

God spoke  
of further  
Moses and  
said to him  
I am the Lord  
and I appeared  
as God Almighty  
known to them  
in the land of Canaan  
Further more I have  
said to the Egyptians  
I am the Lord  
I therefore to the sons  
of Israel I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptian  
land and I will deliver you from the bondage. I will also redeem you with an outstretched arm and great judgments.  
I will take you for my people, and I will be your God. Hardness of Heart  
And you shall know that I am the Lord your God who brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. I will bring you to the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. I will give it to you for a possession. I am the Lord. So Moses spoke thus to the sons of Israel but they did not listen to him.  
By My Name the Lord  
Moses spoke to Pharaoh king of Egypt to let the sons of Israel go out of his land. But Moses spoke before the Lord saying. Behold the sons of Israel have not listened to me. How then will Pharaoh listen to me, for I am an Egyptian? Then the Lord spoke to Moses and to Aaron and gave them a charge to the sons of Israel and to Pharaoh. Bring forth the ten plagues of Egypt to Pharaoh.

# Unrolling the Scroll

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STUDENT  
WORKBOOK

VA'ERA  
And I Appeared  
JANUARY 7-13, 2024

LESSON  
14

# TORAH CLUB



14

**BO**  
JANUARY 14-20

**BESHALACH**  
JANUARY 21-27

**YITRO**  
JANUARY 28-FEBRUARY 3

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# LESSON 14: VA'ERA

EXODUS 6:2–9:35 ■ FOCUS ON EXODUS 6–7

## TORAH PORTION SUMMARY

WHILE EXPLAINING to Moses the significance of His name, the LORD makes four expressions of redemption about the rescue of the Israelites from Egypt. He says, “I am the LORD. (1) I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and (2) I will deliver you from their bondage. (3) I will also redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. Then (4) I will take you for My people, and I will be your God” (Exodus 6:6–7).

God sends Moses to confront Pharaoh again, but first, He lays out the general game plan for the redemption. Pharaoh will refuse to listen to Moses and Aaron. God will take advantage of that opportunity to demonstrate His power with signs and wonders. He will bring His people out of Egypt. Then the Egyptians will know His name.

Moses and Aaron challenge Pharaoh and make their demands. They insist that he should allow the children of Israel to leave for the wilderness for three days to worship God. Pharaoh refuses. Moses and Aaron demonstrate the power of God by turning a staff into a snake, but Pharaoh’s magicians can replicate the sign. Then begins the long story of the plagues on Egypt.

With each plague it seems that Pharaoh will relent, but in the end, he hardens his heart and refuses, therefore eliciting a subsequent plague. The Nile is turned to blood, swarms of frogs cover the land, lice cover men and beasts, swarms of flies, or perhaps wild beasts invade, a fatal disease infects livestock, and the Egyptians are smitten with painful boils. Fiery hail bombards Egypt, and yet through all of this, Pharaoh stubbornly refuses to let the children of Israel go to worship the LORD.

## THIS WEEK ON PORTION CONNECTIONS

ACCORDING TO one explanation of the Passover tradition, the four cups of the Passover Seder correspond to four expressions of redemption from our Torah portion. In this week’s *Portion Connections*, we consider those four expressions as a programmatic text for the ensuing story of the redemption from Egypt. The same text can be understood as the program for the final redemption and personal salvation.

## FOCUS SECTIONS

FOCUS SECTIONS combine mechanical, text derived questions ensuring familiarity with the lesson content and more in-depth group discussion topics.

|                                    |                         |
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| 3 The Burdens of Egypt .....9      | 7 Despondency ..... 15  |
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# VA'ERA

The second reading from the book of Exodus and fourteenth reading from the Torah is named Va'era (וָאֵרָא), which means, “And I appeared.” The title comes from the first words of the second verse of the reading, which says, “And I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as God Almighty” (Exodus 6:3). The portion begins with four expressions of redemption whereby God promises to bring Israel out of the Egyptian bondage. The narrative progresses to tell the story of the first seven of the ten plagues that God unleashed on Egypt.



## DISCOURAGED

God spoke further to Moses and said to him, “I am the LORD.”  
(Exodus 6:2)

“Don’t get your hopes up,” people say. Nothing is as painful as misplaced hope. The higher your hopes, the further they plunge.

Do you remember when you were young and dreamed about what you wanted to do or be when you grew up? What happened? You grew up, and part of growing up is learning not to dream ridiculous dreams. Growing up is learning not to hope for the impossible.

Perhaps you dreamed, “When I grow up, I’m going to marry a handsome prince (or beautiful princess) who will love me absolutely, and we will live happily ever after.” Marrying the handsome prince or beautiful princess is not so difficult. The “happily ever after” is the part many people struggle with.

Is it better to have never hoped than to have hoped and had your dreams crushed?

The message of the gospel is the message of hope. But if you feel hopeless, the gospel is going to fall on deaf ears. It will not take root in you.

When Moses first came back to Egypt, the Israelites were hopeless. They were slaves and brick makers when Moses came peddling hope. Moses told them, “God has sent me to take you out of Egypt.” He showed them signs that convinced them. He gave them great hope that perhaps God was real after all. They began to believe that the God of their fathers cared about them. Moses raised their expectations of life.

But when Moses went to Pharaoh to deliver this message, Pharaoh responded by increasing the workload of the slaves and making their lives

even more difficult than before. The hope that Moses had brought turned to disappointment:

They said to them, “May the LORD look upon you and judge you, for you have made us odious in Pharaoh’s sight and in the sight of his servants, to put a sword in their hand to kill us.” (Exodus 5:21)

Moses was discouraged. His initial encounter with Pharaoh had not resulted in the liberation of the Hebrews. On the contrary, things were worse than ever. The Hebrews resented Moses’ interference. Not only had he falsely raised their hopes, but he had made their situation under the Egyptians more difficult than it had been before he came.

Moses went to God in prayer and asked, “Why have You brought harm to this people? Why did You ever send me? Ever since I came to Pharaoh to speak in Your name, he has done harm to this people, and You have not delivered Your people at all” (Exodus 5:22–23). Moses was right.

After facing disappointment, it is difficult to hope again. When we set out to accomplish something for God, our initial enthusiasm cools quickly as we face difficulties and setbacks. For example, a person sets out to make peace with his enemy, confident that this is God’s will. But his enemy takes advantage of the gesture and aggravates the conflict. Or perhaps a person goes to witness to others about his faith by bringing the good news of Messiah, but it seems that no one receives the message. Or a person may resolve to take on some significant life change. He wants to improve his character or break free from some addiction or pattern of sin. At first he makes a strong effort, but almost immediately he fails in the attempt and ends up just as bad or worse than before.

