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THE WORD BEFORE THE WORLD

How John's Revelation Unlocks the Mystery of Genesis.

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THE WORD BEFORE THE WORLD



By Ariel Blumenthal

Why is John's revelation in the first chapter of his gospel so unique?

The other three gospels begin very differently; and recently reading Genesis 1 at the start of the yearly Torah cycle, I couldn't help but think of John chapter 1 and how he goes all the way back to the beginning. But why?

John 1:

"In the beginning was the WORD, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

² *He was in the beginning with God.*

³ *All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.*

⁴ *In Him was life, and the life was the LIGHT of men."*

Genesis 1:

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

² *The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.*

³ *Then God SAID, 'Let there be LIGHT'; and there was light."*

John was receiving revelation, paraphrasing and writing a sequel to Genesis 1, laying out how Yeshua is part of the Genesis Creation account.

Colossians 1:16-17 concurs, *"For by Him [Yeshua] all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible... were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist."*

So if that's true then we have to ask when we read Genesis 1, *"Where is Yeshua?"* There is Father God creating. There is the Spirit hovering (like a dove). So where is the Son of God? And then God SAID, *"Let there be LIGHT."*

"Bingo."

"Where is the Son = Where's the sun = The light." The first thing God makes is light. And how does God create according to Genesis? By His speech. That's Yeshua too: *"In the beginning was the WORD."* There He is!

Yeshua is the speech of God. Now, think about what speech is and what it represents - our thoughts, our consciousness. A huge part of you is your thoughts and your words. Similarly, a big part of God is His thoughts and words. My father of blessed memory passed away in December 2018; and I was fortunate to be there with him. I remember in his final days the stage where he could barely speak, then barely communicate with a hand squeeze. Once he stopped breathing that all stopped. Indeed, our consciousness, our being alive, is expressed through speech and communication. Yeshua is the Word, the speech, the expression, the wisdom, the power that comes out of God.

"In the beginning was the Word (logos); and the Word was with God and the Word was God." And the Word became flesh. It's Him. It's Yeshua. He is God, and He is also "with God" - distinguished, yet the same. What a mystery!

John's opening refers to light six times. He's very focused. He's interacting with Genesis 1 saying that Yeshua is the light which was spoken out by God. Albert Einstein discovered that $E=mc^2$, the general Theory of Relativity. Energy equals mass times the speed of light ("c") squared. The foundation of that discovery is that the ONLY absolute that never ever changes in the universe is what? The speed of LIGHT. Wow!

The first thing that proceeds out of God is the Word. And that Word is a person. What a great revelation. God is not just raw power, not a mathematical formula. He is the ultimate being, the "person" in whose image we are created.

The life was the light of men

A lot has been said during these past two years about the Judeo-Christian value of life versus this jihadist Islamic suicide death cult. Human life in the image of God is the foundation of our Judeo-Christian civilization, which is being attacked from Islam and from secularism as well. We have to stand for this, the destiny of being conformed to His image. His life that was the light to all men, is now to shine through us. What does that say about the value, the glory, the meaning of mankind? It says we're sons and daughters, children of God, made to be resurrected, to live forever.

In short, from the very beginning and all throughout the scriptures, Yeshua is at the center!





A TRIBUTE TO *Moshe Morrison*



By Tents of Mercy

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of our brother, congregational elder and faithful servant, Moshe Morrison, of blessed memory.

Moshe, originally named Marvin, grew up in a Modern Orthodox Jewish family in Baltimore, Maryland in the USA. He came to faith in the early 70s together with his wife, Katya. In 1994, after leading a Messianic congregation in Baltimore for 15 years, he made aliyah with his family. Starting out in Haifa, Moshe and Katya and their children began the arduous process of absorption into Israeli society.

A few years later, together with Eitan and Connie, Moshe and Katya helped found Tents of Mercy. Moshe was a devoted elder in the congregation, mentoring young people towards bar and bat mitzvah, teaching from the Torah and giving sermons regularly at Shabbat services in his own unique way – always leading with a joke. Moshe had a special love for the holiday of Purim. He wrote, directed, and acted in many Purim plays in America as well as here in Israel. His creative plots and intricate costumes were unique and memorable.

