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To Fear or Not to Fear?

"Dealing with Seeming Paradoxes in our Faith"



By **Asher Intrater**

When Moses came down from the divine fire and smoke of Mount Sinai the first time to give Israel the Ten Commandments, the people shook in fear from the presence of God and the holiness of the commandments. He told them not to fear, yet at the same time, to fear.

What?! That sounds like a contradiction.

"Do not fear, because God has come to test you, in order that the fear of Him would be upon your faces, so that you would not sin." (Exodus 20:20)

To resolve this apparent contradiction is not that difficult. We are not to fear God as if He would hurt us for no reason, or as if He does not have perfectly beneficial desires for us. Yet at the same time, we need to know that He does indeed punish sin; and the healthy fear of the punishment of sin is one of the motivations not to sin.

The Torah was the first stage of bringing us to recognize that we all have sinned, that we need to repent, and that we need to find atonement and forgiveness. In this way, the knowledge of perfect moral law brings us to the need for salvation. That forgiveness and atonement we find in Yeshua's sacrifice on the cross. Thus, the Torah of Moses leads us to the cross of Yeshua. The Torah explains the law; the cross provides forgiveness for our transgressions of the law.

The double issue of "fear and fear not" is explained more fully by Yeshua in Luke 12, in which He says, **"fear not, yet I tell you whom to fear..."**

Let's look at this dynamic a little deeper. The Bible often repeats the encouragement not to fear. God is all powerful; beneficent; and for you. His grace gives us confidence. His promises to protect us provide a foundation for our overcoming FAITH.

The Bible also often repeats the charge to maintain the fear of YHVH. That fear is pure and eternal (Psalm 19:10). We can base our dedication to HOLINESS on these exhortations to fear the Lord.

Obviously, God wants us to have both faith and holiness. Faith without holiness degenerates to worldliness and carnality. Holiness without faith degenerates to religious coercion. Faith and holiness together transform us into the image of Yeshua. These two streams of thought are interwoven throughout the Scriptures. We are to consider both the mercy of God and His severity (Romans 11:22). There are promises and warnings. We are to shine as glorious lights, yet to know that darkness is covering the earth (Isaiah 60:1-2).

Scripture often deals with different sides of the same issue. Truth seems to be paradoxical because God is both holy and gracious. It is hard for us as human beings to deal with complex or paradoxical truths. Yeshua is the living incarnation of truth; and He is both gracious and holy.

The love of God grants us free will; that in itself creates a paradoxical situation. He is sovereign, yet we have to choose. The dual dynamic of truth is found in the interfacing of grace and holiness. The tension between the two is seen repeatedly in Scriptures.

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Why the Heroic Extremes?



By **Eitan Shishkoff**

Do we get it?

Believing in Him is only the beginning. There is SO much more, something exceedingly personal, immediate — moment-to-moment. In Exodus 19:4, God says to Israel: “You saw what I did to Egypt and how I carried you on **eagles’ wings** and brought you to myself.” This word “**myself**” caught me by surprise.

*“What a minute, Father. You mean to tell me that you’ve brought me out of sin and self to bring ME to YOU? This term you’re using, “**myself**,” is such a personal description. First, it tells me that you want to be close to me, that you’ve chosen me for genuine relationship—to be more than a “believer”—to be your child. It also tells me that your intent in freeing me from my own version of Egyptian bondage, in going to **heroic extremes** to rescue me...is to be WITH you, to experience the closeness that is **your desire**.”*

Have we yet grasped that God designed us to BE with Him? To be in full, active, person-to-person relationship?

Speaking about the purpose of the mercy seat, in Exodus 25:22, the Lord said “*And there I will meet with you and I will speak with you.*” This should blow our minds. It should be the basis for a much deeper, more impactful understanding of our Creator’s purpose in giving each of us life.

The Reason We Exist

The unfolding of God’s purpose for us can only take place when we prioritize BEING with Him. Our activity, our service for Him is good. He calls us to do good works.

However, what He tells us in Exodus takes precedence and requires continual refreshing in our priorities. This is true especially now, when the external, threatening conditions of the world around us clamor, competing for our primary attention.

Our destiny—the reason we exist—is to know God intimately, daily, conversationally. The first people, Adam and Eve, heard the Lord walking in the Garden in the cool of the day coming toward them to talk with them (Genesis 3:8).

Is this not exactly what the Lord later told the Israelites? “**There** (at the place of atonement) **I will meet with you and I will speak with you.**” All along, our Father’s desire has been to walk with us and to talk with us.

