



Parasha Chayei Sarah

November 11, 2023

Torah: Genesis 23:1-25:18
Haftarah: 1Kings 1:1-31
Ketuvim Shlichim: 1Corinthians 15:50-57

Talmidim Shel Yeshua 14

Shabbat shalom mishpacha. Our *parasha* today is *Chayei Sarah*, the life of Sarah. It begins with her death at 127 years of age and her burial in the cave *Machpelah* in *Hevron* which Abraham purchased from Ephron the Hittite. The longest event of the *parasha* is Abraham's sending of his servant to find a wife for Isaac from his family in *Padan Aram* and the details of the servant's mission. The servant met *Rivkah*, Rebecca, and she agreed to return with him and become Isaac's wife. When they returned, Isaac took her into his mother's tent and Rebecca became his wife. Past messages about this *parasha* are on our website.

We continue today with our study, *Talmidim Shel Yeshua*. In past messages, we have talked about both Yeshua and *Sha'ul* and continue to focus on Yeshua today. This is Session 14 and we will begin with a bit of history. History is not always the most popular subject, but it is always necessary, necessary in order to get the best perspective of the situation. Our history lesson today begins with something which happened just before the year 70 CE and the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem. Our information comes from Eusebius Pamphilus, the Gentile Bishop of Caesarea, who lived in Israel from about 265 to about 340 CE. He wrote a number of books, including one entitled *The Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius Pamphilus*. In it, he tells that *Ya'acov*, the brother of Yeshua, whom he calls James the Just, died as a martyr at the hand of a group of Jews. Our past mentions of him have been as the congregational leader of the Jerusalem Congregation in the Book of Acts. His death occurred just before the Emperor Vespasian's son, the Roman General Titus, invaded and blockaded Jerusalem, most likely in late 69 CE, leading to the Temple's complete destruction. We know *Ya'acov* from the Gospels of Matthew and Mark, from the Book of Acts and also from his letter which is usually called James. In the Gospels, *Ya'acov* is presented as being skeptical of his brother's Messiahship, but something powerful happened to change his mind. His resurrected brother appeared to him. (1Corinthians 15:7). Eusebius confirmed that *Ya'akov* was very much loved as the leader of the congregation in Jerusalem, a very righteous man and that he was martyred in Jerusalem. He was thrown down to the street below from a wing of the Temple by a group of anti-Messianic Jews. He didn't die immediately and began praying for those who threw him down even as they began to stone him. But, the stoning didn't kill him and he died by having his brains beat out with a fuller's club, a mallet used to beat out the dirt in the washing of clothes. This is the setting in the Messianic community just before Jerusalem was surrounded by the Romans. *Ya'acov* is dead and we can only

imagine the mood of not only Messianic Jews, but every person trapped inside the Roman blockade.

Eusebius is shown in his writings to be distinctly antisemitic and he proposed that the destruction of Jerusalem in the year 70 which followed almost immediately after *Ya'acov's* death happened as punishment of the Jews for killing him. In his history, he lists those whom he calls "bishops," the first fifteen bishops of Jerusalem, as being relatives of Yeshua. We would call them by the title *nasi*, Hebrew for prince or in modern terms, the President. Simeon, the son of Cleopas, the *nasi* who followed *Ya'acov*, also died as a martyr, but by crucifixion. The relatives of Yeshua continued to lead the congregation at Jerusalem for the next 60 years. They led until the second Jewish revolt against Rome which occurred from 132-135 CE. After the Jews were defeated, the Roman Emperor Hadrian banned all Jews from Jerusalem and changed the name of the city to *Aelia Capitolina* in an attempt to cleanse the city of its Jewishness. Thereafter, there were no more Jewish leaders in the body of Messiah in Jerusalem or elsewhere for that matter. He also changed the name of the land from Israel to *Palestina* as a defamation of the Jews, naming their land after their enemies, the Philistines. Thereafter, the Jews were known as the Palestinians until 1948 when Israel became a nation again. After that, they were the Israelis, but Arabs did not become "the Palestinians" until 1964 when the PLO, the Palestine Liberation Organization, was formed and they assumed the name. Before then, they were known simply as Palestinian Arabs and the Jews were "the Palestinians."

