

Parashah #4
(Updated 10.27.07)

Vayera ~ וַיֵּרָא ~ And he appeared

Torah: B'resheet/Genesis 18:1~22:24

Haftarah: M'lakhim Bet/2nd Kings 4:1-37

B'rit Hadashah: Luke 17:26-37; Romans 9:6-9; Galatians 4:21-31; Ivrim/Hebrews 6:13-20; Ivrim/Hebrews 11:13-19; Ya'akov/James 2:14-24; Kefa Bet/2nd Peter 2:4-10

This week's Parashah is quite interesting and there are SO many avenues we could travel.

It has become more and more clear to me that HaShem's (say moe-eh-deem in Hebrew), *moedim/appointed times* were put in place from creation; although they were not taught verbally until Moshe began teaching them at the time of the Exodus. As we go through this Parashah, we will see shades of *Yom Teruah/Feast of Trumpets* or *Rosh Hashanah/New Year*, as some refer to it and we will see shades of *Pesach/Passover* as well.

CHAPTER 18

First of all, in **verses 1-5**, Avraham is visited by Adonai. This was a rare appearance for HaShem. Normally, the Master of the Universe makes Himself known when He has a message to communicate to someone. However, this time, The Holy One came simply to make a "sick call" to Avraham, on the third day after he had performed his ***Brit Milah/circumcision***. We learn from this week's Torah portion about the mitzvah of ***'bikur cholim/visiting the sick***. And should one feel it is beneath his/her dignity to perform this mitzvah, he/she should remember HaShem didn't feel that way when He visited Avraham!

I have a friend who is big into "the law of first mention" and here it is in **B'resheet/Genesis 18** . . . ***bikur cholim/visiting the sick***. And, I might add, this friend is very diligent concerning ***bikur cholim***.

Continuing on . . . three "men" begin approaching so Avraham says, (Batyah's translation) "scuse me HaShem, hold on just a sec, I'll be right back" and he runs out to greet these guys. We could spend a considerable amount of time discussing the pros and cons of that scenario!!

Then he tells these guys, in **verses 3 & 4**, to relax & get comfortable; he'll get some water for them to wash their hot, tired feet and he will get them some bread. Then he proceeds to have Sarah, with the help of ***Yishma'el/Ishmael***, prepare this feast! Gee, I wonder if that's the basis for "do unto others as you would have others do unto you" (**Mattityahu/Matthew 7:12**). After all, it does say that it sums up the Torah and the Prophets.

One of the commentaries suggested that the "tree" Avraham mentioned was a "sukkah", **סוכה**, a temporary dwelling place, and the Sages compare it to the shelter ***HaMashiach/The Messiah*** will erect over Jerusalem.

Before we go any further, let's consider the reality of this setting. Avraham is 99 years old; a heat wave has descended on the area; it's the third and most painful day after his ***B'rit Milah/covenant of circumcision***, when he is the weakest; yet he has this incomparable gift of hospitality!!! No wonder HaShem felt him worthy to be the spiritual leader of all mankind.

Take a look, with me, at **verse 8** . . . CURDS? Milk? And calf? Apparently, some of the rabbis haven't read THIS verse. As Torah teacher, Mark Ensign mentioned, it looks like they had cheeseburgers & milk!!!

When told about the child they would have in approximately one year there was laughter. Avraham laughed out of joy. Sarai laughed with disbelief and then had the audacity to lie about her laughing. (**Verses 13-15**)

Then there's the whole ***S'dom/Sodom & 'Amora/Gomorrah*** thing. That's pretty disgusting when you really start digging into what those dudes were wantin' to do to Lot's guests. Nonetheless, in **verses 23-33** Avraham intercedes, not only for S'dom, but actually for a total of 5 cities mentioned in **B'resheet/Genesis 14:2**. S'dom & 'Amora were the most prominent; less significant were Admah and Zeboim with Tzo'ar being the smallest of the group.