As this Torah portion begins, God is reassuring Moses that, despite the seeming setbacks, His plan is in motion and He is indeed going to liberate the children of Israel from Egypt. He explains to Moses that He will rescue the people because of His compassion, because of His promises, and because He is the LORD. As we set out to do good, to be good (or at the very least, to do better and be better) we can rely on God’s compassion, His promises, and the power of His name to get us through the discouragement.

## STUDY QUESTIONS | FOCUS SECTION 1

1. Why was Moses discouraged?

2. On the basis of what three things did God say He would rescue the people?

GROUP DISCUSSION: According to Hebrews 6, on the strength of what two unchangeable things should we take encouragement regarding the hope of the future redemption that is set before us (Hebrews 6:13–18)?

FOCUS  
SECTION

2

## BY MY NAME, THE LORD

And I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as God Almighty, but by My name, LORD, I did not make Myself known to them. (Exodus 6:3)

God told Moses that he had appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as *El Shaddai* (אל שדי). The New American Standard version of the Bible translates *El Shaddai* as “God Almighty.” *El* means God, but no one knows for certain what *Shaddai* means. Rashi believes the word *Shaddai* should be translated as “the one who is sufficient.”<sup>1</sup> God told Moses that, though He had appeared to the patriarchs as *El Shaddai*, He had not disclosed His Name, the LORD (י/ה/ו/ה), to them.

In the previous Torah portion, Moses asked God for His personal name. He responded by telling Moses both His personal name (י/ה/ו/ה) and the meaning behind His name:

God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM”; and He said, “Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’” God, furthermore, said to Moses, “Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, ‘The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.’ This is My name forever, and this is My memorial-name to all generations.” (Exodus 3:14–15)

Whenever you see LORD in capital letters in your English Bible, the translator is letting you know that the Hebrew is actually using God’s holy name, י/ה/ו/ה. The LORD explains to Moses that the name י/ה/ו/ה means “I AM WHO I AM” (Exodus 3:14). That is to say, “I am unchanging. You can rely on me.”

There is one puzzling thing about Exodus 6:3, however. If we reread the patriarchal narratives, we will see that God did refer to Himself as the LORD (י/ה/ו/ה) while communicating with Abraham and Jacob.<sup>2</sup> So how can God tell Moses that the patriarchs did not know Him by the name the LORD?

In the Bible, a name signifies an attribute, characteristic, or prophetic destiny. God was apparently telling Moses that, although He had revealed His attributes of *El Shaddai* to the patriarchs, He had not revealed the attributes of His name  $\gamma/\text{H}/\text{V}/\text{H}$ . He had not shown them the full meaning of this name. They knew Him as the great, mighty, awesome, and all-sufficient God. They even knew Him as the God who made great, sweeping promises, but they never had the opportunity to know Him as the God who fulfilled those promises. Moses, on the other hand, was about to experience the power of the God who keeps His promises. He was about to see what it looks like when God fulfills His word.

God's name implies that He is faithful and trustworthy. He is the LORD. He is who He is. He does not change with time. If He has made promises in the past, He will certainly keep them. That is the essential meaning of His name.

## STUDY QUESTIONS ■ FOCUS SECTION 2

1. What does El Shaddai mean?
2. What does God's unpronounced name ( $\gamma/\text{H}/\text{V}/\text{H}$ ) mean?
3. What does "I Am Who I Am" mean?

GROUP DISCUSSION: How does "the essential meaning of God's name" impact our faith in Him and our faith in His promises to Israel (James 1:17)?

## FOUR CUPS OF PASSOVER

Say, therefore, to the sons of Israel, "I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from their bondage. I will also redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments." (Exodus 6:6)

Every year the Jewish people celebrate the festivals of Passover and Unleavened Bread. God gave these biblical festivals to His people as a remembrance

of their great salvation from Egypt. Gentile disciples of Yeshua also celebrate the festival in memory of the Master. Moreover, the story of Passover teaches about the death and resurrection of Yeshua and the deliverance He brings.

On the first night of the festival the Jewish people conduct a special commemorative meal. In the days of the Holy Temple, people sacrificed Passover lambs, roasted them, and ate them at this dinner. The meal is called a *seder* (סדר). The word *seder* means “set order.” It refers to the set order of liturgy and ritual foods that compose the seder meal. During the course of the seder, the people participating drink four cups of wine (or grape juice if they prefer). Each of the four cups has a specific purpose. The first cup is called the cup of sanctification. It is the cup by which we declare the legal separation of holy time from normal time, thereby setting apart the festival time for God. The second cup is called the cup of deliverance. We drink it in honor of the deliverance from Egypt. The third cup is called the cup of blessing since it accompanies the recitation of the thanksgiving blessing that comes after the meal. This cup is also called the cup of redemption because we are to remember how God redeemed His people from Egypt. The fourth cup is called by a few different names. Because it is drunk after the recitation of some psalms at the end of the meal, some call it the cup of praise. All together, these four cups are the cups of the Passover meal.

Yeshua’s last supper with His disciples was a Passover Seder meal. He gave His cup to His disciples and told them, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me” (1 Corinthians 11:25).

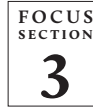
Judaism teaches that each of the four cups corresponds to the promises God made to Moses in Exodus 6:6–7.

| EXODUS 6:6–7 AND THE FOUR CUPS |                |   |
|--------------------------------|----------------|---|
| CUP ONE                        | Sanctification | I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.             |
| CUP TWO                        | Deliverance    | I will deliver you from their bondage.                                    |
| CUP THREE                      | Blessing       | I will also redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. |
| CUP FOUR                       | Praise         | I will take you for My people, and I will be your God.                    |



## THE BURDENS OF EGYPT

I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.  
(Exodus 6:6)



God told Moses that He was about to bring Israel out from the burdens placed on them by the Egyptians. For the Israelites in Egypt, the greatest burden they had to bear was that of brick making.

During the Passover Seder meal, we eat certain ritual foods to remind us of the suffering in Egypt. A variety of bitter herbs garnish the Passover Seder plate, and we eat them at various points during the meal. To help sweeten the experience, we eat a strange concoction called *charoset* (חרוסת), a paste made from fruit and nuts. It tastes great, but it looks rather like mud, which explains why people say that the *charoset* is served on Passover to remind us of the mud-brick and mortar work the Israelites did in Egypt.

