

PARASHAT RE'EH

(SEE)

DEUTERONOMY 11:26-16:17

ETZ CHAYEEM HOO (HE IS A TREE OF LIFE)

Yeshua is a tree of life to those who take hold of Him, and those who support Him are praiseworthy. His ways are ways of pleasantness and all of His paths are shalom. Bring us back YHVH to You, and we shall come, renew our days as of old.

As we begin to study the Torah let us never forget that YESHUA THE MESSIAH is the Living Torah, the Torah-Word of Elohim made flesh. He is the way, the truth and the life — the Living Manna sent from heaven. Without Him living in our lives through the indwelling Presence of his Set-Apart/Kadosh Spirit (Who leads us into all truth and revelation) the Written Torah can become the dead letter of the law!

Haftorah Reading

Isaiah 44:11-45:5

B'rit Chadashah

Judgment against the wicked: **Romans 2:5-11**

Spiritual rest in the spiritual Promised Land: **Hebrews 4:1-10**

Don't be like the surrounding pagan nations: **Revelation 18:4; 2 Corinthians 6:17**

On false prophets in the end times: **1 John 4:1-6; Matthew 24:11; 2 Peter 2:1-22; 1 Corinthians 5:9-13**

Helping those in need: **James 2:15-16; 1 John 3:16-17**

Outline of This Week's Parashah (Torah Portion):

- 11:26 Blessings and Curses for Obeying YHVH's Commands
- 12:1 Destroy the Pagan Altars and High Places
- 12:5 Worship YHVH Where He Has Placed His Name
- 12:15 Where to Eat Sacred Foods; Rules Relating to Wild Game; The Sanctity of Blood
- 12:28 Safeguard YHVH's Commands; The Religious Rituals of the Heathen Are an Abomination
- 13:1 Beware of the False Prophets
- 13:7 One Who Entices Others to Go Astray Is to Be Exposed and Killed
- 13:13 The Fate of a City That Turns from YHVH to Idolatry
- 14:1 Do Not Follow the Practices of the Heathen for Israel Is a Treasured and *Kadosh* (Set Apart) People
- 14:3 Unclean Meats Are an Abomination to Eat
- 14:22 The Second Tithe to Be Used During the Pilgrimage Festivals in the Place Where YHVH Will Choose to Place His Name
- 15:1 Remission of Loans at the End of Every Seven Years
- 15:7 Be Generous and Warmhearted to Your Destitute Brethren
- 15:12 Be Generous to an Israelite Bondsman
- 16:1 The Three Annual Pilgrimage (*Aliyot*) Festivals: Pesach (Passover), Shavuot (Weeks/Pentecost) and

Sukkot (Tabernacles)

—16:16 Three Times Per Year All Men Are to Give an Offering Where YHVH Has Placed His Name

A Blessing and A Curse; The Oak Trees of Moreh and a Kingdom of Priests

This Torah portion begins with the words, “Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; a blessing, if you will obey the commandments of YHVH your Elohim, which I command you this day; and a curse, if you will not obey the commandments of YHVH your Elohim, to go after other gods, which you have not known” (Deut 11:26–28). After this, in verse 29, YHVH instructs the Israelites that upon entering the Promised Land, they are to stop between the mountains of Gerizim and Ebal, which are located at the entry point of the land. The former mountain represents a blessing, while the later represents a curse. The town of Shechem is located between the two mountains. The Hebrew word *Shechem* means “shoulder” or “back” (*Strong’s* H7927). The shoulder supports the head, which through the disposition of the mind and the direction in which the head is pointed, determines the path a person will walk whether good or evil. It was at Shechem, between the two mountains representing good and evil, that Israel renewed its covenant with YHVH before entering the Promised Land (Josh 8:30–35). The power of the covenant that the people made with YHVH on that day thousands of years ago is still visible in the modern land of Israel: Mount Ebal is bare and devoid of vegetation, while Mount Gerizim is lush and green with foliage. This fact stands as a loud testimony and reminder to man today to the power of blessing and cursing, and to the reality and validity of YHVH’s Torah, its covenants and its ability to bless or curse us depending on whether we obey it or not.

