



*Parasha Shemot*

January 14, 2023

*Torah:* Exodus 1:1-6:1

*Haftarah:* Isaiah 27:6-28:13, 29:22-23

*Shlichim:* Acts 7:17-34

*Shabbat shalom mishpacha!* The events of *Parasha Shemot* began a new era for Jacob's descendants. Joseph had died and a new pharaoh was on the throne. This new era is reflected in the Greek name for this Book of *Torah*, *Exodos*, the name given by the Jewish writers of the Septuagint. It means "going out" or "going from," and refers to the first major event in this book, being freed from and going out from Egypt. The Hebrew name of this book, *Shemot* means names and reflects the first verse which says: *1 Now these are the names of Bnei-Yisrael who came into Egypt with Jacob,..* (Exodus 1:1 TLV).

*Parasha Shemot* has a lot of information in five chapters and one verse, more than we can cover today. Here is a quick review. It begins by listing Jacob's descendants who came down into Egypt with him. Joseph had died and a new pharaoh had enslaved the Israelites. As their birthrate continued to increase he ordered the Jewish midwives to kill all baby boys. *Yocheved* gave birth to *Moshe* and placed him in a basket in the Nile River before he could be killed. Pharaoh's daughter found him and adopted him. *Miryam*, *Moshe's* sister, offered to find a nursemaid for him and arranged for his mother to be his nursemaid and raise him during his early years. Years later, Moses witnessed an Egyptian beating a Hebrew and killed the Egyptian. When he realized that his life was in danger he fled to *Midyan*. There he met and rescued *Tsipporah* and her sisters from some competing herdsmen. She took him home and her father, Jethro, the priest of *Midyan*, eventually approved their marriage. While shepherding on the mountain *Chorev*, *Moshe* witnessed a "burning bush." ADONAI sent him to lead the Israelites from Egypt to the land of Canaan, the land which He promised to their ancestors. *Moshe* protested that the Israelites in Egypt would doubt that ADONAI sent him and ADONAI provided him with three miraculous things to show them; changing his staff into a snake, his healthy hand into one with leprosy and water into blood. When *Moshe* again complained that he was not a good speaker, ADONAI told him that his brother *Aharon* would be his spokesman. Aaron met Moses on his way back to Egypt, and they appeared together before Pharaoh and asked for the release of the Israelites. Pharaoh responded no and gave even harsher labor, forcing the Israelites to produce the same quota of bricks as before, but now finding their own straw to put in them. The people were downhearted, but ADONAI told Moses that He would force Pharaoh to let the people leave.

We don't have a lot of information about what went on in Egypt during the first 80 years of Moses' life. We know that even though he lived in Pharaoh's palace he knew his real family, but we are not told about any interaction with them during this time. We understand that Israel as a nation continued to keep the covenant which ADONAI made with their

ancestor Abraham, the covenant of circumcision on the 8<sup>th</sup> day after birth. We know that Moses was circumcised because *Torah* tells us so. Read Joshua 5:4-5.

*What we also understand from reading Torah* is that no one in Israel had heard from the *Ruach Kodesh*, the Holy Spirit of ADONAI, since Joseph's time. The people knew their ancestry and the covenant with Abraham, but apparently very little else. And they knew that they were in a very serious situation in their lives - very harsh slavery. That was a new era, but one which ADONAI had planned. How long they were captive in Egypt had to do with what was happening in another country. ADONAI told Abraham that his descendants would not return from Egypt to the land He was giving them until the iniquity of the Amorites in Canaan was complete. He said to Abraham: 16 *"Then in the fourth generation they will return here—for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete."* (Genesis 15:6 TLV). Most likely, this verse suggests that their iniquity, their sin, was increasing and had not reached the set point at which ADONAI would judge them. When He called Moses, the iniquity of the Amorites must have been very near completion, only about forty years away. ADONAI was now ready to redeem His people and take them back to the land which He promised to Abraham.

