to be—a small society of mutual responsibility. A bunch in which everyone knows each other for the good, the bad, and the ugly, and yet everyone one feels responsibility and indebtedness to be in touch, to be concerned, to help in every way possible, and to fight for turf, honor and respect, when it was deserved and sometimes also when it was not deserved; A FAMILY.

Allow me to take you on a short semantic tour of the Bible with three terms that the Word of God uses to describe the family.

**Shevet (“Tribe”)** used in the Hebrew Bible 190 times. This first term was the primary unit of social and territorial organization in Israel. The tribes bore the names of the twelve sons of Jacob/Israel, with Joseph divided into Manasseh and Ephraim. Their varied histories are as complex as the history of the emergence and settlements of Israel itself. Although, as the nomenclature shows, a person's tribal identity was important—and in wartime the military levy was on a

tribal basis—yet, in terms of practical social impact on ordinary life, the tribe was the least significant of the circles of kinship within which someone lived. The secondary and tertiary subdivisions of the social structure were both more socially relevant as well as closer to what we could recognize as a meaningful “family” structure.

**Mishpacha (“Clan”)**. This second term is used in the Hebrew Bible 300 times. It is also the word used in modern Hebrew for family.

I want to start with the word mishpacha (משפחה) because it is the word most commonly used today in the Hebrew and even in the Jewish (Yiddish) language. In most English and other European languages this Hebrew word is translated as “family.” Looking through the Hebrew Bible we can see that this word can be used as a specific single family but also as a group of families – i.e. a tribe or a clan. If we analyze this word in a sociological way, we see that the word mishpacha is used normally as a relationship established through the

The best example of this is taken from a very interesting story in Numbers 36:1-12. We learn from this story the reason why it was so important to have orderly marriages in Israel. It was for the preservation of Israel's system of the division and inheritance of the land given by the LORD to each tribe and family in Israel.

“Then Moses commanded the children of Israel according to the word of the LORD, saying: ‘What the tribe of the sons of Joseph speaks is right. This is

of Zelophehad; for Mahlah, Tirzah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Noah, the daughters of Zelophehad, were married to the sons of their father's brothers. They were married into the families of the children of Manasseh the son of Joseph, and their inheritance remained in the tribe of their father's family.’” (Numbers 36:5–12 NKJV)

What we learn from this text is that mishpacha (משפחה) is a unit of people who are recognized by the society as kinfolk. Family is a group of people (mainly a man, a woman and children) who are related by a social agreement

to note that some of the clans (families) that we encounter in the later books were clans / families that were not recorded in the census of the book of Numbers. Examples of two of these clans / families are the Matrite clan that King Saul was from (1 Samuel 10:21), and also mentioned later on, the Ephrathite clan related to the family or clan of King David (1 Samuel 10:21). It is clear from these two clan names that they are based not on progeny but on geography. Like today, we have families called Tarablus because they came from Tripoli in Libya or Syria. We have families called Warshawsky because they originated in Warsaw, Poland. The Ephrathite clan came from Bethlehem in Judea whose more ancient name was Ephrat.

The above point relates to the second major feature of the mishpacha — its territorial identity. Today, in the West, the territorial identity of a family has melted down. My wife was born in Florida, with two parents from Texas, who lived in Arkansas when she was a toddler, and in Tennessee when she was in elementary school, and in Ohio when she was in high school. In ancient Israel, the territorial identity of the family was closely related to the territory that the clan / family / tribe received when the land was parcellated in the days of Joshua the son of Nun.

The clearest evidence for this is found in the ancient tribal boundary lists. (Please see the following texts: Josh. 13:15, and passim; cf. Num. 33:54).

**Beit-av (“the Father's House”).** I was surprised to find that this third term is used 140 times in the Hebrew Bible. Its first use is related to Abraham: “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.’” (Genesis 12:1 NKJV)

*Because people married young, the head of the household could preside over three generations of his family. The head of the household could be over several families of two generations each.*

what the LORD commands concerning the daughters of Zelophehad, saying, “Let them marry whom they think best, but they may marry only within the family of their father's tribe.” So the inheritance of the children of Israel shall not change hands from tribe to tribe, for every one of the children of Israel shall keep the inheritance of the tribe of his fathers. And every daughter who possesses an inheritance in any tribe of the children of Israel shall be the wife of one of the family of her father's tribe, so that the children of Israel each may possess the inheritance of his fathers. Thus, no inheritance shall change hands from one tribe to another, but every tribe of the children of Israel shall keep its own inheritance.’ Just as the LORD commanded Moses, so did the daughters

accepted and approved by God and by the community. Note from the case of the daughters of Zelophehad that they were given an approval from God to inherit the land of their father, but it was dictated by God and Moses whom they can marry that would be acceptable to the community of Israel. It is this kinship relationship factor that lies behind the motive for the supportive role of the mishpacha in the social structure of the community. The family had a two or three-fold, social and economic importance. Families made up clans, and clans made up tribes. In Numbers 26, we find 60 clans in Israel. If we count the numbers, it would show that some of these clans that joined together making up each tribe would have comprised very large numbers of people. It is important

The “father’s house” was an extended family, composed of all the descendants of a single living ancestor, the head of the household, who was called, rosh-beit-av (ראש בית אב). The “father’s house” included the grandfathers, the married daughters, their families, the slaves and their families, and workers who lived with the family.

