

TIKKUN AMERICA

restore

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PRAYER AND INTERCESSION

Foundations for the Foundation

PRAYER FOR POWER AND UNDERSTANDING IN THE MIDST OF GOD'S CALLING, GIFTS, AND CIRCUMSTANCES

Honoring and Remembering Roeh Ralph Finley

PERVERTING MORAL SUPERIORITY

Difficult Lessons from Job's Story, Part 2

FROM EVERLASTING TO EVERLASTING, THE LORD GOD (ADONAI ELOHIM) IS ONE

As Father, the Son, and Holy Spirit

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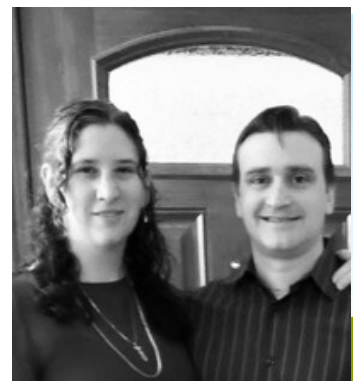


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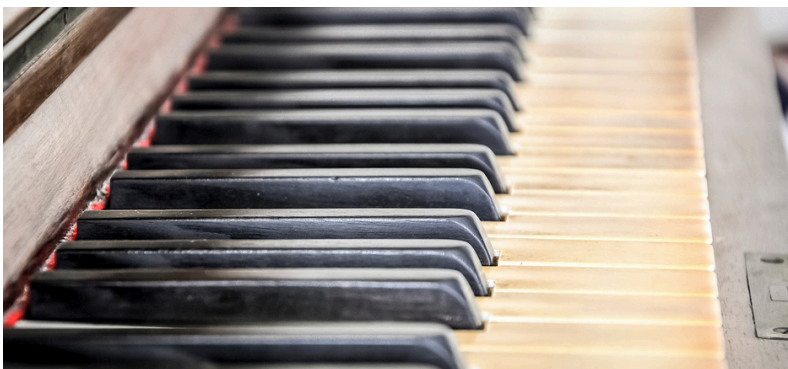


Benjamin and Lorena also help to lead the international teaching ministry Restoration From Zion, affiliated with Tikkun Global.

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BENJAMIN JUSTER

Holy Re-Tune



A Season for Returning

We had an upright piano in our living room when I was growing up. I started piano lessons at six years old, and I remember spending hours practicing scales, chords, and other musical rudiments. From time to time, my parents would hire my music teacher—a gifted pianist who also knew how to tune pianos—to bring the instrument back into proper alignment.

Perhaps you have played a piano that was out of tune. The notes may be close to the correct pitch, but close is not the same as being in tune. Even subtle conflicts between the notes create discomfort. Instead of harmony, there is dissonance—a lack of agreement that produces tension or harshness.

A standard piano has 88 keys, each connected to a hammer that strikes one of 88 strings. Tuning these strings is therefore a careful and time-consuming process. The tuner begins with an anchor pitch and then adjusts the other notes so that the entire instrument is in proper relationship to that standard and ultimately to itself.

My teacher would bring a tuning fork with him. I was fascinated by this simple, precisely engineered metal instrument. When struck, its two prongs vibrated at a specific frequency, creating a clear and reliable tone.

That tone becomes the fixed reference point. The tuning fork does not adjust itself to the piano; the piano must be adjusted to the tuning fork.

When the strings are properly tuned, the notes can work together to produce beautiful music. There is consonance and harmony.

This offers us a helpful picture for the season of Yom Teruah (the Day of Trumpets), the Ten Days of Awe, and Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement). This is a God-appointed season for returning.

Returning to the Standard

Over time, a piano naturally drifts out of tune. Changes in temperature, humidity, tension, and regular use all affect its strings. In the same way, life exerts pressure upon us. Disappointments, offenses, weariness, temptations, busyness, and unresolved conflicts can slowly pull us out of alignment with God.

Usually, this does not happen all at once. We drift. We remain close enough to the right note that we may not immediately recognize what has changed. We continue attending services, praying, serving, and speaking the language of faith, yet something within us no longer sounds quite right.