For those of you who don't know me, I get into "numbers" because I know that my Father does as well. So I thought about Avraham praying for the 50 "righteous ones" and wondered if that ties into the "***minyán***" concept. That would have been 10 righteous people per city. I don't know, what do you think? According to the dictionary, a ***minyán*** is "a

properly constituted group for a public Jewish prayer service, made up of at least 10 Jewish males over thirteen years of age.” And then in **verse 32** the final number Avraham asks for are 10 righteous. I’m inclined to believe it was a **minyan-thing**.

We learn from the Prophet **Ezekiel (16:49)** that it wasn’t the sin of the individuals that brought the city to destruction as much as it was the social sinfulness – the traits of the community at large. The corporate wickedness was bad enough but what made it worse was the fact that it was clothed with legality. It was justified. Wrong had become right and sin had become the law of the land. For such a society, there is no remedy but total destruction. If we use Torah as a blueprint, this world and our nation in particular, should be shaking in its boots!

As I listened to the news on the corresponding Friday morning in 2003, I was appalled to hear that Judge Roy Moore had been officially disbarred from practicing law in the State of Alabama. We watched and listened for months to the debate over the Ten Commandments being removed from the Courthouse. I applaud this man and the strong stand that he has taken for **RIGHT**. I couldn’t help but think of our Parashah reading and the destruction of S’dom for their trying to make the wrong look right. This nation needs to be on its knees in repentance lest the same thing befall us.

CHAPTER 19

It is believed that the “men” who came to visit Avraham were the same “angels” that went to S’dom. **Chapter 18:2** says, “three men”; then in **verse 22** it says “the men turned away”. But here, in **Verse 1**, it says, “The **two** angels came to S’dom that evening.” So what happened to one of the angels?

Tradition tells us that the three “men”/angels who appeared to Avraham were . . .

- The Healing Angel, Rapha-el
- The Announcing Angel, Gabri-el
- The Warring Angel, Myka-el

After they left Avraham, Rapha-el’s job was completed, so only the other two were needed for the rest of their journey and assignment.

Anyway, Lot insists that they come to his home, although they were willing to “stay in the square”. Now, I’m assuming that there was some kind of lodging available for them to stay in. Nonetheless, I believe that Lot knew what would befall these “men” and that is why he insisted that they come to his home, believing they would be safe there.

However, the depravity of the community is made very clear in **verses 4-9**; illicit sex was rampant in S’dom! Did you pay attention to the fact that the men of S’dom were not interested in Lot’s virgin daughters? They wanted to “know” the “men” who had come to visit. According to the Stone Edition of the Artscroll Chumash, “when the Sodomites said that they wanted to **know them**, they meant that they wanted to **sodomize them**.” Then **verses 10 & 11** tell of the “angels” might and how they prevailed against those who would try to do harm to Lot and them, by striking them blind.

The “angels” give instructions in **verses 12 & 13** to Lot concerning his family. Lot spoke with his sons-in-law, who chose not to take him seriously. The following morning, Lot didn’t seem to understand the urgency of the matter to escape to the hills, so the “men” took hold of the hands of Lot, his wife and his daughters and led them outside the city because HaShem was being merciful to them. In **verses 19-22**, Lot obtains permission to escape to Tzo’ar because he is concerned that he can’t make it to the “hills” before destruction falls.

Verse 24 states that HaShem caused sulfur & fire to rain down from heaven. According to the Sages, “sulfur and fire were not natural earthly phenomena but were Divinely originated visitations without natural cause.” Interestingly, the area of S’dom, today, is a desert rich in sulfur mines. Hmm!!! (Show & tell time with “brimstone” from the area of S’dom and ‘Amora.)