Because people married young, the head of the household could preside over three generations of his family. The head of the household could be over several families of two generations each. The head of the household could also have more than one wife, like Abraham, Jacob, and many of the Old Testament leaders had. The New Testament also has several households who received the Good News globally which means the whole household heard the Good News, accepted it and was baptized the same day. The two best examples of this are of two non-Jewish households: “There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian Regiment, a devout man and one who feared God with all his household who gave alms generously to the people and prayed to God always. About the ninth hour of the day he saw clearly in a vision an angel of God coming in and saying to him, ‘Cornelius!’” (Acts 10:1–3 NKJV)

The second example of significance is also from the book of Acts, from the story of Paul and his companion being put in jail in the city of Philippi in Asia Minor: “So they (Paul and Barnabas) said (to the jailer), ‘Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.’ Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. And he took them the

same hour of the night and washed their stripes. And immediately he and all his family were baptized. Now when he had brought them into his house, he set food before them; and he rejoiced, having believed in God with all his household.” (Acts 16:31–34 NKJV)

Now the question that comes up in this case is how big were the households in the Hebrew Bible, and how big were these households in the New Testament?

First, about the New Testament, we have several mentions of “household” that were or became disciples of Yeshua. The implications of this are far-reaching relating to evangelism, outreach and the sheer numerical significance of the disciples of the Messiah in the early community.

**John 4:46 – 53**, “a certain nobleman whose son was sick at Capernaum... inquired of them the hour when he got better. And they said to him, ‘Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.’ So, the father knew that it was at the same hour in which Jesus said to him, ‘Your son lives.’ And he himself believed, and his whole household.”

**Acts 11:14**, “who will tell you words by which you and all your household will be saved.”

**Acts 16:15**, “And when she and her household were baptized, she begged us, saying, ‘If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay.’ So, she persuaded us.”

**Acts 16:31**, “So they said, ‘Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.’”

*Growth would happen by births, acquiring wives for sons, adoptions, attraction of resident workers and resident craftsmen (gerim and toshavim), and by purchase of slave.*

Acts 16:34, “Now when he had brought them into his house, he set food before them; and he rejoiced, having believed in God with all his household.”

**Acts 18:8**, “Then Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his household. And many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed and were baptized.”

**Rom. 16:10-11**, “Greet Apelles, approved in Christ. Greet those who are of the household of Aristobulus. Greet Herodion, my countryman. Greet those who are of the household of Narcissus who are in the Lord.”

**1Cor. 1:11**, “For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by

1. This is a major weakening factor in the structure of the family and in the ability to keep the children and the next generations close enough to really have a serious impact on their values and faith. The Arab / Islamic communities succeed much better to keep their children close to the patriarchal structure and in their faith because of the “household” factor that is kept in those communities.

2. This seems to be different from the scheme of Genesis that says: Gen. 2:24 “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

those of Chloe’s household, that there are contentions among you.”

**1Cor. 1:16**, “Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas. Besides, I do not know whether I baptized any other.”

**1Cor. 16:15**, “I urge you, brethren—you know the household of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have devoted themselves to the ministry of the saints.”

**Gal. 6:10**, “Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.”

**Eph. 2:19**, “Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God. . . .”

**Phil. 4:22**, “All the saints greet you, but especially those who are of Caesar’s household.”

In our modern times, the family is a nucleus comprising a father, mother and their children along with grandparents. The extended family today rarely includes uncles, aunts and cousins because the larger family rarely lives in a close enough proximity to have a meaningful community aspect. For this reason, it is difficult to speak of a “household” in our western culture today. Most of the time, we live in homes that are one family of a father, a mother and children.

If you visit Israel and the Arab villages in Judea and Samaria, you will see these very big homes several levels high—big, beautiful, with modern architecture, elevators and gardens. These are one family/household homes. In the Arab culture, the big family—the grandparents, the children and their families, the grandchildren and

even greatgrandchildren—all live in the same house. They are a household – *beit-av* –in the biblical sense of the word “household.”

So, when we think of a household in the Biblical culture, we must consider that the household would consist of several nuclear (two-generation) families and (with average fertility even under monogamy) would be a substantial number of people. It is likely that a household (*beit-av*) could have comprised some 50–100 persons residing in one building or courtyard with several buildings encircled by a fence. The Biblical story of Gideon, though married with teenage sons and servants of his own, lived under the authority and the protection of his father, Joash, and his house (Judg. 6:11, 27, 30ff; 8:20). The household of Micah the Ephraimite occupied several dwelling houses and could muster a contingent of men. (Judg. 18:14, 19, 28f.).

It is important to note that the *beit-av* in Israel was reckoned through the male line and was patrilineal. When a woman married, she left her “father’s house” and went to live with the family of her husband. Growth would happen by births, acquiring wives for sons, adoptions, attraction of resident workers and resident craftsmen (*gerim* and *toshavim*), and by purchase of slaves. Conversely, a *beit-av* could shrink, even to extinction, through deaths in war or famine, or in a lack of sons because daughters would marry into other households.

### More Terms Used in the Bible to Denote Some Kind of Family Relationship

Kinship terms in the Israelite family were used sometimes for both immediate blood relatives in the family and for wider relationships both familial as well as within the context of a teacher and

student. Besides for immediate family members, the use of “father,” “mother” and “son” were used for other broader relationships among students and teachers, fellow members of a military group, fellows or sisters in a social circle or members of the same fraternity. The same is true for the feminine terms like “mother” and “sister”.