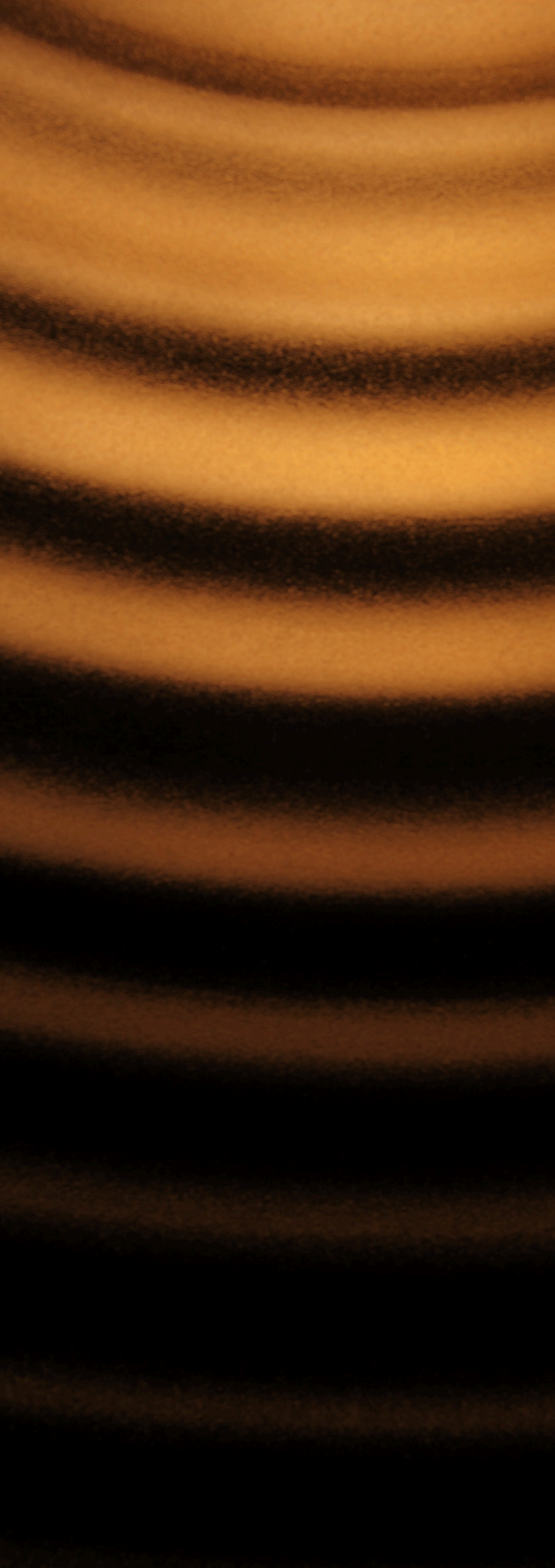
Where Have We Drifted?

The Ten Days of Awe invite us to slow down and ask honest questions. Where have I fallen out of alignment with the character of Yeshua? Where has my love grown cold? Where have I tolerated attitudes or patterns that the Spirit is asking me to confront?

Some of us have become flat. We have lost our passion and spiritual urgency. We are weary, distracted, or merely going through the motions. The work of the Kingdom no longer grips our hearts as it once did. Paul exhorts us, *“Do not be lagging in zeal; be fervent in spirit. Keep serving the Lord”* (Romans 12:11).

Others of us have become sharp. We are angry, offended, caustic, impatient, or even bitter. Perhaps we remain correct in our convictions, but the tone of our lives no longer sounds like Yeshua. Scripture warns us to *“get rid of all bitterness and rage and anger and quarreling and slander, along with all malice”* (Ephesians 4:31).

Still others may be out of tune in less obvious ways. Pride may have replaced teachability. Fear may be directing our choices. Secret compromise may be weakening our spiritual authority. Busyness may have crowded out intimacy with God. Resentment may be contaminating our relationships.



David gives us an appropriate prayer for this season: *“Search me, O God, and know my heart. Test me and know my anxious thoughts, and see if there be any offensive way within me, and lead me in the everlasting way”* (Psalm 139:23–24).