The Muslim inhabitants of Israel claim that Jerusalem was never a Jewish city, but as we know, it is and has been a Jewish city. No matter what the "so-called" Palestinians claim, the archeologists continually, almost daily, find evidence of Jewish presence back to the time of King David. Those are physical things. But, we also see the modern presentations of the writings of the disciples of Yeshua as being almost sanitized of their Jewishness. You must read the Tree of Life Version or the Complete Jewish Bible or other Hebrew oriented Bibles to be able to understand that the Jews wrote all of the Bible. Modern Bible versions have taken out almost all reference to its Hebrew origin.

Writing in the 4th century, Eusebius reported that: Matthew: "also having first proclaimed the gospel in Hebrew, when on the point of going also to other nations, committed it to writing in his native tongue, and thus supplied the want of his presence to them, by his writings." (Ecclesiastical History, page108). That Matthew originally wrote in Hebrew was also reported in the 2nd century by Papias, in the 3rd century by Origen, and by Epiphanius and Jerome in the 4th century. Today, we find the need to reclaim the Jewishness of Yeshua and also the Jewishness of the things written about Him.

To understand just a portion of Yeshua's Jewishness, we look at "The Sermon on the Mount" which is found in Matthew chapters 5, 6 and 7. Matthew 5, verses 3-11 are referred to as "the beatitudes," meaning blessedness. The Sermon on the Mount is introduced by the last words in Matthew chapter 4: *23 Yeshua was going throughout all the Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the Good News of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and sickness among the people. 24 News about Him spread throughout all Syria. And they brought to Him all the sick—those tormented by various diseases and afflictions, those plagued by demons, the epileptics, the paralyzed—and He healed them. 25 And large crowds followed Him from the Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond the Jordan.* (Matthew 4:23-25 TLV). Large crowds followed Yeshua and He healed them.

Chapter 5 begins: *1 Now when Yeshua saw the crowds, He went up on the mountain. And after He sat down, His disciples came to Him. 2 And He opened His mouth and began to teach them, saying,..* (Matthew 5:1-2 TLV). No doubt, Yeshua's healing of all their diseases had had a huge effect and multitudes followed Him everywhere He went. It was no accident that Yeshua spoke the next nine verses, Matthew 5:3-11, while He was seated on a mountain. It is almost certain that Yeshua was presenting Himself as the Prophet Like Moses and He used this picture of Himself to bring to the mind of His Jewish audience the giving of the *Torah* on Mount Sinai and particularly the Ten Words. Although there are only nine beatitudes, that's close enough. But, the nine verses of the beatitudes also present a Jewish picture of another event on a mountain, the reciting of the blessings on Mount Gerizim after Israel entered into the Land of Promise. 26 *"See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse— 27 the blessing, if you listen to the mitzvot of Adonai your God that I am commanding you today, 28 but the curse, if you do not listen to the mitzvot of Adonai your God, but turn from the way I am commanding you today, to go after other gods you have not known. 29 Now when Adonai your God brings you into the land you are going in to possess, you are to set the blessing on Mount Gerizim and the curse on Mount Ebal"* (Deuteronomy 11:26-29 TLV). The blessings that were spoken are found in Deuteronomy 28:1-14. The whole picture of the beatitudes in Matthew 5, the blessings being presented on a mountain, are a shadow of the blessings that Israel spoke on Mount Gerizim. Matthew seems to intentionally form two pictures, one of the second Moses sitting on a mountain as at Mount Sinai, but also a second picture, the shadow of ADONAI's blessings being spoken at Mount Gerizim. The multitude of people gathered around Yeshua also most certainly would have thought of these words of Moses: 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). And, they listened intently to Him, the Prophet like Moses. As we read a moment ago, "Yeshua sat down to teach His disciples," but He also wanted the others around Him to hear. Yeshua's sitting down to teach was the very Jewish way that rabbis of that day taught their disciples. "Sitting at the feet of" describes a disciple listening to their teacher.