Terms like *dōd* and *dōdah* refer to the brothers and sisters of the father or mother, i.e. an uncle (father’s or mother’s brother, *dōd*), or an aunt (the father or mother’s sister, *dōdah*). This terminology could be vague at times, but the relationships themselves in the extended family were carefully regulated. There were prohibitions on certain degrees of kinship for marriage purposes (Lev. 18:6–18; 20:11–14, 19–21). The concern was for sexual ethics and limitation of marital relationships.

### Social Functions of the Family for the Larger Community

The conquest of the land of Canaan by Joshua Ben-Nun and the Israelites who came up from the Sinai desert after 40 years of wandering in the wilderness brought a totally different social structure into the land of Canaan. The social structure of the inhabitants of the land was “city states” of different ethnic groups. We hear of seven different nations that lived in the land of Canaan during the conquest period when the Israelites crossed the Jordan River.

The city-state culture had a very stratified social and economic structure. Each city-state had a king or a ruler from its own ethnic origin. Their cities were fortified with the nobility living inside the fort (within the walls). The local king or ruler and his court (nobility and military brass) were supported by the mass of taxpaying tenant peasants who lived outside the walls of the fortress.

*The family, the mishpacha, was of great importance for the survival of each individual and branch because a person could, and in fact did, count on his relatives to help him to be established in the new land.*

This power-at-the-top, poverty-at-the-bottom pattern was accurately portrayed and warned against in Samuel's speech to monarchy-seeking Israelites (1 Sam 8:10–18). The Israelites had the Torah of Moses and the social system based on a broad equality of kinship groups (tribes and clans). In the beginning, they were without a centralized, elite powerbase. Even after the crowning of Saul as the first King of Israel, there was resistance to a centralized government of one king over all of Israel with one law and one loyalty. After the third king of Israel, Solomon, we see the strength of the tribal (family-based) allegiance that ended in splitting the nation of Israel into two parts. This breakdown in the family of Israel's national identity has not healed even to our own day. The *beit-av* and the *mishpacha* in which the individual found his or her identity as a member of the

covenant people of Israel has survived even after two thousand years of exile and dispersion over the face of the whole world. For this reason, it is important for us to understand and to appreciate the concept of *mishpacha* (family) and of the *beit-av* (household) and learn of the relationships and obligations that are important for the saving of our communities and next generation.

#### **Socioeconomics of the Family in the Bible and in the Jewish Tradition**

An accurate description of the family (or at least of what an extended family ought to be) is an extended association of a protective union of blood-related members. The role of the extended family was primarily protective and restorative for the household that constituted the extended family. This, in fact, was the essential nature of the "kinsman-redeemer" (*go'el*, the savior or redeemer). We can see this role in the book of Ruth and also in the instructions of the Torah in Leviticus 25:47-49, "Now if a sojourner or stranger close to you becomes rich, and one of your brethren who dwells by him becomes poor, and sells himself to the stranger or sojourner close to you, or to a member of the stranger's family, after he is sold he may be redeemed again. One of his brothers may redeem him; or his uncle or his uncle's son may redeem him; or anyone who is near of kin to him in his family may redeem him; or if he is able, he may redeem himself."

In Europe and later in the middle of the 19th century when Jews first immigrated to the USA, the Jewish communities observed this rule and Jewish families helped their kinsman to establish themselves in their new country. The family, the *mishpacha*, was of great importance for the survival of each individual and branch because a person could, and in fact did, count on his

relatives to help him to be established in the new land. The relatives were required to act as a *go'el* (redeemer kinsman) for their family members that were in need. It was a necessity of survival in the New World. The responsibility starts with a brother, moves to uncle, cousin, and then to "any blood relative." Everybody did what he could do, and, collectively, the problems inside the family were solved. Today, you help a cousin; tomorrow you may be helped by your uncle or brother-in-law. This is really the biblical concept of a redeemer (*go'el*).

There is a very interesting story, although contrived by Joab, King David's chief of staff, that demonstrates how this idea of a kinsman redeemer worked:

"And when the woman of Tekoa spoke to the king, she fell on her face to the ground and prostrated herself, and said, 'Help, O king!' Then the king said to her, 'What troubles you?' And she answered, 'Indeed I am a widow, my husband is dead. Now your maidservant had two sons; and the two fought with each other in the field, and there was no one to part them, but the one struck the other and killed him. And now the whole family has risen up against your maidservant, and they said, "Deliver him who struck his brother, that we may execute him for the life of his brother whom he killed; and we will destroy the heir also." So they would extinguish my ember that is left, and leave to my husband neither name nor remnant on the earth.' Then the king said to the woman, 'Go to your house, and I will give orders concerning you.'" (2 Samuel 14:4–8)

This idea of the *go'el* (kinsman redeemer) is of major importance for the understanding of the role of Yeshua in our own redemption. Therefore, the savior (*go'el*) had to be from the family of Israel (a Jew). The most important horizontal relationships that human

beings will have in their lifetime are family relationships. The breakdown of the family in our modern world puts all of humanity in danger of extinction.

