

Hear Israel

Parsha VaYera / And He Appeared

B'reshith 18:1-22:24

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Our parsha this week has been “**Va’Yera**”, which literally translates as “**And appeared**”. It opens with the words, “**Va’Yera Eloah YHVH elown Mamre veh oo yashav pawtakh ohel b’chom HaYom**”. This literally translates as, “**And appeared Eloah Yahweh by the terebinths of Mamre to him who stood at the door of his tent in the heat of the day**”.

This word phrase “**Va’yera**”, or “**and appeared**” is closely related to several other words. For example, we have “**ra’ah**” which means “**to see**” or “**look at**”. It also can mean “**to behold**” or “**witness**” as in “**Re’uben**” or “**behold a son**”. OK, with different vowel points, “**ra’ah**” becomes “**re’eh**” or “**mirror**” or it can be “**rayah**” which means “**evidence**” or “**proof**”. We can see how these are all related to one another. And, as we’ve noted before, there are no vowel points in the Torah text, as written. So, in this “**appearing**” of Yahweh, we have “**beholding**” and “**evidence**” or “**proof**”. Beholding what? Proof of what? Well, keep this thought in mind, as we read the opening verses together.

Let’s begin with **B’reshith** (Genesis) **18:1-8**; **And YHVH appeared to him by the terebinth trees of Mamre, while he was sitting in the tent door in the heat of the day. So he lifted his eyes and looked, and saw three men standing opposite him. And when he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them, and bowed himself to the ground, and said, “Adonai, if I have now found favor in Your eyes, please do not pass Your servant by. Please let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. And let me bring a piece of bread and refresh your hearts, and then go on, for this is why you have come to your servant.” And they said, “Do as you have said.” So Avraham ran into the tent to Sarah and said, “Hurry, make ready three measures of fine flour, knead it and make cakes.” And Avraham ran to the herd, took a tender and good calf, gave it to a young man, and he hurried to prepare it. And he took curds and milk and the calf which he had prepared, and set it before them, and he stood by them under the tree as they ate.**

Now, we learned last week that Avraham was camped at the “**terebinth trees of Mamre**”. The Hebrew word translated as “**terebinth trees**” is “**elon**”, Strong’s #0436 (*aleph-lamed-yud-nun*). “**Elon**”, as we saw last week, is an interesting word, in that it comes from the same root as “**Eloah**” and “**Elohim**”. So, it carries the meaning of “**mighty**”. It also is associated with “**ayil**” which is the “**ram of the offering (korban)**”; and also “**pillar**”, “**pilaster**” or “**door post**”. The

meanings of the very letters, “aleph-lamed-yud-nun” mean the “**Master’s Shepherd staff is in the Hand of the Heir to the Throne**”. This is why the “**terebinth tree**” is an allusion to the “**mighty**”, “**righteous**” and “**upright**” people. “**Mamre**” (*Mem-mem-reish-aleph*) means “**strength**”. The man, “**Mamre**” was an Amorite who lived in Hebron and made an alliance with Avraham. Based on the oral traditions, the rabbis teach that he was a convert of Avraham’s. Also, as we saw last week, the Anaqim (*giants*) lived there too. So these “**terebinth trees of Mamre**” are a picture telling us that Avraham, while living in Hebron dwelt among the mighty and was righteous.

So as Avraham was standing in the doorway of his tent, he looked up and “**beheld**” or “**witnessed**” three “**men**” standing opposite him. Avraham runs to meet them and bows down and says; “**Adonai, if I have now found favor in Your eyes, please do not pass Your servant by**”. The ISR Scriptures have “**Yahweh**” instead of the word “**Adonai**”. However, the Hebrew text reads “**Adonai**”. OK, so Avraham has water brought to wash their feet. Sarah prepares fresh cakes (there was no time to add leaven). So, they would have been without leaven. Along with these cakes, he gives them a freshly prepared **calf**. Now, while the ISR reads that he brought “**curds**”; he actually brought **butter** (*che’mah* in Hebrew) along with **milk**. So, was Avraham just being *neighborly*, or is there more to this? What could this be a picture of? Well, Avraham first brings water for cleansing. Then he chooses a “**ben baqar**” (a “**young bull**” – here “**ben**” means “**male offspring**” and “**baqar**” is “**cattle**” or “**ox**”). It was “**tender**”, “**rach**” in Hebrew, which also means “**delicacy**” or “**perfect food**”. And it was “**tov**”. Well, if you compare these verses with the first ten chapters of **Wayyiqra / Leviticus**, you’ll see that Avraham brings what amounts to an “**offering**” to Yahweh. Remember that a “**Korban**” or “**offering**” is, in Hebrew, a “**drawing near**”. Avraham was “**drawing near**” to Yahweh. Unleavened cakes were a part of these “**offerings**”. The butter and the milk represent the very best of what he had. “**Che’mah**” or “**butter**” is a fat made from the cream (the **best**). This is why Yahweh refers to Eretz Yisra’el as the Land flowing with **milk** and **honey** (“**fatness and sweetness**”), the best of everything.