As most of us know, Lot’s wife became a pillar of salt because she looked back. That just didn’t make sense to me. Why such a harsh judgment for looking back? I believe that Lot’s wife was looking back in sorrow because of what she was losing instead of looking forward to what she would be gaining, a lifestyle without sin. As we are told in **Ivrim/Hebrews 12:1** “let us lay aside every . . . sin which easily besets us, and let us run . . . the race that is set before us”. It is equally important for us today to not look back, with longing, at where we have been but with eagerness, joy and anticipation to the road that we are traveling with Yeshua!

Not long ago I ran across this little thing entitled “Out of the mouths of babes”. It is fitting and I want to share it with you. James, age 4, was listening to a Bible story. His dad read: “The man named Lot was warned to take his wife and

flee out of the city but his wife looked back and was turned to salt." Concerned, James asked: "What happened to the flea?" Sorry . . .

Okay, back to Lot. (Verses 31-38) Lot and his daughters make it to Tzo'ar. According to tradition, we are told that his daughters were modest, righteous women whose actions were nobly motivated. The Torah does not label their actions as incestuous because they believed that the entire world had been destroyed. Since their mother was no longer alive, they felt it was their responsibility to save the human race by having children even if it was through their father. There are several rabbit trails we could chase on these scriptures . . . like "**he was not aware of her lying down and of her getting up**" two different times? Give me a break!!!! I could fall in the category of thinking Lot had become a lecherous old man. Perhaps he had given into the society in which he chose to live. However, think about this . . . HaShem considered him righteous enough to remove him from the destruction.

The Rabbis teach that because their intentions were pure, among their descendants would be **Rut/Ruth**, ancestress of David and Na'amah, queen of **Sh'lomo/Solomon** and mother of Rehoboam, Solomon's successor and link in the Davidic chain.

Never one to pass up an opportunity to dig into **Ivrit/Hebrew**, I checked into the names of the children born to the above mentioned incidents. The older daughter, who "knew" her father the first night, named her son, "**Moab**" which means "**from father**". The younger daughter named her son "**Ben-Ammi**" which means "**son of my people**". The descendents of both of these births reside in the country of Jordan to this day.

CHAPTER 20

This chapter takes us to the 2nd abduction of Sarah and the 2nd time that Avraham lies about her being his sister. I don't know where this "brother/sister" thing came from but, just for the record, Sarah was Avraham's niece; she was the daughter of Haran, Avraham's older brother who died before they left Ur. Nevertheless, it was an act of deception. One of the stories accompanying this abduction is that although Sarah was 90 years old, she didn't look it because she had become youthful again, in her entire being, so she would become pregnant. This is an interesting concept, perhaps not as miraculous as a "virgin birth" but nonetheless, a miraculous birth!

There is really interesting dialogue between HaShem and Abimelech in **verses 3-7** and much to conjecture concerning their discussion. We have WAY too much to cover for now . . . so maybe next year we can cover this.

What happens in **verses 14-18** is interesting indeed. I understand why Abimelech appeases both Avraham and Sarah but it is beyond my comprehension why the L~rd allows Avraham's deception to be rewarded. Now-a-days, it would be considered inappropriate behavior. It's a good thing G~d is G~d!!!

CHAPTER 21

In **Chapter 21** Sarah conceives **Yitz'chak/Isaac**. According to tradition, Sarah conceived on the first day of Rosh Hashanah or more specifically **Yom Teruah/Feast of Trumpets**. Later in this same chapter, after Yitz'chak is born, we find Sarah insisting that Ishmael be banished from their midst because she saw Ishmael "**mocking**" Yitz'chak. In **verse 9**, the Chumash states that the Hebrew verb "**m'tza'chayk**" is used to denote the three cardinal sins: idolatry (**Sh'mot/Exodus 32:6**); adultery (**B'reshet/Genesis 39:17**) and murder (**Sh'mu'el Bet/2nd Samuel 2:14**) indicating that Ishmael's behavior proved that he had become thoroughly corrupt and evil and had to be sent away.