Verses 3-11 of Matthew chapter 5 are nine declarations spoken by Yeshua. We usually refer to them as "the Beatitudes," which is said to mean "blessedness," with the first word of each verse being "blessed." Speaking in Hebrew to them, Yeshua most likely would have said *ashrei*, which means happy. In fact, we find that the Greek word used for "happy" in the Beatitudes, *makarios* (mak-ar'-ee-os), is found in the Septuagint, the Greek language translation of the Hebrew *Tanakh*, 68 times, usually meaning happy or happiness. Similar words in Psalm 1 make us wonder if Yeshua was also using the Hebrew teaching method of *remez* and hinting back, at Psalm 1. It begins: 1 *Ashrei ha'Ish*, אֲשֶׁרִי הָאִישׁ, "happy is the man." Happy is not an exact translation of *ashrei* and there is not just one English word available to use in translating it into Hebrew. It is more properly translated as "how happy." "Blessed" does not convey the deeper meaning of the Hebrew. The Hebrew root, *alef shem resh*, אֶשֶׁר, the root of *ashrei*, conveys the meaning of "walking righteously in joy." That is what Yeshua seems to have been saying. When these things happen, you are to walk righteously and joyfully, even happy. The Beatitudes also speak of people who are humble, not prideful. The opposite of *ashrei*, "how happy," is not just being sad. In Hebrew the opposite is said to be *oy*, אוי. Most English translations render *oy* as "woe," meaning great sorrow or distress; something much more serious than just being sad.

Our goal in studying Scripture is to understand what ADONAI meant when He inspired its writers. In order to try and understand Yeshua's original meaning for His nine proclamations in Matthew 5, I have used the research of a Christian pastor, Dr. Robert

Lindsey and the organization which he founded in Jerusalem, “The Jerusalem School of Synoptic Research.” It’s also a bit of irony that Christian scholarship is being used to restore the Jewishness of a Gospel.

Dr. Lindsey, fluent in Hebrew from more than forty years of study and living in Jerusalem, tells us that there is a tense problem between the Greek and the Hebrew of these nine verses. Looking at the Greek text with the premise that Matthew originally wrote them in Hebrew and then examining them in Hebrew, Dr. Lindsey found no future tenses in the Hebrew. But, the Greek puts them as either future or past tenses. He theorizes that Matthew wrote these verses as present tense but the translation into Greek put them into either future or past tense. Sitting on a Mountain in Israel, Yeshua was speaking about then, right then, His present day. He was not talking about inaugurating or setting up the Kingdom sometime in the future, it was already in existence then. But, many theologians consider Him to be speaking about something coming in the future and that is what the future tenses in Greek proclaim. But, we understand and believe that the kingdom is now!

The first beatitude is: 3 *“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”* (TLV). This is in the present tense in Greek, so there is no tense problem here. There is no tense problem, but there is a potential problem with the translation of the Greek *auton* as “theirs.” Underlying this word is the Hebrew *lachem/lachema*, meaning “theirs.” Lindsey contends that it should be based upon the Hebrew *meichem/meichema*, meaning “of these.” 3 “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for of these is the kingdom of heaven” would be a minimal change of the TLV. Lindsey translates it as: 3 “Blest are those not dependent on self, for of these God makes up his kingdom.” He believes this is better word usage because Yeshua’s followers don’t possess the kingdom. The kingdom is not theirs, but they make up the kingdom. That they are not dependent on self also shows their dependence on ADONAI.

4 *“Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.”* (TLV) Dr. Lindsey found a tense problem in this verse. The first phrase is present tense and the second is future tense. He believes that both should be present tense. Lindsey suggests: 4 “Blest are those who mourn for they get comforted.” They are comforted now, not sometime in the future.