Now, let’s quickly look at another picture. Of these three “**enowsh’im**”, “**men**” or “**beings**”, who appear to Avraham some say that these were just angels; others say this was Elohim with two of His messengers. I would suggest here, that while this is indeed Yahweh, we’re also seeing Him in the form of a “**pre-existent**” Yahshua, who is a manifestation of Elohim. Remember what Yochanan said in **Yochanan 1:1-3**; ***In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with Elohim, and the Word was Elohim. He was in the beginning with Elohim. All came to be through Him, and without Him not even one came to be that came to be.***

Let’s examine the facts. First, **Verse 1** states; ***And YHVH appeared to him by the terebinth trees of Mamre, while he was sitting in the tent door in the heat of the day.*** Then, what does Avraham do? He says, “**Adonai (my Master), if I have now found favor in Your eyes, please do not pass Your servant by**”. But, we’re told a number of times in Scripture that no man sees Elohim, specifically His Face and lives. For example, **Shemot / Exodus 33:20** says; ***But He said, “You are unable to see My face, for no man does see Me and live.”*** And yet, throughout the TaNaK we have someone “**in the flesh**” appearing to people (*righteous people*) and being called Yahweh and/or Elohim. We also know that “**malakim**” or, for want of a better word “**angels**” will not allow themselves to be called Yahweh or be worshipped in any fashion. We have an example in **Revelation 19:10**, as one of the “**malakim**” in heaven addresses Yochanan and; ***And I fell at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, “See, do not do it! I am your fellow servant, and of your brothers who possess the witness of Yahshua. Worship Elohim! For the witness of Yahshua is the spirit of prophecy.”*** And, again in **22:8-**

9; And I, Yochanan, saw and heard these matters. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the messenger who showed me these matters. And he said to me, "See, do not! For I am your fellow servant, and of your brothers the prophets, and of those who are guarding the words of this book. Worship Elohim."

Now here, in **verse 3**, Torah tells us that Yahweh appeared to Avraham, Avraham calls one of these "**men**" or fleshly beings "**Adonai**" or "**Master**" in the Hebrew, in **verse 3**, and then Yahweh answers in the First Person when talking to Avraham about Sarah in **verses 13-14; And YHVH said to Avraham, "Why did Sarah laugh, saying, 'Shall I truly have a child, since I am old?' Is any matter too hard for YHVH? At the appointed time I am going to return to you, according to the time of life, and Sarah is to have a son."**

You see, the word plays we have throughout these verses tell us what we need to know. In **verse 2** Avraham looked up and "**ra'ah**" (**beheld**) Yahweh, whom no man can see. And, he saw and believed the "**rayah**" or "**evidence**" of Yahweh's existence in Yahshua. Now, I want you to hold that thought a minute. Remember the other word "**re'eh**" or "**mirror**"? Sha'ul said of Yahshua in 2 **Corinthians 3:16-18; And when one turns to the Master, the veil is taken away. Now YHVH is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of YHVH is, there is freedom. And we all, as with unveiled face we see as in a mirror the esteem of YHVH, are being transformed into the same likeness from esteem to esteem, as from YHVH, the Spirit.** For those who see Yahshua, it is like seeing the image of Yahweh in a mirror (**re'eh**). These verses remind us also of **B'reshith 1:26-27; And Elohim said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over the livestock, and over all the earth and over all the creeping creatures that creep on the earth." And Elohim created the man in His image, in the image of Elohim He created him – male and female He created them.** Now, "**re'eh**" is spelled "**reish-aleph-yud**". The numeric value of these combined letters is 211, which equals "**Gibor**" or "**Mighty**" from **B'reshith 10:9**, and from **Shemot 3:8**, the word phrase "**ra'ahr'ed**" or "**I have come down**" and from **Bemidbar (Numbers) 6:25**, "**ya'er**" or "**to make shine**" and in **Bemidbar 17:20**, "**av'char**" or "**I shall choose**". He has indeed come down for those He shall choose.