Israel renewed its covenant with YHVH at Shechem at the plains (or oak trees) of Moreh (Deut 11:30). What was significant about this place? It was this exact spot, at the entry point to the Promised Land, that YHVH had established his covenant with Abraham some 500 years earlier. We read about this in Genesis 12:6, “And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Shechem unto the plain [or oak] of Moreh [or teacher].” And it was to this exact spot that YHVH brought Israel to both fulfill and renew his promises he had made to Abraham. It was there YHVH would begin to teach them to walk victoriously and righteously before him in their promised inheritance IF they would choose to obey his Torah (or his instructions in righteousness) and to turn their backs on the pagan gods and practices of the nations around them. It was at the same spot that Jacob, upon entering the Promised Land, buried all his family’s false gods and pagan accoutrements (Gen 35:4). YHVH is calling his people to do the same as we prepare to enter into our promised inheritance as YHVH’s kings and priests ruling with Yeshua on this earth. YHVH is urging his people to come out of Babylon (Rev 18:4), and to come out from the world and to be separate and to touch no unclean thing (2 Cor 6:17).

Now, let’s return to our Torah portion. As noted earlier, this Parashah starts with Israel having to choose between the blessing and the curse—obeying YHVH’s commands, which leads to life, or disobeying them, which leads to death (Deut 11:26; see also 30:15–20). Making the right choices as we go through life is what determines our outcome both here on earth and eternally, whether good or bad, life or death. Earlier YHVH declared that it was Israel’s spiritual destiny to become a nation of priests (Exod 19:6), and as such Israel would become an example to the nations of the world of YHVH’s righteousness and the wisdom of Torah (Deut 4:6–8). YHVH is calling his people today who have put their faith in Yeshua, the Messiah of Israel, to be a royal priesthood (1 Pet 2:9), and to reign with Yeshua as kings and priests in his millennial kingdom (Rev 1:6; 5:10; 20:6). To be a priest of YHVH Elohim requires choosing righteousness over wickedness, the holy (set-apart) over the profane (that which is defiled, polluted or worldly, see Ezek 44:23; 22:26). One cannot represent a holy, set-apart, sinless and righteous Elohim before the nations of the world *unless* one is set-apart (from the world) themselves. Yeshua told his disciples that though they were *in* the world, they were not to be *of* the world (compare John 17:11 and 14). YHVH admonished his people to be holy or set-apart as he is holy or set-apart (Lev 11:44 and 45), and the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews declares, “Follow peace with all men and holiness, without which no man shall see YHVH” (Heb 12:14).

One cannot choose that which is holy (*kadosh* or set-apart) from that which is unholy (defiled or polluted) unless one *knows* what is holy and what is not. YHVH, not man, determines what is holy. In the rest of this Torah portion, YHVH outlines various times, places, things, actions and foods that are holy to him by which his people can enter into holiness and holy communion with him. There are holy times (YHVH’s annual festivals and the Sabbatical year), holy places (where YHVH places his name for his people to gather to worship him), holy food

(clean verses unclean meats), holy income (our material income is sanctified or made holy through our tithing a portion to YHVH), holy lips (YHVH's people are forbidden to allow the names of pagan deities to come on their lips), and YHVH's people are to destroy any pagan, corrupting, defiling influences (the false gods of the heathens) by putting these things out of their lives. This is our mission, our destiny as YHVH's set-apart people, and it all depends on the choices we make, for good or for evil, to obey YHVH or to disobey him.