In this new era since Joseph, no one had a close relationship with ADONAI, at least, we are not told about it. Moses apparently did not know Him and ADONAI chose a very fearful way to introduce Himself. Anyone who saw a bush burning with fire but not being burned up and then hearing a voice coming from within it would be very afraid just as Moses was. 4 *When Adonai saw that he turned to look, He called to him out of the midst of the bush and said, "Moses, Moses!" So he answered, "Hineni."* 5 *Then He said, "Come no closer. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy ground."* 6 *Moreover He said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob."* So Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God. (Exodus 3:4-6 TLV). Moses answered *hineni*, here am I, but was so afraid that he hid his face and wouldn't even look at G-d. This was the *Elohim* that he had heard about but had not ever experienced. Not that Moses could really understand ADONAI, nor can any of us.

Today, we don't even know how to pronounce His name and so we don't. When Moses asked who he should tell the Israelites had sent him: 14 *God answered Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." Then He said, "You are to say to Bnei-Yisrael, 'I AM' has sent me to you"* (Exodus 3:14 TLV). In Hebrew, "I AM Who I Am" is *ehyeh asher ehyeh*, אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה. Literally translated, it means "I will be what I will be." ADONAI said: *"You are to say to Bnei-Yisrael, 'I AM' has sent me to you."* "I Am" is an emphatic statement of being, one which let Moses know, and lets us know today, that our Creator is beyond our understanding. He is "I Am!" We cannot define Who He is. He is beyond our understanding. In the English language, the present tense verb "to be" is expressed in the words am, is and are. In English, we can say: He is here, I am here and we are here. That's present tense for us. A writer at *One For Israel* wrote about this subject, *ehyeh asher ehyeh*, and explained something strange about the verb "to be" in Hebrew. In Hebrew, the verb "to be" only exists in past and future, but not in the present tense. In Hebrew, they don't say "I **am** hungry", they just say *ani ra'ev*, "I hungry". They don't say "that table **is** big", they say "that table big". They can say "I *was* hungry", or "I *will be* hungry", but not "I *am* hungry". This author says that there is no "is" or "am" in Hebrew and asks the question why? He said: "Perhaps because in the Hebrew language, the language of the Bible, the present tense of the verb "to be" is reserved for use by G-d alone. Only G-d can say "I AM"." He goes on to explain that when we look at the original Hebrew text which in English says, "I AM WHO I AM", it appears to the modern Hebrew reader as

if it's in the future tense meaning: "I will be that which I will be." But, it's actually the present tense. He goes on to explain that the Hebrew interplay between the tenses of the verb "to be" illustrates the fact that our G-d is, was, and always will be. In addition, the letters of the four-letter name of ADONAI, יהוה, contain the Hebrew for he was, he is, and he will be as expressed in the form of *hayah*, הָיָה, meaning "to be." Some have interpreted *ehyeh asher ehyeh*, "I will be what I will be," as representing ADONAI's existence in past, present, and future. This gives us some understanding of who ADONAI is, One who "is" in the past, "is" in the present, and "is" in the future, all at the same time. We still don't fully understand Him and our finite minds can't understand Him. But, in His infiniteness, He has known from before the foundation of the universe that each of us would be sitting here today. And He knows how we will serve Him in the days to come.

ADONAI introduced Himself to Moses as: 6 ..., "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob." (Exodus 3:6b TLV). Moses may have heard some of the stories of G-d's interaction with his family, possibly even about how his great, great, great, great grandfather Abraham met ADONAI. When Abram met ADONAI, it was a G-d to man interaction. Think about how you met Him. Did someone tell you about Yeshua and His promise of salvation? And, did you then accept His sacrifice as atonement for your sins? In most of our situations, someone witnessed to us, a pastor, a Sunday School teacher or a friend. Think back for a moment. When you accepted Yeshua, how much did you really know about ADONAI? Did you know what was required of you after you accepted Yeshua? Most of us didn't. At our personal *Yom Kippur*, our day of salvation, we were probably just like the new believers in Samaria: 14 Now when the emissaries in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the message of God, they sent Peter and John to them. 15 They came down and prayed for them to receive the *Ruach ha-Kodesh*. 16 For He had not yet come upon them; they had only been immersed in the name of the Lord Yeshua. 17 Then they began laying their hands on them, and they were receiving the *Ruach ha-Kodesh*. (Acts 8:14-17 TLV). The people in Samaria who had trusted in Yeshua were very limited in their spiritual knowledge. They had trusted in His sacrifice, been immersed in His name and had received a measure of the *Ruach*, the Holy Spirit at salvation, but knew nothing about the fullness of the Spirit. Israel in Egypt was very much like we are before we personally get to know our Creator and Messiah. Just because we know Yeshua as Savior does not mean that we know all we need to know or have experienced all that we need to experience. Moses got a crash course, but we must be more methodical in our studies.