This longing of God’s heart is movingly displayed in Yeshua’s story of the prodigal son. The father LONGED for his wayward son to return. And when the lad finally came home, his father showered him with forgiveness, blessings, and birthright. Why? Because the dad’s primary desire was to BE WITH his son and to share life with him.

We are told in the Book of Romans that we have been adopted as sons and daughters of God. Does this not bring home the message of us being earnestly WANTED by God? Does that not change our view of ourselves and of life in this challenging world?

Yes, He brings us to Himself. He wants to meet with us and to speak with us daily, continually.

Do we get it?

Rage and Eruption



By **Guy Cohen**

One night, recently, I was awakened and I sensed two words – Rage and Eruption. These words were in English even though I am not a native English speaker.

I found this interesting since I was planning to teach on Revelation 16. There we read of God's wrath upon mankind and on the earth, including the waters, the sun, the atmosphere, and the very air we breathe. The eruption and deluge of destruction are the judgment of God poured out against His own creation – man and earth.

“Then I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels, ‘Go, pour out the seven bowls of God’s wrath on the earth.’” (Revelation 16:1)

In this chapter we are told that many will not come to their senses even as cataclysmic judgment is falling. Many will still not humble themselves, repent and receive Him. Many still refuse to listen.

If we look at the period of the plagues in Egypt, we can see a very similar situation. Pharaoh's heart remained hard, even as plague after plague was visited upon him and his people. The difference is that mankind becomes *our own pharaoh*. Mankind is not willing to release themselves from the spirit of stubbornness which resists God. We see this power of evil mentioned in Revelation 16 and how it controls mankind already today.

*“They cursed the name of God, who had control over these plagues, but they **refused to repent** and glorify Him.”* (Revelation 16:9)

It never ceases to amaze me how, no matter what, there are those whose hearts remain stubborn and refuse to turn to God. It is as if nothing He does is ever enough

to win over some hardened hearts. When God brings punishment, as even a good earthly father sometimes does; men ask where His love is or claim that there is no God.

In the eyes of the world, we, as believers in Yeshua, are strange. We, having given Him a place in our hearts, are called to be different, to be a light and to separate from the things of this world. Let us heed the warning of Hebrews 12:25, *“See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. For if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, how much more shall we not escape if we turn away from Him who speaks from heaven.”*

The End of the “Plague” or just the Beginning?

The reason for this teaching is that I see 2022 not to be the end of plagues, but just the beginning.

Why? I believe we have yet to learn the lessons of this period of testing. Through this plague called COVID, there was the opportunity for men's hearts to be turned to Yeshua and for believers to join in unity in prayer and intercession, asking God for breakthroughs in this and other areas. However, for the most part, men's hearts have been distanced from God and sadly, some congregations have divided and dispersed.

In the days to come, may we witness a real change of heart. May we stand together as believers in Yeshua, claiming God's promises from Psalm 91 for His protection over our households.

May no fear, pestilence, plague, or disaster come near your tents.

Wise, Beautiful & Innocent...



By **Leon Mazin**

In the Torah portion “Chayei Sarah (The life of Sarah),” the original Hebrew text says that Sarah lived for **“one hundred years and twenty years and seven years”** (In Hebrew, the years are described in that way, Genesis 23:1).

Commentators say that at the age of 127, Sarah was as wise as a woman who had reached one hundred years, as **beautiful as a 20 year old**, and as innocent as a seven year old.

Celebrating Twenty Years

Therefore, twenty years can be seen as the age at which one attains beauty and perfection. I have the pleasure of informing you that **Shavei Tzion** was founded 20 years ago. **The congregation is celebrating its 20th anniversary and it is a truly a beautiful community!** I want to thank all our dear friends – those from far away and those nearby. We are tremendously grateful for your generosity and partnership with Shavei Tzion.

I remember a call from a friend who asked, “What will you call the congregation?” The name that came to my heart was **Shavei Tzion** – those who (like my family, from the Diaspora) have returned to Zion having heard the Voice of Heaven!

We started out as a small evangelism project sent from the Tents of Mercy Congregation to nearby Haifa, helping new immigrants settle in their new homeland. Through these immigrants we spontaneously emerged as our own congregation – **“Return to Zion.”** With God’s help, we increased and grew strong!