Burdens come in various forms. Your burden might not be literal brick making. You might, in some sense, feel that you are making bricks at your job or with your financial situation. You may be burdened with debt. You may be bent low by an unjust political situation. You may suffer with poor health or with your family relationships. We all face different types of burdens in life.

Of course, it is also possible that you are literally burdened with brick making. For example, a sect of Torah-observant Christians used to exist in Romania prior to World War II. When the Nazis came, they were rounded up along with the local Jewish populations. Those who were not sent to Auschwitz were herded into a brick-making factory.<sup>3</sup>

There is another kind of burden that mankind struggles under: the burden of sin, guilt, and condemnation. A grievous doom lies upon all humanity: We are all destined to die and face the judgment. The weight of our guilt and the knowledge of our impending end can be a heavy burden to bear. The good news of salvation is that, through faith in Yeshua, those burdens can be removed. Instead of sin we have forgiveness. Instead of guilt we have joy. Instead of condemnation we have vindication. Instead of death and judgment we have the gift of eternal life and grace.

The same God who liberated Israel from the burdens in Egypt is able to liberate His people from their burdens today. Yeshua beckons all who are burdened to come to Him for relief:

Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls, for My yoke is easy and My burden is light. (Matthew 11:28–30)

STUDY QUESTIONS | FOCUS SECTION 3

- 1. What were “the burdens of the Egyptians” that were placed on the Jewish people?
- 2. What is the spiritual burden under which humanity struggles?

GROUP DISCUSSION: How do we become enslaved to sin, and how do we find freedom from it (John 8:34–36)?

FOCUS  
SECTION  
**4**

DELIVERANCE FROM BONDAGE

I will deliver you from their bondage. (Exodus 6:6)

It is one thing to be burdened. It is even worse to be in bondage. A man might carry his own burden willingly, but it is far more difficult to carry it under the compulsion of another. The LORD told Moses that, in addition to taking Israel out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, He was going to deliver them from bondage.

There are many different types of bondages. Some might find themselves taken into literal bondage, like the Jewish and Sabbatarian communities during World War II or the persecuted Christians in Sudan and other troubled areas today. Others might find themselves in self-made bondages. It is easy to give oneself up to financial bondage with things like a high mortgage or other deep debts. We fall into the bondage of our appetites and find ourselves ruthlessly lorded over by addictive behaviors like chemical abuse (drugs, alcohol, nicotine) or even the sins of gluttony and sexual immorality. A person unable to exercise self-control over his own behavior is a person in bondage.

For example, a man says he is going to quit smoking. The cigarettes are expensive and he knows they are bad for his health. He tells everyone he is quitting and he tosses his cigarettes into the garbage. A few hours later, he is digging through the trash, looking for his cigarettes. He is in bondage to his addiction.

When a person is in bondage, he is unable to liberate himself. He needs someone on the outside to deliver him from the bondage. That is why

people who struggle with addictions find their best success when they turn to counseling, support groups, and other systems of accountability. It takes someone outside the situation to intervene.

God is able to intervene and release us from the various bondages that shackle us. Through faith in Yeshua, our chains can fall away.

On the night of the Passover Seder meal, the people at the table follow a traditional liturgy for the occasion. The Passover Seder liturgy is called the *haggadah* (הגדה), a word that means “telling.” It is called “telling” because the liturgy is written to tell the story of the exodus from Egypt. Much of the liturgy is sung aloud by everyone at the table. One of the popular songs, “*Avadim Hayinu*,” expresses the joy to be found in deliverance from bondage:

*We were slaves in Egypt,  
We were slaves.  
Now we are all free men,  
We are free men!*

Through faith in Yeshua, we have all been set free from slavery to sin. Yeshua teaches that everyone who sins is enslaved by it, but He is able to set us free from its bonds:

Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin. The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son does remain forever. So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.  
(John 8:34–36)

## STUDY QUESTIONS | FOCUS SECTION 4

1. What is the difference between being burdened and being in bondage?
2. What does the word *haggadah* mean?

3. What is a Passover Haggadah?

GROUP DISCUSSION: Yeshua sets us free. But from what? Contrast the difference between the idea of “freedom from the Law” and “freedom from sin.” Are they the same thing (John 8:34–36)?

FOCUS  
SECTION  
**5**

REDEMPTION

I will also redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. (Exodus 6:6)

The LORD tells Moses that He intends to take Israel out from under their burdens and to deliver them from their bondage. More than that, He promises to redeem them while visiting “great judgments” on the Egyptians. Redemption implies the payment of a ransom to buy back from slavery or captivity. In the Torah, when a family member is taken into slavery, the responsibility to buy that person back falls to the next nearest family member.<sup>4</sup> The buying back is called redemption. Pharaoh, the people of Egypt, and the false gods of Egypt had a claim on the people of Israel. The Hebrews were their property. God told Moses that He intended to ransom Israel from slavery the same way a family redeemer would ransom his next of kin from slavery.

In the days after the apostles, the Roman government crushed the Jews of Judea and Jerusalem and carried many of them away into captivity. The sages of that generation raised money from the survivors and then traveled from city to city, looking for Jewish slaves to buy back into freedom. Similarly, in the war-torn nation of Sudan, Muslim militants often raided Christian villages, dragging many of the children away into slavery. Christians with various international ministries arranged means to redeem as many of these captives as possible.

In our battle with darkness, humanity stands in need of redemption. The devil has had a claim on the human species ever since the incident with the fruit tree in Eden, and our situation has not improved since then. We have followed a path of ever-increasing sin and corruption. Our disobedience to God has made us unwittingly loyal to Satan. Human beings belong to the devil. We are his people.

God is not willing to simply give up the human race to perdition. Just as He sent Moses and Aaron to redeem Israel from Egypt, so too, He sent His Son, Yeshua, to redeem us from the clutches of the adversary. Yeshua paid the ransom price with His very life. Those who believe in Him are the redeemed.

Oh give thanks to the LORD, for He is good, for His lovingkindness is everlasting. Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, whom He has redeemed from the hand of the adversary. (Psalm 107:1-2)

## STUDY QUESTIONS | FOCUS SECTION 5

1. What does the word “redemption” mean?
2. Since the incident in Eden, to whom do human beings belong?
3. What was the ransom price Yeshua paid to redeem us?

GROUP DISCUSSION: From what did God redeem us and for what did He redeem us (Titus 2:14)?