Whether Yehudah admits it or not; this makes Yahshua the "**Adam Kadmon**". This is the term the rabbis use, which translates as the "**Express Image of Elohim**". You could also say, "**Adam Kadmon is Elohim's Divine expression as a man**". As Rabbi Yitzchak Ginsburg puts it, "**For this reason, Adam Kadmon is often seen to represent the archetypal soul of Mashiach, the Divine 'Intermediary' which reveals the infinite to the created finite reality.**"

Let's continue with **verses 9-15; And they said to him, "Where is Sarah your wife?" And he said, "See, in the tent." And He said, "I shall certainly return to you according to the time of life, and see, Sarah your wife is to have a son!" And Sarah was listening in the tent door which was behind him. Now Avraham and Sarah were old, well advanced in age, and Sarah was past the way of women. And Sarah laughed within herself, saying, "After I have grown old, shall I have pleasure, my master being old too?" And YHVH said to Avraham, "Why did Sarah laugh, saying, 'Shall I truly have a child, since I am old?' Is any matter too hard for YHVH? At the appointed time I am going to return to you, according to the time of life, and Sarah is to have a son." But Sarah denied it, saying, "I did not laugh," for she was afraid. And He said, "No, but you did laugh!"**

This direct discussion between a fleshly appearing Elohim and Avraham continues, as we do, from **verses 16-33**; *And the men rose up from there and looked toward Sedom, and Avraham went with them to send them away.*” And YHVH said, *“Shall I hide from Avraham what I am doing, since Avraham is certainly going to become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I have known him, so that he commands his children and his household after him, to guard the way of YHVH, to do righteousness and right-ruling, so that YHVH brings to Avraham what He has spoken to him.”* And YHVH said, *“Because the outcry against Sedom and Amorah is great, and because their sin is very heavy, I am going down now to see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry against it that has come to Me, and if not, I know.”* So the men turned away from there and went toward Sedom, but Avraham still stood before YHVH. And Avraham drew near and said, *“Would You also destroy the righteous with the wrong? Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city, would You also destroy the place and not spare it for the fifty righteous that were in it? Far be it from You to act in this way, to slay the righteous with the wrong, so that the righteous should be as the wrong. Far be it from You! Does the Judge of all the earth not do right?”* And YHVH said, *“If I find in Sedom fifty righteous within the city, then I shall spare all the place for their sakes.”* And Avraham answered and said, *“Look, please, I who am but dust and ashes have taken it upon myself to speak to YHVH, Suppose there are five less than the fifty righteous, would You destroy all of the city for lack of five?”* And He said, *“If I find there forty-five, I do not destroy it.”* And he spoke to Him yet again and said, *“Suppose there are found forty?”* And He said, *“I would not do it for the sake of forty.”* And he said, *“Let not YHVH be displeased, and let me speak: Suppose there are found thirty?”* And He said, *“I would not do it if I find thirty there.”* And he said, *“Look, please, I have taken it upon myself to speak to YHVH: Suppose there are found twenty?”* And He said, *“I would not destroy it for the sake of twenty.”* And he said, *“Let not YHVH be displeased, and let me speak only this time: Suppose there are found ten?”* And He said, *“I would not destroy it for the sake of ten.”* Then YHVH went away as soon as He had ended speaking to Avraham. And Avraham returned to his place.