Study Questions for This Week's Midrash (Torah Discussion):

- 1 **11:27–28**, *That you hearken ... If you do not hearken.* The rabbis point out that the phrase “that to hear [Heb. *shema*]” is a metaphor for blessing, while “to not hear [*lo-shema*]” is a metaphor for cursing (*ArtScroll Stone Edition Chumash*, p. 999). *Hearing and doing*, in Hebraic thought and according to the meaning of the Hebrew word *shema*, are synonymous. If one hears, but does not do what he has heard, then he has not heard. Hearing, Hebraically, is more than an auditory function, but involves the heart resulting in corresponding actions resulting in either blessing (if one hears and obeys YHVH's Word) or curses (if one does not hear and obey YHVH's Word). Scripture prophesies that in the future a problem would arise among the people of YHVH. The problem would not be a famine of food and water, but of the ability *to hear (shema)* and *to do the Word of Elohim* (Amos 8:11). Likewise, Isaiah prophesied that there would be those who would *say* (or “draw near with their mouths”) but who would not *do* (“but their hearts are far from me,” Isa 29:13). Yeshua accused the religious hypocrites of his day of doing the same thing (Matt 15:8–9). Examine your words and corresponding actions. Do they perfectly align, or do you stand convicted before YHVH of disobedience and/or hypocrisy?
- 2 **12:2ff**, What are the present-day high places where the world has placed its altars to its gods that as a called-out people and a set-apart nation YHVH is calling us to cast down and to destroy? Idols and spiritual strongholds that form strongholds in our hearts and minds are things that hinder or prevent us from serving and obeying YHVH fully. What keeps you from keeping YHVH's Sabbath and appointed times annual festivals (*moedim*)? What keeps you from prayer and intimate and set-apart times with him? What keeps you from hearing the voice of Yeshua and from loving him fully by keeping all of his commands? How about television, sports, your job and work schedule, family and peer pressure, fear, sinful habits and addictions, lust, greed, materialism and so on? What are you going to do about it?
- 3 **12:3**, *You shall obliterate [destroy, put to death] their names* [i.e., the names of pagan gods]. As the *ArtScroll Stone Edition Chumash* points out, not only was Israel to remove the idols themselves, but they were not even to refer to them by their proper names (p. 1000). Rashi says that names of ridicule were to be coined for the pagan gods and used instead. He points out in his commentary on this verse that Jews would actually formulate derisive wordplay names based on the original names of the gods. For example, the pagan temple called, “the house of the crest” became “the house of the ditch” in that the words *crest* and *ditch* were similar in Hebrew. Or the idol “everyone's eye” became “thorn in the eye.” A similar example of this occurred during the Second Jewish Revolt of A.D. 135. The leader of that revolt, Simon bar Kosiba, was given the name *Simon bar Kochba* (meaning “star”), but when his revolt failed at the hands of the Romans his detractors nicknamed him *Simon bar Koziba* meaning “Son of a Lie” (*Rabbi Akiba's Messiah*, by Daniel Gruber, p. 165). Coming up with names of ridicule for pagan deities and concepts may seem like a silly child's game to some, but could it not serve to indelibly imprint on the minds of YHVH's people the seriousness of idolatry and idolatrous practices? Could this not be a means of guiding the younger generation away from the ways of evil and into the paths of righteousness? In following the Jewish interpretation on this Torah command, what are some present day “gods,” “goddesses” or modern-day idols that could use renaming?
- 4 **12:5ff**, Where has YHVH chosen to place his name spiritually? Are you bringing your tithes and offerings to that place so that YHVH can bless you?
 - Honour YHVH with your substance, and with the first fruits of all your increase so that your barns be filled with plenty ... (Prov 3:9–10)
 - Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use it shall be measured to you again. (Luke 6:38)

“Will a man rob Elohim? Yet you are robbing me! But you say, ‘How have we robbed you?’ In tithes and offerings. You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing me, the whole nation [of you]! Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in my house, and test me now in this,’ says YHVH of Hosts, ‘if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you a blessing until it overflows. Then I will rebuke the devourer for you, so that it will not destroy the fruits of the ground; nor will your vine in the field cast [its grapes,],’ says YHVH of hosts.” (Mal 3:8–11)

Giving (through tithes and offerings) is a spiritual, kingdom principle and a key to obtaining blessings and success.