We do not pray this so that we can drown in shame. Conviction is not condemnation. God reveals what is out of tune because He desires to restore us. As Rabbi Sha’ul writes, *“Godly sorrow leads to repentance for salvation, leaving no regret”* (2 Corinthians 7:10).

Retuned for Resonance

There is power in spiritual resonance. With sound waves—one vibrating object can cause another object with the same natural frequency to vibrate more strongly. The sound becomes fuller because the vibrations are working together rather than competing against one another.

As we become aligned with Yeshua, the life of God is increasingly expressed through us. Something else also happens. As each of us becomes more closely aligned with Yeshua, we become more closely aligned with one another. A piano is not brought into harmony by tuning every string according to the preference of the string beside it. Each string is brought into relationship with the same standard.

Our unity must work the same way. We do not achieve biblical unity by ignoring truth, suppressing differences, or demanding that others conform to us. We pursue Yeshua together. As each member grows toward Him, the whole community becomes healthier. What has become disordered can be restored.

What has drifted can be brought back. What has produced dissonance can once again become part of a beautiful sound.

How Do We Respond in This Season?

1. Invite the Holy Spirit to identify what is out of tune.

Set aside unhurried time for prayer and examination. Ask the Lord specific questions: Have I become spiritually flat? Have I become sharp with others? Is there an area in which I have resisted Your correction? Then become quiet enough to listen. *“Let us search and examine our ways, and turn back to Adonai”* (Lamentations 3:40).

2. Make the necessary adjustments.

Repentance must become concrete. Confess sin specifically to God. Change a habit. Remove a source of temptation. Restore a neglected spiritual discipline. If you have wronged someone, go to that person, take responsibility, and seek reconciliation. Yeshua teaches us to pursue reconciliation even before presenting our offering to God (Matthew 5:23–24). Do not merely acknowledge that a string is out of tune; allow the Master to adjust it.

3. Embrace the work of retuning in community.

We need trusted people who can hear what we may no longer recognize in ourselves.





Invite a spouse, elder, friend, or spiritual mentor to speak honestly into your life. Serve together. Mourn and celebrate together. This fosters deep connection and beautiful harmony. We are commanded to “spur one another on toward love and good deeds” (Hebrews 10:24).

4. Receive the cleansing that is available through Yeshua.

Yom Kippur reminds us of the seriousness of sin, but it also points us toward God’s provision for atonement. Yeshua, our Great High Priest, entered the Heavenly sanctuary through His own blood and obtained eternal redemption for us (Hebrews 9:11–12). We examine ourselves honestly, but we do so with confidence in His mercy.

The Shofar is sounding. It is calling us to awaken, to return, and to be re-tuned. May we allow the Holy Spirit to bring every area of our lives back into alignment with Yeshua. And as individuals, families, and communities come into greater alignment with Him, may our lives resonate together—amplifying the beauty, power, and presence of God throughout the earth.

 **Benjamin Juster**
Editor in Chief

THE SHOFAR IS
SOUNDING. IT IS
CALLING US TO
AWAKEN, TO
RETURN, AND TO
BE RE-TUNED.

BEN JUSTER



PRAYER *for* POWER *and* UNDERSTANDING IN THE MIDST *of* GOD'S CALLING AND CIRCUMSTANCES



Lorena Juster

Within Tikkun America, we are gifted and blessed to have many who serve in faithful Congregational ministry and other ministerial settings through sacrifice, devotion, and love for God's people. Of these, one of our dearest leaders and friends, Pastor (Roeh) Ralph Finley z"l of Ahavat Yeshua Messianic Jewish Congregation in Washington, D.C., recently passed away and is now with Yeshua. As our hearts grieve, we also remember and honor our dear friend. This article is written in blessed memory of Roeh Pastor Ralph Finley.

