



## **Parasha Beshalach**

January 15, 2022

*Torah:* Exodus 13:17-17:16

*Haftarah:* Judges 4:4-5:31

*Ketuvim Shlichim:* John 1:29-34

*Shabbat shalom mishpacha!* In last week's *parasha*, Pharaoh finally let Israel go. Our *parasha* this week is *Beshalach*. It begins with the words: *17 After Pharaoh had let the people go, God did not lead them along the road to the land of the Philistines,..* (Exodus 13:17a TLV). The verses go on to say that He did this because they would lose heart if they saw armed Philistines and would return to Egypt. ADONAI knew them very well. They had succumbed to fear before and would again a number of times in the next few weeks. But, if you've seen 10 mighty miracles in the form of plagues against the Egyptians, your faith should already be strong. But Israel was also a nation of babies. They had only been actively knowing and following ADONAI for just a few weeks after generations of just knowing about Him. Now, they had experienced Him personally, and trusting and believing was a difficult change to make in their approach to life.

As Pharaoh raged after Israel with his army, ADONAI delivered them. Through Moses, He caused the sea to open so that they could cross on dry land and then closed the sea back on the Egyptians: *30 So Adonai saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. 31 When Israel saw the great work that Adonai did over the Egyptians, the people feared Adonai, and they believed in Adonai and in His servant Moses.* (Exodus 14:30-31 TLV). Now, finally, the people were ready to praise ADONAI and gathered on the eastern shore of the Red sea, Moses and the people sang a song to ADONAI. We have an ancient Hebrew liturgical song based upon one of the verses in their song and we sing it every week. *Moshe* and *B'nei Yisrael* sang this song to ADONAI: *11 Who is like You, Adonai, among the gods? Who is like You, glorious in holiness, awesome in praises, doing wonders?* (Exodus 15:11 TLV). It's *Mi Kamocha*, "Who is like You!" Each week when we sing *Mi Kamocha*, it reminds us of how great is our G-d and especially what He did for Israel at the Red Sea!

There is another important verse in this Song of Moses and we also have a modern Scripture song about it. It's called "Horse and Rider." This is the verse: *2 Adonai is my strength and song, and He has become my salvation.* (Exodus 15:2a TLV). The Hebrew actually says "*Yah* (יְהוָה) is my strength and song." *Yah* is a shortened form of ADONAI's name *YHVH*, a name which we don't pronounce. But, this verse must be very important to ADONAI because He has caused it to appear three times in the *Tanakh*, the Hebrew Bible. And it isn't found just in one general area. It appears in all three sections of the *Tanakh*; in the *Torah*, in the Prophets, and in the Writings. We will hear about the other two verses as we close the message today.

Our message today is "Yeshua, Our Jewish Messiah, Part 3." Last week we examined Yeshua's birth, His *b'rit milah*, His covenant of circumcision, and His *Pidyon HaBen*, His redemption as a first-born Son. His parents followed *Torah* commands regarding these things perfectly. We continue today with the next events in Yeshua's life.

The next personal mention of Him is found in Luke chapter 2, verses 41-52. The family travelled from Nazareth to Jerusalem for Passover each year. They were very zealous for

ADONAI because we are told that they attended each year. Not nearly every Israelite did that. Luke tells about the time they attended when Yeshua was twelve years old. After it was over, they began their two to three day journey home. They travelled in a caravan with neighbors from Nazareth and other groups that may have joined them. After they had travelled for a day and realizing that Yeshua was not in the group, they turned back to look for Him. When they got to Jerusalem, it took another three days to find Him. *46 After three days they found Him in the Temple, sitting in the center of the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. 47 And all those hearing Him were astonished at His understanding and His answers.* (Luke 2:46-47 TLV). They questioned Him as to why He would do this and cause them to search frantically for Him. *49 He said to them, "Why were you searching for Me? Didn't you know that I must be about the things of My Father?" 50 But they did not grasp the message He was telling them. 51 Then He went down with them to Natzeret and was obedient to them.* (Luke 2:49-51a TLV). Yeshua, the Son of G-d, was not like children who were completely human. He must have had knowledge of who He was from inception. And, the same would have been true at age 12. He knew who He was but did not reveal it as it says in other places in the Gospels, "because His time had not yet come." But, as verse 51 says, He also fulfilled His human obligations as an obedient son.