Looking ahead a few weeks in our reading, we find that this group of people who came out of Egypt become a congregation. Four verses beyond our *Shlichim* reading today in Acts 7, Stephen said this about Moses: 38 This is the one who was in the community in the wilderness,. (Acts 7:38a TLV). The Greek word translated "community" is *ecclesia*, meaning assembly or congregation. This group of people from Egypt which will soon find themselves in the wilderness will be the "called out ones of Egypt." Speaking through Hosea, ADONAI said: 1 "When Israel was a youth I loved him, and out of Egypt I called My son." (Hosea 11:1 TLV). Prophetically, Israel is G-d's son just as prophetically this also applies to Yeshua as ADONAI's Son. In *Torah* this called out group is referred to as the *kahal*, specifically, *HaKahal B'Midbar*, the Congregation in the Wilderness. The translators of the Septuagint, the *Tanakh* translated into Greek, translated the word *kahal* most often as *ecclesia*, but also translated it as *sunagoge* about half the time. Our congregation, our synagogue, takes its name from the Hebrew word *kahal* which has the context of "an assembly of called out ones." Just as Israel was called out of the darkness of Egypt, we are also "called out" of the darkness of the world to be ADONAI's special people. *Shimon Kefa* wrote: 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). It is especially important that we fully grasp the reality of this calling in our lives.

But that's not the only similarity between us and Israel coming out of Egypt. In Egypt the *kahal* which came out was not just Israel, but also included Gentiles, most probably Egyptians, but very likely also slaves who were from other nations. We are told: *37 Then Bnei-Yisrael journeyed from Rameses to Succot, about 600,000 men on foot, as well as children. 38 Also a mixed multitude went up with them, along with the flocks, herds and heavy livestock.* (Exodus 12:37 TLV). Our synagogue is also a mixed multitude; Jew and Gentile together. That's the way that G-d planned it. That's the way that He always wanted it.

As called out ones who know Yeshua, our congregation is a part of the Messianic Jewish Movement, a modern day re-establishment of the Messianic body in Yeshua's disciple's days, an earlier time in which the congregations were also a mixed multitude. We, a re-creation of Yeshua's body in the 1<sup>st</sup> century, have an important role to play in these "last days." Those of us in *Beit Shalom* are also a part of a much larger body, the world-wide body of Messianic Judaism. Together as the Messianic Jewish Movement, we have been described as a "bridge" between traditional Judaism and Christianity. We are called to take the Gospel, the Good News of Yeshua, to our brother and sister Jews, as well as to Gentiles who do not know Him. And we are also called to be "salt and light" to the Church. One statement Yeshua made about salt escaped me until just recently, one of those things you have read many times, but did not sink in: *50 "Salt is good; but if the salt becomes unsalty, with what will you flavor it? Have salt in yourselves, and keep shalom with one another."* (Mark 9:50 TLV). This says to me that if we have salt in ourselves, that is, we have not lost our saltiness, then we will seek peace, unity, in Yeshua's body. The Complete Jewish Bible puts it a little differently. Referring to saltiness, it says: *"That is, be at peace with each other."* (CJB). In this understanding of Yeshua's words, the purpose of our saltiness is to promote peace among the brethren. If we have lost our saltiness, we are not peacemakers. And, we must also be light by sharing what Yeshua has taught us.

We are in a critical time in history. Just as Moses led Israel out of Egypt and into a time of training in ADONAI's ways, those of us in the *kahal*, the congregation of the last days, also need to be trained in G-d's ways. Some of us have come in at a later time and have not had the opportunity to learn the basics which have been covered in past years. Fortunately, they are able to do that through reviewing past teachings. I encourage you to review and individually study our eight sessions entitled "Yeshua, Our Jewish Messiah" which began December 25, 2021 and the eight sessions entitled "*Sha'ul* The Jew" which began April 9, 2022. These are available on YouTube and also on our website. Share them with your friends. I am always available to answer questions or to point you to a past teaching. We all need to periodically review what we have previously learned as we recommit ourselves as *talmidim shel Yeshua*, disciples of Yeshua.