Now, we have another curiosity here in **verse 16**; *And the men rose up from there and looked toward Sedom, and Avraham went with them to send them away.*” And, in **verse 22**; *So the men turned away from there and went toward Sedom, but YHVH still stood before Avraham.* OK, the Hebrew word used in these verses for “**men**” is an interesting choice. I don’t believe for a minute that Yahweh chooses His words indiscriminately. The word here is “**enowsh’im**” (*aleph-nun-vav-shin-yud-mem*), the plural of Strong’s #0582 “**enowsh**”, which literally means “**sons of man**”. I thought they were “**angels**”. I’m just reporting on what Torah says..... “**sons of man**”. Now, **Enowsh** (*Aleph-nun-vav-shin*) was the first-born son of Seth, according to **B’reshith 4:26**. Now, we see that Seth, followed by Enowsh (Man), is counted as the first-born of Adam. For in **B’reshith 5:1-8**; *This is the book of the genealogy of Adam. In the day that Elohim created man, He made him in the likeness of Elohim. Male and female He created them, and He blessed them, and called their name ‘Adam’ in the day they were created. And Adam lived one hundred and thirty years, and brought forth a son in his own likeness, after his image, and called his name Sheth. And after he brought forth Sheth, the days of Adam were eight hundred years. And he brought forth sons and daughters. So all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years, and he died. And Sheth lived one hundred and five years, and brought forth Enowsh. And after he brought forth Enowsh, Sheth lived eight hundred and seven years, and brought forth sons and daughters. So all the days of Sheth were nine hundred and twelve years, and he died.*

Yahshua referred to Himself as “**Enowsh**” or “**Son of Man**”; indicating that, in order to be our Kinsman Redeemer, He had to come through the lineage of Adam / Seth and be born into this “*natural*” world just as you and I.

On a separate note here; **verse 22** ends in the ISR Scriptures, in English, by stating that Yahweh still stood before Avraham. However, in the Hebrew Torah, the reverse is true. It reads, “**Avraham still stood before Yahweh**”. He never stands before man.

Next, Avraham (*true to form*) intercedes on behalf of any that are, or may be, righteous in the cities about to be destroyed. As usual, I find the numbers interesting. I’m not going to belabor this. However, I will just point them out and some possible connections. First, Avraham asks if there are **fifty** righteous, would Yahweh spare the cities. **Fifty** is the numeric value of the letter “**Nun**” which equals the “**Kingdom**” or “**Heir to the Throne**”. **Fifty** also equals the numeric value of “**dumah**” or “**His blood**” and “**Yovel**” or the “**Jubilee**”. Yahweh does indeed hold back judgment when the Blood of the Heir to the Throne is found upon us.

Next, we have an interesting play on the numbers. First Avraham asks that if there are **five less** than the **fifty**, would Yahweh destroy the city for the lack of **five**? **Five** is the numeric value of the letter “**hey**” which means “**revelation**”. **Five** also represents the Five books of Moshe, or Torah, in Scripture. So it’s also like saying that Yahweh would not destroy the cities should He find the “**Revelation of the Torah there**”. And, Who does Torah reveal??? Yahshua. But, Yahweh says that He would not destroy it if He finds **forty five**. What’s interesting here is that **forty five** is numeric value of “**Lot**” and also “**Adam**” or “**mankind**”. While Yahweh didn’t find **forty five** righteous souls, He did save Lot and He has indeed provided salvation for all “**mankind**”.

Then Yahweh adds that He would not do it if **forty** are found. Forty represents “**trials**” and “**testings**” in Scripture; such as the 40 years in the wilderness and the forty days that Yahshua spent in the wilderness to be “**tested**”; just to name a couple of the many. **Forty** is also the numeric value of “**lu’ e**” or “**mine**” or “**for me**” as well as two phrases in Wayyiqra / Leviticus 25:25 “**ga’aloh**”, “**his kinsman**” and “**v’ga’al**”, “**and shall redeem**”, speaking of the mitzvah of the “**kinsman redeemer**”. So again, while Yahweh didn’t find **forty** righteous, He will never destroy “**those of His who come through the trials and testing by the Kinsman Redeemer**”.

Next, we have **thirty**, the numeric value of the letter “**lamed**” or “**shepherd’s staff**”. **Thirty** is also the numeric value of “**ba kaha**” or “**in power**” and “**va cheet ah**” or “**He will purify**” and “**va ah chayeh**”, “**and I make alive**”. By His staff, His leading, in power He will purify and make us alive. Yahshua said of Himself in Yochanan / John 10:10; **I have come that they might possess life, and that they might possess it beyond measure.**

Then, we get to **twenty**. If Yahweh would find **twenty** righteous, He would relent and not destroy the cities. **Twenty** is the numeric value of the letter “**kaf**” or “**palm of the hand**” or “**covering**”. It is also the numeric value of “**Yadah**” or “**His hand**” and “**abib**” or “**the first month**” in which Passover occurs. If He is our covering, if we are in the palms of His hands destruction will pass over us.