In Loving
Memory Of
Rae
Ralph Finley



Dear brothers and sisters in the Lord. May you be blessed in this new month, and may the riches of God's love be with you as you dedicate one more month to the one who has created you and me, as each of us experiences His love and healing in various ways, and also the different callings, gifts, talents, and challenges for our lives. Yes, we all handle all of these circumstances in many different ways. For some of us it may be a fast recovery, and for some others it might take a long time. In this, we should not forget that when one is suffering, we all are suffering together, and if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. (1 Corinthians 12:26)



In this case, we have a wife who is doing just that at the same time. She is suffering in the absence of her beloved and rejoicing as her beloved is honored both before our Father in Heaven and before us here on earth. Our brother served our righteous Lord, and now he can hear. *"Well done, good and faithful servant."* Because Roeh Ralph walked in righteousness, which is what our Lord awaits from us to obtain His godliness, faithfulness, love, perseverance, and gentleness. (1 Timothy 6:1) May our Heavenly Father strengthen us; we need His help to overcome all this.

As Ben and I attended the memorial service for this beloved brother, a pillar of the Messianic Movement, we experienced both sentiments: suffering and joy. This honorable couple, Roeh Ralph and Sandra, embraced their calling to the Messianic Movement with passion, honor, compassion, and care for each member, and learned so much to serve the body of the Messiah better and to be pastors and leaders full of God's presence.

How would I know this if I hadn't been part of that community? I was there at Pastor (Roeh) Ralph's memorial service.



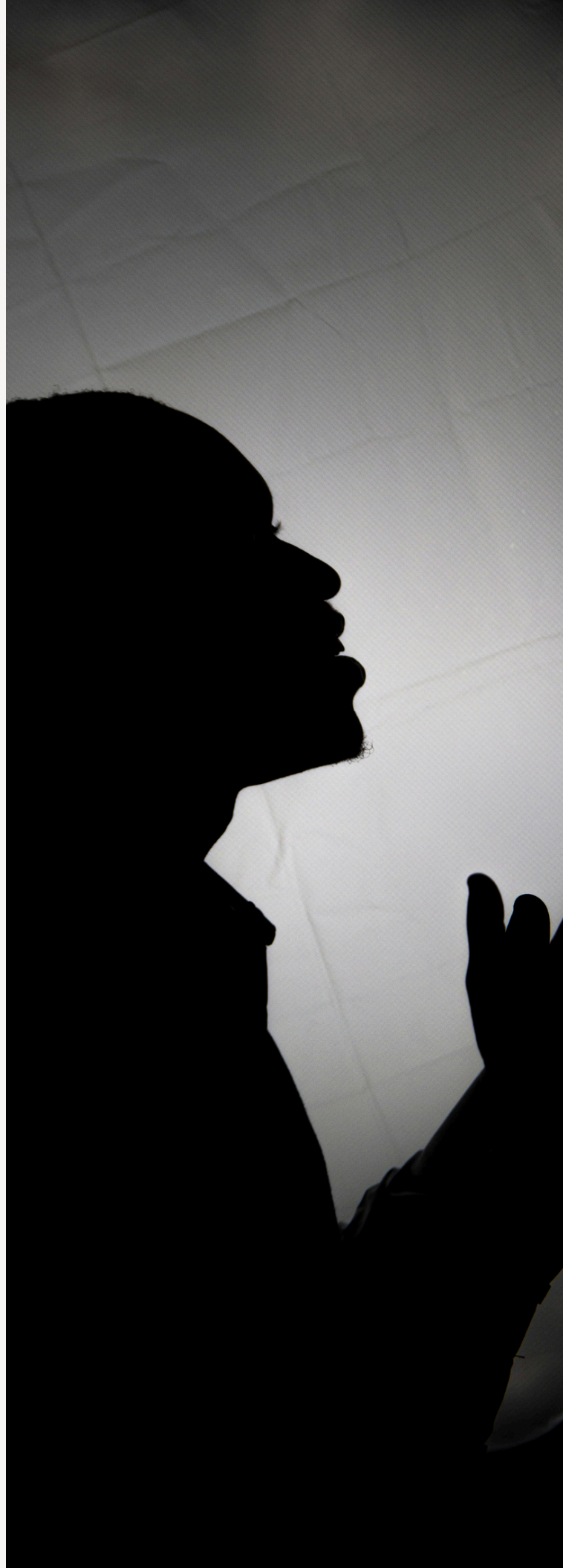
I heard his children speak highly of him and how much they love him, and I heard from many others in his community who have been there since they were seven years old or since they were born. They spoke of Pastor (Roeh) Ralph, as they also lost a father. He showed honor and respect to each of them and spoke words of conviction when he noticed that they were struggling with different issues. I heard how both young and seasoned people spoke of him as a father, not just as a pastor, but also as a friend. Roeh Ralph was also a father to the fatherless. A true pastor is not just one who gives orders but one who prays for you, respects you, speaks the truth to you in love, serves you, and does not just let you live a life as you might please. A true pastor will show you how to live a life of integrity and righteousness because we serve a God of righteousness.