To understand Yeshua, we also have to understand His cousin *Yochanan*, John, the son of Zechariah and his wife Elizabeth. John was about six months older than Yeshua and the circumstances surrounding his birth are given in Luke chapter 1. Please read it as you reflect on this message. John's father Zechariah was of the Tribe of Levi and was a *kohen*, a priest. That means that John was also a *kohen*, but he seemingly rejected it and chose to live in the wilderness. We are not told why directly, but he may have rejected his priesthood because of the corruptness of the leading priests. We get a sense of this in his criticism of some Sadducees in Matthew 3:7 as "a group of vipers," and it is undeniable that the priesthood was corrupt under the High Priest Caiaphas.

On the day of John's *b'rit milah* and his naming, his father Zechariah prophesied about him, saying: *76 "And you, child, will be called a prophet of Elyon. For you will go before Adonai to prepare His ways, 77 to give knowledge of salvation to His people through removal of their sins."* (Luke 1:76-77 TLV). These were not Zechariah's words, but words directly from the *Ruach*. We focus on his words, "For you will go before ADONAI to prepare His ways, to give knowledge of salvation to His people through removal of their sins." Zechariah actually said that his son John was to be an Elijah figure for his day. The Gospel author Mark introduces John by writing: *2 As Isaiah the prophet has written, "Behold, I send My messenger before You, who will prepare Your way."* (Mark 1:2 TLV). There is one small problem with this statement. It was not Isaiah, but Malachi who wrote it. Theologians explain this by referring to it as a "composite quotation," a quotation from more than one source and say that the most important author is the one referenced. We will see that in a moment as the quotation continues with Isaiah's words.

But Malachi's words are important and that's not all that he said. Reading just that much would cause those in Yeshua's day to remember the rest of his statement: *1 "Behold, I am sending My messenger, and he will clear the way before Me. Suddenly He will come to His Temple—the Lord whom you seek—and the Messenger of the covenant—the One whom you desire— behold, He is coming," says Adonai-Tzva'ot.* (Malachi 3:1 TLV). I recommend that everyone read from a Hebrew oriented Bible such as the TLV or the CJV. This verse points out a part of the need for doing that. Christian oriented Bibles form a chapter 4 with this verse at chapter 4, verses 5 and 6. This happens fairly frequently throughout the *Tanakh*. But, don't just rely on your Bible. Refer frequently to concordances, either in book form or on line. See what the Hebrew or the Greek says to verify what you are reading in your Hebrew

oriented Bible. Mark told us that John was the 1<sup>st</sup> century Elijah figure who would clear the way before the Messiah; he would begin the cry for *teshuvah*, repentance, and would then introduce the Messiah Himself.

Mark continued: 3 *“The voice of one crying in the wilderness, ‘Prepare the way of Adonai, and make His paths straight.’”* (Mark 1:3 TLV). This is *remez*, a Hebrew teaching method using key words to hint back at a longer Scripture. In this case, it is a reference to Isaiah, whom Mark originally quoted. This is the second part of a composite quotation, a quotation having more than one being quoted. This is what Mark wanted his readers to understand; that this was Isaiah speaking. 3 *A voice cries out in the wilderness, “Prepare the way of Adonai, Make straight in the desert a highway for our God.”* (Isaiah 40:3 TLV). In his chapter 3, Matthew also quotes Isaiah 40 verse 3. And, Luke adds more from Isaiah chapter 40: 5 *“Every valley shall be filled up and every mountain and hill brought low. The crooked shall be made straight and the rough ways made smooth, 6 and all humanity shall see the salvation of God.”* (Luke 3:5-6 TLV) which is a quote of Isaiah 40:3-5. All humanity, every human being, shall see Yeshua, the salvation of G-d.

What is the connection between the actual Prophet Elijah and the Elijah figure prophesied to come? The rabbis believe that Malachi and Isaiah prophesied of an Elijah figure who would return because he did not die, but was taken up in a whirlwind by ADONAI. Before John was born, the angel Gabriel, speaking of the Messiah, told his father Zechariah: 17 *“And he will go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of fathers to the children and the disobedient ones to the wisdom of the righteous, to make ready for Adonai a prepared people.”* (John 1:17 TLV). John would go before Yeshua in the purpose of Elijah’s ministry. Luke 3 says that John began his ministry in the 15<sup>th</sup> year of the rule of Tiberius Caesar. That would have been the year 26 and is also believed to be the year of Yeshua’s immersion by John. John’s mission was the same as Elijah’s, to bring Israel back to faithful worship of G-d. Elijah continually exhorted the people to repent of their sin and to return to G-d and warned them of His judgment if they did not. Now, John served with that same zeal for ADONAI, condemning sin and urging the people of Judah to confess and to repent of their sins in preparation for the appearance of the Messiah. Those who repented were immersed in the Jordan as a sign of their *teshuvah*, their turning away from sin.