5 *“Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.”* (TLV). Lindsey also notes a tense problem in this verse, suggesting that the second phrase should be present tense rather than future tense. He also suggests that “meek” be changed to “humble.” He suggests: 5 “Blest are the humble, for they inherit the earth.” The word humble, speaking of those who have a low estimation of their own importance, seems better suited than meek, those who are submissive. The humble inherit the earth now, not sometime in the future. Speaking in the present tense, Yeshua seemed to be characterizing the multitudes of Israel, the people who were under the oppression and taxation of the Romans right then.

6 *“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.”* (TLV). Again we have the same tense problem, present tense in the first phrase and future in the second. Both phrases should be present tense. Lindsey suggests: 6 “Blest are those hungry for deliverance, for they get satisfied.” Those who put their trust in Yeshua’s sacrifice are not satisfied in the future, they are satisfied right now. They are satisfied at the time that they place their trust in Yeshua. Yeshua was telling His disciples that righteousness was present and available right then. Lindsey proposes that these nine sayings of Yeshua are typical Hebrew proverbs, but they must be in the present tense to show that they are proverbial.

7 “*Blessed are the merciful, for they shall be shown mercy.*” (TLV). Again, the second phrase should be present tense. Lindsey suggests: 7 “Blest are those who extend mercy, for they get mercy extended to them.” Mercy now and not in the future.

8 “*Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.*” (TLV). Again, the second phrase should be present tense, not future. 8 “Blest are the pure in heart for they see God now.” They are already in a relationship with ADONAI and trust in Him now.

9 “*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.*” (TLV). The second phrase should be present tense rather than future. Lindsey suggests: 9 “Blest are those who make peace, for they get called “*Children of God.*” We are called to be peacemakers now, not in the future.

10 “*Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*” (TLV). There is also a tense problem here. The first phrase should be present tense rather than past tense. And again, Lindsey disputes the use of the Greek *auton* translated as “theirs” and prefers “of these.” We saw the same situation in Matthew 5:3. By saying, “of these,” rather than “theirs” we do away with the idea that the kingdom is owned by Yeshua’s followers and correctly state that the kingdom is made up of them. Lindsey’s associate and friend, Professor David Flusser, an orthodox Jew, the Professor of New Testament Studies at Hebrew University, who was a student of the Essenes, the residents of *Kumran*, argued that “persecuted” is incorrect and that the underlying Hebrew was *nirdefei tzedakah*, meaning “to pursue righteousness.” He believed that the meaning of this beatitude was that the people of the Kingdom were inwardly driven to get the saving power of God by pursuing righteousness. Lindsey suggests: 10 “Blest are those who cry for the redemption of the world, for of these God makes up His kingdom.” That is our cry today: *hoshiana Yeshua!* Save us now! Save all of “us,” the people of the world. The Kingdom of Heaven is not futuristic. It is now! In this beatitude, Yeshua is not discussing persecution at all. He is describing people whose chief desire is for ADONAI to redeem the world. Thinking this way, the nine beatitudes taken together are a description of the people who make up the Kingdom of Heaven, His body of followers. They are those, us, who are submitted to Yeshua and fitting in with his plans. That’s where we want to be!

11 “*Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and say all kinds of evil against you falsely, on account of Me.*” 12 “*Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great! For in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*” (TLV). The ninth beatitude is found in two verses, verses 11 and 12. Again, we see in the traditional readings the promise of reward for being persecuted which Lindsey did not believe was Yeshua’s intent. The primary understanding that we get from Lindsey is that the Kingdom is not future, but is now. *HaMalchut haShemayim*, “the Kingdom of the Heaven,” is not futuristic, but is a present reality wherever ADONAI is ruling. His Kingdom is present in each of us whose hearts He rules. Lindsey suggests: 11 “Don’t be discouraged when you are cursed or slandered on account of Me, 12 but rejoice, realizing that the prophets before you faced the same kind of persecution.” The understanding of the Greek text as translated in most Bibles is that the Kingdom is near, but it has not yet come. But, if you put the passages dealing with the Kingdom back into Hebrew, it is apparent that the Kingdom has already arrived, almost the exact opposite of the Greek meaning.

