



**Parasha Va'era**

January 1, 2022

*“Yeshua, Our Jewish Messiah Part 2”*

*Torah:* Exodus 6:2-9:35

*Haftarah:* Ezekiel 28:25-29:21

*Ketuvim Shlichim:* Luke 2:21-24

*Shabbat shalom mishpacha!* Our *parasha* this week is *Va'era*. It begins, ADONAI revealed Himself to Moses by saying: 2 *“I am Adonai. 3 I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob, as El Shaddai. Yet by My Name, Adonai, I have not made Myself known to them.”* (Exodus 6:2-3 TLV). Prior to this Israel knew ADONAI as El Shaddai. ADONAI continued: 6 *“Therefore say to Bnei-Yisrael: I am Adonai, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. I will deliver you from their bondage, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. 7 I will take you to Myself as a people, and I will be your God. You will know that I am Adonai your God, who brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. 8 So I will bring you into the land that I swore to give to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob, and give it to you as an inheritance. I am Adonai.”* (Exodus 6:6-8 TLV). This is a restatement of the promise which ADONAI made to Abraham.

Here is a summary of the rest of the *parasha*. Moses and Aaron went before Pharaoh and Aaron's staff turned into a snake and swallowed the staffs of the Egyptian sorcerers. ADONAI then sent a series of plagues upon the Egyptians. The waters of the Nile turned to blood, swarms of frogs overran the land and gnats infested them. Swarms of flies filled the houses of the Egyptians but none were in Goshen where Israel was. A plague killed Egypt's domestic animals but not those of Israel. Boils afflicted the whole land. Then, hail accompanied by lightning devastated the Egyptians but there was no hail in Goshen. 35 *So Pharaoh's heart was hardened and he did not let Bnei-Yisrael go—just as Adonai had said by Moses' hand.* (Exodus 9:35 TLV). Hardened is translated from *chazak* which also means strengthened. The Hebrew says *v'chazak*, *וַיַּחֲזַק*. ADONAI did not harden Pharaoh's heart. He strengthened the evil desire which was already in his heart.

We continue today with our topic, “Yeshua, Our Jewish Messiah, Part 2.” By way of introduction, I wish to point out several things about *Beit Shalom Messianic Synagogue*. First, we are a Messianic Jewish synagogue. While we have both Jewish and non-Jewish members, we are primarily non-Jewish in membership, that is, at this present time. It may not always be that way. As a Messianic Jewish congregation, ADONAI has given us a specific calling: to be a part of the His end-time movement that He is carrying out through Messianic Jews. We are licensed as a congregation through the International Alliance of Messianic Congregations and Synagogues and my ordination as a congregational leader is through the IAMCS, a part of the Messianic Jewish Alliance of America, the MJAA. As a congregation and members, we are a part of Messianic Judaism covenantally and spiritually. In these last days, and specifically since the mid-1970s, ADONAI has poured out His Spirit on Jews, and many thousands have recognized Yeshua as their long-awaited Messiah and submitted themselves to Him, accepting His life sacrifice as a atonement for their sin. We join with the

greater Messianic Jewish Movement, those beyond the MJAA, in the spiritual goal of “the salvation of all Israel” as prophesied by *Sha’ul* in Romans 11:25-27.

Second, we follow ADONAI’s written word in the *Tanakh*, the Hebrew Bible, and the *Ketuwim Shlichim*, the writings of Yeshua’s disciples. Found in our English language Bibles as Genesis through Revelation, we recognize these Scriptures as our only guide to faith and practice. We also accept as liturgy and tradition those elements of Jewish liturgy and practice which reflect our faith and do not conflict with written Scripture. But, we do not consider these traditions beyond Scripture authoritative for us unless they are expressly stated in the Word of G-d. We reject the *Talmuds* and other Jewish writings as being authoritative for us although we can learn from them and do sometimes use them as aids in understanding.