5 **12:5**, *Only at the place that YHVH will choose ... to place his name there ... shall you seek out his Presence [habitation] and come there.* The word *Presence* (as translated in the *ArtScroll Stone Edition Chumash*) is the Hebrew word *sheken*/שָׁכַן (*Strong's* H7933/*TWOT* 2387) and as a verb means “to dwell or tabernacle,” and as a noun it means “dwelling, or tabernacle.” According to *TWOT*, the verb is used 129 times in the Tanakh (OT) of which 43 times YHVH is the subject; that is, it describes where he dwells (e.g., on Mount Zion [Ps 74:2], among his people [Exod 25:8], or in Jerusalem [Zech 8:3]). On several occasions, it refers to his divine and glorious Presence dwelling among his people (e.g., Exod 24:16; Ps 85:9). The word *mishkan*, which was the portable tabernacle, sanctuary or earthly dwelling place of the glorious Presence of YHVH among his people, is derived from this word. What is YHVH saying in this verse? Namely, he is telling his people NOT to go just anywhere to worship him, but to go only where he has placed his name. How do we know where that is? **It will be where his manifest glory and Presence is to be found!** Where you fellowship and worship him collectively with other believers is the manifest glory and Presence of YHVH there to confirm that YHVH has placed his name there? If not, why not? Now let's read Psalm 63:1–4,

O Elohim, you are my El; early will I seek you: my soul thirsts for you, my flesh longs for you in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; **to see your power and thy glory, so as I have seen you in the sanctuary.** Because your lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise you. Thus will I bless you while I live. I will lift up my hands in your name. (emphasis added)

Let us briefly analyze the bolded portion of this psalm of David in light of the above discussion. *To see* is the generic Hebrew verb *ra'ah* meaning literally “to see.” The word *power* (Heb. *oz*) means “might, power and strength.” This too is a generic term.

The next word is *glory*, which is the Hebrew word *kavod* (*Strong's* H3519/*TWOT* 943 d,e) literally meaning “heavy or weighty.” In this instance, in reference to YHVH, it refers to “the visible manifestation of God” and his glory and is often associated with his visible manifest Presence within the tabernacle (*TWOT*, vol. 2, p. 943).

The next word in verse two to analyze is *have seen*, which is an entirely different word in the Hebrew, even though it is the same English word (*to see*) as used earlier in the verse. *Seen* is the Hebrew word *chazah* (*Strong's* H2372/*TWOT* 633) meaning “to see as a seer/prophet in an ecstatic way with intelligence, to prophesy, to have a vision, to gain spiritual understanding.”

The last word is *sanctuary*, which is the Hebrew word *kodesh* and is the name of two rooms in the *mishkan*/tabernacle: the *Kodesh* (Set-apart/Holy Place) and the *Kodesh haKodashim* (Most Set-Apart Place/Holy of Holies).

What can we gather from the wealth of information found in this Psalm? When David hungered and thirsted for YHVH as if he were about to die of thirst he talked about seeking the Presence of YHVH in the Set-Apart Place where YHVH's name and glorious and manifest Presence were to be found. There he could literally *experience* the Presence of YHVH and gain prophetic insight and understanding.

Again, are you experiencing this kind of breakthrough in your daily walk with YHVH, and in the congregation or fellowship where you attend each Sabbath and at YHVH's appointed-time feasts? If not, why not? What can you do to experience the intimacy with the Father that David experienced and describes here?

6 **12:30ff**, Many well-meaning believers have been snared by heathen-based rituals that have been “Christianized” and called by names such as Christmas, Easter, etc. Have these celebrations of pagan origin snared your heart and mind, as well?