Who was the voice crying in the wilderness prophesied by Isaiah? It was the Elijah figure for the 1<sup>st</sup> century who would appear before Yeshua revealed Himself to the people. Yeshua later confirmed to His disciples that that Elijah figure was John. Read Matthew 17:10-13 and Mark 9:11-13. 10 *The disciples questioned Him, saying, “Why then do the Torah scholars say that Elijah must come first?”* 11 *Yeshua replied, “Indeed, Elijah is coming and will restore all things. 12 I tell you that Elijah already came; and they didn’t recognize him, but did to him whatever they wanted. In the same way, the Son of Man is about to suffer at their hands.”* 13 *Then the disciples understood that He was speaking to them about John the Immerser.* (Matthew 17:10-13 TLV).

John was the Elijah figure who preceded Yeshua in His first coming, but Scripture indicates that there will be another appearance of an Elijah in the future who will precede Yeshua’s second coming. Through the prophet Malachi, ADONAI also said: 23 *“Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and terrible day of Adonai. 24 He will turn the hearts of fathers to the children, and the hearts of children to their fathers— else I will come and strike the land with utter destruction.”* (Malachi 3:23-24 TLV). What is the “great and terrible day of ADONAI?” The Day of ADONAI, *yom ADONAI*, יום יהוה, is also referred to by the Prophet Zephaniah: 14 *The great day of Adonai is near— near and coming very quickly! The sound of the day of Adonai is bitter— the shouting of the warrior is there. 15 That day is a day of wrath a day of trouble and distress, a day of devastating storm and*

*desolation, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness, 16 a day of shofar and alarm against the fortified cities and against the high corner towers. 17 I will bring such distress upon mankind that they will walk like the blind—for they have sinned against Adonai. Their blood will be poured out like dust, and their flesh like dung. 18 Neither their silver nor their gold will be able to rescue them on the day of Adonai's wrath. With the fire of His passion the entire earth will be consumed. For He will make a total, dreadful annihilation of all the inhabitants of the earth.*" (Zephaniah 1:14-18 TLV). These verses make it clear that this is something that has never happened and it will be against all the earth. The great and terrible day of ADONAI is a day of terrible destruction, His vengeance on the wicked of the present world. Yeshua told us what would immediately precede *Yom ADONAI* when He said: 29 *"But immediately after the trouble of those days, 'the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light and the stars will fall from heaven and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.'* 30 *Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the land will mourn, and they will see 'the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven' with power and great glory.*" (Matthew 24:29-30 TLV). Yeshua will return before *Yom ADONAI*, the great and terrible day of G-d's judgment. We will already have our resurrection bodies and be with our Messiah who will be ADONAI's instrument of judgment upon the wicked. In the 1<sup>st</sup> century, that day was far away, but not so today. It is on the horizon, a judgment against all of the wickedness in the world. For us, it will be a day of joy because when *Yom ADONAI* comes, we will be with our Messiah and not experiencing what the world will be going through.

It is a tradition at Passover to set a place for Elijah. In our own *Beit Shalom Pesach Hagaddah* we read this: "Look and see the empty chair and place setting for the prophet Elijah, the forerunner of the Messiah! We pour wine in his cup in honor of *Eliyahu HaNavi* (Elijah the Prophet). We look forward to his coming as the herald of Messiah Yeshua. *"Remember the Torah of Moses My servant, whom I commanded at Horeb—statutes and ordinances for all Israel. Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and terrible day of Adonai. He will turn the hearts of fathers to the children, and the hearts of children to their fathers—else I will come and strike the land with utter destruction.*" (Malachi 3:22-24 TLV). We are awaiting the Elijah figure for our time, the one who will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and the hearts of the children to the fathers. For those of us in the United States, right now is the time that we most need this. Our youngest generations, Generation Y, those born from 1981-1996 and Generation Z, those born from 1997-2012, are widely separated from their spiritual fathers and mothers, the faithful older group in Yeshua's body, and in many cases from their own physical fathers and mothers. Many of these young people have turned their backs on Yeshua, Jesus, and on organized worship and have embraced the ways of the world. We desperately need for them to be touched by G-d. There is also another meaning of the fathers and children. It's about Jews and Gentiles. The Jews are the fathers of our faith. Right now, we have an ever increasing amount of antisemitism over all the earth. Sadly, it is also within the Church. Elijah will turn back our physical children to the fathers and vice versa and our spiritual Fathers, the Jews, to their Gentile children and vice versa. Whether this coming Elijah figure is a physical man or a move of ADONAI's Spirit, we don't know. But, we need ADONAI to send him now to prepare us, the faithful remnant, for the great revival which we are sensing is near. The coming Elijah could be the key to revival before the great and terrible day of ADONAI?