## GOD'S PEOPLE

I will take you for My people, and I will be your God. (Exodus 6:7)

The LORD told Moses to tell the children of Israel that He would take them out from under their burdens, deliver them from their bondage, and redeem them. Even more than that, He told Moses to tell them that He would take them for His own people and He would be their God.

The phrase “I will take you for My people, and I will be your God” is an adaptation of an expression from the sphere of marriage. The ancient Near Eastern wedding formulation was “You will be my wife; I will be your husband.” Similarly, the divorce formula was “You are not my wife; I am





not your husband.” What does this mean? Does God intend to take Israel as His wife? Yes. God likened Himself to a suitor and the people of Israel to the young woman He is courting. Just as a young man courting a wife feels great love for the woman on whom he has set his affections, so too God delights in the people of Israel. He was not content to simply redeem them from slavery; He wanted to take them as His very own people. That is to say that He desired an ongoing, personal relationship with the people of Israel. He wanted them to be the “people of God.”

This is the kind of relationship God desires to have with each of us. He does not want a distant sort of universal relationship. While it is true that, as the Creator of the universe, all things belong to Him, He desires something more intimate than that with you. He does not want to be the God of you in the same way that He is the God of beetles. God is a romantic. He wants you to fall in love with Him with the same kind of sweeping love that He feels for you.

God told Moses to tell the children of Israel that He was going to bring them to the land of Canaan just as He had promised the forefathers. He says, “I will bring you to the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and I will give it to you for a possession; I am the LORD” (Exodus 6:8).

This can be compared to a girl whose father fell into hard times, lost his property, and eventually died, leaving her with a great pile of debt. Unable to pay the bills, she was sold into slavery, where she became the helpless thrall of a ruthless slave driver. One day a visiting gentleman saw her and recognized her as the daughter of an old friend. He sent a messenger to the slave girl. The messenger said, “Your father’s friend has recognized you, and for the sake of your father’s memory, he is going to get you released by redeeming you. Not only that, he would like to ask your hand in marriage. Not only that, he also intends to purchase back your father’s property and settle there with you.”

One of the songs from the Passover Seder Haggadah expresses the piling on of promise and blessing in the Passover story. The song is called “*Dayenu* (דינו),” the Hebrew word for “It would have been enough.”

## STUDY QUESTIONS | FOCUS SECTION 6

1. What do the words “I will take you for my people, and I will be your God,” imply?
2. What kind of relationship did God desire with Israel?

3. What does God desire from you that He does not expect from beetles?

GROUP DISCUSSION: Compare the intimate wedding imagery that describes the relationship between God and Israel with the concept of the “bride of Messiah” (Ephesians 5:25–32).

## DESPONDENCY

So Moses spoke thus to the sons of Israel, but they did not listen to Moses on account of their despondency and cruel bondage.  
(Exodus 6:9)



Moses returned to the children of Israel in Egypt with God’s message, the four expressions of redemption, and the good news about their relocation to the promised land of Canaan. His words, however, fell on deaf ears. They had already listened once to Moses, and that had only gotten them into trouble with Pharaoh. Allowing Moses to raise their hopes had resulted in extra work and harsher working conditions. The Torah says that “they did not listen to Moses on account of their despondency and cruel bondage” (Exodus 6:9).

Sometimes it is hard to listen to hope because of our despondency. Having dared to hope in the past and having been betrayed by that hope, we resolve not to be hurt again. One way to avoid ever being hurt again is to refuse to hope. The pessimist is actually afraid of hope.

Being a pessimist myself, I know this racket. You put in an application for a job, then immediately start prepping yourself for the bad news. “Someone else probably got a better application in ahead of me. Even if they look at mine, I won’t qualify for the position. It probably isn’t going to happen. Why would something good happen to me?”

The pessimist claims that he is just being a realist, but despair is not reality. The heart of the pessimist is really saying, “I am comfortable in my despondent state. Please don’t raise me out of this state, because I can’t stand being teased with the chance of happiness. I would rather be unhappy than risk the chance of disappointment.”

Such an attitude, however, is the antithesis of faith. If we truly believe in God, we should be incurable optimists, living in a constant state of expectation. If God is on our side, we cannot lose:

What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things? (Romans 8:31–32)

When you know you cannot lose, you have nothing to fear. You don't need to be afraid of disappointment. You don't need to be a pessimist to protect yourself. You can afford to be an optimist. The world needs more of those. God wants to raise our expectations. He wants us to get our hopes up.

## STUDY QUESTIONS | FOCUS SECTION 7

1. Why didn't the people listen to Moses?
2. Why is pessimism and negativity the antithesis of faith?
3. What does the world need more of?

GROUP DISCUSSION: Why should believers be incurable optimists (Romans 8:31–32)?

## THE SECRET ARTS

Then Pharaoh also called for the wise men and the sorcerers, and they also, the magicians of Egypt, did the same with their secret arts. (Exodus 7:11)

Moses and Aaron went to challenge Pharaoh again with their demand. Pharaoh replied by asking for a sign. If Moses and Aaron were really representing a deity, they should be able to produce some kind of sign or wonder. God had anticipated this reaction and prepared Moses for it by telling him

to cast down his staff and transform it into a serpent. (Another possible translation of the passage could render the Hebrew word for serpent as “crocodile,” though this seems unlikely.) Moses and Aaron did so and the staff turned to a serpent.

However, Pharaoh was not impressed, because his magicians were able to duplicate the miracle “with their secret arts” (Exodus 7:11). Each one cast down his staff and changed it into a serpent before the throne of Pharaoh.

What were the secret arts of the magicians of Egypt? Were they adept in the art of illusion, like a modern-day magician, or did they actually possess magical powers by which, among other things, they could transform sticks into snakes?

It is an arrogance of modern western man to assume that there is no such thing as magic. The history of humanity in every known culture testifies otherwise. In most places, and at most times, human beings have believed in magic and in the ability of certain persons to wield it. In the days of the apostles, magic was well understood to be derived from the assistance of unseen spirits—the power of demons.

The Bible warns us not to dabble in magic.<sup>5</sup> There is no such thing as white magic. All magic is black magic unless it is the work of the Spirit of the LORD, in which case it isn't magic.

Pharaoh's magicians were able to turn their staffs into snakes, too. However, the staff/snake of Moses and Aaron devoured those of the sorcerers. This miracle was a harbinger of things to come. The “magic” of Moses and Aaron was more powerful than that of the Egyptian magicians; which is to say, the God of Israel was more powerful than the gods of Egypt.