Third, we recognize the Bible as a Jewish document from Genesis to Revelation and seek to understand it through Jewish eyes. ADONAI has chosen and called the Jewish people to be His priests to the nations. In these last days, He is preparing them to assume their role as priests who will take His truth to the people of the nations. He has spoken through the Jewish writers of each book of the Bible and His message through them can only be fully understood by recognizing the Bible as a Jewish document. Our goal in understanding is to make every effort to cut a straight path with the word of truth as *Sha’ul* told Timothy (2Timothy 2:15).

Last *Shabbat*, we discussed Yeshua’s genealogy and His name. As we consider His birth today, it will be helpful to understand the world into which He was born. Why was He born when He was? We don’t know ADONAI’s reasoning, but suspect that His timing had a great deal to do with the coming destruction of the Temple, something which would also end the Levitical priesthood and the validity of the majority of the commands in the *Torah*.

About 625 years before Yeshua was born, 625 BCE, ADONAI called *Yirmeyahu*, Jeremiah, to be His prophet. It was during a time of tremendous idolatry in Judah, the southern kingdom. The northern kingdom, Israel, had been defeated and taken into captivity about a hundred years earlier and now Judah was as almost as idolatrous as their northern tribesmen had been. Two major prophecies of Jeremiah were that 1) Israel would be taken captive by Babylon and that 2) ADONAI would cut a New Covenant with Israel. The Jews of the first century were aware of a coming new covenant, but believed that it was a renewed commitment to abide by ADONAI’s *Torah* and had no idea that it was connected to the coming of the Messiah.

About twenty years after Jeremiah prophesied the New Covenant, around 605 BCE, the first group of Jews were taken captive to Babylon. Among them was a young man named Daniel whom ADONAI would use to prophesy the coming of the Messiah. Daniel was an old man and had been in Babylon about sixty-five years when ADONAI sent the angel Gabriel to explain to him about the coming of the Messiah. (around 540 BCE). Gabriel explained to Daniel what was to happen in Israel in Daniel 9:24-27 in what is called the Prophecy of the Seventy Weeks. In these four verses, a lot of time is covered, 490 years. Gabriel told Daniel that the weeks representing years would begin with the order to rebuild Jerusalem from its Babylonian destruction. These years would include the time of the coming of the Messiah and what would happen afterward in the seventieth and final week of the prophecy. (For an excellent explanation, read “Daniel Unsealed” by Dan Bruce). As the Prophet Amos explained, “ADONAI never does anything without telling His prophets” (Amos 3:7) and ADONAI foretold what was to happen in the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE regarding the New Covenant and the Messiah through Jeremiah and Daniel as well as other prophets.

The beginning of the 1<sup>st</sup> century was a time of turmoil. The people of the Kingdom of Judah had returned from Babylonian captivity about 538 years earlier. They had two brief periods of freedom, from 538 BCE to 167 BCE; 371 years of freedom until the Selucid occupation of Antiochus Epiphanes and then from 160 BCE to 63 BCE; 97 years of freedom until the Roman occupation. Yeshua was born into an Israel under foreign rule and the people were desperately looking for deliverance.

Yeshua was born a member of the Tribe of Judah, an Israelite, in our present terminology, a Jew. He was to fulfill not only everything spoken about Him in prophecy, but also everything required by *Torah* of an Israelite. *1 Now it happened in those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus to register all the world's inhabitants. 2 This was the first census taken when Quirinius was governor of Syria. 3 Everyone was traveling to be registered in his own city. 4 Now Joseph also went up from the Galilee, out of the town of Natzeret to Judah, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was from the house and family of David. 5 He went to register with Miriam, who was engaged to him and was pregnant.* (Luke 2:1-5 TLV). Joseph travelled from Nazareth where he had been living to his ancestral home, Bethlehem. He was a builder and craftsman, jack of all trades, called in the Greek “a *tekton*.” This was a title which would also be given to Yeshua when he became an adult working with his father. It is supposed that Joseph was working in Nazareth as a *tekton*, usually translated as carpenter, when he met *Miryam*. As a *tekton*, he was much more than a carpenter and could perform all types of construction from carpentry to stonework. As we discussed last week, Joseph had noticed *Miryam*'s pregnancy early on and had planned to quietly divorce her when the angel intervened and told him that the baby was by the *Ruach Kodesh*, the Holy Spirit. At the time that they are travelling to Bethlehem, it is months later and *Miryam* was very much pregnant.