7 13:4, This verse reads from the Masoretic Text (the standard Hebrew text from which all the standard English Bibles are translated) as follows:

You shall walk after YHVH your Elohim, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and cleave unto him.

The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible quoting the Dead Sea Scrolls renders this verse as follows:

You shall walk after YHVH your Elohim, and you shall serve him, and listen to his voice, and cling to him, and fear him, and keep his commandment.

The editors of *The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible* (DSSB) comment that the syntactical (word order) variation between the two versions is significant since the latter reading offers a definition of what it means to follow Elohim and a sequence in which the specified actions should be undertaken (p. 166, translated by Abegg, Flint and Ulrich). Are these commentators correct in stating that the order in the DSSB gives us a better definition and a more accurate sequence of steps in the believer's growth in their walk with YHVH? Or is the traditional text more accurate?

8 13:2–6, *A prophet or a dreamer ... a sign or a wonder*. A prophet may claim to receive his vision or "word from YHVH" while he was awake in a vision or in a dream while asleep (*ArtScroll Stone Edition Chumash*, p. 1007). According to Rashi, a sign is a supernatural event in heaven while a wonder is a miraculous event on earth. There are those among the people of YHVH who, as Adam Clarke states in his commentary on this verse, "pretend to have a Divine influence, so as to be able perfectly to direct others in the way of salvation" or shows some "miraculous proof of his mission ... or some type of representation of what he wishes to bring you over to" (vol. 1, p. 774). Yeshua warned about false prophets in the latter days who would deceive many (Matt 24:11) and false messiahs who might even deceive the "very elect" (verse 24). Paul talks about a "man of sin" that would arise showing signs and lying wonders such that some would fall from the truth of the salvation message of the gospel (2Thess 2:1–12). Paul warns, "do not be soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word ... let no man deceive you by any means (verses 2–3). He then (in verses 15–17) encourages the brethren to *stand fast* in the simple truths of the gospel of Yeshua:

Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which you have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle. Now our Master Yeshua the Messiah himself, and Elohim, even our Father, which has loved us, and has given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and establish you in every good word and work.

As you learn more about the Hebrew roots of the Christian faith and the Written Torah-Word of YHVH, are you being led astray from the simple Word of YHVH, whether as found in the Tanakh (OT) or in the Apostolic Scriptures (NT) by people claiming to speak as an oracle from heaven? Deuteronomy 13:3 says that YHVH proves his people "to know whether you love YHVH your Elohim with all your heart and with all your soul." Jude, the half brother of Yeshua, speaking of the spiritual delusion to occur in the last days exhorts us to "earnestly contend for the faith which was once and for all delivered unto the saints" (Jude 1:3). Are you standing firm and earnestly contending every day or are you being allured by the siren's song of the false prophets and teachers who lead people away from the gospel truth into spiritual delusion and eternal oblivion?

9 13:18, *The voice of YHVH your Elohim*. What is the voice of YHVH? Is it not the Torah commandments that he audibly thundered from Mount Sinai to the Israelites and dictated to Moses from the Most Set-Apart Place in the tabernacle? Do we have the right to be selective in our hearing and are you one who "does what is right in his own eyes" (Deut 12:8)? Do you make excuses why YHVH's words do not apply to you, why you are an exception to the rule and why your situation is unique and special? Perhaps your finances, your marriage, your health, your family relationships and other areas in your life are a mess because you are not obeying YHVH's voice. Stop and reflect for a moment on this. Let the Spirit of Elohim speak to or convict you on this matter. Then repent and resolve before YHVH to change your attitude and course of life today!