## THE TEN PLAGUES

You shall say to him, “The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, sent me to you, saying, ‘Let My people go, that they may serve Me in the wilderness.’ But behold, you have not listened until now.”  
(Exodus 7:16)

Pharaoh refused to allow the children of Israel to leave for a festival. “Who is the LORD that I should obey His voice to let Israel go?” (Exodus 5:2), he said. Moses warned him not to mess with the God of the Hebrews unless he really wanted that question answered. “By this you shall know that I am the LORD” (Exodus 7:17), God warned Pharaoh as He began to unleash plagues against Egypt. It took ten plagues to finally pry the children of Israel loose from Pharaoh's stubborn grip. Egypt was devastated.

This Torah portion tells the story of the first seven plagues. The remaining plagues appear in the next Torah portion.

| The Ten Plagues |                          |                        |            |                |
|-----------------|--------------------------|------------------------|------------|----------------|
| English         |                          | Hebrew                 |            | Exodus Passage |
| 1.              | Blood                    | <i>dam</i>             | דם         | 7:14-24        |
| 2.              | Frogs                    | <i>tzepardea</i>       | צפרדע      | 8:1-15         |
| 3.              | Gnats                    | <i>kinnim</i>          | כנים       | 8:16-19        |
| 4.              | Swarms                   | <i>arov</i>            | ערוב       | 8:20-32        |
| 5.              | Pestilence               | <i>dever</i>           | דבר        | 9:1-7          |
| 6.              | Boils                    | <i>shechin</i>         | שחין       | 9:8-12         |
| 7.              | Hail                     | <i>barad</i>           | ברד        | 9:13-35        |
| 8.              | Locusts                  | <i>arbeh</i>           | ארבה       | 10:1-20        |
| 9.              | Darkness                 | <i>choshech</i>        | חשך        | 10:21-29       |
| 10.             | Slaying of the Firstborn | <i>makkat bechorot</i> | מכת בכורות | 11:1-12:29     |

Were the ten plagues really necessary? Couldn't God have liberated the children of Israel some other way? Couldn't He have just supernaturally taken them out of the land?

God was doing more than just liberating Israel. He was demonstrating His sovereign power to establish His name and reputation. Moreover, the ten plagues were judgments levied against the false gods of Egypt. Several of the plagues correspond directly to Egyptian deities. All of the plagues arose out of the natural world, a sphere that the gods of Egypt were supposed to have had under their own control.

### The Nile Turned to Blood

Thus says the LORD, “By this you shall know that I am the LORD: behold, I will strike the water that is in the Nile with the staff that is in my hand, and it will be turned to blood.” (Exodus 7:17)

The Nile turning to blood is a good example of the war against the gods of Egypt. The Egyptians considered the Nile river as a god. The Nile was the source of life in Egypt. All of Egypt depended on the Nile's annual floods and constant flow of water. The image of turning the Nile to blood is supposed to invoke the image of the God of the Hebrews slaying the Nile god.



Pierced through by the arrows of the Most High, the false god of the Nile bled his life away.

At a certain point during the Passover Seder, the participants in the meal solemnly recite the names of the ten plagues. Some families have a vivid traditional ritual to accompany the recitation. Each person dips a finger into his wine glass and drips a spot of red wine onto his plates with the pronouncement of each plague's name. At the end of the recitation, the plate is spattered as if with blood, a grim reminder of the judgment of God.

Pharaoh was not convinced. When he saw that his magicians were able to duplicate a similar miracle of changing water to blood, he disregarded Moses. The Nile remained blood for seven days.

## THE FROGS

But if you refuse to let them go, behold, I will smite your whole territory with frogs. (Exodus 8:2)

According to some sources, the Egyptian goddess Heqt was depicted with a frog's head. The plague of frogs may have been a deliberate insult to her dignity, or it may have been a broad lampoon of the Egyptian pantheon that was supposed to be in control of natural phenomenon like frog reproduction.

There is an old tradition to keep the children entertained at the Passover Seder table with various amusements. The point of the Passover ritual is to communicate to the children the story of the salvation from Egypt. To keep them engaged in the meal, adults incorporate songs, games, treats, and novelties.

Several years ago, in preparation for the Passover Seder in our house, my wife brought home a large supply of stretchable rubber frogs that could be fired in the same way a rubber band can be launched. She did not tell the children ahead of time. During the meal, when it was time to tell about the plague of frogs, the adults unleashed a barrage of the rubber amphibians on the children. A good time was had by all.

Pharaoh did not have a good time, and neither did the Egyptians. Even though Pharaoh's magicians could duplicate the trick, Pharaoh was not comforted by their success. The last thing he needed was more frogs. He agreed to let the people go. Moses prayed to remove the frogs. As soon as the frogs were gone, however, Pharaoh changed his mind.

This can be compared to a man who prays earnestly for God to heal him of some dread affliction. He promises, "If you heal me, God, I will give up smoking, drinking, gambling, and womanizing." Miraculously he is healed, but as soon as he feels healthy the man says, "Never mind, God, I'm feeling a lot better now."

## THE GNATS

Then the LORD said to Moses, “Say to Aaron, ‘Stretch out your staff and strike the dust of the earth, that it may become gnats through all the land of Egypt.’” (Exodus 8:16)

For their next trick, Moses and Aaron created a plague of gnats out of the dust of Egypt. The fertile soil of Egypt was supposed to be under the blessing of the gods of Egypt. Under the curse of the God of Israel, it brought forth biting insects. Few things are more maddening than small biting insects. As a native of Minnesota, USA, I am familiar with gnats, but even more so with mosquitoes, the pernicious, blood-sucking pestilence. I cannot help but wonder if the ambiguous Hebrew word *kinnim* (כִּנִּים) might be better translated as “mosquito.” The Hebrew Lexicon *Brown, Driver and Briggs* offers “mosquito” as a possible rendering. Some translate it as “vermin,” rats and mice and the like. I still think it was mosquitoes.

The Egyptian magicians were unable to duplicate this miracle, and even if they could have, who in his right mind would intentionally create more mosquitoes?

## THE SWARMS

For if you do not let My people go, behold, I will send swarms of insects on you and on your servants and on your people and into your houses; and the houses of the Egyptians will be full of swarms of insects, and also the ground on which they dwell. (Exodus 8:21)

Before Pharaoh could even formulate a response to the mosquito problem, the LORD unleashed a plague of swarms against the Egyptians. Unfortunately, the Hebrew is ambiguous, and we are not certain about what kind of swarms descended on Egypt. The New American Standard version of the Bible translates it as “swarms of insects.” Some suggest it may have been swarms of flies. Some Jewish traditions regard it as swarms of wild beasts.