The Judean leaders sent out *kohanim* and Levites to ask John "who are you?" He said, "I am not the Messiah." They asked: 21 *"What then? Are you Elijah?" they asked him. "I am not," said John. "Are you the Prophet?" "No," he answered.* (John 1:21 TLV). John gave them

three answers. He said that he was not the Messiah, that he was not Elijah and he was not the prophet. He was the Elijah figure, but didn't know it. But, he knew that he was not the Messiah or the Prophet. The Prophet is "the prophet like Moses" which Moses himself prophesied: 15 *"Adonai your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your midst—from your brothers. To him you must listen."* (Deuteronomy 18:15 TLV). That's Yeshua! The people of Israel of the 1<sup>st</sup> century were closely watching for the things the prophets had said and were hoping for the prophesied Messiah, for Elijah and the Prophet like Moses in their day. When they heard that John had begun to immerse for repentance, they had to go and find out who this man was.

John told them that he was: 23 ...*"the voice of one crying in the wilderness, "Make straight the way of Adonai,"" as the prophet Isaiah said."* (John 1:23b TLV). He said: 26 *"I immerse in water," John answered. "Among you stands One you do not know, 27 coming after me, whose sandals I'm not worthy to untie."* (John 1:26-27 TLV). I believe that John knew his cousin Yeshua, but he did not know He was the Messiah until it was immediately revealed to him at the Jordan River the next day. 29 *The next day, John sees Yeshua coming to him and says, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! 30 This is the One about whom I told you, 'He who comes after me is above me, because He was before me.' 31 I didn't know Him, but I came immersing with water so that He might be revealed to Israel."* (John 1:29-31 TLV). John knew in the Spirit that there was One coming after him, but didn't know until ADONAI revealed it to him at that moment that it was his cousin Yeshua. He said: "I didn't know Him." What was written next verifies this: 32 *Then John testified, "I have seen the Ruach coming down like a dove out of heaven, and it remained on Him. 33 I did not know Him; but the One who sent me to immerse in water said to me, 'The One on whom you see the Ruach coming down and remaining, this is the One who immerses in the Ruach ha-Kodesh. 34 And I have seen and testified that this is Ben-Elohim."* (John 1:32-34 TLV). John saw the Holy Spirit coming down on his cousin Yeshua and then recognized Him as *Ben Elohim*, the Son of G-d.

It's presented a little differently in Matthew: 13 *Then Yeshua came from the Galilee to John, to be immersed by him in the Jordan. 14 But John tried to prevent Him, saying, "I need to be immersed by You, and You are coming to me?" 15 But Yeshua responded, "Let it happen now, for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness."* So John yielded to Him. 16 *After being immersed, Yeshua rose up out of the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Ruach Elohim descending like a dove and coming upon Him. 17 And behold, a voice from the heavens said, "This is My Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased!"* (Matthew 3:13-17 TLV). It is possible that Yochanan, who was actually a *kohen* and also the foretold Elijah, immersed Yeshua as a part of the act of going before Him. Yeshua said: *"it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness."* It was something that they were to do together. Yeshua's immersion was a sign of ADONAI's approval of Him and it shows that He was anointed and equipped for ministry. The act of *tevillah*, immersion, fulfilled all righteousness because it was an acknowledgement that Yeshua was willing to take on the role as our Messiah and also that John carried out his part in fulfilling righteousness. The immersion which John was proclaiming was an immersion of repentance, something which Yeshua did not need. This is possibly another reason that Yeshua said "I want you to immerse me," even though He had no need to repent. His immersion also fulfilled the tradition for Jewish leaders to be immersed before assuming a new status. Yeshua taught Nicodemus about *tevillah* and his need to be immersed, an immersion described as being "born again of the Spirit." Read John 3:1-12. But, in the overall Jewish tradition, there were other reasons for being immersed, such things as being crowned a king, becoming a member of the Sanhedrin, a couple preparing to marry, ritual purity before entering the Temple and

in John's case, repentance. Immersion was not a new thing, not something which John invented. It was a very important process commanded by ADONAI and dated back to the time of giving the *Torah* in the wilderness. Because of what John did, he was known as *Yochanan haMatabil*, John the Immerser or John the Baptist, from the Greek *baptizo*, meaning to dip. Because John immersed Him, Yeshua's status changed from being an ordinary citizen into His anointed ministry of proclaiming the Kingdom of G-d.