### Issues of Jurisdiction in the Biblical Family

In certain cases, the father (the head of the family and the household) had authority to act judicially on certain family problems based on the authority of the Torah. These included marriage and divorce, matters relating to slaves and parental discipline.

the civil elders for public exposure of the rebellion of the child.

The most important aspect of the role of the family in ancient Israel was how it served as the vehicle of continuity for the faith, history, law, and traditions of the nation. The family in Israel and in the New Testament as well had one major objective in relationship to the children and the next generation, namely, the preservation of Israel's "national assets." These "national assets" were Israel's relationship to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel; the observance and

shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates."

As you can see this text is fully engaged with the importance of the family and the children. It is not a theoretical, theological statement, but the most important theological principle in the whole Bible, and the objective of it is practical concerning the children and the family.

As well as teaching the law itself, the father was to give explanations to his child concerning particular events, institutions, or memorials. There are five such question-and-answer texts: Exod. 12:26ff; 13:14ff; Josh. 4:6ff, 21-23; and Deut. 6:20-24. These passages have to do with a special Biblical didactic principle that involves the children asking questions and the Father answering their questions. It is not forcing the children to learn but engaging their curiosity to ask: "When your son asks you ... you shall say ..." These texts and instruction are not liturgical in form. They are natural; a result of the action and the deeds that the family is doing. The living examples of the family offer an educational opportunity that is a result of the desire of the children to understand what the family is doing.

A very important function of the father and the husband in the Israelite family is the ability to annul the vow that a daughter or a wife swears. This is an especially important rule from the Torah

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Of course, now, in the 21st century, the issue of parental discipline has been limited by the laws of state in most western countries of the world. Even in biblical times, the head of the family (the patriarch of the family) could not act on suspicion, and he had to investigate and examine before applying parental discipline even if it would not be a physical punishment on the child. We can see that the Scriptures both give permission to exercise parental discipline as well as instructions and limits on it (Deut. 24:10f.; Judg. 6:30f.; 2 Sam. 14:7). The law of the rebellious son (Deut. 21:18-21) instructs the father, and through him the whole family, that any disciplinary action ought to be taken only after the family has done all it can, and the matter has come before

preservation of the Torah; and the continuity of faith and community in the best way that the LORD has prescribed for all of our generations. The father of the family was obligated to teach the Torah of the LORD to his children, not only as a duty of parenthood, but indeed as a condition of his own enjoyment of the gift of the land (Deut. 6:7; 11:19; 32:46ff). It is interesting that so many of the main commandments of the Torah and of the Holidays are geared to keeping the interest of the children and being a blessing to the younger generations. We see this in one of the major texts—a text that could be called "The Creed of Israel" and ought to be also of every Jew or non-Jew that believes in God and believes in Yeshua: Deut. 6:4-9, "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one! You

## *Marriage in the Torah falls under the category of family laws. In the Hebrew Bible, most marriages were arranged between the families.*

that sets the hierarchic order of the family. It is the same hierarchy that we see in the New Testament. Today, with the social movements that are taking place in Western Society, it is doubly important to point out these biblical principles:

1. “But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.” (1 Corinthians 11:3)

2. “Or if a woman makes a vow to the LORD, and binds herself by some agreement while in her father’s house in her youth, and her father hears her vow and the agreement by which she has bound herself, and her father holds his peace, then all her vows shall stand, and every agreement with which she has bound herself shall stand. But if her father overrules her on the day that he hears, then none of her vows nor her agreements by which she has bound herself shall stand; and the LORD will release her, because her father overruled her.” (Numbers 30:3–5 NKJV)

### **MARRIAGE**

Marriage is one of those universal institution. The Word of God in every one of the categories—the Law of Moses, the

Prophets and the Writings (The Tanakh) and the New Testament—all deal with and instruct about marriage and divorce. Marriage in the Torah falls under the category of family laws. In the Hebrew Bible, most marriages were arranged between the families. We see this in the case of Isaac and Rebecca in the clearest way. However, there are some famous marriages that were not arranged by the families. That of David and Bathsheba is a good example of a marriage that was not pre-arranged by the family. The Torah speaks of three ways to get married:

1. By purchase – you buy the wife from her father (family). The best example of this is Abraham’s servant Eliezer who goes up to the house of Laban in Haran to find a bride for Isaac. He takes several camels with gold and silver to give to Laban for Rebecca to come with him and to marry Isaac.

2. By contract (a writing of divorcement) or in modern English it is called “a pre-nuptial agreement.” In Hebrew, it is called a Ketubah. The text that this is based on is from Deuteronomy 24:1, “When a man takes a wife and marries her, and it happens that she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some uncleanness in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, puts it in her

hand, and sends her out of his house...”

3. By the consummation of the marriage. This is based on several stories and texts from the Bible, but the most commonly quoted is from Deuteronomy 22:13-14, “If any man takes a wife, and goes in to her, and detests her, and charges her with shameful conduct, and brings a bad name on her, and says, ‘I took this woman, and when I came to her I found she was not a virgin...’”

It is clear from this text that the consummation of the marriage is a commitment to marriage of this woman. The expectation of the marriage is that the woman is a virgin. This is still true for both Jewish and Muslim marriages even unto this day.

In the Christian world these three ways to get married still exist:

1. The giving of a ring (normally gold and sometimes with diamonds) is the act of purchase. This is what those words uttered in the marriage ceremony mean: “With this ring I do thee wed!”

