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Raising the Dead Ain't Easy



By **Eitan Shishkoff**

I once tried to raise a man from the dead.

Michael was a kind, handsome, earnest, married believer in his 30s, with two lovely daughters. We had been fasting and praying for his *inoperable brain tumor* to dissolve. Gathered around his bed, calling on God and worshipping, we longed with all our hearts for our friend to live and not die.

Then he stopped breathing. His skin began turning an ashen gray. The room became very quiet. No one wanted to accept our friend's departure. On the inside I began wrestling with a desperate thought. *"Should I try to raise my friend from death? Yeshua told His disciples to raise the dead. Why shouldn't I at least try. What's there to lose?"*

Milliseconds later I decided to take the radical step. Not knowing how to go about it, I remembered the biblical accounts of Elijah and Elisha stretching themselves out on dead children. So, I climbed onto my friend's body and blew into his mouth. I blew hard, three times, but nothing happened. He was still dead.

Resurrection is God's Business

What was my takeaway from the experience? Resurrection is God's business. It was crystal clear as I climbed down off him, broken and dejected, that unless God shows up there's no use trying to raise the dead.

"...We should not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead." (2 Corinthians 1:9)

The empty tomb of Yeshua is a turning point in all human history. Being God in the flesh and conquering sin while subjected to every temptation we face (Hebrews 4:15), the Messiah swallowed death for us all (Hebrews 2:9).

His victory over the grave signals a reversal of the curse pronounced on Adam in the Garden. Through Jesus, mankind can now overcome death itself.

That is why He is called *"the first fruits of the dead"* (1 Corinthians 15:20), a reference to the Feast of Firstfruits (Leviticus 23:10). Occurring on the day after the Shabbat of **Passover week**, this was the very day of Yeshua's resurrection – **Resurrection Sunday** as many of us know it.

The Ultimate Hope

Death is forcing its way into our daily awareness – through pandemic, war, and terrorism. Thus, the promise of one's own resurrection from the grave becomes more and more relevant. Life is finite. I will die. I don't know when or how, but it is inevitable. Is there life after death? As a child raised by humanists, I was told that when you die that's it, *kaput!*

Paul the Apostle and the Prophet Isaiah both proclaimed that death is swallowed up in victory (Isaiah 25:8; 1 Corinthians 15:54). But perhaps the ultimate statement, and the solid rock upon which our confidence of eternal life rests, comes from Yeshua himself. *"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me, though he may die, yet shall he live"* (John 11:25).

I didn't bring Michael back to life. I longed to do so. More importantly, though, he IS alive on the other side of the grave. It sure will be good to see him.



You Need to Talk

Passover-telling, positive affirmation,
and proclaiming the Sh'ma



By **Hannah Tekle**

“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.”
(Deuteronomy 6:4)

The iconic Jewish prayer proclamation, the *Sh'ma*, literally means “Hear.” In modern colloquial phrasing it would sound like, “Hey you, listen!” It is probably the most well-known prayer commonly associated with the Jewish people and religion. This summation of everything central and important in the Tanakh is proclaimed in morning, evening and nighttime prayers.

The *Sh'ma* is also traditionally said before dying – the last words on one’s lips. For secular Israelis, this has morphed into an exclamation “Sh’mā Israel” which is said in situations of actual or perceived danger, whether actually life-threatening or merely very scary. It is so deeply embedded in the linguistic fabric of the society that it can also be an irreverent and casual expression of shock or scared surprise.

No doubt rabbinical commentary has in-depth explanations for this passage. But, what is really fascinating to me is how it can be a connecting seam between those cut of traditional “cloth” and those cut of modern. When a random Israeli high school kid yells out, “Sh’mā Yisrael,” upon being startled by something unexpected, what does she or he mean? The passage is written to Israel from Moses by God, but when we say it, we are declaring it to one another and to ourselves.

What is it about this short proclamation that sets it apart from others and elevates it to the abbreviation of all of Judaism?