I find **verses 16 & 17** interesting. In **verse 16** Hagar sat at a distance, lifted her voice and wept. BUT **verse 17** says "**G~d heard the cry of the youth**" and again in the same verse "**G~d has heeded the cry of the youth**". It was the cry of the child that HaShem responded to. Why would Hagar abandon her child, although 13~14 years old, just because they ran out of water and might die? What better time to comfort and console? **Verse 19** states that G~d opened her eyes and she saw a well. The Torah doesn't state that a well was miraculously created. Apparently the well was there all along but Hagar was blinded by her own introspective ~ "oh, woe is me" ~ attitude. It is important for us to know and remember that Adonai is our **Yehovah-Yireh/Provider**. He always provides what we need but we must have our eyes open and be ready to see it and receive it.

Verse 33 states "he (Avraham) planted a _____ in Beer-Sheba. Eight different translations that I looked at said "tamarisk tree"; one said a "grove" and the Chumash and Tanach say "eshel". One Rabbi understands it to mean an "orchard" which would correspond more correctly with "grove", and that Avraham served its fruit to the travelers. However, since I LOVE the Hebrew language and its meanings, I like another Rabbi's interpretation, that it was an inn for lodging (a motel, if you please). In Hebrew "**esheh**" is spelled "**aleph, shin, lamed**" which is an acrostic from the

Hebrew words meaning **“eating, drinking and escorting”** ~ the three basic services a host should provide his guests. This makes sense to me given Avraham’s gift of hospitality that we learned about at the beginning of this Parashah.

Before we continue, I want to share one of the traditional rabbinic legends concerning Avraham and Yitz’chak’s father-son relationship. One of the legends says that scoffers said, “The child is Sarah’s but not Avraham’s because he is too old to sire a son. It must be the son of Abimelech.” In response to the scoffers, HaShem made the face of the Yitz’chak a mirror image of Avraham. When they looked at the son, it was like they were looking at the father. Then they knew that this really was Avraham’s son, because he was the very image of his father.

Oh my gosh! As I was proof reading these notes, I couldn’t help but think of Avinu, our Father and Yeshua, His Son, which makes me think of the nay-sayers concerning our Messiah, and who His Father is. Yeshua, Himself said that a son’s deeds prove his true paternity. He does the work of his father, especially in the culture of 1st Century Israel. In **Yochanan/John 14:9** Yeshua said, “He who has seen Me has seen the Father.” It helps to know the culture and customs of Israel.

CHAPTER 22

This chapter tells us about Avraham’s Tenth Trial, the (say ah-kay-dah) **Akeidah/Binding** of Yitz’chak. I believe we could spend a week on this chapter alone; it is SO symbolic. There is no way a quick scan of the verses will suffice.

In **verse 1**, Adonai speaks to Avraham, who responds with **“Hineni”** (say he-nay-nee), **“Here I am”**. (Remember, I love to share **Ivrit/Hebrew!**)

Then in **verse 2** Adonai says **“Please take”**. The Chumash tells us that Avraham was 137 and **Yitz’chak/Isaac** was 37 so there was no way Avraham could force Yitz’chak to go. Instead, Avraham was to take him by persuasion to do the will of G~d. Also, in this verse he is told to go to the land of Moriah, which we learn later is called Jerusalem.

As short as **verse 2** is, a lot transpires between Avraham and HaShem. According to Rashi, there was a conversation, recorded in the Talmud, which went like this:

- G~d said, “Take your son.”
- Avraham: “But I have two sons. Which should I take?”
- G~d said, “Your only one!”
- Avraham: “But each of them is the only son of his mother.”
- G~d answered: “Whom you love.”
- Avraham: “But I love them both.”
- G~d replied: “I mean Isaac.”

Verse 3 says **“he took his two young men with him”**. According to Midrash, Avraham took Eliezer and Ishmael, who had come to visit him. I want to point out that these two **“young men”** must have been about 50 years of age because Ishmael was 13 when Yitz’chak was born.