There are two more aspects about Yeshua as Messiah which were revealed by His coming to John. John said: 26 ... *"Among you stands One you do not know, 27 coming after me, whose sandals I'm not worthy to untie."* (John 1:26b-27 TLV). This is suggestive of Yeshua as being the *goel*, the kinsman redeemer of Israel. Then, John said: 29 ..., *"Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"* (John 1:29b TLV). This is a direct reference to Yeshua as the Passover Lamb. We will continue with these subjects next time.

We close with what we began. After escaping the Egyptians through the Red Sea, Moses and the Children of Israel sang a song of praise to ADONAI. In it they sang: *2 Adonai is my strength and song, and He has become my salvation.* (Exodus 15:2a TLV). In the verse, He is my strength, He is my song, and He is my salvation. These words are quoted three different times this same way in the *Tanakh*, the Hebrew Bible.

It appears next in Isaiah. In Isaiah 11, the Prophet has just told about "a branch which will emerge from the trunk of *Yishai*," Jesse. We are told that He will judge the people with fairness and justice and slay the wicked. He will assemble the dispersed of Israel and gather the scattered of Judah. That branch is *Yeshua ben Yosef ben David ben Yishai*, Yeshua, son of Joseph, son of David, son of Jesse. Speaking of the branch which grew from Jesse's stump, Isaiah continues to tell of Messiah's second coming and His returning to earth to claim his rightful place as *Melekh Mashiach*, King Messiah. Verse 11 says: 11 *"It will also come about in that day that my Lord will again redeem— a second time with His hand— the remnant of His people who remain from Assyria, from Egypt, from Pathros, from Cush, Elam, Shinar, Hamath, and from the islands of the sea."* (Isaiah 11:11 TLV). Then, in the next chapter, chapter 12, the prophet Isaiah says: 2 *Behold, God is my salvation! I will trust and will not be afraid. For the Lord Adonai is my strength and my song. He also has become my salvation.*" (Isaiah 12:2 TLV). It's about our Jewish Messiah who came once and will come again. He is not identified by name, but there is no doubt that this is about Yeshua.

We find these words again in the *Ketuvim*, the Writings, in Psalms. It is a Psalm you all know because it's a part of the *Hallel*, the Praise, which we recite each year at Passover. It says: 14 *Adonai is my strength and song, and He has become my salvation.* (Psalm 118:14 TLV). This psalm is also all about *Mashiach*. Once when Yeshua was teaching in the Temple and was confronted by the *kohanim* and elders, He told them a parable about a vineyard which the owner leased to some tenant farmers. The tenants refused to pay several times and eventually killed the owner's son. Using *remez* to conclude the parable, Yeshua hinted back at Psalm 118 when He said: 42 ..., *"Have you never read in the Scriptures? 'The stone which the builders rejected, this has become the chief cornerstone. This came from Adonai, and it is marvelous in our eyes.'"* (Matthew 21:42b TLV). What's the connection? Yeshua was pointing those Judean elders to these verses in Psalm 118: 21 *"I give You thanks, because You have answered me and have become my salvation. 22 The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone. 23 It is from Adonai: it is marvelous in our eyes!"* (Psalm 118:22-23 TLV). Verse 21 refers to verse 14, *Adonai is my strength and song, and He has become my salvation.* Yeshua is our salvation in Exodus, in Isaiah and in Psalms! We can read it this way: *Adonai is my strength and song, and He has become my Yeshua*, which as you know, means "ADONAI's salvation."

Everything about Yeshua is Jewish and He has perfectly fulfilled every requirement for His Messiahship, for His Kingship and for His personal righteousness. He is our *Kohen Gadol*, our High Priest and we are His *kohanim*, His royal priesthood: 9 “*But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession, so that you may proclaim the praises of the One who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.*” (1Peter 2:9 TLV). As His *talmidim*, His disciples, we are not only called to proclaim His praises, but to proclaim His message to those around us: 20 “*teaching them to observe all I have commanded you. And remember! I am with you always, even to the end of the age.*” (Matthew 28:20 TLV). *Shabbat shalom!*