- 10** **14:2**, *A peculiar people.* We are to be the *kadosh* (set apart) and peculiar or treasured people of YHVH. What we eat (verse 3ff) is a key factor in being set-apart unto YHVH. After all, if we are returning to the Hebrew roots of the Christian faith and learning to study, “eat” and live the Torah, the *kadosh* Word of Elohim, learning to live by the “whole counsel of the Word of Elohim” (Acts 20:27), and coming away from certain paganized practices of the Christian church, how then can we still eat unclean foods? Eating kosher spiritual food goes hand-in-hand with eating kosher physical food. Are you still eating “any abominable thing” (verse 3)? These are not the author’s words, but YHVH’s! What excuses and rationalizations have you contrived in your thinking (i.e., strongholds and altars to pagan gods) to keep your belly as your god (Phil 3:19)?
- 11** **14:2**, *You are ... a peculiar/treasured people unto himself.* The term *treasured people/am segulah* is used several times in the Torah. For example, in Exodus 19:5–6 when YHVH betrothed himself to and married the people of Israel they became his *am segulah* or “treasured possession among all the peoples of the nation, a kingdom of priests and a *kadosh*/set-apart nation.” Moses restates this same idea to the younger generation of Israelites about to enter the Promised Land in our present verse, and again in Deuteronomy 26:17–19 where he again calls them his “treasured people” and admonishes them to keep his Torah-commands that he might “make you high above all the nations which he has made, in praise, and in name, and in honor, and that you may be a set-apart people unto YHVH your Elohim.” What passage in the Apostolic Scriptures does this remind you of? (Read 1 Peter 2:9.) Note that YHVH has chosen us from among all the peoples of the earth. As *A Torah Commentary For Our Times* points out, “This idea that God selects or designates the people of Israel as an *am segulah* remains a central belief in Jewish tradition. The prophet Malachi (3:17) uses the term. So does the Psalmist who, singing in the Jerusalem temple, praises God for having ‘chosen Jacob—Israel—as a treasured possession’ (135:3–4) (p. 132). With humility, contrition and gratefulness, do you own this identity? Is it a part of your innermost being? If you know that you are a special treasure and a called-out people destined for great things in the kingdom of Elohim will not the reality of *who* you are and *whose* you are and what you are to become affect your walk of righteousness here and now? Does this not inspire you to walk a little higher, a little more set-apart, a little closer to YHVH, and to be a better spiritual light through your words, thoughts and deeds to the heathens around you?
- 12** **16:1ff**, How important are YHVH’s feast days (annual set-apart times or *moedim*) to you? The Israelites and first-century Messianic believers planned their entire year’s schedule around them. YHVH’s annual festivals were that important to them. Do we travel halfway across the country to take a vacation or to go to a conference, and yet do not set apart the time to obey YHVH’s voice and to keep his appointed times? What does this say about the status of our spiritual priorities? The feast days are the skeletal framework of YHVH’s entire plan of redemption (salvation) of Israel. One cannot in good conscience keep the weekly Sabbath without keeping YHVH’s annual Sabbaths. They stand or fall together. What plans are you making to keep the upcoming fall appointed times of YHVH: Yom Teruah (Day of the Awakening Blast/Trumpets), Yom Kippur (Day of Covering/Atonement), Hag HaSukkot (Feast of Tabernacles) and Shemini Atzeret (Eighth Day)?
- 13** **16:16**, *Three times in a year ... in the place which he shall choose.* The imminent Jewish rabbi of the nineteenth century, Samson Raphael Hirsch, as to why we separate ourselves from the world during the three pilgrimage or *aliyah* festivals, said in his commentary on Deuteronomy 16:16: “[T]hree times in the year all the individual members of the nation [of Israel] are to appear out of all isolation personally before the Presence of the One God of the nation in the circle around the one common Sanctuary and thereby become conscious of each one being in connection with all the others, with God, and with His Torah.”
- Shema Israel! Hear and obey the word of Elohim you people of Israel and be blessed!***