Verse 4, “On the third day”, (the day of resurrection?), “Avraham raised his eyes and perceived the place from afar.” A friend suggested that this verse indicated that HaShem had allowed Avraham to see Mt. Calvary, where He offered His Son as a sacrifice. The Chumash commentary indicates that Avraham saw a cloud hovering over the mountain and understood that it represented G~d’s Presence. Avraham asked Yitz’chak if he saw what Avraham had seen and Yitz’chak replied affirmatively. Given this information, I believe both Avraham and Yitz’chak saw the “crucifixion” and that helped both of them follow through with the instruction of Adonai.

The prophetic voice of G~d is heard in **verse 5** when Avraham says, “. . . I and the lad will go yonder; we will worship and we will return to you.” Additional “fore-shadowing” is found in **verse 6** when Avraham places the wood for the offering on Yitz’chak’s shoulders. It reminds of us when “the wood for the offering” on Calvary was placed on Yeshua’s shoulders.

Yitz’chak questions his father, in **verse 7**, concerning the lamb for the burnt offering and Avraham responds, in **verse 8**, with “HaShem will provide himself the lamb for a burnt offering.” Seven out of nine translations render it this way. When you consider that it could have read, “HaShem, himself, will provide the lamb . . .” I am intrigued that it reads as it does. As we know, from a Messianic viewpoint, He truly did “provide Himself, The Lamb” for an offering.

Verse 9 tells us that **“he bound Isaac”**. Given the information we already have, we know that Avraham could not have bound Yitz’chak without his consent. There is an interesting interchange between the two of them during this time.

Traditionally, the Sages say that Yitz'chak requested his father to bind him because he was afraid that his natural instinct of survival might cause him to flinch causing injury to both of them or might prevent the proper performing of the ritual slaughter. Therefore, the binding took place. From the Messianic standpoint, we know that Yeshua carried the wood (execution stake) up the mountain for His sacrifice just as Yitz'chak carried wood up the mountain for his sacrifice. Yitz'chak had marks on his wrists and ankles from the rope that "bound" him. Similarly, Yeshua had marks on his wrists and feet where He was "bound" to His altar. There are some who believe that Yitz'chak's binding took place during the same time of the year as **Pesach/Passover**, and of course, we know that Yeshua was the Passover, Lamb, many years later.

I read somewhere, at sometime, an interesting note having to do with the ram being caught in the thicket by its horns (**verse 13**). The reality of the ram's horn is to protect it from getting caught in the thickets. Hmmm!!! Another act of HaShem!!! Further more, the midrash claims that the two horns of the ram became the two **trumpets/shofarot** (say show-fah-roat), of G~d. HaShem blew the first one on Mount Sinai (**Sh'mot/Exodus 19**) at the giving of the Torah and He will sound the second one at the coming of **HaMashiach/The Messiah**.

Personally, while I like that thought, I was having a problem with it. How could there have been any ram's horns since the ram became the offering and was burned up? I am most thankful for First Fruits of Zion who provided the following information!!! Rabbi Bechaye had the same question and answered it himself, saying, "The answer is that G~d created a new ram out of the ashes." How can the horn from **Yitz'chak's/Isaac's** ram be the horn that will herald the Messiah when that ram was completely burned? The answer is simple: The ram was resurrected.

YITZ'CHAK/ISAAC AND YESHUA/JESUS

These are the parallels in the lives of Yitz'chak and Yeshua. In addition to these, upon examining the scriptures closely, we learn that Yitz'chak was not a small boy when his father took him up the mountain for the sacrifice. Rather he was approximately 37 years of age. We are told that Yeshua was approximately 33 to 34 years of age.

YITZ'CHAK / ISAAC

Yitz'chak is the promised son of the covenant with Avraham

Yitz'chak is born through a miraculous conception.

Yitz'chak is the long-awaited fulfillment of G~d's promise.

Yitz'chak is offered up for a sacrifice on Mount Moriah by his father.

Yitz'chak does not die, but lives.

YESHUA / JESUS

Yeshua is the promised son of the covenant with Abraham.