A Hint

We find a hint in the verses that follow. **“And these words which I command you this day shall be on your heart, and you shall repeat them diligently to your children, and you shall speak of them when you sit in your home, and when you walk on the way...”**
(Deuteronomy 6:5-7)

While discussing the transition from Purim to Passover recently with my Shabbat school kids’ class, I stumbled upon an incredibly simple but profound answer to this question why this prayer became central to Judaism.

Prepping them for the next lesson, I asked what they thought the similarities and connection were between the two holidays. They gave me various answers; some were even insightful beyond their years. Both holidays celebrate God’s victory for the people of Israel in a difficult situation. Both have a brave protagonist that stands up to advocate on behalf of the people. The kids also gave some more light-hearted answers: we eat yummy food during both, we get a vacation from school for both. We joked about eating “Pharaoh’s ears” cookies instead of “Haman’s ears” (the triangular cookie that we eat to commemorate villainous Haman’s demise). As we giggled, I pointed out a much more obvious and elementary similarity, which is that both holidays start with the letter P – in Hebrew the letter ‘peh.’

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Has Judgment Begun?



By **Guy Cohen**

*“He is coming to judge the Earth.
He will judge the world with justice.
He will judge the nations in truth.”*
(Psalm 98:9 as sung by Lamb)

Current world events cause many to ask if what we are seeing is God’s judgement. In the Hebrew scripture, we see Israel in the desert, having sinned and received God’s sentence of forty years. During that time, the nation was purified. A new generation emerged from the desert into the Land of Promise.

Where are we today? Has His sentence begun?

We read in 1 Peter 4:17, *“For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?”*

Those are sobering words as we look at what is going on around us near and far.

There is something about the character of man, which responds in a certain way to God. When things are going well for us we forget Him, but when things go badly we remember Him – all too often only to blame Him. Can you explain why we react this way?

Part of a Birth Timeline

I believe the recent events are part of a process we are going through in the birth of something greater. If you go through pregnancy and then there is no birth; you would ask, “Why all this pain?” However when there is a birth, a fruit of sorts, it is worth it. We see the reason for persevering through the challenge. I believe we are in a birth timeline. Look at Yeshua. His timeline was unto a worthy outcome – not *“... to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved”* (1 John 3:17).

Yeshua did not come to condemn or judge but to save, to redeem from sin and death, to birth humanity anew.

How can we turn the instinct for blaming into an instinct for praising, even in difficult times, even in the midst of judgment? I once thought that the Holocaust was the darkest possible hour in history, and it was. However, in reading the story of Corrie ten Boom, I realized something that can change how we pass through the darkest times – our point of view. Corrie did as Yeshua instructed; she came as a little child; no matter what evil was happening around her, she sought to find God in the midst of it.

As I listen to the news reports and see the faces of frightened and displaced Ukrainians, I feel their pain and sorrow. Surely God is at work in both judgment and redemption. How can we respond? Some have flown to the Ukrainian border to help refugees. Each must move according to the leading of the Holy Spirit. For us in Israel, we see that multiplied thousands of Ukrainian Jews are being brought out of exile and war, home to Israel. This is one of the good things coming out of the situation.

God knows who belongs to Him and who is part of the plan to bring His people home. God made a covenant with Abraham, which includes Abraham’s redeemed descendants being in a first-fruits-redeemed portion of earth, to which God will bring His seed from the four corners of the earth; and to which Messiah Yeshua will return. No government or army can prevent nor even accomplish this, only God.

Let us remain alert as we follow the leading of the Spirit of God, standing where God would have us, being ready to move according to His timing, in the midst of His redemption and His judgments.



War Responses



By **Leon Mazin**

In early spring, we celebrated Esther's Purim victory over Haman and evil. But even as we commemorate that victory, we are surrounded by war, slaughter, ambition, uncertainty, and fear – fulfilling the prophecy of Yeshua in Matthew 24 of wars and rumors of war, etc.