Here are the Beatitudes based upon the scholarship of Dr. Lindsey.

(5:3) “Blest are those not dependent on self, for of these God makes up his kingdom.”

(5:4) “Blest are those who mourn for they get comforted.”

(5:5) “Blest are the humble, for they inherit the earth.”

(5:6) “Blest are those hungry for deliverance, for they get satisfied.”

(5:7) “Blest are those who extend mercy, for they get mercy extended to them.”

(5:8) “Blest are the pure in heart, for they see God.”

(5:9) “Blest are those who make peace, for they get called “Children of God.”

(5:10) “Blest are those who cry for the redemption of the world, for of these God makes up His kingdom.”

(5:11) “Don’t be discouraged when you are cursed or slandered on account of Me, (5:12) but rejoice, realizing that the prophets before you faced the same kind of persecution.”

Our statement of faith regarding Scripture is that the Bible is true and correct as originally written. But, the problem facing followers of Yeshua today is that what is written down as this Bible version or that Bible version is man’s interpretation of what either the Hebrew or Greek words say. All Bible versions claim to be truth, but because they are so different, that has to be an impossibility. Man’s interpretation of Scripture does not always express our Father’s intent. A more Hebraic understanding of Matthew 5 teaches us that Messiah brought His kingdom to earth from heaven when He came down as the Jewish man Yeshua. His kingdom is not future, but is here now.

That Matthew originally wrote his Gospel in Hebrew is logical. He was a Jew initially writing primarily to Hebrew speakers. We suppose that it was translated into Greek because most of the 1st century world understood Greek. But, that it was translated into Greek created some problems such as the tense problems which we noted. However, in the Gospel of Matthew, we also find a number of Hebrew idioms which were directly translated from Hebrew to Greek and then to English and they are still being mistranslated in English. Until the advent of Hebrew based Bible translations, this verse from the Sermon on the Mount was totally misunderstood. *22 “The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. 23 But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!* (Matthew 6:22-23 KJV). The King James Bible was translated directly from the Greek with the translators not knowing that this is a Hebrew idiom. The translators of the Amplified Bible try to explain the English translation by adding words in brackets to help the reader understand. *22 “The eye is the lamp of the body; so if your eye is clear [spiritually perceptive], your whole body will be full of light [benefiting from God’s precepts]. 23 But if your eye is bad [spiritually blind], your whole body will be full of darkness [devoid of God’s precepts]. So if the [very] light inside you [your inner self, your heart, your conscience] is darkness, how great and terrible is that darkness!”* (Matthew 6:22-23 AMP). Is this what Yeshua meant when He said it? Was He saying that this was all about spiritual precepts and that the difference between light and darkness was understanding G-d’s precepts? We know that is not true. These translators did their best to explain the English, but it is not just plain English. It is an idiom originally written in Hebrew translated first into Greek and then into English. You have to know that’s what it is. A Hebraic roots Bible explains this: *22 “The eye is the lamp of the body.’ So if you have a ‘good eye’ [that is, if you are generous] your whole body will be full of light; 23 but if you have an ‘evil eye’ [if you are stingy] your whole body will be full of darkness. If, then, the light in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!”* (Matthew 6:22-23

TLV). Dr. David Stern of blessed memory, the translator of the Complete Jewish Bible did the same thing that the translators of the Amplified Bible did, but when he put words in brackets, he knew what he was talking about. The correct Hebrew understanding of these verses is that a good eye is a Hebrew idiom for being generous and an evil eye is an idiom for being stingy. This chapter begins with Yeshua talking about *tzedakah*, the giving of alms. He then gives the Disciple's Prayer, teaching us to pray, and then returns to the subject of giving and calls it "laying up treasure in heaven." It is logical that this idiom about giving follows a discussion of giving. Matthew wrote it in Hebrew. Others translated it into Greek and eventually into English. You can't always understand what is written from a Hebrew perspective by just reading it in English. Sometimes the English is sufficient to understand it, but sometimes not.