HAFTORAH READING—ISAIAH 44:11-45:5

The Absurdity of Idolatry

- 1 **44:10–20**, This portion of Scripture reveals the folly of worshipping the created instead of the Creator (also Rom 1:18–25).
- 2 **44:13**, *Makes it after the likeness of a man, according to the beauty [splendor, glory] of a man.* (See study below on *The Religion of Humanism*.)
- 3 **44:14**, *The rain nourishes it.* What is the underlying message here? (Read Romans 1:19–21.) Keep in mind that that which makes something or contributes to something's creation logically must be greater than the thing created. Using this same logic, as one works one's way upward, one eventually lands at the doorstep of YHVH Elohim, the ultimate Creator of all things. This being true, why do men prefer to worship the works (idols) of their own making instead of YHVH Elohim?
- 4 **44:20**, *He feeds on ashes.* Worship of anyone or anything other than YHVH Elohim is considered feeding on ashes (nothingness) and is the product of a deceived heart. Who is the originator of deception, the father of lies, and the one who is the great counterfeiter of truth?
- 5 **44:21**, *You are my servant, O Jacob.* Consider how it is preferable to be a servant of YHVH while worshipping the one true Creator compared to being a king and worshipping the spiritual idols of one's own deceived mind.
- 6 **44:22**, *I have blotted out ... redeemed you.* This verse discusses one of the benefits of worshipping the Creator of all things. As the Righteous Judge of the universe, he has the ability to forgive us of our sins and to grant us eternal life. Are there any other religious systems on planet earth whose god(s), goddess(es) or idols promise forgiveness and redemption?
- 7 **44:22**, *As a thick cloud.* The sins we commit are like thick clouds that block our view of YHVH, and impede our prayers from being heard. (Read Matthew 5:23–24 and 1 Peter 3:7 as examples of how sin can hinder our prayers.)
- 8 **44:23–24**, *Redeemed Jacob ... your Redeemer.* (Read Genesis 48:16.) What is the biblical definition of *redemption*? (See the brief study below on this subject.)
- 9 **44:25**, Compare this verse with 1 Corinthians 1:20 and 2:6–16.
- 10 **44:28–45:1-5**, *Cyrus.* The reader will be interested to know that this prophecy of Isaiah concerning Cyrus, the first king of the Persian empire, was made circa 712 B.C., which was more than 100 years before Cyrus was even born. Of this, Josephus, the first century Jewish historian, records that Cyrus purposed to restore the Jews to their land and to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem based on his "reading the book which Isaiah left behind him of his prophecies; for this prophet said that God had spoken thus to him in a secret vision, 'My will is, that Cyrus, whom I have appointed to be king over many and great nations, send [sic] back my people to their own land, and build my temple.' This was foretold by Isaiah one hundred and forty years before the temple was demolished. Accordingly, when Cyrus read this, and admired the divine power, an earnest desire and ambition seized upon him to fulfil what was so written" (*Antiquities* 11.1).

THE RELIGION OF HUMANISM

All men must choose one of two paths to follow in life: to live a life in accordance with the Word of Elohim, or to rebel against the Word of Elohim and to live his life however he wishes. The philosophy of the former path causes a man to conform his life to the Word of Elohim and to walk in a healthy fear and respect of his Heavenly Creator, while in the latter man tends to conform the Word of Elohim to his image by picking and choosing what from YHVH's Word suits him and tossing the rest. This course of action causes man to elevate his own thoughts

above the Word of Elohim resulting in man worshipping himself, or the beauty or glory of his own thoughts. This is the religion of humanism where man is elevated to the place of deity and Elohim is demoted to a place of irrelevance or nothingness. The father of this religion is the devil who is the father of lies, and the Bible records the genesis of this religion in the account of the serpent deluding man through a series of lies (or half truths) at the Tree of Knowledge in the Garden of Eden.

All the religions of the world trace their lineage back to secular humanism, except the true religion of the Bible. Even modern Christianity and modern rabbinic Judaism have absorbed many humanistic concepts.