2. The vows exchanged between the bridegroom and the bride are a verbal contract that has replaced the written contract that is still in vogue in both Jewish and Muslim weddings.

3. Of course, the consummation of the marriage is also there, although not spoken of in public. However, if there is no consummation of the marriage, the marriage has not really taken place legally and it can be annulled.

4. In Jewish marriages, there is one last event that takes place in every stream

3. Eph. 5:22, “Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.” Col. 3:18, “Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.”

4. Of course, if people want to find reasons why these principles don’t apply for us today, it would not be too difficult or too sophisticated to bring logical arguments with good humanistic principles that would justify ignoring and rejecting these old but important biblical principles. There are no limits to human imagination and ability to justify.

5. There were no church buildings for worship until emperor Constantine in the 4th Century A.D.

of Judaism. The breaking of a glass under the foot of the bridegroom. This is done after the bridegroom takes a vow based on Psa. 137:5, “If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget its skill!” This unique Jewish practice in marriage is of great importance, and it demonstrates how seriously Jewish men and women take the destruction of the Temple of God in Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 A.D.

Although most of the marriages in Israel were arranged by the family, there are exceptions, like in a case of rape, or in the case of two free people who engaged in sex out of their free will, and by the Torah they are then automatically married and cannot ever divorce. Another kind of marriage in the Torah was taking a wife from captives of war. (See Deuteronomy 21:10-14.)

## AUTHORITY

In Israel, authority and leadership for all practical purposes at the local level lie in the hands of elders who were almost certainly the senior males from each household. Whether consciously imitating this pattern or not, the early Christian movement entrusted its leadership (under the apostles) to “elders” in each church (always referred to in the plural in the NT), and these seem to have normally been drawn from the functioning heads of households whose own family life was exemplary. (See the guidelines for appointing overseers, elders — probably synonyms — and deacons, in 1 Tim. 3:2–7, 12; Titus 1:6.) It is interesting that women are mentioned as heads of households (e.g., Lydia, Nympha, and Priscilla are always named before their husbands). They are not explicitly called heads of the churches which met in their homes, but it seems not at all improbable that they would have been.