Regarding Zelensky and Putin, there is no need to persuade you who is good and who is bad, and why suspicion and deceit are poor character traits for rulers! But why are they fighting, and who pushed them to this? If we ignore the pain of people, we can see how “one big gas station replaces another.” Russia is losing sources of income, but the market continues to need oil and gas, and there will always be nations to supply those things. Nations use their resources variously – to cover the cost of weapons, to restore ruins and to assist refugees. But who will be there to undo the deaths and repair the ruined lives of millions of people?

Increasingly, verses from the book of Daniel come to mind:

“Finally, there will be a fourth kingdom, strong as iron – for iron breaks and smashes everything – and as iron breaks things to pieces, so it will crush and break all the others... this kingdom will be partly strong and partly brittle. And just as you saw the iron mixed with baked clay, so the people will be a mixture and will not remain united, any more than iron mixes with clay.” (Daniel 2:40-43 NIV)

This is very reminiscent of the modern steel and iron world we live in. Skyscrapers are made of concrete, iron and glass. Iron is in our cars, planes and even guns. But people cannot and will not become united and “*people-group will rise against people-group.*” (Luke 21:7)

Daniel gives one consolation: the Kingdom of Yeshua, the Kingdom of the Son of Man, is being built and will bring the world into harmony (Daniel 2:44). But right now, what are we believers to do?

- “Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.” (Proverbs 4:23 NIV)
- Seek wealth in God and do not rely on the values of this world!
- Don't be afraid; follow Yeshua.
- Give a good example to the world. “By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” (John 13:35 NIV)

Blessings and Shalom of God to you, dear brothers, and sisters. I encourage you to take part in our ministry, as we serve and help many in this difficult time.

Prayer requests

1. Events in Ukraine are closely connected to people in our community. We have many from Ukraine, Russia and Belarus – **please pray that we would all put unity before God above other preferences.**
2. Congregational home groups are an important place for fellowship and spirituality – **please pray for continued, peaceful, safe gatherings.**
3. Congregational youth group – **please pray for spiritual growth in the youth.**
4. We are expecting many refugees as well as returning Jewish immigrants, and the ability to serve others is important – **please pray for strength for our volunteers that they may joyfully welcome all who come to our door.**
5. We are still replacing the sound and broadcast equipment that was recently stolen – **please pray for sufficient funds for replacements.**



The Mouth

The Hebrew letter 'peh' is also the word for mouth, which is appropriate because both Purim and Passover are about **telling**. Mordecai *telling* Esther to be true to her destiny. Esther *telling* Ahasuerus that her people were in danger. God *telling* Moses that he is called to talk to Pharaoh. Moses *telling* Pharaoh to “*let my people go – that they may worship.*”

The very manual we use to retell the story on the first night of Passover is called the Ha-ga-da – “the telling.” We use our mouth to talk – to voice the story of the Exodus.

The Desire and Need to Talk

In the garden of Eden, God walked **and talked** with Adam and Eve. We are made in God’s image. Is it any wonder that we deeply desire to communicate with one another? At least many of us do. We speak of everything from the mundane and superficial to the deep longings and thoughts of our heart and mind. A little five year old friend of ours, when hindered by her siblings from telling everything she had to say, yelled out emphatically “I NEED TO TALK!” a phrase which has become an inside joke our family uses whenever one of us really needs to be heard.

We are made in God’s image. He desires to tell us who He is and how he feels about us. He also desires to be told how we feel about Him – our worship.

Words have power. For good and for bad.

How and what we say to ourselves and to others matters.

The Psalms are full of positive declaration about who God is and what He has done.

“I will TELL of your goodness; all day long I will speak of your salvation, though it is more than I can understand.”
(Psalm 71:15)

“I will TELL of all your wonderful deeds.” (Psalm 9:1)

Self-Talk and Modern Trends

The current secular mental health trend is focused on what we tell ourselves. Our narrative. Self-talk. Positive declaration. Relationship counsellors advise us that this is true also about what we tell each other – spouses, children, friends, bosses, co-workers. When we call out the positive in one another, giving each other affirmations and not depredations, it affects not only the atmosphere but the outcome.