Yeshua is born through a miraculous conception.

Yeshua is the long-awaited fulfillment of G~d's promise.

Yeshua is offered up for an offering in Jerusalem (by His Father!).

Yeshua dies, but also lives.

Back to our Parashah (Torah portion), in **verse 14** we learn that Avraham named the site "**Adonai Yireh**", which means "**Adonai will see to it**" or "**Adonai provides**". According to the Chumash, the original name given to it by Shem, the son of Noah, was "**Salem**" or "**Shalem**", meaning "**peace, wholeness, completeness, nothing missing, nothing broken**". After the Akeidah, Avraham called it "**Yireh**". According to the Chumash, in deference to both names, G~d synthesized it and called it "**Yireh~shalem**" or "**Yerushalayim**".

Another traditional source says when King David renamed the place; he wanted to honor both Malchi-Tzedek and Abraham so he combined the names to form **Yireh-Salem**, which sounds similar to **Yerushalayim/Jerusalem**. Either way, the name is prophetic for when Messiah comes, He will rule from "**Yerushalayim**" where "**Peace will be seen**".

Vayera ~ וַיֵּרָא ~ And he appeared
Haftarah: M'lakhim Bet/2nd Kings 4:1-37

The Stone Edition of the Artscroll Chumash says that Elisha's greatness is set forth by his compassion for others. We see here in the Haftarah two episodes that reveal this. The first one involved a destitute widow who has no one to help her and the second involved a wealthy, influential woman who needed no favors from anyone.

Perhaps the first one was chosen because of the similar apathetic condition of the widow's neighbors given her plight as compared to those in Sodom. According to the Sages, this was a widow of the prophet Obadiah, who risked his life and spent his fortune to support and shelter hundreds of prophets from the sword of **Ach'av/Ahab** and **Izevel/Jezebel**. However, when his widow was confronted by a creditor who was about to take her children as slaves in payment for her debts, she had nowhere to turn but to Elisha. He was there to listen, empathize and help. As long as there were empty vessels to fill, the oil continued to flow until there was no more need (**verse 6**). In our lives, HaShem causes blessings to continue flowing to us until **we** choose to no longer receive them; when we no longer are an open or empty vessel.

The bulk of the story in 2nd Kings, **verses 8-37** and the second episode involves the Shunamite woman who had everything – but no children. Elisha shows his gratitude for her hospitality by blessing her with a son, as HaShem blessed Sarah with a son. However, after some time, the child grew ill, and died. After summoning the prophet again, the woman was privy to another miracle of HaShem – life from the dead.

We can instantly see the connection between the two stories in the Torah and the Haftarah. Our Torah portion involves the miraculous birth of the "son of promise", Yitz'chak. In the Torah portion, we also find the "death" of this same son. To be sure, if the Angel of HaShem had not stopped Avraham, his son surely would have died. Therefore, the Torah considers him to have died—figuratively (**Hebrews 11:17-19**). Even the rabbis of antiquity interpret the "Akeidah" (the binding of Yitz'chak) in this manner.

In **verses 8-10**, we see where the Shunamite woman implores her husband to build a **mishkan** (sounds like mish-kahn) which implies **room** or **dwelling place**. It is an anagram in Hebrew . . . (so here we have our major Hebrew lesson for this week!)

- Mem [sounds like mehm] (מ) for (mee-tah) **mitah/bed**
- Shin [sounds like sheen] (ש) for (shul-kahn) **shulkan/table**
- Koof [sounds like koof] (כ) for (key-say-ee) **kisei/stool**
- Nun [sounds like noon] (נ) for (nehr) **ner/candlestick**.

These four items were all that were necessary to make a comfortable **mishkan/dwelling place/room** for Elisha. I think knowing some basics of Hebrew causes Torah to come to life!

