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God is.



By **Asher Intrater**

Does God exist? That has been one of man's biggest questions for millennia.

Some philosophers describe God as the "maximal being." But that is rather vague.

In light of the confused and varied opinions about God in both the religious and secular world, let's go over the basic scriptural, "Judeo-Christian" view of the nature of God.

1. God exists.

The complex beauty and harmony of natural creation, along with the spiritual yearnings of the human soul, demand a super-intelligent designer-creator. Since every action has a cause, there must be an original source or first cause. "In the beginning God created..."

2. God is good.

God is benevolent, with good intentions for all. He can be trusted. A creator would not necessarily have to be good natured: many pagan religions have gods that are evil and selfish. "O give thanks to the Lord for He is good, and His mercy endures forever."

3. God is all-powerful.

God has all authority and all power. All the powers in the world originated with Him. He is the One God, and therefore the single Sovereign. "Almighty God..."

4. God is Spirit that created the material world.

Spiritual things are not the product of a material world, but the opposite. The awesome spiritual energy of "Let there be light" initiated our universe. Scientific evidence

has forced physicists to concede that there must have been a beginning to the physical universe - an "initial singularity" which they call "the big bang." The energy that created the universe is spiritual. "God is Spirit."

5. God is a person.

God is not a human being. Human beings were created in God's image, both male and female. So, God is personal in nature. We are "persons" because He was first. (Note: In Hebrew, the language for God is in masculine gender, while the language for Spirit is in feminine gender.) "Our Father in Heaven..."

6. God is loving.

The deepest quality in the human heart is love. That quality comes from God. He is love (1 John 4:8). All His commands to us are summarized in the command to love God and love one another. "Love comes from God."

7. God desires a personal relationship with you.

Since God is love, His primary desire for us is to receive His love, and to love Him in return. He wants to love us. Having a personal intimate relationship with God as our Heavenly Father is the most precious and beautiful of all things. It is the purpose of existence. "Love the Lord with all your heart."

8. God is neither secular nor religious.

Different philosophies and religions try to define God to the best of their abilities. But God is bigger than any particular person understands. He is bigger than any group. He loves all people. He is above religion and racism. He is not an "ism"; He IS. "I am that which I am."

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5 Eternal Insights From the World Cup



By **Hannah Tekle**

The World Cup competition in Qatar of the Persian Gulf is has drawn to a close. Soccer or “*Cadur-regel*” (in Hebrew) is the most popular sport in Israel. Kids and adults alike love to play a pick-up game anywhere possible – whether on grass or asphalt, hill or plain.

Soccer fans root for local Israeli teams with fierce loyalty. Wearing the “wrong” colors in some circles is reason enough for antagonistic behavior – particularly on important game days, and certainly when in attendance at the games themselves.

What is humorous and even the brunt of a currently-running comical commercial, is that while Israel adores soccer, our national team was only once good enough to qualify for the World Cup – in 1970. Local Israeli championship teams do occasionally play their European counterparts, and dozens of our best players have even been drafted to European soccer teams.

In the absence of Israeli representation in the World Cup, Israeli fans root for other countries associated with their heritage or language, or merely a team that captures their heart and attention. Walking in downtown Haifa the other night, after a surprising and exciting win by the Moroccan team, we passed a diverse group of students loudly and gleefully celebrating the Moroccan success. Many, including my family, favor the Brazilian team for the way they play with passion, grace, freedom and joy.

Following the World Cup together has been a pleasant and wholesome family activity for several weeks. As we have been watching, it has been fun to observe and identify national flavors and characteristics in the teams and fans. We enjoy the drama of it all, the fanfare, the emotion, and

cultural expression that inevitably comes out in the way the teams play and the way the fans root for their teams – how they rejoice in their team’s successes and wins and how they grieve the errors and losses.

As we followed the progress of the tournament, the global relevance of the event really struck me. It has been particularly fascinating to watch how each country responds to our Israeli correspondents reporting on the games from Qatar. Before and after the Iran-USA game, some Iranian fans refused to speak to the Israeli reporters out of fear of reprisals for consorting with the enemy. Others spoke bravely, openly and amiably with the Israelis – expressing sadness over the animosity between the nations, and conveying hope that things may be different in the future.