Whatever they were, the swarms did not molest the Hebrews living in Goshen. Under the duress of the swarms, Pharaoh relented and offered to let the Hebrews sacrifice to their God, so long as they did not leave the land. Moses insisted that they would have to leave for the wilderness so the sacrificial services would not offend Egyptian sensibilities. Pharaoh consented, but no sooner was the plague of swarms lifted than he changed his mind.

## PESTILENCE

Behold, the hand of the LORD will come with a very severe pestilence on your livestock which are in the field, on the horses, on the donkeys, on the camels, on the herds, and on the flocks. (Exodus 9:3)

The Egyptians depicted several of their deities as cows or bulls.<sup>6</sup> In the fifth plague, the cows and bulls of Egypt died while the gods of Egypt were proven impotent by their inability to protect Egyptian livestock. The LORD unleashed a plague of pestilent disease that devastated the horses, donkeys, camels, herds, and flocks of the Egyptians. The livestock of the Hebrews, however, never contracted the illness. Pharaoh took note of this, but he still did not let the people go.

## BOILS

It will become fine dust over all the land of Egypt, and will become boils breaking out with sores on man and beast through all the land of Egypt. (Exodus 9:9)

Moses and Aaron took the soot of a kiln and cast it into the air before Pharaoh. It may have been soot from a kiln that the Hebrew slaves were forced to work at in brick making. The soot turned to a fine dust, spread out over Egypt, and caused painful boils to erupt on the flesh of men and beasts. The magicians of Egypt had given up trying to vie with Moses and Aaron several plagues ago. By the time the plague of boils hit Egypt, the magicians could not even appear before Moses because of their discomfort from the boils.

Even the stubborn and unreasonable Pharaoh would have consented to let the Hebrews go by that time if God had not hardened his heart. God strengthened Pharaoh's heart so that he would stand fast in his defiance all the way to the dramatic conclusion of the exodus from Egypt. The LORD explained to Pharaoh that if He desired, He could just as easily have killed him and his people. Instead He was preserving them so that they might bear testimony to His power and proclaim His name throughout the earth.

## HAIL

Behold, about this time tomorrow, I will send a very heavy hail, such as has not been seen in Egypt from the day it was founded until now. (Exodus 9:18)

The seventh plague brought fiery hail that devastated the crops of Egypt. The Torah notes that the flax and barley were ruined because they were

already ripe. That note places the plague of hail sometime around the month of March. Once again, the Egyptian gods were defaced as the LORD took control of weather patterns, which they were supposed to be managing, and ruined crops, which they were supposed to be protecting. The hail and accompanying storm shattered trees and killed men and beasts, but the storm did not affect those dwelling among Israel in the land of Goshen.

The defeat of Egypt's gods must have convinced many Egyptians to cast their allegiance with the God of Israel. When Israel finally did leave Egypt, a number of Egyptians left with them.

None of the plagues affecting Egypt were completely supernatural. God utilized the forces of the natural world to produce maladies that Egypt was prone to suffer. In the summer months between June and August, it is not unusual for the Nile river to take on a dull reddish hue that might be reminiscent of blood. Frogs make their appearance in September. Cattle are sent to graze in the pastures during the winter months, when the rains make grass abundant. The flax crop, which was destroyed by the hail, does not bloom before February, when winter storms are still a possibility. The plagues against Egypt probably took nearly a year from start to finish. The exodus did not occur until April.

## HARDNESS OF HEART

Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he did not let the sons of Israel go,  
just as the LORD had spoken through Moses. (Exodus 9:35)

Even after seven catastrophic plagues, Pharaoh was still unwilling to comply with Moses' demands. The Bible explains that his heart was hard. What does it mean to have a hard heart? A hard heart is a proud, selfish, and unrepentant heart. Though Pharaoh intended to repent several times, in each instance the pride of his heart ultimately forbade him.

If you are the kind of person who finds it difficult to apologize, to admit you were wrong, or to take responsibility for a mistake, you may be suffering from a hard heart. This is a grievous problem, more serious than sin itself, because a hard heart fosters sin and blocks out the potential of forgiveness and change. Due to hardness of heart, lives are wrecked, marriages are destroyed, families are scattered, friends are lost, congregations are split, and wars are fought. The hard-hearted person may even know, deep inside, that he is dead wrong about some matter, but he will never admit it.

The Apostle Paul reminds the followers of Yeshua that we are not to be like the unbelievers who live their lives in hardness of heart. He says that hardness of heart results in a callous attitude toward others and in a surrender to sensuality, impurity, and greed:

So this I say, and affirm together with the LORD, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness. (Ephesians 4:17-19)

Only when our hearts are soft will we be sensitive to the needs and hurts of others. When our hearts are soft, we can feel the leading of God and the comfort of His presence. The person with a hard heart feels nothing but his own self-imposed misery.

How do you soften a hard heart? With a lot of work, and more important, humility. Such a task requires us to imitate Yeshua, who, in His humility, suffered and took the blame for others. The heart of Yeshua is the opposite of a hard heart.


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## ENDNOTES

- 1 See the comments on Genesis 17:1, page 60.
- 2 See Genesis 15:7, 28:13.
- 3 D. Thomas Lancaster, "The Sabbath-Keepers of Transylvania," *Messiah Journal* (2009): 39-49.
- 4 See comments on Leviticus 25.
- 5 Leviticus 19:26, 31; Deuteronomy 18:10-12.
- 6 The Egyptians venerated live bulls in the worship of their gods. Bull cults and calf cults in honor of Horus existed in the Nile Delta region.