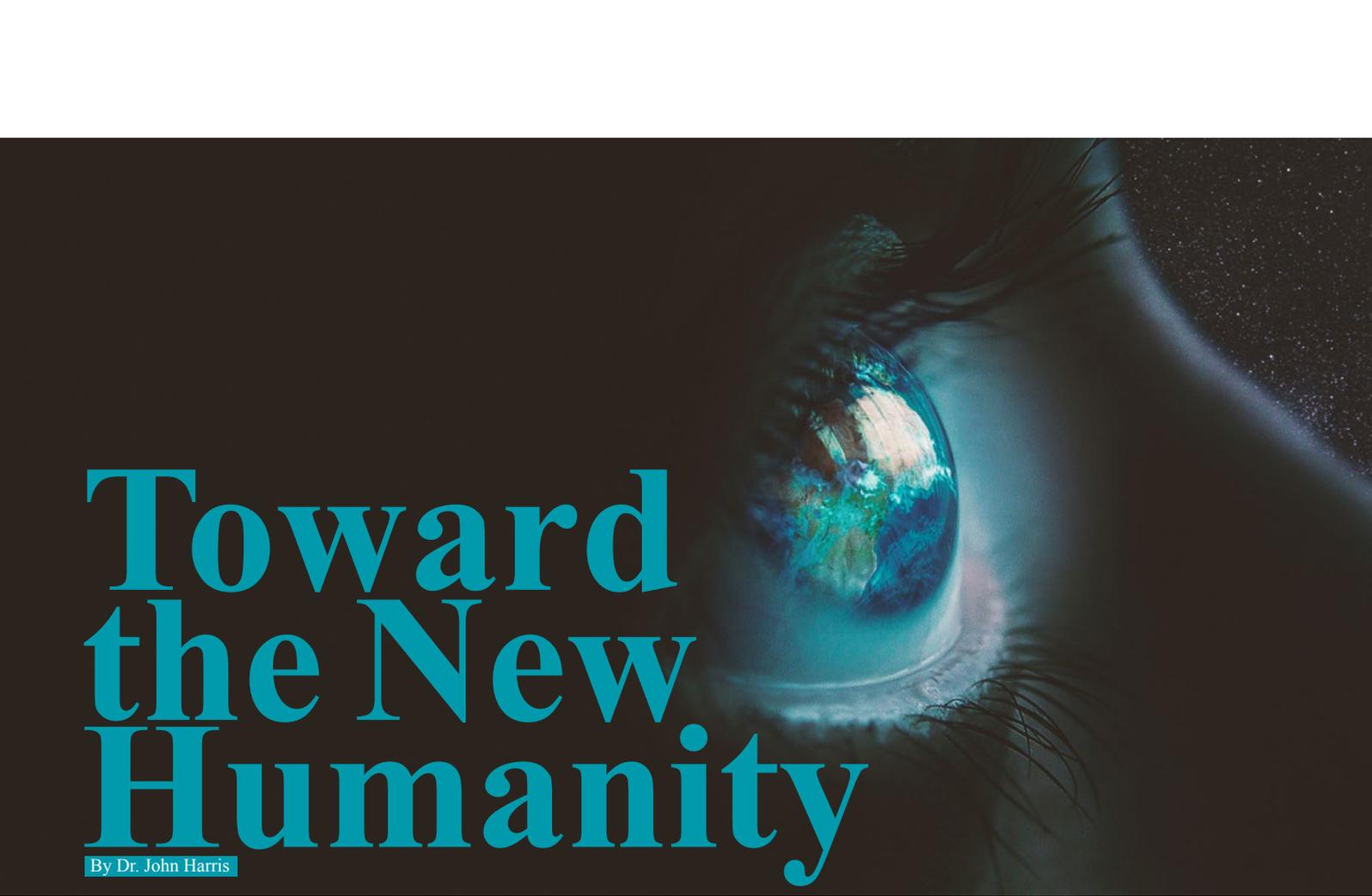
## WORSHIP AND TEACHING

The Israelite family was the location of key elements in the continuity of Israel’s faith, including Passover, circumcision, and the teaching of the Law. Similarly, in the New Testament, much of the Church’s functioning life took place in homes. This included the preaching of the gospel (Acts 5:42; 20:20); administering baptism (Acts 16:15; 1 Cor. 1:16); breaking bread, probably referring to the Lord’s Supper (Acts 2:46, 20:8); and systematic teaching (Acts 20:20). In this last text, Paul recalls that his prolonged teaching ministry in Ephesus was conducted both in public and in homes. The household codes envisage not only the family-centered nature of the Church, but also the home as the place of Christian education for wives (1 Cor. 14:35) and children (Eph. 6:4).

Finally, with all this wealth of familial characteristic and their Old-Testament background, it is not surprising that after the 4th century A.D., the Christians also took over the metaphorical use of family as a picture for the whole Church. It was a part of the replacement theology that was adopted by the Christian Church to cut all relationship with the Jewish people and the Jewish nation. In the Bible, Israel as a nation is the only one called *beit-Yahweh*, “house/family of the LORD” (Num. 12:7; Jer. 12:7; Hos. 8:1; and Mic. 4:2 where the Temple probably stands for the whole land and people of God). The church, as the organic continuum of Israel and not a replacement of Israel, could be called metaphorically the house of God (Eph. 2:19; Gal. 6:10; Heb. 3:2–6; 1 Tim. 3:15; 1 Pet. 4:17).

In conclusion, the family is the greatest victim of modernity, and the 20th and 21st centuries have brought major changes to the way families see themselves and are seen in western society. We must

remember that the FAMILY is the molecule that humanity is built upon. The family consisted of one man and one woman when God created Adam and Eve in the Genesis of our world. This is the only way that humanity can continue to procreate and exist according to God’s design. As human beings, we each have the divine characteristic of the power of imagination. We can imagine, invent, develop and create new ideas, systems and technology because we are created in the image and form of our Creator. There were chapters in human history where humans imagined a tall building that will reach the sky. Humans gathered around this great idea and united and all spoke the same language and began construction of the tower. It was a great idea imagined and created by human beings—a wonderful accomplishment of noble ideas like unity and uniformity, ideas that many governments have tried hard to accomplish with lofty aspirations. However, human beings forget this universe has an Owner, the Creator, the LORD God of Israel. The final word and the outcome of great plans made by mice and men are ultimately in HIS hands. God the Creator of all in both Heaven and Earth is still in control of HIS universe. If the family falls apart, the only ones who will suffer are our children and our children’s children. Let us guard, preserve, protect and stand with the FAMILY—with our Families—and raise our children under the guidance and admonition of the LORD GOD of ISRAEL and HIS INSTRUCTIONS. Men, remember that a disciple who does not take care of his family is worse than an infidel. (1 Tim. 5:8, “But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.”) Let us protect and stand by our families! The family is the only guarantee that humanity will continue to exist as we have known it since the dawn of history.



# Toward the New Humanity

By Dr. John Harris

## Overview

God created the father and mother of all humanity to relate to them in the community of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. But Adam and Eve chose to go their independent way relying on knowledge, thus placing themselves outside of the blessed life surrendered to God. Following suit, we, their progeny, struggle to find our independent way by our reason. Believing we have a rational GPS between our ears, we trust it to guide us individually and collectively. We'll see the consequences early in Genesis and then through the struggles of a chosen people trying to be a people of God. When Jesus came, he described the type of people who could hear God's voice, the beatitude people – God's new humanity.

## God's Favorites

What kind of person does God favor? There are examples of individuals He blessed in the Old Testament—Abraham, Joseph, and David. We can use the beatitudes as a checklist describing those whom God blesses.

- Poor in spirit - No inflated view of self
- Mournful - Sorry for his sins and the misery of others
- Meek - Quietly productive
- Hungry and thirsty for righteousness - Driven to correct injustice
- Merciful - Quick to forgive
- Pure in heart - Not lustful, wanting the best for others, not calculating how to take advantage of others

- Peacemaker - Leaving no wake of disturbance; resolving conflict
- Persecuted and vilified - Harmed by word or deed for doing what is right

## From Potential to Failure

In contrast, the lives of Adam's and Eve's early descendants help us to see ourselves in our natural state. Today, marriage and family counselors use genograms to help husbands and wives understand themselves and each other by looking back at two generations. Similarly, we can better understand our inherited human nature by reflecting on our earliest kinfolk in Genesis.