Moshe was many things. He was a son, a brother, a husband, a father, a rabbi, a mentor and a friend. He was also a musician, a carpenter, an artist, an avid body builder, and a writer. (He published a book of short stories and penned hundreds of encouraging articles – including dozens that appeared in this magazine.)

We here at Tents of Mercy were blessed to have Moshe among us. We treasure not only the time he was with us, but also the positive mark he made on people's lives and the special touches he invested in our congregational home, such as the beautiful wooden ark for the Torah scroll and his famous "Tents of Muscles" gym.

After many years of battling Parkinson's and dementia, Moshe passed away the day before his 78th birthday. We thank God for Moshe's life, and we pray for comfort for his children and grandchildren in the knowledge that he is reunited with his beloved wife and ushered into eternal life with His saviour.

"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith." (2 Timothy 4:7)

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LIFE AND GROWTH AT RETURN TO ZION



By Leon Mazin

For the elders of the congregation, autumn is a busy time of reorganizing and revitalizing home group ministries and awakening areas that tend to ‘slumber’ during the summer months. Please pray for wisdom and anointing for our entire leadership team.

Our humanitarian aid programs continue to support new immigrants (olim). Thank God, after a lull caused by the recent conflict, aliyah is once again increasing. We see this in the growing number of immigrant requests coming in. This aspect of ministry is of especial importance for us, as even the name of our congregation, Return to Zion, reflects this calling.

The music school, like regular schools, has returned to maximum activity. This year began with a strong group of students in violin, piano, and vocal classes, as well as music theory. On the surface, it may seem like just a “social project,” but taking place within the walls of the congregation, everything becomes deeply spiritual. We ask for your prayers — for the children, the students, and the teachers. May the world of music grant Heavenly Peace to every heart involved.

Youth groups and ministries have always been a priority for us, and we continue to invest in them with dedication. This summer, there was an impactful outreach and retreat of “Nesher/Eagle” youth in Norway — an experience that is still bearing fruit. Our youth pastors, Shirley (my eldest daughter) and her husband, Iliya, are pouring their hearts into this ministry. Thanks be to God, the group is growing.

Now, a few words about personal matters — after all, pastors and ministers are still flesh and blood. This season has been especially intense for us. Our youngest son recently had his graduate recital — a significant and responsible moment. He is a violinist (though he can play multiple instruments). Our middle daughter got married during the fall holiday season. A wedding in Israel is always a whirlwind — joyful and full of life! And another grandchild was born into our family during Sukkot!

In the midst of all the above, as a family, a congregation and a nation, we thank you for your prayers!





“Save me, O God, for the waters have come up to my neck.”

This is how King David opens Psalm 69. His words express the heart's cry of those who come to God in prayer during the Ten Days of Repentance, when the weight of sin, shame, and failure overwhelms the soul. The iniquities of mankind are many, and so like David we cry out from the depths of our hearts: *“Do not hide Your face from Your servant, for I am in distress; answer me quickly.”*

David admits that his enemies are many, but his deepest pain comes from the reproach and disgrace he bore for the sake of God's holiness: *“For zeal for Your house has consumed me.”* This is fulfilled completely in Yeshua the Messiah, whose zeal for the house of the Lord led Him to bear reproach and ultimately our sins as well. He took upon Himself the sins of the world, so that we might find true forgiveness and atonement.

On Yom Kippur, the high priest would enter the Holy of Holies with the blood of sacrifice to seek forgiveness for the entire nation, yet that atonement was only temporary. Yeshua, the eternal High Priest shed His pure and perfect blood once and for all. Through His shed blood, salvation is made available to all mankind *“once for all”* (Hebrews 10:10). He is the One who answers the cry of Psalm 69, lifting us out of the deep waters and setting our feet upon solid rock.