Allow me *another quick Hebrew lesson...* When Noah blessed his sons, he said, “May God expand/multiply Japheth.” (Japheth in Hebrew means Beautiful/Propagating). Our congregation has been privileged to spread the good news to many. Online broadcasting from Shavei Zion has been providing instruction and pioneering a new style of worship to Messianic congregations here and in other countries for over ten years. The online audio-visual library of our “Oasis-Media” site contains thousands of lessons and sermons built up over 20 years. The impact has been significant, teaching Jews the Jewish context of belief in our Savior Yeshua, not rejecting their Jewish identity but, on the contrary, returning them to the roots of their forefathers.

For the last five years we have not had to advertise to find the needy people we support through our humanitarian programs. Word about us has spread far and near – that there is help for all who come to our door. We can barely cope with all the requests that we receive, but we thank God that we can be His hands of mercy for many of those who are **Returning to Zion!**

We ask you to pray for the Grace of God to be upon us, that we may continue doing what we believe the Lord has entrusted to us for the next 20 years!

Prayer requests:

- New homegroup for Alpha course graduates.
- New Hebrew homegroup.
- Anointing and leading from God for our youth group.
- A prompt roof repair of our building.

Peace and blessings to you and your loved ones in Yeshua the Messiah.



Beneficial Side Effect

You know how every pill these days comes with a long list of potential adverse side effects?

Well, the unwelcome stir and restrictions around COVID brought a beneficial side effect to the sour tasting “medicine” of Israeli lockdowns. They provided the impetus for Tents of Mercy (and related Israeli ministries) to improve our connection with local congregants and partners around the world through the help of YouTube – an unexpected boon.

We invite you to stop in and take a look at over 40 worship sessions and sermons available in English (as well as Russian and Hebrew). For now, “dropping by” on the Web is sure cheaper than coming to visit on a guided tour and (for the time being) easier than getting past airport health officials!

YouTube Channels:

Please click on the links below to visit and subscribe.* If you enjoy what you see, we would love to hear from you as well!

- **Tents of Mercy** – Congregation in Haifa Bay
- **Oasis Media** – Shavei Tzion Congregation in Haifa
- **Tiferet Yeshua TLV** – Congregation in Tel Aviv
- **Revive Israel Tikkun Global**

**If you are reading this in print form, simply open YouTube and type in the name of each ministry to find their channel.*



There are many questions with tension. Do we pay taxes to Caesar? Do we stone a woman caught in adultery? How can an infinite God dwell fully in bodily form in a human being? Is the kingdom of God in heaven or on earth? Are we left wing or right wing politically? Are we for medical vaccinations or against? Do the righteous suffer? What is the nature of grace and works? We are saved “not by works” (Ephesians 2:9) yet “unto good works” (Ephesians 2:10).

There is a dual dynamic of truth. Yeshua displays the perfect integration of the God-Man paradox.

We follow Him as a person. The principles of God’s Word contain different aspects of applying God’s truth.

We are called into a real relationship with God. Relationship deals with the wonder of a person having different aspects to his personality. Our faith is not a one-dimensional doctrine but a dynamic relationship with a living God who interacts with us.

Our faith seems to have paradoxes because God is a real person, not a robot. THE Truth is a living person, not a list of formulas or a fact sheet. To walk with God, we have to deal with a multifaceted relationship with a real Being.

Disciple Making - From Genesis to YOU



By **Tal Robin**

Becoming disciples of Yeshua is a core value and commandment that comes up again and again in the writings of the New Testament. In Matthew 28:19 Yeshua told us to go and make disciples. But is this a new action only from the New Testament period?

No. There is an unfolding development of discipleship from Genesis all the way to the Book of Revelation, just as there is also a gradual unveiling regarding the gospel and other truths in scripture, including the revelation of God and the Messiah.

In the Beginning God Created... Discipleship

Already in the Garden of Eden God walked with Adam and Eve and guided them, gave them instructions –

began to train people to grow into His image. God also gave parents the ability, authority and responsibility to bring up their children in an initial discipleship. At the youngest ages, as infants and toddlers, mothers have a very special role in this.

Discipleship in the Hebrew Scriptures

The Hebrew scriptures present a number of training contexts – for example, the pattern of the Levitical priesthood combined with instructions that God gave regarding this position that were passed down from generation to generation.

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In 1 Kings and 1 Samuel, we also see the concept of the “sons of the prophets” and the “band of the prophets.” Obviously, there must have been a process of being trained and taught. We see this in the interaction between Elisha and his “discipler” Elijah - shared experience and wisdom. With Samuel and Jeremiah, the emphasis is God directly equipping two young prophets, from childhood, and it reinforces the point that God *invites people to be disciples* – already from the times of the Hebrew scriptures.