KEY WORDS AND TERMS

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <div> VOCABULARY</div> |  |
| arbeh  | Locusts; the eighth of the ten plagues of Egypt.   |
| arov   | Swarms; the fourth of the ten plagues of Egypt.  |
| Avadim Hayinu  | We were slaves; a song traditionally sung during the Passover Seder.   |
| barad  | Hail; the seventh of the ten plagues of Egypt.   |
| charoset   | A paste made from fruit and nuts; it is eaten at a Passover Seder in remembrance of the mud-brick and mortar work the Israelites did in Egypt. |
| choshech   | Darkness; the ninth of the ten plagues of Egypt.   |
| dam  | Blood; the first of the ten plagues of Egypt.  |
| Dayenu   | It would have been enough; a song traditionally sung during the Passover Seder.  |
| dever  | Pestilence; the fifth of the ten plagues of Egypt.   |
| El   | God.   |
| El Shaddai   | God Almighty.  |
| haggadah   | The telling; a book used during a Passover Seder as a guide to each of its steps.  |
| kinnim   | Gnats; the third of the ten plagues of Egypt.  |
| makkot bechorot  | Slaying of the firstborn; the last of the ten plagues of Egypt.  |
| midrash  | Commentary, sermon; something searched out.  |
| parashah   | A section or paragraph from the Torah.   |
| seder  | Set order; name for the Passover meal.   |
| Shaddai  | Almighty, the one who is sufficient.   |
| shechin  | Boils; the sixth of the ten plagues of Egypt.  |
| torah  | Teaching; instruction.   |
| tzepardea  | Frogs; the second of the ten plagues of Egypt.   |
| Va'era   | And I appeared; the fourteenth parashah.   |
| Y/H/V/H  | The sacred, four-letter, unpronounceable name of God usually translated as LORD.   |

|   |        |
|---|--------|
| <div> PEOPLE AND PLACES</div> |        |
| Yeshua  | Jesus. |



## PRIMARY SOURCES

None.

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## NOTES



# TORAH

## PORTIONS

“Man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD.” DEUTERONOMY 8:3

| #                             | NAME | DATE | TORAH | HAFTARAH |
|-------------------------------|------|------|-------|----------|
| GENESIS / B'REISHEET   בראשית |      |      |       |          |

|    |              |             |                     |                          |
|----|--------------|-------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| 1  | B'REISHEET   | 14 OCT. '23 | GEN. 1:1–6:8        | 1 SAM. 20:18–42          |
| 2  | NOACH        | 21 OCT. '23 | GEN. 6:9–11:32      | ISA. 54:1–55:5           |
| 3  | LECH LECHA   | 28 OCT. '23 | GEN. 12:1–17:27     | ISA. 40:27–41:16         |
| 4  | VAYERA       | 4 NOV. '23  | GEN. 18:1–22:24     | 2 KGS. 4:1–37            |
| 5  | CHAYEI SARAH | 11 NOV. '23 | GEN. 23:1–25:18     | 1 KGS. 1:1–31            |
| 6  | TOLDOT       | 18 NOV. '23 | GEN. 25:19–28:9     | MAL. 1:1–2:7             |
| 7  | VAYETZE      | 25 NOV. '23 | GEN. 28:10–32:3[2]* | HOS. 12:13[12]–14:10[9]* |
| 8  | VAYISHLACH   | 2 DEC. '23  | GEN. 32:4[3]–36:43* | OBA. 1–21                |
| 9  | VAYESHEV     | 9 DEC. '23  | GEN. 37:1–40:23     | ZEC. 2:14[10]–4:7*       |
| 10 | MIKETZ       | 16 DEC. '23 | GEN. 41:1–44:17     | 1 KGS. 3: 15–4:1         |
| 11 | VAYIGASH     | 23 DEC. '23 | GEN. 44:18–47:27    | EZE. 37:15–28            |
| 12 | VAYECHI      | 30 DEC. '23 | GEN. 47:28–50:26    | 1 KGS. 2:1–12            |

| #                      | NAME | DATE | TORAH | HAFTARAH |
|------------------------|------|------|-------|----------|
| EXODUS / SHEMOT   שמות |      |      |       |          |

|    |           |             |                  |                              |
|----|-----------|-------------|------------------|------------------------------|
| 13 | SHEMOT    | 6 JAN. '24  | EXO. 1:1–6:1     | ISA. 27:6–28:13, 29:22–23    |
| 14 | VA'ERA    | 13 JAN. '24 | EXO. 6:2–9:35    | EZE. 28:25–29:21             |
| 15 | BO        | 20 JAN. '24 | EXO. 10:1–13:16  | JER. 46:13–28                |
| 16 | BESHALACH | 27 JAN. '24 | EXO. 13:17–17:16 | JDG. 4:4–5:31                |
| 17 | YITRO     | 3 FEB. '24  | EXO. 18:1–20:23  | ISA. 6:1–7:6, 9:5–6[6–7]*    |
| 18 | MISHPATIM | 10 FEB. '24 | EXO. 21:1–24:18  | ISA. 66:1–24                 |
| 19 | TERUMAH   | 17 FEB. '24 | EXO. 25:1–27:19  | 1 KGS. 5:26[12]–6:13*        |
| 20 | TETZAVEH  | 24 FEB. '24 | EXO. 27:20–30:10 | EZE. 43:10–27                |
| 21 | KI TISA   | 2 MAR. '24  | EXO. 30:11–34:35 | 1 KGS. 18:1–39               |
| 22 | VAYAK'HEL | 9 MAR. '24  | EXO. 35:1–38:20  | 2 KGS. 12:1–17[11:21–12:16]* |
| 23 | PEKUDEI   | 16 MAR. '24 | EXO. 38:21–40:38 | 1 KGS. 7:51–8:21             |

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| LEVITICUS / VAYIKRA   ויקרא |      |      |       |          |

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|-------------------|-------------|-------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| 24                | VAYIKRA     | 23 MAR. '24 | LEV. 1:1–5:26[6:7]* | 1 SAM. 15:1–34    |
| 25                | TZAV        | 30 MAR. '24 | LEV. 6:1[8]–8:36*   | EZE. 36:16–38     |
| 26                | SH'MINI     | 6 APR. '24  | LEV. 9:1–11:47      | EZE. 45:16–46:18  |
| 27                | TAZRIA      | 13 APR. '24 | LEV. 12:1–13:59     | 2 KGS. 4:42–5:19  |
| 28                | METZORA     | 20 APR. '24 | LEV. 14:1–15:33     | MAL. 3:4–24[4:6]* |
| PESACH I          |             |             |                     |                   |
| 23 APR. '24       |             |             |                     |                   |
| EXO. 12:21–51     |             |             |                     |                   |
| JOSH. 5:2–6:1     |             |             |                     |                   |
| PESACH VIII       |             |             |                     |                   |
| 30 APR. '24       |             |             |                     |                   |
| DEUT. 15:19–16:17 |             |             |                     |                   |
| ISA. 10:32–12:6   |             |             |                     |                   |
| 29                | ACHAREI MOT | 4 MAY '24   | LEV. 16:1–18:30     | EZE. 22:1–16      |
| 30                | KEDOSHIM    | 11 MAY '24  | LEV. 19:1–20:27     | AMOS 9:7–15       |
| 31                | EMOR        | 18 MAY '24  | LEV. 21:1–24:23     | EZE. 44:15–31     |
| 32                | BEHAR       | 25 MAY '24  | LEV. 25:1–26:2      | JER. 32:6–27      |
| 33                | BECHUKOTAI  | 1 JUN. '24  | LEV. 26:3–27:34     | JER. 16:19–17:14  |