And so David concludes with hope: *“For God will save Zion ... and those who love His name shall dwell there.”* We also know that through Messiah Yeshua, those who love the name of the Lord find refuge, salvation, and an eternal inheritance.

As we examine our ways and return to God, we remember that true atonement is not found in our deeds but in the blood of the Messiah. Through Him we are written and sealed in the Book of Life – not only for one year, but for eternal life.

THE TABERNACLE AND THE ROCK



By Guy Cohen

During the Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot), we leave our sturdy houses to sit in fragile booths with four simple walls and a leafy roof open to the heavens. This is no mere tradition; it's a prophetic reminder that our lives here are temporary, and that our true covering is the presence of Adonai. Our strength is not in bricks or stone, but in the Ruach (Spirit) who shelters us.

Yeshua said: *“Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock”* (Matthew 7:24). He did not promise that there would be no rain or wind, but He did promise that a house built on the Rock will stand. The Rock is not an idea; it's a Person, Yeshua the Messiah, the cornerstone rejected by men but chosen by God.

When we build our lives on Him, obeying His words, trusting His ways, no storm can destroy us. Even as we sit in tabernacles, feeling the wind blow through the fragile structures, we remember that our dwelling is temporary, but our foundation is eternal. Our hope is in the Rock of Israel, the Messiah who never fails.





Moshe had always seen himself as a “good Jew,” but in his early 20s, as he and Katya sought the deeper meaning of life, he encountered Yeshua. **These are Moshe’s words from his personal testimony:**

When first confronted with the claims of Yeshua, I went into a state of turmoil. Yeshua said, *“I am the way, the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father but by me.”* It was easy to assimilate other religions into my consciousness, but I was repelled by this Yeshua who claimed to be The Way. I knew instinctively also that He was different than Buddha, Krishna or even Moses... My soul was in deep conflict. I remember one night flinging myself on my bed and crying out to the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, *“Who is this Yeshua and what does He want from me? How can this be true?”*

My need to hear from God became so great that I searched within myself determined to lay aside every obstacle that stood in the way of my hearing from God directly – the drugs, and the other religions, all of it could go... I acknowledged my lostness and became aware of God’s contrasting perfection. I saw Yeshua as the perfect atonement... [and said] *“I give you control; from now on, be my Lord.”*

Over the years the priceless presence of Yeshua has grown and blossomed within me. I would have given up my Jewishness for God, yet in Him I have plumbed the rich depths of my forefathers’ faith. I have found a new significance and fulfillment in being a Jew who has found the Jewish Messiah.

Excerpt from Eitan Shishkoff’s eulogy:

What is the measure of a man? Is it not the way he responds to adversity? To loss (in Moshe’s case, a nine month old daughter in 1988 and his beloved wife in 2013)? It’s refusing to settle for the familiar (staying in Baltimore) and embracing the unknown (moving to Israel in your 40s) in order to bring redemption and hope.

So, Mosh – thanks for a life well-lived. The gift of your friendship came from heaven. We are bound together, soul to soul – *nefesh Inefesh*. As the Good Book says, *“there’s a friend who sticks closer than a brother.”* You’ve been faithful, supportive, enjoyable, and teased me just when I needed to lighten up. And now you’ve made it. You crossed the finish line. I’m sure you’ve already heard the words we’re all waiting to hear: *“Well done, good and faithful servant”* – cuz you sure are one!



THE TWO SEAS



By Gil Afriat

If you look at the Sea of Galilee, you see a lake that is full of life. There is lush vegetation around its banks, and as the New Testament stories make clear, it is full of fish. It also serves as a source of fresh drinking water for Israel.

A hundred kilometers south of the Sea of Galilee is the salty Dead Sea. It's an extraordinary place, but it's quite literally dead. What's the difference between these two seas? The living, thriving Sea of Galilee has streams of water feeding it and the Jordan River flowing out of it. The Dead Sea only has water flowing INTO it: nothing flows out. When a believer, or a congregation, for that matter, doesn't have an "outflow," it is in danger of becoming stagnant and dead!