Why does this international event garner so much passion and human interest? Perhaps because it connects us to insights that are much deeper than mere entertainment.

Here are five insights that link straight to eternity:

1. God is the ultimate winner and champion. He created us in His image. We are all looking for a win. We are all looking for a hero.

*“Every athlete in training submits to strict discipline, in order to be crowned with a wreath that will not last; **but we do it for one that will last forever.** Therefore I do not run like someone running aimlessly...”* (I Corinthians 9:25-26)

2. We identify easily with the desire, drama and determination of the underdog teams, who pick themselves up again and again and push forward, occasionally winning against all the odds. Our heavenly coach has called us to join in His winning streak, but we have to follow His lead which is not always easy.

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Praying Urgently for Our Modern Day Pauls



By **Guy Cohen**

A new government coalition is being formed yet again in Israel. As I witness the various religious political parties taking their places and volleying for leading positions in the government, I am reminded of Paul of Tarsus.

The Apostle Paul, before his transformation on the road to Damascus, was known for his hatred of the believers in Yeshua. He pursued them with great religious zeal, determined to stop, stamp out and even kill anyone *he perceived as against the Torah*. He saw the Torah as an axe of judgement against heresy. Any beliefs that varied from its teachings, as he understood them, were to him a falsehood to be excised. The Gospel of Yeshua as atoning Messiah was initially tantamount to idolatry in Paul's eyes.

When I first learned about Paul in the New Testament, I saw an ultra-Orthodox fanatic with a religious spirit. This approach is still to be found in streams of Israel's Orthodox Judaism today.

Paul, who was a Pharisee, saw himself as the extended arm of the Jewish traditional establishment. He saw himself as fighting a holy war. The approach taken by Orthodox Jews of today, in particular those entering government positions, is all too similar to that of the Sadducees and Pharisees of Yeshua's time.

What I sense as I listen to the Jewish religious leaders and politicians is that they want to bring into all areas of society that same authority which they had in Yeshua's day. They have accomplished this by accusing and questioning others' lifestyle and belief systems here in Israel, such as questioning the legitimacy of others' Jewishness. They also see believers in Yeshua as heretics. I see them when I look at Paul; seeking to ascribe to themselves divine legitimization.

How did the First-Century Messianic congregation in Damascus feel knowing that this man Paul was on his way

to persecute them? Probably fear and worry. Their very existence was threatened as they faced potential death.

This is exactly the same spirit that I see the religious bringing to Israel's Knesset (legislative body). There are many potential "Pauls" among those elected. **Please pray with us that the spirit of destruction against believers in Yeshua will be stopped by God as He meets these "Pauls" on their way to persecuting Yeshua and his believers.**

As it was with Paul, **may their zeal for our destruction be turned into passion for Yeshua.** Let us not forget that we have been saved by grace. Freely we have received, freely we should give (Matthew 10:8). *And so, will you take a stand in faith together with us? And believe together for "Damascus Road" experiences for these religious/political leaders in Israel?*



Would the Wives

of the Patriarchs (Rebecca, Leah, and Rachel)
be Granted Citizenship Under Israel's New Government?



By **Leon Mazin**

Thank you so much for standing with us in prayer and support! Together, we serve in proclaiming Yeshua the Messiah in Israel!

As most of you know, a new government led by Benjamin Netanyahu is in the process of being formed. Most of the political parties that have aligned with him are Orthodox. Among their coalition demands, is a change to the "Law of Return." This law allows Jews from other countries to obtain citizenship in the State of Israel. This law also allows people who have even one Jewish grandparent to receive citizenship. These parties want to change the law in order to prevent assimilated descendants of Jews from moving to Israel.

In light of this, I want to share an interpretation from Genesis 24.

Abraham insisted that Isaac not marry a woman from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom he dwelled. He sent his servant, Eliezer, back to his home country to find a wife for his son.

"And the servant said to him, 'Perhaps the woman will not be willing to follow me to this land. Must I take your son back to the land from which you came?'"

But Abraham said to him, 'Beware that you do not take my son back there.'" (vv. 5-6)

It is easy to understand the reason for Abraham's request. First, among the Canaanites, there was a curse of sin and moral baseness. There was no chance to find an appropriate wife in Canaan for Isaac through whom the Creator could bring salvation for the whole world.