| #                          | NAME | DATE | TORAH | HAFTARAH |
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| NUMBERS / BAMIDBAR   במדבר |      |      |       |          |

|                         |              |             |                 |                         |
|-------------------------|--------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| 34                      | BAMIDBAR     | 8 JUN. '24  | NUM. 1:1–4:20   | HOS. 2:1–22[1:10–2:20]* |
| SHAVU'OT I              |              |             |                 |                         |
| 12 JUN. '24             |              |             |                 |                         |
| EXO. 19:1–20:23         |              |             |                 |                         |
| EZE. 1:1–28, 3:12       |              |             |                 |                         |
| SHAVU'OT II             |              |             |                 |                         |
| 13 JUN. '24             |              |             |                 |                         |
| DEUT. 15:19–16:17       |              |             |                 |                         |
| HAB. 3:1–19             |              |             |                 |                         |
| 35                      | NASSO        | 15 JUN. '24 | NUM. 4:21–7:89  | JDG. 13:2–25            |
| 36                      | BEHA'ALOTCHA | 22 JUN. '24 | NUM. 8:1–12:16  | ZEC. 2:14[10]–4:7*      |
| 37                      | SHELACH      | 29 JUN. '24 | NUM. 13:1–15:41 | JOSH. 2:1–24            |
| 38                      | KORACH       | 6 JUL. '24  | NUM. 16:1–18:32 | ISA. 66:1–24            |
| 39                      | CHUKAT       | 13 JUL. '24 | NUM. 19:1–22:1  | JDG. 11:1–33            |
| 40                      | BALAK        | 20 JUL. '24 | NUM. 22:2–25:9  | MIC. 5:6[7]–6:8*        |
| PINCHAS                 |              |             |                 |                         |
| 27 JUL. '24             |              |             |                 |                         |
| NUM. 25:10–30:1[29:40]* |              |             |                 |                         |
| JER. 1:1–2:3            |              |             |                 |                         |
| 42–43 MATTOT–MASSEI     |              |             |                 |                         |
| 3 AUG. '24              |              |             |                 |                         |
| NUM. 30:2[1]–36:13*     |              |             |                 |                         |
| JER. 2:4–28, 3:4        |              |             |                 |                         |

| #                             | NAME | DATE | TORAH | HAFTARAH |
|-------------------------------|------|------|-------|----------|
| DEUTERONOMY / DEVARIM   דברים |      |      |       |          |

|                         |                 |             |                     |                                    |
|-------------------------|-----------------|-------------|---------------------|------------------------------------|
| 44                      | DEVARIM         | 10 AUG. '24 | DEUT. 1:1–3:22      | ISA. 1:1–27                        |
| 45                      | VA'ETCHANAN     | 17 AUG. '24 | DEUT. 3:23–7:11     | ISA. 40:1–26                       |
| 46                      | EKEV            | 24 AUG. '24 | DEUT. 7:12–11:25    | ISA. 49:14–51:3                    |
| 47                      | RE'EH           | 31 AUG. '24 | DEUT. 11:26–16:17   | ISA. 54:11–55:5                    |
| 48                      | SHOFTIM         | 7 SEP. '24  | DEUT. 16:18–21:9    | ISA. 51:12–52:12                   |
| 49                      | KI TETZE        | 14 SEP. '24 | DEUT. 21:10–25:19   | ISA. 54:1–10                       |
| 50                      | KI TAVO         | 21 SEP. '24 | DEUT. 26:1–29:8[9]* | ISA. 60:1–22                       |
| 51–52 NITZAVIM–VAYELECH |                 |             |                     |                                    |
| 28 SEP. '24             |                 |             |                     |                                    |
| DEUT. 29:9[10]–31:30*   |                 |             |                     |                                    |
| ISA. 61:10–63:9         |                 |             |                     |                                    |
| ROSH HASHANAH I         |                 |             |                     |                                    |
| 3 OCT. '24              |                 |             |                     |                                    |
| GEN. 21:1–34            |                 |             |                     |                                    |
| 1 SAM. 1:1–2:10         |                 |             |                     |                                    |
| ROSH HASHANAH II        |                 |             |                     |                                    |
| 4 OCT. '24              |                 |             |                     |                                    |
| GEN. 22:1–24            |                 |             |                     |                                    |
| JER. 31:1–19            |                 |             |                     |                                    |
| 53                      | HA'AZINU        | 5 OCT. '24  | DEUT. 32:1–52       | HOS. 14:2[1]–10[9];<br>JL. 2:15–27 |
| YOM KIPPUR              |                 |             |                     |                                    |
| 12 OCT. '24             |                 |             |                     |                                    |
| LEV. 16:1–34            |                 |             |                     |                                    |
| ISA. 57:14–58:14        |                 |             |                     |                                    |
| SUKKOT I                |                 |             |                     |                                    |
| 17 OCT. '24             |                 |             |                     |                                    |
| LEV. 22:26–23:44        |                 |             |                     |                                    |
| ZEC. 14:1–21            |                 |             |                     |                                    |
| SHMINI ATZERET          |                 |             |                     |                                    |
| 24 OCT. '24             |                 |             |                     |                                    |
| DEUT. 14:22–16:17       |                 |             |                     |                                    |
| 1 KGS. 8:54–66          |                 |             |                     |                                    |
| 54                      | VEZOT HA'BRACHA | 25 OCT. '24 | DEUT. 33:1–34:12    | JOSH. 1:1–18                       |

\* The Torah and haftarah chapter/verse numberings are taken from the Hebrew Bible (Christian published chapter/verse numberings are indicated within parentheses).

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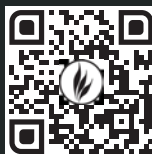
Join us in Orlando, Florida, as we uncover the hidden secrets of the kingdom within Esther's story and unite with other *FFOZ Friends* and Torah Club Members against anti-Semitism and the enemies of Israel. The book of Esther's words echo powerfully: "For if you keep silent at this time, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have not come to "the kingdom for such a time as this

Malchut is about building. Building relationships.  
Building a leading community. Building the kingdom.



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WE LOOK FORWARD  
TO SEEING YOU  
IN ORLANDO, FL!



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