*6 But while they were there, the time came for her to give birth— 7 and she gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped Him in strips of cloth and set Him down in a manger, since there was no room for them in the inn.* (Luke 2:6-7 TLV). *Miryam* gave birth to Yeshua, her firstborn son, and placed Him in a cradle that was a manger, a feeding trough for animals. Do you believe that I can prove to you in Scripture that Yeshua was born in a *sukkah*? I can. When Jacob returned with his family to Canaan from *Padan Aram* it says this: *17...but Jacob journeyed to Sukkot and built a house for himself, and for his livestock he made booths. That is the reason that place is called Sukkot.* (Genesis 33:17 TLV). The word translated “booths” is *sukkot*, סֹכּוֹת, the plural of *sukkah*. Yeshua's ancestor Jacob built livestock shelters, *sukkot*, and that is what Yeshua was born in in Bethlehem. That He was born in a *sukkah* does not necessarily mean that He was born during the Festival of *Sukkot*, but there is considerable evidence that He may have been. But, He was born in a *sukkah*.

When Yeshua was born, the angel told the shepherds “A savior, Greek *sótér* (so-tare) is born”: *11 “A Savior is born to you today in the city of David, who is Messiah the Lord.”* (Luke 2:11 TLV). Where the *Mashiach* would be born had been foretold by the Prophet Micah about 75 years before Jeremiah prophesied the New Covenant. Through Micah, ADONAI told the people of Judah that He would bring a Messiah/King who would save them and that He would be born in Bethlehem: *1 “But you, Bethlehem Ephrata— least among the clans of Judah—from you will come out to Me One to be ruler in Israel, One whose goings forth are from of old, from days of eternity.”* (Micah 5:1 TLV). The people should have known from these words that the Savior was sent from ADONAI and was G-d Himself. Micah said that He was an eternal being.

21 *When eight days had passed for His brit-milah, He was named Yeshua, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb.* (Luke 2:21 TLV). *B'rit milah*, Hebrew for covenant of circumcision, was performed for Yeshua on His eighth day of human life, exactly in accordance with the covenant which ADONAI made with Abraham. The angel who came to Joseph in a dream was only relaying the message. Yeshua's name was a name chosen by ADONAI to have profound significance for the people He created. This baby boy named "ADONAI is salvation" would grow up to be the Savior of His people Israel and the Savior of the people of the nations who would choose to become grafted into the Commonwealth of Israel. According to the custom of that day, the father named boys at their *b'rit milah* and Joseph would have named Yeshua. He named Him Yeshua as commanded, but His full name was *Yeshua BenYosef*, Yeshua, son of Joseph, His adopted father. Every Jewish male had to be brought into the Covenant of Abraham and circumcision was the act which caused it. ADONAI said to Abraham: 10 *"This is My covenant that you must keep between Me and you and your seed after you: all your males must be circumcised. 11 You must be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin, and this will become a sign of the covenant between Me and you. 12 Also your eight-day-olds must be circumcised, every male, throughout your generations,..."* (Genesis 17:10-12a TLV). Circumcision was the sign in the flesh of every Israelite male that they were in covenant with ADONAI. Through this covenant He promised the land of Canaan as a homeland for all of Abraham's descendants. Yeshua's genealogy began: 1 *The book of the genealogy of Yeshua ha-Mashiach, Ben-David, Ben-Avraham:* (Matthew 1:1 TLV). This phrase told that Yeshua was not only a *ben*, a son, a descendant of King David, but was also a descendant and also a son of the covenant through Abraham. The cutting of the flesh of the foreskin was the official act which made Jewish males "sons of the covenant." As faithful followers of ADONAI and covenant members of the Covenant at Sinai, Yeshua's parents obeyed *Torah* and did what was required by ADONAI.