We'll begin by picturing humans from Adam and Eve to Abraham; then take a 10,000-foot view from Abraham to

*Rather than trying to make a certain race perfect, God chose from all nations a single people with certain dispositions.*

Christ. Except for only a few, all humans, including God's chosen people, never got it right. Rather than trying to make a certain race perfect, God chose from all nations a single people with certain dispositions.

God created our first parents as relational beings. Our ability to relate seems so natural; we don't consider it a special gift from God. Yet, most failures in life are due to the inability to relate. More people lose their jobs because of relationships rather than lack of skills. Years ago, I met a nun who had served in Mother Teresa's House of the Dying and served as a midwife in Africa. She had come to Birmingham for her Sabbatical to practice living with others to improve her ability to relate to others. I asked her why she needed such practice; she said living with another person is the hardest thing one will ever do in this life. If a nun from a close religious community needs to improve her relational ability, what about most of us living in a competitive, individualistic society?

If God had not made us relational beings, we could not love. As relational beings, we have the potential to love God and others. If we were only thinkers, we could not love.

Nevertheless, our first parents got off on the wrong foot when they chose to follow their human knowledge rather than to live in the divine community—relationship with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Everyone has repeated this mistake, and sadly, most humans never get over it. We believe we know what's best for us. We assume that we are rational individuals, and so, we think we need only our commonsense to manage our lives.

High intelligence helps us to know about things, but it does not help us understand ourselves or conform to God's will. Even the most intelligent people make big mistakes in life. God did not design us as autonomous individuals guided only by reason and knowledge. He created us to be relational beings—to live in communion with Him so that our will and thinking blend. If we die to ourselves to live in community with Him, He sees us through this world's chaos; we rest in Him, not tossed to and fro by this world's clashing currents.

### **Seeing Ourselves in Our Earliest Ancestors**

The first child of the first parents killed his brother out of jealousy. Then he extended his evil by building the first human government. Augustine compared this first murder driven by jealousy to the murder of Remus by Romulus, mythical founders of Rome. (See the endnote for Augustine's reflection on the jealousy of Cain for Able and Romulus for Remus.) Because of this endemic trait, one brother killed the other. Later in the Genesis story, Nimrod, the mighty hunter, built up Babylon and established Nineveh.

Babylon and Nineveh became the arch-foes of God's work with His chosen people. The Assyrians, whose capital was Nineveh, captured and deported the ten tribes of Israel in the Northern Kingdom. Later Babylon captured and exiled the Jews in the Southern Kingdom. John described Rome in Revelation as Babylon, the opposer of Christ's kingdom.

Cain had three later descendants who symbolize three major human preoccupations. Jabal represents the good life as dwelling in tents surrounded by his wealth—his flocks. Today's Jabal has a big house and is deeply invested in the stock market. Jubal is noted for playing the lyre and pipes, and he represents entertainment. In our affluence, we distract ourselves from our endless striving for more by constant entertainment. Tubal was the technologist, a forger of bronze and iron. Technology, based on science, multiplies our abilities to secure more of the good life.

There was another line of people from Adam and Eve other than Cain's descendants. Seth, their third son, replaced Abel. One of Seth's descendants, Enoch, so pleased God that He spared Enoch from suffering death and took Enoch to be with Him. Before the flood, the most notable of Seth's descendants, Noah was the only righteous man on earth. In Noah's day, humans had become so corrupt that God regretted making them. He ordered a flood to wipe the earth of all human and animal life.

After the flood, God started anew on a clean slate with Noah and his three sons - Japheth, Shem, and Ham. Japheth's descendants lived in Syria, Greece, Italy, and as far as Spain. We're likely Japheth's descendants. Ham's people lived in Canaan, Egypt, North Africa,

and Arabia. Shem's people clustered in Mesopotamia, around the Euphrates and Tigris rivers, and in southern Arabia.

The self-confident, proud people near Babylon decided to build a tower into the heavens to make themselves known. God did not want them to fulfill their human ambition, so, he confused their language. After this, humans have found it impossible to succeed in worldwide projects. We think in our language, thus, it is difficult for people with different languages to think alike. It is hard to imagine what the world would become if by working together, humans created a world to fit their desires and lusts. In Macbeth, Shakespeare describes life outside of communion with God.

*Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player*

*That struts and frets his hour upon the stage*

*And then is heard no more: it is a tale*

*Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,*

*Signifying nothing.*

## **A New People, a Chosen People**

Having seen humans continually trying to live independent of him, God adopted one people that would put him first over their inclinations. So, he went to Shem's people living along the east side of the Euphrates to call Abraham out of Ur, south of Babylon. He took Abraham from the most advanced place at that time in the ancient world to live among Ham's people in the Canaan outback. Here Abraham would become the original father of a chosen, blessed people—a light to all humankind. God put Abraham's descendants in Egypt as slaves under Ham's descendants for centuries.

After 430 years, God appointed Moses to lead them out. Paul says they were baptized into Moses in the cloud and the sea. As they went on, they ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink from the spiritual Rock following them, which was Christ. Despite these rich provisions, they did not live up to their destiny. These former slaves, saved from bondage, became idolaters and fell into sexual immorality. They put Christ, the Rock that followed them, to the test and grumbled in discontent. The adult men—baptized in the cloud and sea—failed to trust God, and they died before they reached the Promised Land.