So, getting back to the *Sh'ma*: more than any psychological exercise we can do to rearrange our self-narrative, when we are stuck in a mental rut (or preferably before) let’s enlist the wisdom of the Passover “telling” and the *Sh'ma* proclamation and tell ourselves and those around us who and what God is and what He has done.



Name of Yeshua Prophesied Ahead of Time



By **Asher Intrater**

Sometimes we are asked if the name of Yeshua (ישוע) is actually prophesied in the Tanakh.

It is – in several ways. We start with a beautiful prophecy of the name, by the prophet Zechariah.

*“Hear now, O **Yehoshua** the High Priest. You and your companions who are sitting before you are men as a **wondrous sign (mophet)**. For behold I am bringing My servant, the **Branch** (tzemakh).”* (Zechariah 3:8)

The basic idea of this verse is that Yehoshua, the High Priest at the time of Zechariah, was a symbol or sign of the coming Messiah. The poetic name of the Messiah here is Branch (tzemakh). Yehoshua the High Priest is a foreshadowing sign of the coming Messiah.

*“Take silver and gold and make crowns; and set them on the head of **Yehoshua the son of Yehozadak** the High Priest. And say to him, “Thus says the Lord of Hosts, ‘Behold this man, **his name is Branch** (tzemakh), and in his place, He will grow (yi-tzemakh), and build the sanctuary of the Lord.”* (Zechariah 6:11-12)

This man, the High Priest, whose name was Yehoshua, is described here simply: **“his name is branch.”** What could that mean? There are only two options that come to mind. The first is that his personal name was Tzemakh, as if his friends would call him, “Hi, Tzemakh.” But that makes less sense because his name was Yehoshua.

The other option is that Yehoshua was prophetically carrying the additional name of the Branch, the coming Messiah. That is the obviously more sensible meaning. The branch is the Messiah. This man is a symbol of the Messiah; this man also has the same name as the Messiah. The name of the Messiah is Yehoshua.

*“Then arose **Yeshua the son of Yozadak**, and his brothers the priests, and Zerubbabel, son of Shealtiel, and his brothers, and they built the altar of the God of Israel, to offer burnt offerings on it.”* (Ezra 3:2)

ויקם ישוע בן יוצדק ואחיו הכהנים וזרובבל בן שאלתיהל ואחיו ויבנו את מזבח אלהי ישראל להעלות עליו עלות ככתוב בתורת משה אישׁהאלהים

Here we have the same account retold in the book of Ezra. Zerubbabel’s generation were immigrants returning from Babylon. By the time of Ezra there was also a second generation of native Israeli-born “sabras.” The native-born generation tends to shorten names, particularly classic biblical style names.

For instance, the biblical name Yehonatan in Israel today is usually called Yonatan.

This is apparently what happened to the name Yehoshua. In the next generation, Yehoshua was shortened to Yeshua. The name Yeshua appears 29 times in the Tanakh. All of them are in the generation after the return from exile (Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah). All of them represent a shortening of the name Yehoshua. Yeshua is Yehoshua.

Let’s summarize:

1. Messiah = Branch (Zechariah 3:8)
2. Branch = Yehoshua (Zechariah 6:12)
3. Yehoshua = Yeshua (Ezra 3:2)

Therefore Messiah = Yeshua

The name of Messiah is Yeshua.



Israeli Turned Back at Gate to Eternity

By Tiferet Yeshua

Menny is a very special person who joined Tiferet Yeshua in 2021. Recently after one of our services, Menny walked up to Debby, the Tiferet Yeshua secretary, and said:

“Debby... I know He is alive because He raised me from the dead.”

When Menny first showed up at Tiferet Yeshua, as an Israeli who had met Yeshua while abroad, he had never even heard Yeshua’s real Hebrew name. He also did not know that there were other Jewish followers of Yeshua.

The Day Menny Died:

After his military service in the IDF, Menny took a trip to the US and ended up staying. In November 2014, Menny was a married father of five children, working in US real estate and construction when he started renovations on an old Victorian building he had bought. The building had been damaged in a fire, but inspections had found the building structurally sound for renovation. While Menny was working over a high gable on the second floor, that section of the building collapsed. Menny plummeted 30 feet and was buried under the building debris. After being airlifted to a nearby hospital, his medical records show that he had no signs of life upon arrival. Miraculously medical personnel resuscitated him and began the fight for his life.

