

## Tree of Life Messianic Ministries

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**Message 11-7-09**  
**VaYera-And He Appeared**  
**Genesis 18:1-22:24**  
**2 Kings 4:1-37**  
**Revelation 12:3-6**

### Introduction

The title to this week's parsha is Vayera, "appear," which is what the Almighty does to Abraham, "in the plains of Mamre."<sup>1</sup>

### Genesis 21:1-6

**1** The LORD took note of Sarah as He had promised, and the LORD did for Sarah as He had spoken. **2** Sarah conceived and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken. **3** Abraham gave his newborn son, whom Sarah had borne him, the name of Isaac. **4** And when his son Isaac was eight days old, Abraham circumcised him, as God had commanded him. **5** Now Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. **6** Sarah said, "God has brought me laughter; everyone who hears will laugh with me."

Abraham did as the Almighty commanded and he circumcised his son Isaac on the eighth day. This has been done in Judaism since Biblical days though some question the value of circumcision and there are on-going differences of opinion. The bottom line is the Almighty told His children to do it. Whether we agree or not we are to do what the Almighty instructed us to do. I recently read an article by a Messianic Rabbi who said the Torah was a living, changing document. The problem with this is he was putting forth the concept that within Torah there were allowances for other beliefs like the keeping of Christmas, etc.

He was making allowances for Christians who struggle with keeping Torah. I can tell you from personal experience that even observant Jews struggle with keeping Torah. The idea is to try to keep Torah as best you can. This is all that the Holy One of Israel asks of His children. The Almighty does not give one set of rules for one child and another for another child. He makes allowances in order to bring His children into unity with Him but He does not permit His children to do as they please because there must be unity within the Body of Messiah. Without a

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<sup>1</sup> Torah with a Twist of Humor

common set of instructions to go by we wind up with everyone doing as they please. There are many parts to the Body of Messiah, and each one has their job, but they work together for the common good.

**Romans 12:4** For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, **5** so we, though many, are one body in Messiah, and individually members one of another.

This does not mean that we can do what we please and say the Torah changes. It has always been my belief and what I teach, that there is one set of teachings or instructions for everyone of us. To me it is not a matter of Christian or Jew or Judah and Ephraim, or physical Israel and spiritual Israel. For me there is one people, both physical and spiritual, who make up the Body of Messiah in Israel. In order to bring unity to the Body we have been given a set of Divine instructions to help us.

If everyone did as they pleased and decided that they did not want to go out of their way to follow the Almighty's Torah or make up their own Torah how does that bring us into unity? Moses worked for forty years to unite the twelve tribes into a unit and to bring order out of disorder. Israel went beyond the twelve tribes and had a mixed multitude in it. In some rabbinical commentaries they say it was the mixed multitude that sinned at the Golden Calf and not Israel but the truth is that when Moses came down from the mountain he punished all of Israel for this sin.

The Torah has always made allowances for taking in those who are not native born into Israel. Once an individual takes on worship of the Holy One of Israel, is immersed, and follows Torah they are part of Israel. With Ruth this was a little different, as there is no mention of immersion but let's see what she did say to her mother-in-law Naomi.

**Ruth 1:15** And she said, "See, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law." **16** But Ruth said, "Do not urge me to leave you or to return from following you. For where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God. **17** Where you die I will die, and there will I be buried. May the LORD do so to me and more also if anything but death parts me from you." **18** And when Naomi saw that she was determined to go with her, she said no more.

Ruth took upon herself the people of Israel and the God of Israel. This is a declaration of faith unlike any other. Ruth was a Moabites and according to the Almighty Israelites were not to marry anyone from Moab. Remember that Moab comes from the incestuous relationship between Lot and his daughters. One daughter bore Ammon and the other Moab. Yet in this passage we see that Ruth accepts the people of Israel and the God of Israel and she will eventually become an ancestor of King David and ultimately the Messiah Yeshua.

Would this have happened if she came to dwell among Israel, but refused to make its people her own, and it's God hers as well? Think about it my friends – think about it carefully. Some will say I am being too strict in my interpretation of Torah but after teaching Torah for my entire ministry I have come to the conclusion that there is one set of instructions for everyone who desires to become part of Israel. If we have more than one set of instructions confusion will set in. This is what happened in the early days of the Messianic Movement 2,000 years ago. The Shaliach Shaul contended with this in several of his congregations. He taught one thing and

someone else taught something different. This was the main reason for the Acts 15 Council in Jerusalem and James' decision concerning Gentiles.

Some say that this decision only brought four stipulations for Gentiles and excused them from the rest of Torah but this is not what it says.

**Acts 15:20** but should write to them to abstain from the things polluted by idols, and from sexual immorality, and from what has been strangled, and from blood. **21** For from ancient generations Moses has had in every city those who proclaim him, for he is read every Sabbath in the synagogues."

My understanding of these verses and the passage in question is summed up in verse 21. Moses means Torah in this verse because the Gentiles are being sent to the synagogues to hear Torah being proclaimed. If all the Gentiles had to follow were the four rules in verse 20 then verse 21 was not necessary. There would have been no reason to send them to the synagogues to learn Torah. Come now people, this is not rocket science! One Torah one nation!

### **2 Kings 4:12-16**

**12** He said to his servant Gehazi, "Call that Shunammite woman." He called her, and she stood before him. **13** He said to him, "Tell her, 'You have gone to all this trouble for us. What can we do for you? Can we speak in your behalf to the king or to the army commander?'" She replied, "I live among my own people." **14** "What then can be done for her?" he asked. "The fact is," said Gehazi, "she has no son, and her husband is old." **15** "Call her," he said. He called her, and she stood in the doorway. **16** And Elisha said, "At this season next year, you will be embracing a son." She replied, "Please, my lord, man of God, do not delude your maidservant."