Nevertheless, God gave them instructions on how to live as God's light in the dark world of Japheth and Ham. After wandering in the desert for 40 years, they came to the land of milk and honey, with wells they did not dig and fruit trees they did not plant. It was as if a noble, rich, kind man found a deserted, dirty baby in a ditch, picked it up, and bathed and royally clothed it, and provided the best education, but when the orphan came of age, he rejected his loving, generous father.

For a while, they lived in Canaan without a ruler; whenever they disobeyed God, they fell victim to their neighbors, God always sent them a savior to their rescue when they called on him. They became envious of their neighbor nations with a king and an established army. So, they asked for a king, apparently not realizing that they were trying to take care of themselves. They, like Adam and Eve, sought independence from God. Remember:

• Adam and Eve chose to go at it alone by human knowledge.

*In their respective roles, they became legalists, more focused on keeping the forms and ceremonies of the Law than becoming a people with God's heart.*

• Cain, the first murderer, formed the first human government separate from God's rule.

• Nimrod developed Babylon and built Nineveh, and both became opponents to God's people.

• Those living around Babylonians tried to reach the heavens independent of God through human cooperation and planning.

In a similar manner, God's chosen people decided to provide for their protection on their own by establishing over them a king with a standing army.

God gave them three kings. First was Saul who quickly went his way, even assuming at one point the role of priest. Then, God appointed a man after his heart, David. This king also made mistakes; but when confronted with them, he was sorry and repented, although he had to bear

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1. Of the Fratricidal Act of the Founder of the Earthly City, and the Corresponding Crime of the Founder of Rome by Augustine. (Fathers of the Church, The City of God, Book XV, Chapter 5, [www.newadvent.org/fathers/120115.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/120115.htm))



the consequences. Then Solomon, the richest and wisest man, merged all that David had conquered from the Euphrates to Egypt. Solomon's son, Rehoboam, lost it all, except for the tribe of Judah around Jerusalem, by one wrong decision. Again, we have a man led by his ego wanting to be the big man.

When Rehoboam announced more burdensome taxes, the northern tribes readied to revolt, and an ambitious man who was standing in the wings seized the moment to become their leader, Jeroboam. So God's chosen people split into two peoples—Judah in the south and Israel in the north—with their respective histories described through the reigns of their kings. Israel's kings and people often deserted God for the idols of the surrounding people. They got off on the wrong foot when Jeroboam made two golden calves, placing one in Dan and the other at Bethel. He used religion for political ends. Eventually, God sent the Israelites into cruel Assyrian captivity, never again to be a nation.

In the Southern Kingdom, most of the Jews, particularly the able, were deported to Babylon, staying 70 years. Upon their return to Jerusalem and the surrounding area, they never practiced idolatry again. Later, they built synagogues and focused on the scriptures. Different sects emerged, such as the super-religious Pharisees, the Sadducees, the scribes, and experts in the Law. In their respective roles, they became legalists, more focused on keeping the forms and ceremonies of the Law than becoming a people with God's heart. Thousands of years after the first humans were created as relational beings to live in community with God and other humans, the legalism of the Jews so distanced them from God that

they did not even recognize Him when he appeared as Jesus Christ. Jesus said they strained at gnats and swallowed camels.

### **Lesson for Us**

Why have I attempted this quick overview of God looking for a people to live in community with him? By the time Christ came, the Jewish religious leaders had let religious doctrines, practices, and form preoccupy them. Consequently, they had lost sight of becoming what God ultimately wanted them to be. They counted more on their physical descent from Abraham than on having his faith.

In the past, our fellowship believed that if we restored the forms and practices of the first-century church, then that would make us God's people. This dominating preoccupation led us away from being formed by the Holy Spirit into Godlikeness through communion with him.

With this article, I am illustrating that humanity from the beginning missed the mark, choosing to go its own way. Rich North America is disconnected from God, believing we made our own success through science and technology. Like our ancestors, we have come to trust our thinking more than to have a relationship with God.

So, let us take note of our tendency to trust in our intelligence and abilities. Let us worry about ourselves and our fellowship as Paul worried about his Galatian children, "my little children, for whom I am again in the anguish of childbirth until Christ is formed in you!"

There's a lot more to Netivyah than meets the eye; the Teaching From Zion magazine is only one of our outreach and humanitarian ministries. We invite you to connect with the other branches of our ministry.

### **Congregation**

Roeh Israel, v.v. "Shepherd of Israel," is a Messianic Jewish Congregation in Jerusalem. The Congregation is made up of followers of Yeshua, both Jews and non-Jews, who worship together in a traditional synagogue environment.

### **Humanitarian Aid**

There are many families in Israel, even entire sections of the population, who fall between the cracks. Hamotzi Food Distribution Center is a place that literally brings forth food for local needy families in Jerusalem. Without charities and organizations like Netivyah, they would not be able to put food on the table.

### **Publications**

Publishing is one of Netivyah's top priorities, as we see education as being central to our existence. Visit our website for previous issues of Teaching from Zion, as well as a selection of our books.

### **Radio Station**

Kol Ha'Yeshua ("The Voice of Salvation") is the Hebrew partner of "Trans World Radio" worldwide gospel radio network. We present the Good News to our Hebrew-speaking audience in the context of its Jewish and Hebrew culture.



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