We need more fathers and mothers, with pastoral hearts, looking for the good in others. We need more brothers and sisters, and we need more friends who will challenge us to stay on the straight path and not just accept us as we are going down to the pit, but will help us and guide us, so we don't go down the wrong path, a path that will eventually kill us not only spiritually but also physically.

When we go through trials and tribulations, some of us will be able to walk with a few people, and some of us will need a full army behind us without knowing that they are there, but that you are prayerfully helping us get the revelation when we are going down the wrong path, and also to help us when we are grieving, as grieving will be different for everyone. Let's keep our sister Sandra in our prayers as she grieves her husband, beloved friend, and her companion. As we read these Scriptures, let's meditate on how, from Him, God, every family in Heaven and on earth receives its name.

Dear Father, strengthen us in the deepest part of our being with the power of your Ruach, Holy Spirit, in the name of Yeshua our Savior, Amen.

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father — from Him every family in heaven and on earth receives its name. I pray that from His glorious riches He would grant you to be strengthened in your inner being with power through His *Ruach* (Holy Spirit) so that Messiah may dwell in your hearts through faith. I pray that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to grasp with all the kedoshim (the holy ones) what is the width and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Messiah which surpasses knowledge, so you may be filled up with all the fullness of God. Now to Him who is able to do far beyond all that we ask or imagine, by means of His power that works in us, to Him be the glory in the community of believers and in Messiah Yeshua throughout all generations forever and ever! Amen. (Ephesians 3:14-21 TLV)



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MARTIN BOARDMAN

PRAYER & INTERCESSION

What is the best gift you have ever received? Maybe it was a Christmas or Hanukkah gift or a birthday present—a gift you remember because of what it was or who gave it to you. It stands out as the best gift ever. Salvation in Messiah Yeshua is the greatest gift we can ever receive. Moreover, salvation also enables the second-best gift we can receive: the gift of prayer.

In its simplest form, prayer is a conversation with God. Through Messiah Yeshua, we experience salvation and are adopted as God's children. Therefore, our communication is not only with God, the creator and sustainer of all things, but also with a Father who welcomes us and calls us His children. Prayer is a dialogue with our loving heavenly Father and with His most precious Son.



Conversation is a primary means of building relationships. Through it, both parties get to know one another better. The significant relationships in my life have all been developed and nurtured through conversation. In prayer, our heavenly Father listens and communicates with us. Thus, prayer becomes one of the main ways we can deepen our relationship with God. Through it, we learn more about who God is; His character, nature, plans, and purposes; and, most importantly, the incredible love and grace He lavishes upon us.

QUIET TIMES

Personal quiet times are the best way to grow and develop a relationship. Reading God's Word and praying to Him leads to a strong relationship. Personal devotions are the powerhouse of transformation, whether you are a new or seasoned follower of Yeshua.

As new believers or those who have followed Yeshua for a long time, prayer serves as the backbone of our relationship with God. It is an ongoing and ever-deepening adventure. Prayer takes many forms, from a quick-breath prayer, "Oh, Lord, help me!", to extended sessions that can last several hours or even overnight. However, the length of time is not what matters. It is not about the quantity of prayer but the quality. What matters is developing and deepening our relationship with God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, which is essential.

Because God is always with us, we can pray at any time and in any situation. Our prayers may be spoken aloud or whispered silently in our hearts. Prayer can also be written in a journal or even sung. The saying, “The one who sings prays twice,” attributed to Saint Augustine, highlights how expressive prayer can be in song. Prayer can be sung as vibrant praise and worship or as a somber lament.