Second, there was a potential bride for Isaac in Abraham's former homeland, but if Isaac had to go back and live there in order to marry her, he would lose his calling and would not be able to fulfill his role in God's greater plan.

Was Rebecca Jewish? No. She was Aramean, a resident of Haran. In the next generation, Rachel and Leah, the daughters of Rebecca's brother, Laban, were also Aramean. We also know the stories of Rahab and Ruth, women from other nations who joined themselves to Israel. Each desired to join the Abrahamic family of faith, and even became a part of the human ancestry of Yeshua, the Son of David. Each of these women left behind their cultures and lifestyles "to bring the Kingdom of Heaven down to earth." Well, they succeeded!

And today, the Orthodox parties, which know and understand the Torah, want to turn away children and grandchildren with patrilineal Jewish ancestry – when our patriarchs took non-Jewish women as wives!

It sounds ridiculous, but that is our reality these days. In the Nazi camps, the grandchildren of Jews with as little as ¼ Jewish ancestry were murdered, but today the grandchildren of Jews may soon be refused when they apply to return to Israel.

I am sharing this to **encourage you to pray** for God's will to be done and for the door to remain open for those returning to Israel. *And may the thousands who wish to enter the heritage of the physical children of Abraham be allowed to serve for the glory of the Lord.*



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By **Hannah Tekle**

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*“Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I **press on toward the goal to win the prize** for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.”* (Philippians 3:13-14 NIV)

3. The players who succeed the most and the teams that win are playing with everything they have. They hold nothing back. They play with all their heart and all their might. We are designed by God to do life with our all.

*“**Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters**”* (Colossians 3:23 NIV)

4. God created us for connection. Camaraderie between the players of the same team and even different teams, is very endearing. The emotions stirred up in us when teams win and lose in dramatic circumstances is by the Creator’s design. In fact, research shows that fans who identify with and feel attached to sport teams gain positive impact on their mental health from the experience regardless of whether their team is winning or losing.

*“**Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.**”* (Romans 12:15 NIV)

[Disclaimer: This article does not represent a promotion of or a condoning of all aspects political and/or sociological regarding the World Cup.]

5. Finally, we all are waiting for the winning team to be revealed. After watching each team stand together to ward off defeat (defense) and unite in every attempt to achieve victory (offense), the bottom line is: Who will persist till the end and win the game?

*“**For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God...**”* (Romans 8:19 NRSVUE)

The final game of the 2022 World Cup was so dramatic and close that we held our breath waiting to see who would win. Argentina’s national team proved victorious this time. Four years from now it will all be open once again to see who makes it to the final game and takes the cup.

As for us, we are citizens of heaven and we know who will be the Victor in the cup of Eternity! May the taste and smell of eternity fill our lives in a way that glorifies God and draws others to their Creator, the ultimate and victorious Winner!



If Yeshua Needed It... So Do I



By **Youval Yanay**

Have you accepted the invitation? Cashed the open check?

It's actually a commandment you will not find in the Torah, but you will find throughout the New Testament. In 1 Thessalonians 5:17 Paul says, "Pray always;" And in verse 25, "Brothers, pray on our behalf."

Why has it now become not just an invitation to be accepted, but also a commandment to be joyfully obeyed? Because of the new and open door to relationship with God in Yeshua's New Covenant.

Prayer brings us closer to God – just as the offering of the Torah sacrifices brought the one sacrificing closer to God. In Hebrew "to bring a sacrifice" is "to bring close" – L'hakreev. After the final sacrifice of Yeshua, there is no need to offer any more blood sacrifice, and prayer becomes our way to draw near and create a connection with God. (By the way, Rabbinical Judaism also sees a connection between prayer and sacrifice, and calls the three daily synagogue services by the names of the three daily temple sacrifices: Shacharit-dawn, Mincha-late afternoon, and Maariv-evening.)

Heart prayer shows God that we want to be near Him and that we truly know we need Him. Like a father, God is pleased when His children want to be with Him.

While spending time with God in prayer, we are inspired to love God and praise Him. It's not a mechanical chore that needs to be done, and not a "grocery list." In heartfelt prayer, our zeal and attraction for Him grow. Nearness begets surrender. We understand that our health, livelihood, strength – everything is from God. This alters reality for us.