I view discipleship as a joint, cooperative action involving both God and human mentors. The term disciple should describe the relationship between God and God's people – a process of training in which a person follows God, gets closer to God, trusts Him more and comes to know God more. You develop qualities of holiness. You begin to do God's works and you begin to train others in turn.

What your goal is will dictate who your teacher is and what you want to learn. For example, those who want to become mathematicians or doctors will find themselves a mentor in the field. Our goal is to be children of God, and men and women of God. [As disciples of Yeshua we can excel in other areas as well, there is no contradiction. On the contrary, all we do - we do as unto the Lord.]

Where the Rubber Meets the Road

Luke 6: 40 says, *“A disciple is not greater than the teacher, but everyone who completes his learning will become like his teacher.”* Yeshua is the only one who can take you from where you are today, into the place of being a son or daughter of God – filled with the fruit of the Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit, doing His works, being where He is, with Him forever.

“I am the true vine and my father is the vinedresser. Every branch in me that does not bear fruit, He removes... He who abides in me and I in him, bears much fruit, for without me you can do nothing.” (John 15:1)

“By this is my father glorified that you bear much fruit and become my disciples.” (John 15:8)

We should ask ourselves, “Where am I in the discipleship process, in light of the standards set before us in the Bible?”

• *“He who does not take up his cross and come follow me cannot be my disciple.”* (Luke 14:27)

• *“Therefore every one of you who is not willing to give up his possessions cannot be my disciple.”* (Luke 14:33)

• *“By this shall all men know that are my disciples, if you have love one for another.”* (John 13:35)

To BE true disciples of Yeshua we must set aside what we have and take what Yeshua gives us! With soft, trusting hearts, we submit to God's will, with Yeshua always being our master and teacher.

To MAKE disciples, we need to represent the Lord and His Majesty to the best of our ability! This includes sharing the gospel and teaching the Scriptures, always pointing people toward Yeshua and the kingdom of God, encouraging and admonishing others to live a life of obedience to Messiah. Whether you were saved this morning or years ago, this is a call for all of us as witnesses of Messiah to already encourage those who do not yet know the Lord to be disciples.

Always remember to get closer to the Lord. You are still in the discipleship process – no longer blind, but not yet perfectly like Yeshua.





IAMWITH ISRAEL

Passover Outreach Opportunity in Haifa Bay

#IamWithIsrael

Dear Friends,

Every year during Passover, the Tents of Mercy Congregation holds a food outreach that touches nearly 1000 economically disadvantaged Israeli families in their city of Kiryat Yam and the surrounding Western Galilee/Haifa Bay area.

The outreaches involve hand-packing each Passover holiday food package with love and dedication. It's a beautiful expression of believers and pre-believers cooperating together to help the needy. Local municipality workers, the local chapter of wounded IDF veterans, young and old congregational members come together to make it all happen. Even some of you reading this right now have pitched in with love from the nations.

The outreaches are made possible through partners like you who give sacrificially to purchase the food items, enabling Tents of Mercy to be a blessing in their sphere of influence. Pastor Avishalom attests that these outreaches always bring a sense of divine fulfillment and humility, in that so much gets accomplished even through frail human vessels.

This year Passover falls in mid-April. Already the local municipality welfare office is compiling a list of eligible families as more than ever are stretched financially. Imagine that, the rabbis curse us, yet the Ahm ha Aretz (People of the Land) turn to Messianic believers for help. And we love responding! Tents of Mercy is "rolling up their sleeves" to receive hundreds of local families coming for aid.

It is a privilege to see God touch a city through Tents of Mercy. The verse on their heart is hearing the voice of the Lord calling their city in His love:

"He has told you, man, what is good, and what ADONAI is seeking from you: Only to practice justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God. The voice of ADONAI calls to the city." (Micah 6:8-9)

I know we can count on those of you whose hearts are being quickened to this need, to join us in prayer and in finances to buy food items.

We want to invite you to join this Tikkun-affiliated endeavor. Tents of Mercy is looking to bless 1000 struggling families with Passover food packages costing \$80 each. Would you consider funding half a package for \$40? Or a full package, or even more? If so, click on the links below.

We can help make a difference and help give voice to God's love!

Ron Cantor

Director, #iamwithisrael,

Revive Israel – Tikkun Global



ritg.org/passoveroutreach

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