Yeshua said to us: *35 "Have your belt strapped on and lamps burning. 36 Be like people waiting for their master to return from a wedding feast, so that when he comes and knocks, they may open to him immediately. 37 Happy are those slaves whose master finds them alert when he comes. Amen, I tell you, he will prepare himself and have them recline at table, and will come and serve them. 38 And if he comes in the second or even the third watch and finds them so, they will be happy. 39 But understand this, that if the master of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have allowed his house to be broken into. 40*

*You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you don't expect.*" (Luke 12:35-40 TLV). We must be prepared when Yeshua returns, not because He is going to test us about our knowledge of Scripture, but because He will test us about how we applied it in our lives. We can't apply it if we don't know it. We who are living in today's society are so busy that we have very little time left to serve Yeshua. Suminder Kaur, a man in India, told this story. "Imagine there is a bank, which credits your account every morning with \$86,400.00 but carries over no balance from day to day. Every evening the bank cancels whatever part of the amount you had failed to use during the day. What would you do if you had an account at this bank? Of course you would draw out every penny! Well, everyone has such a bank. Its name is Time. Every morning, it credits you with 86,400 seconds. Every night it writes off, as lost, whatever of this you have failed to invest to good purpose. It carries over no balance. It allows no overdraft. Each day it opens a new account for you. Each night it burns the records of the day. If you fail to use the day's deposits, the loss is yours. There is no going back. There is no drawing against the "tomorrow.' Therefore, there is never not enough time or too much time. Time management is decided by us alone and nobody else. It is never the case of us not having enough time to do things, but the case of whether we want to do it."

Here is some Scriptural wisdom about time.

*29 But this I say, brethren—the time is short. From now on those who have wives should be as though they had none;...* (1Corinthians 7:29 TLV).

*13 Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a town and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit. 14 Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. What is your life? For you are a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes .* (James 4:13-14 TLV).

*1 Since we are co-laboring, we also urge you not to receive God's grace in vain. 2 For He says, "At a favorable time I listened to you, In a day of salvation I helped you ." Behold, now is the favorable time. Behold, now is the day of salvation.* (2Corinthians 6:1-2 TLV).

*15 So pay close attention to how you walk—not as unwise people but as wise. 16 Make the most of your time because the days are evil.* (Ephesians 5:15-16 TLV).

*12 So teach us to number our days, so that we may get a heart of wisdom.* (Psalm 90:12 TLV).

*11 Besides this, you know the time—that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first came to trust.* (Romans 13:11 TLV). The time is now. It is the time for us to use our time well, taking the advice given us in the Scriptures.

A Torah scholar asked Yeshua "which commandment is first of all?" Quoting Deuteronomy and Leviticus, He said: 29 ..., "The first is, 'Shema Yisrael, Adonai Eloheinu, Adonai echad. Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One. 30 And you shall love Adonai your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' 31 The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." (Mark 12:29b-31 TLV). The greatest commandment is what we know as the Shema. To be able to walk in the fullness of the Shema, we must understand what we are being called to do. What are we diligently called to teach our children? The answer is obvious. We are to teach them that they are to love ADONAI with all their heart, all their soul and all their strength, the implication being that

we love Him by obeying what He has asked of us. Immediately following the *Shema* in Deuteronomy 6 it says: 7 “You are to teach them, **(ADONAI’s commands)** diligently to your children, and speak of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down and when you rise up.” (Deuteronomy 6:7 TLV). We are also to bind them as a sign upon our hand and as frontlets between our eyes. The laying of *tefillin* on the hand and the head in traditional Judaism is a literal fulfillment of this command. But, we must not neglect its spiritual meaning. What we do with our hand is to reflect the love of G-d and what we do with our mind is to reflect the love of G-d. When we place a *mezuzah* on our doorposts, we are carrying out the literal fulfillment to write them on our doorposts and on our gates. But, there is also a spiritual fulfillment; we are to reflect the love of G-d within our homes. What does it mean to love ADONAI with all our heart, soul and strength? Beyond what we have just said, it means that we are to be obedient to ADONAI and obedient to Yeshua. When we honor the *Shabbat*, we are fulfilling the *Shema*. When we eat only the things which ADONAI has told us we are to eat, we are fulfilling the *Shema*. And, when we love our neighbor as ourselves (Leviticus 19:18), a command that Yeshua called the second greatest commandment, we are fulfilling the *Shema*.