In Matthew 6:10-13, Yeshua teaches us how to pray – yes, even encourages us to ask for things:

"Your kingdom come.

Your will be done

On earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our debts,

As we forgive our debtors.

And do not lead us into temptation,

But deliver us from the evil one."

Yet in verse 8 He says:

"For your Father knows your needs before you ask Him."

So if God already knows, why then should we pray for our needs? For one thing, that prayer time becomes an opportunity for quality relational interaction, like a husband and wife who use the excuse of "coordinating their day" to have some one-on-one time over coffee.

Look who's praying: In Luke 5:16, we learn that Yeshua went out to desolate places and prayed. In Mark 1:35, in the early morning while it was still dark, Yeshua got up and went out to a deserted place and prayed there. Yeshua prayed a lot. When in difficulty, He would pray. When in need of comfort, encouragement and guidance, He would pray. In Gethsemane, after the last supper with the disciples, Yeshua was filled with sadness and anguish and so *"he went a little way, he fell on his face and prayed"* (Matthew 20:38).

If Yeshua needed to constantly pour out His heart to Father God and have it refilled, can I really live otherwise?

Prayer is where we hear God. A central part of prayer is listening. We receive encouragement and comfort and are filled with God's love for us. He strengthens us and accepts us, yet He also at times will rebuke us. As we concentrate on Him and are filled with His presence, He graciously shows us what we must change in our actions, decisions and behavior.

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God is.

By Asher Intrater

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9. God has a plan for a perfect world.

There are so many problems in the world today. Those problems are the result of human disobedience and rebellion against God. But God is patiently working on the hearts of people. In the end, those who submit to His plan will be part of eternal paradise. “The Garden of Eden...”

10. God has a perfect plan for your life.

Not only does God have a plan for a perfect world, He has a perfect plan for every individual. Not only will paradise be restored, but each person who submits to Him will be restored and made whole. “And God will wipe away every tear.”

11. God is moral.

God has not only good intentions, He also has clearly defined moral values. He is not corrupt, lustful or evil. Our moral values came from Him. The Ten Commandments give a basic framework for His morals, in contrast with pagan mythologies describing gods who sin and act selfishly. Those gods are not The God. “His judgments are righteous.”

12. God is holy.

God is more than good; more than moral. He is Holy. Holy means perfectly good combined with absolutely powerful. This level of purity is above anything human and anything found in creation. It is the transcendent glory of a perfect God. “Holy is the Lord.”

Since God has personal qualities, loves us, and wants to have a relationship with us, it would only make sense that He desires to make Himself known to us. How would God do that?

Would He reveal Himself to us internally alone? Or through nature? Through other people? Through a special person? Through history? Through prophecies? Through visions? Through writings?

That discussion would bring us to yet another level of questions, which would deal with what those revelations of God are to mankind, and what His expectations are from us. These questions are central, essential to search out. “*God looks down from heaven at mankind, to see if there are any who are wise, who seek God*” (Psalm 14).

If Yeshua Needed It... So Do I

By Youval Yanay

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Learning is a way of life for the disciple as he is transformed into the glorious image of God’s son (Romans 8:29). We let the light of His word penetrate us, and live in the light as He is in the light (I John 1:7).

As disciples of Yeshua, we need to dedicate this time to Him regularly, daily and be filled with His love. We need to be “sheep” who hear Him, know His voice and follow Him. We want to live a prayer life of honesty and truth and closeness to the Lord, to reflect Yeshua to others – not only in what we say but also in who we really are. *Prayer is where it all begins.*

Intercession for others: We have the authority, grace and even duty, as instructors and teachers, to stand before

the throne of glory and pray for others, especially those near us and under our care. To know their difficulties and the temptations they face, and to stand before God in prayer and obtain grace for them. We open a pathway for them, and protect them in prayer.

In conclusion: When we focus on ourselves, our needs, our rights, our desires and our plans, life becomes a prison of loneliness, sadness and emptiness. Prayer removes us from this prison and reminds us of God’s healing, liberating and saving action in our lives. It reminds us of what He did for us to pave our way to life and freedom. Prayer brings us back home.

Let’s all be people of prayer, prayer warriors, close to God and living out His kingdom.

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