Finally, He says for the sake of **ten** righteous, He will withhold destruction. **Ten**, the letter “**yud**” meaning “**hand**”, also the word phrases “**v’hoveh**”, “**and I came**” and “**Avoh**”, “**I will come**”. What a picture we see in this account of Avraham’s intercession and Lot’s impending salvation.

Once again, we see our future being played out in the lives of our forefathers. Do you remember that phrase we learned from last week? It was, "**Ma'aseh avot siman le'vanim**" or "**The deeds of the fathers are signposts to the children**". You see, in the days to come, Yahweh will not even go this far, to save a city for even fifty. Speaking of His Judgment, Yahweh says in **Yehezqel 15:13-20**; "**Son of man, when a land sins against Me to commit a trespass, and I shall stretch out My hand against it, and cut off its supply of bread and send scarcity of food on it, and cut off man and beast from it, even though these three men, Noah, Dani'el, and Iyob, were in it, they would deliver only themselves by their righteousness,**" declares the Master YHVH. "**If I cause an evil beast to pass through the land, and it shall bereave it, and it shall be a wasteland, so that no man passes through because of the beasts, even though these three men were in it, as I live,**" declares the Master YHVH, "**they would deliver neither sons nor daughters. They alone would be delivered, but the land be a wasteland. Or if I bring a sword on that land, and I shall say, 'Sword, go through the land,' and I shall cut off man and beast from it, even though these three men were in its midst, as I live,**" declares the Master YHVH, "**they would deliver neither sons nor daughters, for they alone would be delivered. Or if I send a pestilence into that land, and I shall pour out My wrath on it in blood, to cut off from it man and beast, even though Noah, Dani'el, and Iyob were in it, as I live,**" declares the Master YHVH, "**they would deliver neither son nor daughter. They would deliver their own lives by their righteousness.**"

OK, let's move on to **B'reshith 19:1-16**; **And the two messengers came to Sedom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gate of Sedom. And when Lot saw them, he rose up to meet them, and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground, and he said, "Look, please my masters, please turn in to your servant's house and spend the night, and wash your feet, and rise early and go your way." And they said, "No, but let us spend the night in the open square." But he urged them strongly, and they turned in to him and came into his house. And he made them a feast, and baked unleavened bread, and they ate. Before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sedom, both old and young, all the people from every part, surrounded the house. And they called to Lot and said to him, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us, and let us 'know' them." So Lot went out to them through the doorway, and shut the door behind him, and said, "Please, my brothers, do not do evil! Look, please, I have two daughters who have not known a man. Please, let me bring them out to you, and do to them as you wish, only do no deed to these men, because they have come under the shadow of my roof." But they said, "Stand back!" And they said, "This one came in to sojourn, and should he always judge? Now we are going to treat you worse than them." So they pressed hard against the man Lot, and came near to break down the door. But the men reached out their hands and pulled Lot into the house with them, and shut the door. Then they struck the men who were at the doorway of the house with blindness, both small and great, and they wearied themselves to find the door. And the men said to Lot, "Have you anyone else here? A son-in-law, and your sons, and your daughters, and whomever you have in the city – bring them out of this place! For we are going to destroy this place, because the cry against them has grown great before the face of YHVH, and YHVH has sent us to destroy it." And Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, who had married his daughters, and said, "Get up, get out of this place, for YHVH is going to destroy this city!" But to his sons-in-law he seemed to be as one joking. And when morning dawned, the messengers urged Lot to hurry, saying, "Get up, take your wife and your two daughters who are here, lest you be consumed in the punishment of the city." And while he loitered, the men took**

hold of his hand, and his wife's hand, and the hands of his two daughters, YHVH having compassion on him, and they brought him out and set him outside the city.