One of my favorite parts of this story has to do with **verses 25-27**. Despite the fact that her only son lay dead in her home, when asked "Is everything all right with you?" her reply was "It is well." What an affirmation of faith!!! This is a verse that I have chosen as one of my own. When asked about my circumstances, my reply is "It is well!" At her insistence, Elisha returns home with her and revived the child by placing himself upon the lifeless body of the boy. The Sages say that Elisha injected his own soul into the child.

Vayera ~ וַיֵּרָא ~ And he appeared

B'rit Hadashah: Luke 17:26-37; Romans 9:6-9; Galatians 4:21-31; Ivrim/Hebrews 6:13-20; Ivrim/Hebrews 11:13-19; Ya'akov/James 2:14-24; Kefa Bet/2nd Peter 2:4-10

Luke 17:26-37 (Geneva Study Bible Commentary): **Verse 26** The world will be taken by surprise with the sudden judgment of G~d, and therefore the faithful ought to continually watch. **Verse 31** We must pay careful attention that neither distrust nor the enticements of this world, nor any consideration of friendship hinder us in the least way. **Verse 37** The only way to continue is to cleave to Christ.

Once again, we find ourselves in scripture, that alludes those who will be “taken away”. We must be careful of the teachings we have received from the traditions of man and pay close attention to what Yeshua has to say about the last days.

I really hate to repeat myself but the L~rd continues to lay this matter on my heart. Here is an excerpt from my notes of a couple of weeks ago . . .

Just as HaShem didn't “rapture” Noah from the flood, He did provide a way of escape and He was with Noah during his trial. (And I can think of other instances as well . . . Daniel in the lion's den; three Hebrew children in the fiery furnace, etc, etc.) Just as in Noah's days, the generation of Yeshua's return will ignore the warnings leading up to the big event. Life will continue as normal; then catastrophe will strike! Yeshua goes on to speak about those who will be taken away and those who will be left behind:

“Then there will be two men in the field; one will be taken and one will be left. Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one will be left.” **Mattityahu/Matthew 24:40-41**

According to First Fruits of Zion, “these verses are often interpreted to mean that when Yeshua comes, the one taken will be whisked away to meet Him in the sky. Since the one left working in the field is not a believer, he will be left behind. The one left grinding at the mill also not a believer will also left behind. However, the one “taken away” in the **Matthew 24** passage is not ‘raptured up’, as is popularly taught. Just as the flood came and took people away in judgment, the ‘taking away’ in **Matthew 24:40-41** refers to people being taken in judgment.

Yeshua makes this explicitly clear in a parallel passage in **Luke 17** when His disciples ask about the ones taken away. “Where [will they be taken], L~rd?” they asked and He answered, “Where the body is, there also the vultures will be gathered.” (**Luke 17:37**)

“In Yeshua's teaching, those ‘taken away’ correspond to those who perished in the flood. The corpses of those who perished in the flood became food for the scavenging birds, such as the raven, which was released from the ark. So, too, when Messiah comes, the wicked will be slain and left as food for birds. Thus we should understand those who will be ‘left behind’ in the Matthew 24 passage are the righteous. They can be compared to Noah and his seven family members who survived the flood, as Peter says, “The L~rd knows how to rescue the G~dly.” (**2 Peter 2:9**) The thrust of the passage is that we must stay vigilant in our wait for Messiah. We must not be like the complacent generation of Noah that was caught unawares, for Messiah will come suddenly, like a thief in the night. “Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your L~rd is coming.” **Matthew 24:42**”

Romans 9:6-9 The Apostle Paul mentions in **verse 6** “. . . For not everyone from Isra'el is truly part of Isra'el.” **Verse 7** provides us with the answer that physical lineage does not make one a part of Israel because the people of Israel are the people of G~d. If you reject G~d how can you remain part of the people of G~d? Further more, in **verse 7** there is additional clarification concerning the “seed of Avraham”. “What is to be called your ‘seed’ will be in **Yitz'chak/Isaac**.” (**B'resheet/Genesis 21:12**) and again in **verse 9** “At the time set, I will come; and Sarah will have a son.” (**B'resheet/Genesis 18:14**)

Some Muslims claim that the Land of Israel belongs to the Arabs on the ground that they are “Abraham's seed” through Ishmael. However, verses in the Torah as well as these verses clearly refute that claim!