The Dead Sea

Believers can become like the Dead Sea if they are self-focused in their faith, seeking only to receive from God, from their congregation and from others (encouragement, help, attention, love, support, etc.).

When there is no genuine outflow of wanting to serve and bless – the lives of the "self-centered" end up producing very little fruit of the Spirit. Yeshua does not mince words when it comes to trees that produce no fruit – a sober warning to us all for genuine soul searching (Matthew 7:19, Luke 13:7). God fills us so we can become life-giving rivers of water to those around us.

Congregations can also be self-focused and end up like the Dead Sea. The Lord Yeshua called us to be fishers of men, to make disciples, and to care for the poor and needy in our communities. When congregations do not engage in outreach, do not participate with other congregations or invest in other ministries, a "bunker" mentality can set in. Leaders become overly protective; the flock does not grow, and there ends up not being a surplus.

It is fitting that Yeshua began His ministry around the Sea of Galilee – Israel's only living "sea." It is a reflection of who He is. We, in turn, are called to be like our Master. He kept His eyes on the Father and was the servant of all. Individually and corporately, when we focus on what God wants and on what we can do for others as an impulse of love, the "rivers of living waters" from the Holy Spirit within us will abound all the more.

That's why the Tiferet Yeshua vision is: "Love God, love one another, and love our city." We make it a point to have ongoing ministry to the poor and needy in our community through the weekly Feed Tel Aviv outreach as well as other outreaches. Practical generosity must also be constant and ongoing. Therefore ten percent of our overall budget is designated to giving to believers in need and supporting other ministries. We have seen God's promise for growth and life come to pass, firstly in people and also in finances.



SIDING WITH GOD'S PLAN FOR REVEALING HIS FAITHFULNESS



By Youval Yanay

Today, we see a biblical picture unfolding before our eyes: war, destruction, rebellion. But the real question is not whether Israel today is “right” or “wrong.” That is not the point. What truly matters is the plan of God for His people, a plan built around God’s gracious and unchanging faithfulness.

In Scripture, Israel is portrayed as a strong and stubborn people, independent and often disobedient. Yet God has never rejected them. The prophet Zechariah tells us that in the end there will be **two groups**.

“I will gather all the nations to fight against Jerusalem...Then the Lord will go out to fight against those nations.” (Zechariah 14:2–3)

“Everyone who survives of all the nations that came against Jerusalem shall go up year after year to worship the King, the Lord of Hosts, and to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles.” (Zechariah 14:16)

This is where the question becomes personal. Which side am I on? Am I among those who resist the plan of God or among those who recognize His work, His people, and His Messiah? Israel is a chosen people, called to reveal the faithfulness of God, not because of what they do but in spite of what they do. God remains faithful even when Israel is not. And if God is faithful to Israel, then each one of us can be certain that He will be faithful to us as well. If we judge Israel solely by its actions, what about ourselves? Are we always in the right? No. It is only by God’s grace and faithfulness that we stand at all.

That’s why looking at Israel today is not about politics or even morality. It’s about witnessing the faithfulness of God in action. The same God who keeps His promises to Israel, invites each of us to choose our side – to stand with His faithfulness, His Kingdom, and His Son, Yeshua, the King of Kings.

*“Be glad, people of Zion, rejoice in the Lord your God, for He has given you the autumn rains because He is **FAITHFUL**.”* – Joel 2:23



We invite you to join us in prayer:

- For Israel and our nation: Pray for divine protection, and for a spiritual awakening that stirs hearts toward repentance, holiness, and a deep recognition of God’s Messiah. Pray that God’s glory will be revealed across the land and that His light will shine in every heart.
- For our Winter 2025 discipleship program “Your Kingdom Come” starting this month: Pray for God’s wisdom and guidance in every detail of planning, logistics, and spiritual preparation. Ask that He would prepare the hearts of every participant – that each one will encounter His presence, be transformed by His Word, and walk boldly in the calling He has placed on their lives.