There is no standard formula for prayer. However, certain components can assist us in developing our prayer lives. These components include praise, through which we express to God how good and excellent He is. We declare His attributes and the names given to Him in Scripture. Psalm 34:1 says, “*I will extol the Lord at all times; his praise will always be on my lips.*”

THANKSGIVING

A companion component to praise is *thanksgiving*. Scripture reminds us that our God provides for all our needs, so we can thank Him for the many things He has given us and the many wonderful things He has done for us. Simply spending time saying *thank you* to the Lord will affect our well-being. Being thankful has been shown to positively affect the neurochemistry of our brains. Giving thanks is good for us!

Bringing praise and thanksgiving to the Lord emphasizes who God is in His Majesty and Glory. In doing so, we often become aware of our brokenness and shortcomings. However, God, who knows everything about us, still welcomes and encourages us to approach Him with *honest confession*.





He invites us to be genuine and truthful about ourselves with Him. God encourages us to *“approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need”* (Heb. 4:16). When we come in confession, acknowledging our guilt and wrongdoings, we encounter a heavenly Father who extends love and forgiveness and empowers us to forgive others.

GOD DELIGHTS IN OUR PRAYERS AND HAVING US HEAR HIS VOICE

As our heavenly Father, God delights in hearing and responding to us when we pray. He invites us to pray in His Name for what we need. Yeshua, in what we know as the Lord’s prayer—a model prayer—invites us to say, *“Give us today our daily bread”* (Matt. 6:11). James reminds us that *“every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows”* (James 1:17).

God delights in both hearing from us and speaking to us. By quieting our minds and focusing on the Lord, we can learn to recognize His voice and learn exactly how the Holy Spirit communicates to each of us personally. Yeshua said, *“My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me”* (John 10:27).

To learn how to hear His voice, each of us needs to learn exactly how God speaks to us. This is a skill we need to develop and practice. The Holy Spirit speaks to each of us in different ways, and it’s not always an audible voice; it’s often a still, quiet voice. Some see and hear impressions, and some see visions. Others can experience very strong senses, while some receive specific words.

Recognizing His voice deepens our relationship with Him and invites us to partner in advancing the Kingdom. You can learn more about hearing His voice in The Romans 911 Project materials.

INTERCESSION TAKES US DEEPER

Prayer involves more than simply asking for what we need or even for what others might require. One of the privileges of prayer is to inquire of the Lord what He desires and needs.

In His sovereignty, God has chosen to work through the prayers of believers. This act of intercession is powerful; through this type of prayer, God can influence our earthly reality. God's plans and purposes are realized through intercessory prayer.

In Ezekiel, the Lord declares, *"I looked for someone among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, but I found no one"* (Ezek. 22:30). God sought an intercessor who would pray to Him for the land—an intercessor like Moses, who was a man of prayer. Psalm 106:23 tells us that God stated the following: *"So he said he would destroy them—had not Moses, his chosen one, stood in the breach before him to keep his wrath from destroying them."* The Lord used Moses and his intercession to turn away His anger against the Jewish people after they sinned.

Intercession moves God to show His mercy to people through provision.

When the Israelites faced a challenge, Moses repeatedly cried out to the Lord for provision. In response,





the Lord provided water, manna, and even quail.

The role of Moses as an intercessor can also be observed in the battles the Israelites faced. When the Amalekites attacked at Rephidim (Exodus 17:8-16), Moses, Aaron, and Hur ascended the mountain to pray. Joshua and his men fought the physical battle, while Moses engaged in a spiritual battle through prayer. As Moses prayed, Joshua experienced success in battle. This illustrates the importance of intercession. God employs our prayers for others to advance His Kingdom.

Effective prayer encompasses both personal and corporate dimensions. We need to develop our relationship with Jesus/Yeshua through our quiet times with Him, who reminds us:

“But when you pray, go into your room, close the door, and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words.” Matthew 6:6-7

We also need to come together in prayer with other believers. Once more, Yeshua reminds us:

“Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.” Matthew 18:19-20

INTERCESSION BRINGS THE BREAKTHROUGH

Prayer is the frontline work in the Kingdom of God. As God answers prayer, He strengthens His Kingdom. Without prayer, especially intercessory prayer, the enemy can hinder the advance of the Kingdom. Too often, believers and the Church have been prayerless, allowing the enemy to gain ground. Being devoid of prayer is a sin we must confess and repent of as the Holy Spirit convicts us. It is a task in which all men and women need to participate.