Due to the extent of his injuries, Menny was in a coma for over a year. The way he describes it: *“My head was smashed apart. My whole right side is filled with titanium because my bones shattered from the fall.”* When Menny finally woke from the coma he had to begin intensive physiotherapy to relearn how to do everything.

He barely remembers those first couple of years. Menny

could not speak. He was relearning how to swallow, feed himself, to walk. The doctors determined that Menny had significant brain damage and sent him to a nursing home. Somewhere along the line Menny started speaking again.

It was then he started to share *where he had gone and the person he had met—the reason why he was still alive.*

“Your name is not in this book”

We found local newspaper accounts of the building collapse, which mention Menny by name and his injury. All of the details he remembers about the accident are accurate. While Menny was in the nursing home, a woman minister from a local church who volunteered there started taking walks with Menny as part of his physical therapy routine. She told him it was a miracle that he was still alive. He then told her the real story of his miracle:

“When I died, I went up into the universe, into the next world. It wasn’t a dream. I came to a man who had an open book on a stand in front of him. I approached him and told him, ‘My name is Menny Mor. Where do I go?’ The man just looked at me. I knew he was the one who was supposed to tell me where to go. So, I ask him again, ‘Where do I go? To the left or to the right?’ Then he said to me, ‘You are not written in this book. I am sending you back to where you came from.’”

To read more about Menny, go to www.tiferetyeshua.org/blog/



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I AM WITH
ISRAEL

Livestreaming the Gospel from Tel Aviv

#IAmWithIsrael

Dear Friends,

Israelis love the internet. We use it more than most countries; and when it comes to something as taboo as Yeshua, we have learned that the most effective way to reach people is online.

Tiferet Yeshua (where I was the previous pastor!) is a Hebrew-speaking congregation in Tel Aviv. They need our help with their media outreach. When Tiferet Yeshua broadcasted their first livestream service in February 2020, they had no idea how critical their capability to livestream would become. **One month later the Covid lockdown hit Israel, and suddenly more Israelis than ever were spending enormous amounts of time online, looking for answers and open to the Gospel.** By the summer of 2020, Tiferet Yeshua was experiencing a surge of seekers and new believers reaching out to them online through social media platforms.

Israelis Seeking the Truth Online

Amazingly, Tiferet Yeshua **actually grew during the Covid lockdowns because seekers and believers looking for a congregation to connect with, found them online!** The livestreaming of their services has turned out to be an amazing tool for sharing the Gospel. Israelis from all over the country, including the Orthodox, who cannot allow themselves to come to services in person, are viewing Tiferet Yeshua's services online. Since the restrictions on gathering in houses of worship in Israel were lifted entirely in February this year, more and more people have been coming to Tiferet Yeshua every week; and many Israelis continue to connect online each week to view their main service. The last time I was there, about three weeks ago, it was packed.

I was absolutely stunned. I don't think I've ever seen that many people in the building and so many of them I didn't even recognize because they were new.

Also, believers who have been disconnected from congregations for years or believers who never connected to a local congregation began joining Tiferet Yeshua's online services and **now have started attending in person!**

When Tiferet Yeshua first installed their livestream equipment, the capability in Israel for livestream sound and video was extremely limited, and, as a result, the quality of their first broadcasts left much to be desired. They finally found one of the only sound technicians in Israel who has considerable expertise in livestream. He is helping them update their sound technology.

The overall cost of the media upgrades for Tiferet Yeshua's livestream and sound needs is \$40,000. We would like to invite you to be a part of supporting the Gospel going forth to Israelis in Hebrew through livestreaming from Tiferet Yeshua. Would you consider a gift of \$50 or \$100 for this important project which will help this local congregation continue shining the light of Yeshua?

Our goal is to reach Israelis with the message of Yeshua... Let's do it together!

Ron Cantor
Director, #IAmWithIsrael
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