In these last days, YHVH is calling his people out of the humanistic mix of good and evil found in most religious systems (Rev 18:4). Only the true religion presented in Scripture—one that is fully Torah-based and Yeshua/gospel-centered is free of humanistic influences. Only this religion will be positioned to stand against the spirit of Antichrist posited by the Man of Sin in the last days.

(Go to <http://www.hoshanarabbah.org/pdfs/human.pdf> to read the entire article entitled, “Secular Humanism, the Devil’s Original Lie and the Religion of the New World Order—The Humanist Agenda Versus the Messianic Israel Movement.”)

REDEMPTION DEFINED

Redemption involves three things: the exchange of one thing (money or blood) for something else (the sins of Israel), and the use of power.

Ancient Israel, for example, was redeemed from its enemy (slavery to her Egyptian masters—a picture of man’s bondage to sin) by the atoning blood of the sacrificed lamb and by the outstretched arm of YHVH at the dividing of the Red Sea, and Egypt was judged through the ten plagues and the destruction of her army (Exodus chapters 7–14). Similarly and on a spiritual level, YHVH delivers, saves or redeems any and all sinful men who place their trust in the blood of Yeshua, the Lamb of Elohim who paid the penalty of death for man’s breaking of Elohim’s laws by allowing himself to die on the cross. Several passages in the Apostolic Scriptures (New Testament) speak of this spiritual transaction.

Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Messiah, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. (1 Pet 1:18–19)

For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify Elohim in your body, and in your spirit, which are Elohim’s. (1 Cor 6:20)

And what is the exceeding greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his mighty power. (Eph 1:19)

In Revelations 20:10 and 14, YHVH judges sin, death and Satan.

Nelson’s Illustrated Bible Dictionary defines *redemption* as,

“Deliverance by payment of a price. In the NT, redemption refers to salvation from sin, death, and the wrath of Elohim by [Messiah’s] sacrifice. In the OT, the word redemption refers to redemption by a kinsman (Lev 25:24,51–52; Ruth 4:6; Jer 32:7–8), a rescue or deliverance (Num 3:49), and ransom (Pss 111:9; 130:7). In the NT, it refers to loosing (Luke 2:38; Heb 9:12) and loosing away (Luke 21:28; Rom 3:24; Eph 1:14). The NT emphasizes the tremendous cost of redemption: ‘the precious blood of [Messiah]’ (1 Pet 1:18; Eph 1:7), which is also called an atoning sacrifice, ‘a propitiation by His blood’ (Rom 3:25). Believers are exhorted to remember the ‘price’ of their redemption as motivation to personal holiness (1 Cor 6:19–20; 1 Pet 1 :13–19) The Bible also emphasizes the result of redemption: freedom from sin and freedom to serve Elohim through [Yeshua the Messiah our Master.]”

A redeemer is one who redeems someone in need of redemption of salvation. *Nelson’s Illustrated Bible Dictionary* defines *redeemer* as,

A redeemer is one who frees or delivers another from difficulty, danger, or bondage, usually by the payment of a ransom price. In the OT the redeemer could function in several ways. He could buy

back property (and even enslaved people) sold under duress (Lev 25:23–32). He (usually as owner, not as a relative) often redeemed from the Lord dedicated property and firstborn livestock (Lev 27:1–33; also Exod 21:28–30).

Boaz's function as redeemer for Ruth (Ruth 3:13–4:10) is well known, as is Job's resurrection hope in Elohim, his Redeemer (Job 19:25). Elohim Himself is the Redeemer of Israel, a fact mentioned 18 times—especially by the prophet Isaiah (Ps 78:35; Isa 41:14).

In the NT, [Messiah] is viewed as the ultimate Redeemer, although the Greek word for redeemer is not used. [Yeshua] gave His life 'as a ransom for many' (Mark 10:45). Thus, the apostle Paul speaks of believers as having 'redemption through His blood' (Eph 1:7).