Speaking of the first and second greatest commandments, Yeshua said: 40 “The entire Torah and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.” (Matthew 22:40 TLV). What did He mean? For those of us who have become covenant partners in the New Covenant, it means that when we say that we honor the *Shema*, we are taking on the yoke of the *Torah*. We are being obedient to ADONAI’s commands which were written on our hearts when we accepted Yeshua. (Jeremiah (31:30-32). In rabbinic theology the “yoke of the *Torah*” is a metaphor implying the call to study the *Torah*. It is also called “the yoke of the kingdom of heaven.” Symbolically, we accept this yoke like a yoke for oxen, but a yoke of servitude to ADONAI. “Sha’ul did it”: 1 Paul, a slave of Messiah Yeshua, called to be an emissary and set apart for the Good News of God... (Romans 1:1 TLV). “Shimon Kefa did it”: 1 Simon Peter, a slave and emissary of Messiah Yeshua, To those who have received a faith equal to ours through the righteousness of our God and Savior, Messiah Yeshua: (2Peter 1:1 TLV). “Ya’acov, Yeshua’s brother did it”: 1 Jacob, a slave of God and of the Lord Yeshua the Messiah, To the twelve tribes in the Diaspora: Shalom! (James 1:1 TLV). That’s what Yeshua has called us who serve Him to be, slaves, servants of our Messiah. 42 **And calling them (his disciples) over, Yeshua said to them, “You know those recognized as rulers of the nations lord it over them, and their great ones play the tyrant over them. 43 Yet it is not this way among you. But whoever wants to be great among you shall be your servant, 44 and whoever wants to be first among you shall be slave of all.”** (Mark 10:43-44 TLV). Put your name in this phrase: “I, \_\_\_\_\_, a slave of Messiah Yeshua...” We must understand that we are His servants. If we understand that, then we also understand that we must do His bidding. It’s a heart thing. We do it because we love Him and want to please and serve Him. We are saved by His grace through faith and our being obedient to Him has nothing whatsoever to do with our salvation. We obey because we love. We love Yeshua with all our heart, with all our mind and with all our strength; the *Shema*!

Our *haftarah* today prophesies the day that is coming soon: 1 In that day Adonai will punish Leviathan the fleeing serpent with His fierce, great, strong sword, Leviathan the twisted serpent! He will slay the dragon in the sea. (Isaiah 27:1 TLV). Leviathan is none other than *HaSatan*, Israel’s adversary. His punishment and the fulfillment of Isaiah 27:1 is coming soon as we see in John’s vision of things to come: 10 And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone... (Revelation 20:10a TLV). In our *parasha* today, allegorically, *HaSatan*, the god of this world, is Pharaoh. He seeks to keep ADONAI’s children

as slaves to sin. But he will not succeed with Yeshua's followers of today. Revival is coming! *Sha'ul's* words to Timothy are words for us: 15 *"Make every effort to present yourself before God as tried and true, as an unashamed worker cutting a straight path with the word of truth"* (2Timothy 2:15 TLV). After we have trusted Yeshua, we must learn the truth of the Scriptures and then we must do our best to be faithful to them. Understanding and walking in the commandments, Genesis to Revelation, will cause us to be kinder, gentler people, showing our love not only for our brothers and sisters in Messiah, but for all of our neighbors, salt and light to them. The power to overcome comes from our Messiah. He said: 8 *"But you will receive power when the Ruach ha-Kodesh has come upon you; and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and through all Judah, and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."* (Acts 1:8 TLV). Just as there was a set time for the judgment of the inhabitants of the Land of Canaan because the iniquity of the Amorites was not yet complete, there is a set time for Messiah to return and to defeat His enemies. The iniquity of ADONAI's enemies is not yet complete, but is approaching its fullness. We know His return is near and we cannot neglect to proclaim that truth! Our redemption is near! As faithful slaves of Yeshua, may we be the salt and light that He has called us to be! *Shabbat shalom!*