This passage always ties very neatly into the story of Yeshua's conception and birth. Besides that we see this in the story of Sarah and Rachel. The Holy One calls out His servants and gives the promise of an heir who will carry on the family name and ministry for the Eternal One of Israel. He makes His servants wait for His promise to them to be fulfilled causing some to begin to question the promise as the years go by. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were among the last of the Biblical figures to live relatively long lives by early Biblical standards.

Moses dies at one hundred and twenty years of age, full of life that came from being in the presence of the Holy One of Israel. Though he was hesitant at his calling by the Almighty he accepted it and walked 40 years with Israel's God forming a nation, a unique people set apart to the Holy One of Israel.

**Numbers 15:16** One Torah and one judgment shall be for you and for the sojourner who sojourns with you."

**1 Timothy 1:8** Now we know that the Torah is good, if one uses it lawfully.

It does not matter if you are native born into Israel through Judah or if you are a Gentile who has been grafted in, you are all equal within Israel, so therefore you are all grafted in through faith in Messiah and called to follow the Torah. It is not the Torah of Judah though Judah has been given a special responsibility regarding Torah and Messiah.

**Genesis 49:8** "Judah, your brothers shall praise you; your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies; your father's sons shall bow down before you. **9** Judah is a lion's cub; from the prey, my son, you have gone up. He stooped down; he crouched as a lion and as a lioness; who dares rouse him? **10** The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until tribute comes to him; and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples.

Judah was set apart from the beginning with Jacob's blessing. The scepter means leadership which will be culminated when Messiah Yeshua returns because He is from the tribe of Judah of the line of David. The ruler's staff will be His, but for now, it has been given to Judah or the Jewish people and all those who have become part of the Jewish people. In some translations, depending on the manuscript used, Shiloh is used and is taken as a Messianic meaning to indicate the Messiah will come through the line of David.

The hope of Israel would be the Messiah who came 2,000 years ago for the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Some believe this meant Ephraim and the ten tribes but taken in context with Yeshua's ministry He very rarely ventured outside the confines of Jerusalem and nearby towns. Even more He very rarely spoke to Gentiles. Two times where He did one was a Roman officer and the other was a Samaritan woman. In both cases He commended their faith and how it was greater than the faith of Israel.

I used to focus on the two houses of Israel but in trying to achieve unity I found dissension within the body of Messiah and I finally came to the understanding of Ezekiel 37.

**19** say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I am about to take the stick of Joseph (that is in the hand of Ephraim) and the tribes of Israel associated with him. And I will join with it the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, that they may be one in my hand. **20** When the sticks on which you write are in your hand before their eyes, **21** then say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I will take the people of Israel from the nations among which they have gone, and will gather them from all around, and bring them to their own land. **22 And I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel. And one king shall be king over them all,** and they shall be no longer two nations, and no longer divided into two kingdoms.

Verse 22 says it all – He will make us one nation in the land. He will gather His people from the nations. **HE WILL DO IT!** We need to learn how to live together as the Body of Messiah in love and Torah. Torah shows us the way and Messiah takes care of the rest. He is the lion of the tribe of Judah.

I look at unity my friends. I desire to see unity in the Body and let's stop using labels that divide us and start looking at ourselves as the people of the Holy One of Israel.

### **Revelation 12:3-6**

**3** Another sign was seen in heaven there was a great red dragon with seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads were seven royal crowns. **4** Its tail swept a third of the stars out of heaven and threw them down to the earth. It stood in front of the woman about to give birth, so that it might devour the child the moment it was born. **5** She gave birth to a son, a male child, the one who will rule all the nations with a staff of iron. But her child was snatched up to God and his throne; **6** and she fled into the desert, where she has a place prepared by God so that she can be taken care of for 1,260 days.

The woman in this passage of Scripture from the book of Revelation is Israel and she gives birth to the Messiah Yeshua. The dragon is Satan who seeks to destroy the Messiah but he could not because the hand of His Father was protecting Him. Satan was angry and came after Israel but Israel was taken by the Holy One to a place where she will be cared for 1,260 days – the time believed to be the Great Tribulation. The hand of the Almighty will be upon His people Israel. He called Israel out as a special treasure, a unique people.

**Exodus 19:5** Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine.

From the beginning the Holy One of Israel had a plan – probably even before that. After all He had to know we would sin even before He created us and yet He still did it. He brought us into being knowing full well we would contend with Him and His Torah. This is why the Messiah was needed because only the perfect sin offering would do to satisfy the Father. When I am told the Torah changes I am sorry because all I can see are the words of Yeshua.

**Hebrews 13:8** Yeshua the Messiah is the same yesterday and today and forever.

If Yeshua does not change then how can His Word if He is the Living Word of the Father? How can His Word change when He doesn't? I cannot accept that there are two sets of instructions for His people. If we are all equal in Messiah then we are all equal under His covenant of Torah.

***After Yossele moves into a Catholic neighborhood his neighbors are up in arms over his habit to barbecue steaks on Fridays, the day they are forced to eat fish. So they tell him if he wants to continue he should convert. So Yossele dutifully goes with them to the local priest who sprinkles holy water over him, solemnly intoning, "Born a Jew, raised a Jew, now a Catholic...born a Jew, raised a Jew, now a Catholic..." The Catholics return home ecstatic: no more tempting smell of delicious meat on Fridays. But the very next Friday they are shocked at the scent of barbecue again drifting through the neighborhood. They rush to Yossele's house to remind him of his new vows, and find him sprinkling water over a cooking steak, solemnly intoning, "Born a cow, raised a cow, now a fish...born a cow, raised a cow, now a fish..."<sup>2</sup>***

May the Lord bless you and yours... *Mordecai Silver*

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<sup>2</sup> Torah with a Twist of Humor

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