Galatians 4:21-31 These verses provide a very clear delineation between the children of the two covenants. Hagar represents the mother of those who are in bondage and Sarah represents the mother of those who are free, which of course parallels our Torah portion concerning the birth of **Yishma'el/Ishmael**, born of the bond woman and **Yitz'chak/Isaac**, born of the free woman.

According to David Stern in the Jewish New Testament Commentary, “. . . the one covenant referred to **is from Mount Sinai**, the *Torah* of Moshe. It **bears children for slavery**, but not because it is bad (nowhere does the account in Genesis denigrate Hagar); hence there is no reason to demean the Mosaic Law on the basis of this passage. The Mosaic Law bears children for “slavery,” to be enslaved to the ‘weak and miserable elemental spirits’ (verse 9) of legalism, because people pervert the Torah into a legalistic system. Who does this? **The present Yerushalayim**, that

is, the non-Messianic Jewish community of the first century, both its establishment and the people loyal to that establishment. The Judaizers, the would-be Messianic Jews who insist that Gentiles become legalists, do the same thing. She, Hagar, the present Jerusalem, **serves as a slave, along with her children**, the legalists. **But the Yerushalayim above**, corresponding to Sarah, **is free; and she is our mother**, the mother of all who have the trusting faithfulness that Abraham and Yeshua had whether Messianic Jews or Messianic Gentiles.”

Hebrews 6:13-20 (Geneva Study Bible Commentary) Verse 19 Which [hope] we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters into that within the veil;

Rav Sha’ul/Rabbi Paul compares hope to an anchor because in the same way that an anchor when cast into the bottom of the sea secures the whole ship, so hope also enters even into the very secret places of heaven. He makes mention of the sanctuary, alluding to the old tabernacle and by this returns to the comparison of the priesthood of Christ with the Levitical priesthood.

Ivrim/Hebrews 11:13-19 As most of us know, this chapter is called the “Faith Chapter” or “Trusting Chapter” as it is rendered in The Complete Jewish Bible. The specific parallel to our Torah portion is found in **verse 18** “. . . What is called your ‘seed’ will be in Yitz’chak.” which is found in **B’resheet/Genesis 21:12**. Avraham’s faith or trust was so great that he trust HaShem to fulfill His promise, even if it required miracles . . .

- First, of making an aged couple able to have children (**B’resheet/Genesis 17:19; 18:11-14; 21:2**) and . . .
- Second, of resurrecting **Yitz’chak/Isaac** from the dead, an implication of the story of the binding of Isaac for sacrifice by Avraham (**B’resheet/Genesis 22:1-19**)

Ya’akov/James 2:14-24 Yeshua’s brother, **Ya’akov/James**, is making the point that faith without actions is a dead faith and of little to no benefit. Here, in these verses, he uses Avraham as an example. Avraham proved his faith by his actions of taking **Yitz’chak/Isaac** up Mt. Moriah in order to sacrifice him on the altar, which is the parallel to our Torah portion this week. In **B’resheet/Genesis 15:6** we see that “Avraham had faith in G~d and it was credited to his account as righteousness.”

Kefa Bet/2nd Peter 2:4-10 In these verses we find that there definitely is punishment for the ungodly and the blueprint for this is found in our (say pah-rah-shoat) **Parashot/Torah portions** from last week and this week regarding the destruction of the wicked by the Flood and the destruction of **S’dom/Sodom** and **Amora/Gomorra** by fire and brimstone. Yet those whom HaShem regarded as righteous, in this case, **Noach/Noah** and his family as well as Lot, He delivered from it all.

Our corresponding Psalm for this Torah portion is: Psalm 11