Now, here in **verse 1**, these two men are identified as “**messengers**” or “**malakim**” in Hebrew. Does that conflict with the previous chapter's description of them as “**enowsh'im**” or “**sons of man**”? You decide. Messengers do not necessarily have to be “**angelic**” beings or “**the sons of Elohim**”. Take for example the taking of Yeriho in **Yehoshua / Joshua 2-6**. We are told in **6:25**; *However, Yehoshua kept alive Rahab the whore, and her father's household, and all that she had. And she dwelt in the midst of Yisra'el to this day, because she hid the messengers whom Yehoshua sent to spy out Yeriho.* The word used here for messengers is “**enowsh'im**”, “**sons of man**”. Now, in **Debarim / Deuteronomy 2**, as Moshe is recounting the history of their time in the Wilderness. he tells the people in **verses 25-27**; *'This day I begin to put the dread and fear of you upon the peoples under all the heavens, who, when they hear the report of you, shall tremble and shake because of you.'* Then I sent messengers from the Wilderness of Qedemoth to Sihon sovereign of Heshbon, with words of peace, saying, 'Let me pass over through your land on the highway. I shall go on the highway and turn neither to the right nor to the left. Now, here we have the word “**malachim**” for “**messengers**”. And, these also were indeed men sent out as the source text, **Bemidbar / Numbers 21:21-22**, tells us; *And Yisra'el sent messengers (malakim) to Sihon sovereign of the Amorites, saying, "Let me pass through your land. We shall not turn off into fields or vineyards, we shall not drink water from wells, but go by the sovereign's highway until we have passed over your border."*

I don't know if Lot knew that these men were different, as they walked in to the city. But, as Lot sees them come into town and, like his uncle Avraham, he rose up to meet them and bowing, offers his home and hospitality to them. When they agree to join him, he washes their feet and prepares a feast for them, again including unleavened bread. See the similarities in what Lot does and what Avraham did in the previous chapter. Even as the men from the city come “**knocking**” in order to abuse these men, Lot offers his own daughters in order to protect those who are guests in his house. I found it interesting that, as Lot tries to tell the men of the city to “**not do evil**” as these men are his guests, that they say in **verse 9**; *But they said, "Stand back!" And they said, "This one came in to sojourn, and should he always judge? Now we are going to treat you worse than them." So they pressed hard against the man Lot, and came near to break down the door.* I find it interesting that the men of the city remember that Lot was a sojourner and they do not approve that he always seems to judge their evil actions.

Now, it's these “**messengers**” that have to rescue Lot from the men of the city. We see that these two messengers have power to strike these men blind. This reminded me that the “**messengers**” of Elohim, whether angels or men, are given power to perform the works of Him who sent them. Look at the powers given to Moshe in order to get Pharaoh's attention and the attention of the Children of Yisra'el, not to mention in order to feed them and give them water. Then there was “**Eliyahu**” (**Elijah**) and “**Elisha**”. Then there are the “**messengers**”, “**apostles**” or “**emissaries**” of Yahshua who were given the power to perform miracles in order to show the love of Elohim. There will be the “**Two Witnesses**” or the “**Two Olive Trees**” of **Revelation 11**, who will be given great power for a time, in order to give witness of the Restoration of the Kingdom of Yahweh to Yisra'el. It's interesting that the messengers I've just mentioned are all “**enowsh'im**” or “**sons of men**”.

Two weeks ago, in Parsha Noach, we learned that it was because of Noach's righteousness, that he and his whole house (*his wife, sons and sons' wives*) were saved. We read what Sha'ul and Sila (Silas) told their jailer after their miraculous delivery from prison, in **Acts 16:30-31**; ***And having led them outside he said, "Masters, what do I have to do to be saved?" And they said, "Believe on the Master Yahshua Messiah, and you shall be saved, you and your household."*** And, now here, in Sedom, we have the messengers of Elohim taking Lot and his whole house, (*his wife and unmarried daughters – those under his covering*) out of the city just before its destruction. Again, we see that Lot's righteousness will save his whole house. Or, will it? People still have the ability to choose. In this case, Lot's sons-in-law and his daughters who were under their husbands' covering, chose to ignore the warning to "**come out**" and would perish with the rest. And, as we'll see in a minute even Lot's wife made a choice at the very last minute that cost her, her life. She took her eyes off her salvation and looked back. Ruth suggested something I hadn't seen before; and, I think she's correct. She said that Lot's wife probably looked back in hopes of seeing her two other daughters and perhaps her grandchildren coming out after them. Folks, when our time comes, we can't look back. All of us will have to make our own decision, whether to go, stay behind or turn back. Fear for their children kept a whole generation of B'nei Yisra'el out of the Promised Land. And, this is what Yahweh restated in Yehezqel 15, that we read a few minutes ago, about not saving a city even if Noah, Dani'el and Iyob were living there. He'll rescue the righteous and judge the rest.