We have been praying for revival for a number of years. But, what is revival? By definition, it is "the state of being revived: such as a renewed attention to or interest in something old or a new presentation or publication of something old." What we are doing right now and what has been presented in our past messages of *Talmidim Shel Yeshua*, is revival, one phase of it. It's not complete revival, but a part of revival. We here, by returning to the Hebrew understanding of Scripture, are in revival and many in Messianic Judaism and others in Yeshua's body are also. We, and they, are restoring what was lost. That's what revival is, bringing back something which has been lost, in this case the Jewishness of Yeshua and the Jewishness of the Scriptures. This is but one task which ADONAI has given us in Messianic Judaism for today, a return to a more correct understanding of Scripture.

This is, in part, a return to the ancient paths of ADONAI. When Jerusalem was under siege by the Babylonians, ADONAI spoke through Jeremiah: *16 Thus says Adonai: "Stand in the roads and look. Ask for the ancient paths— where the good way is— and walk in it. Then you will find rest for your souls."* (Jeremiah 6:16a TLV). ADONAI said that *teshuvah*, repentance, was the way, a return to the old paths. (Jeremiah 18:8). But, those in Jerusalem at that time did not turn, did not make *teshuvah*, and walk in those paths and the city was destroyed and many were killed. The "ancient paths," the good way, are the correct understanding of ADONAI's words and walking in them. The Jewishness of the Bible cannot be removed without changing the meaning of what ADONAI and Yeshua said. This is where we are now. We must return to the understanding of the ancient paths. That is revival! *Tefillah*, prayer for Israel, is also revival. Return to *Torah* is revival. And, the pouring out of ADONAI's spirit, as is happening in pockets here and there today, is also revival. It's all needed. May we experience it all, ADONAI!

Today, many are walking in counterfeit paths, paths which lead to destruction. *Sha'ul* prophesied of the "last days," saying: *1 "But understand this, that in the last days hard times will come—"* (2Timothy 3:1 TLV). Hard times are here and even harder times are on the way. We see it not only in the United States, but also throughout the world. Israel's war with Hamas is "hard times," a part of what the rabbis call *ikvot mashica*, the Footsteps of Messiah. Today, brought about by the war, traditional rabbis are even talking about Gog and MaGog. This war has created a spiritual awakening in *Eretz Yisra'el* with more and more testimonies about those on the political left, yes the left, turning to ADONAI. The *geulah gadol*, the "great redemption" of Israel is on the horizon, a time when all Israel will mourn for Yeshua as it says in Zechariah 12:10 and we will see the fulfillment of *Sha'ul's* prophecy: *26 ... and in this way all Israel will be saved, as it is written, "The Deliverer shall come out of Zion. He shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob. 27 And this is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins."* (Romans 11:26-27 TLV).

Revival is here. May it take root and spread through all of Yeshua's body and to the whole world. A moment ago, I said that Jeremiah said that repentance was Israel's answer. Here is what he said: 8 *"But if that nation turns from their evil, because of what I have spoken against it, I will relent concerning the calamity that I planned to do to it."* (Jeremiah 18:8 TLV). "Turns" is from the Hebrew שׁוּב, *shuv*, meaning "to turn back; return." Twenty-five hundred years ago, Israel didn't turn back and as a result, the nation was destroyed and Israel was taken into Babylonian captivity. But, ADONAI is not going to punish them again. He said this about Israel's days after the Babylonian Captivity: 20 *"In those days and in that time" — it is a declaration of Adonai— "Israel's guilt will be sought, but there will be none, also for the sins of Judah, but they will not be found. For I will pardon those whom I leave as a remnant."* (Jeremiah 50:20 TLV). The time is near for Israel's redemption, the final redemption, the *Geulah gadol*. Yeshua, may your Kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven! May it be soon and in our days! *Shabbat Shalom!*