Weeks have now passed and the next verses show that Yeshua's parents continued to be obedient to *Torah*: 22 *And when the days of their purification were fulfilled, according to the Torah of Moses, they brought Him to Jerusalem to present to Adonai.*" (Luke 2:22 TLV). The *Torah* of Moses was actually the *Torah* of ADONAI. He was the one who commanded it. Purification was in two stages for *Miryam* as a new mother of a son: 1 *Then Adonai spoke to Moses saying: 2 "Speak to Bnei-Yisrael, instructing: If a woman conceives and bears a male child, then she will be unclean for seven days, as in the days of her niddah she will be unclean. 3 In the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin is to be circumcised. 4 She must wait during the blood of purification for 33 days. She is not to touch any holy thing, nor come into the Sanctuary, until the days of her purifying are completed.*" (Leviticus 12:1-4 TLV). For seven days after giving birth, anything which *Miryam* touched would become unclean and would have to be ritually cleansed. Her initial period of uncleanness was the same length of time as for her *niddah*, uncleanness after her menstrual period, seven days. After seven days, she would have undergone *tevilah*, immersion, and would have been clean. She could then touch everyday objects and not render them unclean. She could have relations with her husband, but she remained in a second level of uncleanness until 33 days after giving birth. During the 33 days she could touch ordinary things, but could not enter the Temple or touch holy objects. *Torah* describes what she must do after the 33 days: 6 *"When the days of her purification are completed for a son (**33 days**) or for a daughter (**66 days**), she is to bring to the kohen, at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting, a year old lamb for a burnt offering and a young pigeon or a turtledove, for a sin offering. 7 He is to present it before Adonai and make atonement for her. Then she will be cleansed from the discharge of her blood. This is the Torah for her who gives birth, whether to a male or a female child.*" (Leviticus 12:6-7 TLV).

*22 And when the days of their purification were fulfilled, according to the Torah of Moses, they brought Him to Jerusalem to present to Adonai. 23 As it is written in the Torah of Adonai, "Every firstborn male that opens the womb shall be called holy to Adonai." (Luke 2:22:23 TLV).* The Gospel writers did not tell everything and then not always in the order that it happened, but by examining *Torah* we can fill in the blanks regarding what happened in Jerusalem with Yeshua and His family. In these two verses we are told that *Miryam* had passed the 33 days for purification and had come to Jerusalem and the Temple. But then, Luke switched the subject to Yeshua and told that He was presented as a firstborn son.

Every first born Jewish male who was not of the Tribe of Levi had to be redeemed. Because ADONAI brought death to the firstborn of Egypt, but spared the firstborn of Israel, He declared that all the firstborn sons of the twelve tribes of Israel belonged to Him. 2 *"Consecrate to Me all the firstborn, from every womb of Bnei-Yisrael, both men and animals—this is Mine."* (Exodus 13:2 TLV). When ADONAI later designated the entire Tribe of Levi (Numbers 8:14-18) to serve Him as priests and Levites and all Israelite firstborn were no longer dedicated as His servants they had to be redeemed. This brought about what is now called *Pidyon haBen*, the ceremony of the redemption of the firstborn son. It fulfills ADONAI's *Torah* requirement: 15 *"The first offspring of the womb from all flesh, whether human or animal, offered to Adonai, is yours. However, you are to redeem the firstborn of man and the firstborn of unclean animals. 16 When they are a month old, you are to redeem them at the redemption price of five shekels of silver by the Sanctuary shekel, or 20 gerahs."* (Numbers 18:15-16 TLV). (See also Exodus 13:12; 15). When they arrived in Jerusalem, Yeshua was a little over a month old.