Let's continue with **Chapter 19:17-30**; ***And it came to be, when they had brought them outside, that he said, "Escape for your life! Do not look behind you nor stay anywhere in the plain. Escape to the mountains, lest you be consumed." And Lot said to them, "Oh no, YHVH! Look, please, your servant has found favor in your eyes, and you have increased your kindness which you have shown me by saving my life, but I am unable to escape to the mountains, lest calamity overtake me and I die. Look, please, this city is near enough to flee to, and it is small. Please let me escape there – is it not a small matter – and let my life be saved?" And He said to him, "Look, I have favored you concerning this matter also, without overthrowing this city for which you have spoken. Hurry, escape there. For I am not able to do any deed until you arrive there." So the name of the city was called Tso'ar. The sun had risen upon the earth when Lot entered Tso'ar. And YHVH rained sulphur and fire on Sedom and Amarah, from YHVH out of the heavens. So He overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground. But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a post of salt. And Avraham arose early in the morning and went to the place where he had stood before YHVH, and he looked toward Sedom and Amarah, and toward all the land of the plain. And he looked and saw the smoke of the land which went up like the smoke of a furnace. Thus it came to be, when Elohim destroyed the cities of the plain, that Elohim remembered Avraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when He overthrew the cities in which Lot had dwelt. And Lot went up out of Tso'ar and dwelt in the mountains, and his two daughters were with him, for he was afraid to dwell in Tso'ar. And he and his two daughters dwelt in a cave.***

Here, Lot's wife looks back. As I said, she took her eyes off of her salvation. Her connection to her children, to the world, was too strong. The "**fear of Yahweh**" was not in her to the point that she could overcome her flesh. That is really the question we must ask ourselves, whether in trying to keep Torah or being obedient to His call, "**do we fear Yahweh enough to be serious about keeping His commands**"?

Shimon Kepha (Peter) pretty well said it **Kepha Beit / 2 Peter 2:20-22**; *For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of the Master and Savior Yahshua Messiah, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the first. For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the set-apart command delivered unto them. For them the proverb has proved true, “A dog returns to his own vomit,” and, “A washed sow returns to her rolling in the mud.”* How was her end worse than the first? Dead is dead, right? We’re told that she became a “**pillar or post of salt**”. In Hebrew, it was a “**netseeb melach**”. Gesenius’ Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon says that “**netseeb**” is a “**statue**”, a “**fossil**” or a “**monument**” to something. “**Melach**” or “**salt**” was a word for noting the most set-apart and the firmest of covenants in Scripture. What covenant is the most set-apart, the firmest that Yahweh gave His creation? Yahshua (**Yah saves us**); salvation is the firmest most “**set-apart**” covenant of all. Lot’s wife turned from that covenant and was made a “**monument**” to it.

Our Bit Chadashah reading for this *parsha* is also from **Kepha Beit / 2 Peter 2**. It covers **Verses 4-11**; *For if Elohim did not spare the messengers who sinned, but sent them to Tartaros, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be kept for judgment, and did not spare the world of old, but preserved Noah, a proclaimer of righteousness, and seven others, bringing in the flood on the world of the wicked, and having reduced to ashes the cities of Sedom and Amorah condemned them to destruction – having made them an example to those who afterward would live wickedly, and rescued righteous Lot, who was oppressed with the indecent behavior of the lawless (for day after day that righteous man, dwelling among them, tortured his righteous being by seeing and hearing their lawless works), then YHVH knows how to rescue the reverent ones from trial and to keep the unrighteous unto the day of judgment, to be punished, and most of all those walking after the flesh in filthy lust and despising authority – bold, headstrong, speaking evil of esteemed ones, whereas messengers who are greater in strength and power do not bring a slanderous accusation against them before the Master.*

Just as the ashes and ruin of Sedom and Amorah became an example for us until this day, this “**pillar of salt**”, this “**monument to the covenant of Salvation**” that Lot’s wife became, is an example to us today not to take our eyes off of our *Salvation*. Yahshua said, regarding these *last days*, in **Mattityahu 10:12-13**; *And because of the increase in lawlessness, the love of many shall become cold. But he who shall have endured to the end shall be saved.* We’ve all experienced it; the love of some of our brethren becoming cold, seeing their fire go out. We hurt for them and we pray for them. But, we can’t look back.

And, sometimes we feel so weak. We all have moments of weakness. But, if we “*stay the course*”, Yahshua said that we’ll be delivered in spite of our weaknesses. Notice Lot’s weakness here. When the messengers tell him to escape to the mountains and don’t look back; *And Lot said to them, “Oh no, YHVH! Look, please, your servant has found favor in your eyes, and you have increased your kindness which you have shown me by saving my life, but I am unable to escape to the mountains, lest calamity overtake me and I die. Look, please, this city is near enough to flee to, and it is small. Please let me escape there – is it not a small matter – and let my life be saved?”*

There were five cities slated for destruction on that day; *Sedom* = “**burning**” as with lust, *Amorah* = “**habitation of evil**”, *Admah* = “**blood**” and *Tseboyim* = “**laughing hyenas**”. Then, there was *Tso’ar*. Because of his weakness, Lot pleaded for the city to be saved that he might

go there and live. And, Yahweh did answer him; ***And He said to him, "Look, I have favored you concerning this matter also, without overthrowing this city for which you have spoken. Hurry, escape there. For I am not able to do any deed until you arrive there."***

Yahweh spared the city for Lot's sake ***For I am not able to do any deed***: The angels are told to do nothing to judge the earth until the 144,000 who have a special calling are sealed, according to **Revelation 14**. But stopping here was a curse. Tso'ar means "***tiny***" or "***insignificant***"; "***a trifle***", or "***petty***". Yahweh had provided the deliverance, but what Lot did with it after that was up to him. He chose a smaller measure of obedience. If we only go "so far", we will be doomed to live our lives in a lukewarm manner that Yahshua hates, having nothing to be remembered for. He had no male progeny to carry on his name. He was opting for the easy way, to live out his days in fruitless insignificance, rather than go all the way, as the malakim had told him.

We tend to do the same thing, when it comes to getting out of Mitzrayim and Babylon. Can we make it to the mountain of Elohim? Some say, "*My health isn't good*". "*I'm so overweight*." "*I have arthritis and my knees are bad*." "*How can I endure the wilderness?*" "*I have my children and grandchildren to think about*." Even in our weakness, when we feel we can't go on, our Elohim is with us, as long as we don't take our eyes off of Him. Kepha couldn't walk on water when he took his eyes off of Yahshua and looked at his situation. You children won't come if you won't. He gives us a place of rest and safety for the moment. He'll save us from the destruction. But no matter what, our race is to be run to the end..... to the mountain, to the Mountain of Yahweh.

King David asks in **Tehillim / Psalms 24:1-4**; ***The earth belongs to YHVH, And all that fills it – The world and those who dwell in it. For He has founded it upon the seas, And upon the waters He does establish it. Who does go up into the mountain of YHVH? And who does stand in His set-apart place? He who has innocent hands and a clean heart, Who did not bring his life to naught, And did not swear deceitfully. He receives a blessing from YHVH, And righteousness from the Elohim of his deliverance.***

And, as Yahweh spoke through the prophet in **Zekaryah 8:3-8**; ***"Thus said YHVH, 'I shall return to Tsiyon, and I shall dwell in the midst of Yerushalayim. And Yerushalayim shall be called: City of the Truth, and the Mountain of YHVH of hosts, the Set-apart Mountain.'*** ***Thus said YHVH of hosts, 'Again old men and old women shall dwell in the streets of Yerushalayim, each one with his staff in his hand because of great age, and the streets of the city shall be filled with boys and girls playing in its streets.'*** ***Thus said YHVH of hosts, 'If it is marvelous in the eyes of the remnant of this people in these days, should it also be marvelous in My eyes?' declares YHVH of hosts. Thus said YHVH of hosts, 'See, I am saving My people from the land of the sunrise and from the land of the sunset. And I shall bring them back, and they shall dwell in the midst of Yerushalayim. And they shall be My people, and I shall be their Elohim, in truth and in righteousness.'***

Baruch HaShem Yahweh !