*22 And when the days of their purification were fulfilled, according to the Torah of Moses, they brought Him to Jerusalem to present to Adonai. 23 As it is written in the Torah of Adonai, "Every firstborn male that opens the womb shall be called holy to Adonai." (Luke 2:22:23 TLV).* Luke didn't give us this detail, but Joseph would have paid 5 shekels redemption money to redeem Yeshua as we read in Numbers 18. This next verse seems to be out of the order in which it happened: 24 *So they offered a sacrifice according to what was said in the Torah of Adonai: "a pair of turtle doves, or two young pigeons."* (Luke 2:24 TLV). Those birds were actually *Miryam's* purification offerings. 8 *"If she cannot afford a lamb, then she is to bring two turtledoves or two young pigeons, one for a burnt offering and the other for a sin offering. Then the kohen will make atonement for her, and she will be clean."* (Leviticus 12:8 TLV). They couldn't afford a lamb and offered the birds. This completed the immediate *Torah* requirements of 1) purification of the mother at seven days, 2) *b'rit milah* of the son on the eighth day, 3) redemption of firstborn son and 4) ritual purification of the mother after 33 days.

Even the magi who came about a year later knew of Yeshua's birth, possibly because of Daniel's presence and influence in Babylon years before. 1 *Now after Yeshua was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of King Herod, magi from the east came to Jerusalem, 2 saying, "Where is the One who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him."* (Matthew 2:1-2 TLV). The Magi saw Yeshua's star and travelled a great distance to worship Him. Another way that they might have known about this was through Balaam's prophecies about Israel. He prophesied: 17 *"I see him, yet not at this moment. I behold him, yet not in this location. For a star will come from Jacob, a scepter will arise from Israel."* (Numbers 24:17a TLV). This prophecy may have alerted them to the star in the heavens which guided them and to His kingship signified by the scepter. It was known throughout the ancient world that ADONAI would send a king to rule over His people

Israel. When the Magi arrived in Bethlehem, they found Yeshua with his mother *Miryam* and they worshipped Him, presenting Him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

Yeshua's earthly parents did everything required by ADONAI in *Torah*. As Yeshua later told us: 18 *"Amen, I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or serif shall ever pass away from the Torah until all things come to pass."* (Matthew 5:18 TLV). Yeshua, the perfect Son of ADONAI, was sent to live a perfect life on the earth. As a sinless human man, He did all these things, not so that we would not have to, but because He was G-d in the flesh, perfect in every way.

When we understand why ADONAI did all these things, we realize that He did them for us. That He required the firstborn sons of Israel to be redeemed and required His only Son, His firstborn, to be redeemed as a son of Israel was something which He did for us. The Son who was not of the Tribe of Levi was redeemed, but became not only a priest, but Israel's High Priest under the New Covenant. It was because of the great love between the Creator and His creation. He loves us with an everlasting love. In the prelude leading up to the prophecy of the New Covenant, ADONAI said to Israel: 2 *...."Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love. Therefore I have drawn you with lovingkindness."* (Jeremiah 31:2b TLV). ADONAI's everlasting love was shown in many ways, but especially through making a New Covenant with Israel, His chosen nation, a covenant which would be cut with His own Son's blood. He loves Israel, His chosen people and Yeshua loves us with the same love as that of the Father. Yeshua said to His disciples: 9 *"Just as the Father has loved Me, I also have loved you. Abide in My love!"* (John 15:9 TLV). Their love for us is something that is beyond human comprehension. We can't understand grasp its magnitude. G-d's ways are not our ways. He chose to have Israel live under Tabernacle and Temple law for thousands of years before He sent His Son to become the perfect sacrifice, the fulfillment of the New Covenant. Our part is to love ADONAI in return. We who have received G-d's mercy of salvation must return His love and we do by obedience to our Master, our Messiah. Yeshua, whose name means ADONAI's salvation, is our Jewish Messiah. He was perfectly obedient to all that ADONAI required of Him, even death on a tree. When He returns, our Jewish Messiah will be our Jewish King ruling from Jerusalem, the city in which ADONAI has placed His name. *Shabbat shalom!*