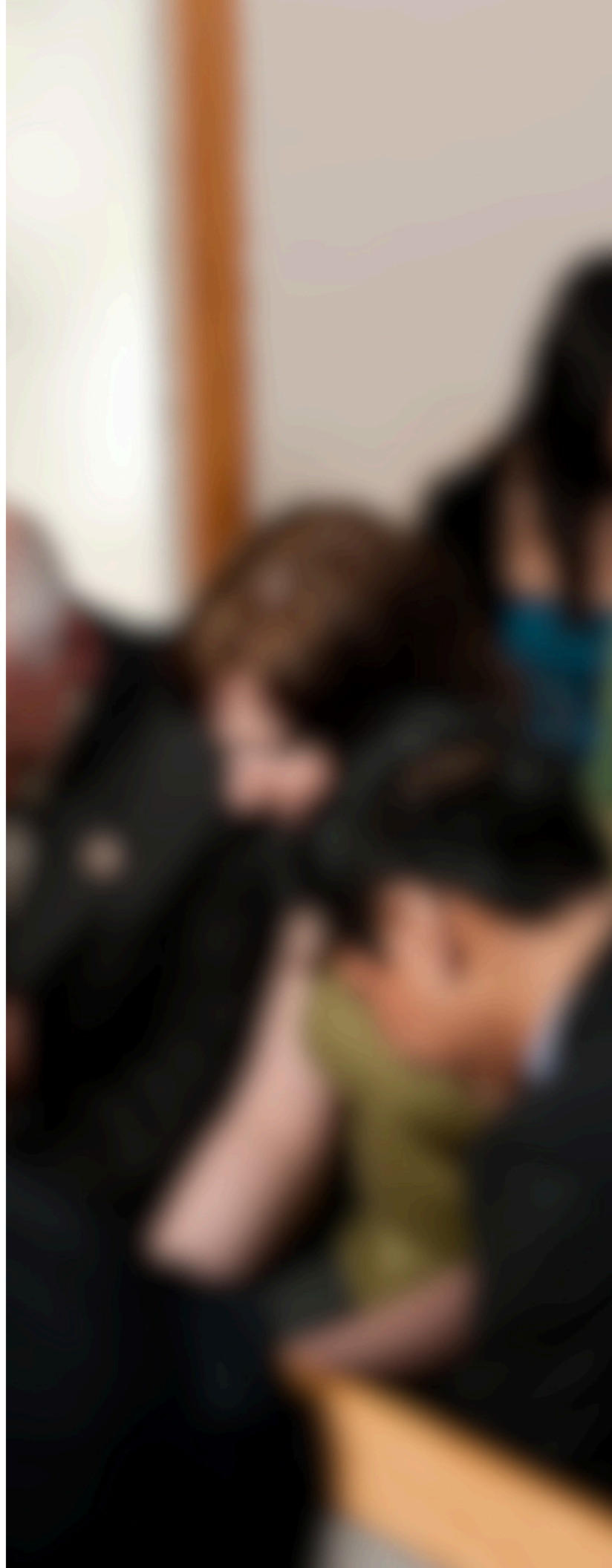
Unfortunately, there is often a lack of men committed to this work of prayer, intercession, and spiritual warfare, and this needs to change. Plus, leadership must be at the helm, leading prayer and intercession by example. During these end times, men must step up to the plate, to the frontlines where they are called, and play their role to help advance the Kingdom.

As believers grow in prayer, they gather as the *Ecclesia* to pray and unite with other congregations (Churches) to intercede for their communities. The Lord will respond to their prayers by pouring out the Holy Spirit, bringing revival and awakening to both individuals and communities.

Transformation occurs as the Body of Messiah prays together.

Transformation occurs as leaders gather regularly with other leaders to pray for their communities.

Can you imagine when our Churches and Messianic Congregations finally get this right, how quickly the world will change all around us by us advancing the Kingdom of God in prayer?





Prayer is a powerful tool of God's Kingdom; it provides the fuel for any type of ministry focus. God advances His Kingdom by answering the prayers of believers, Churches, and Communities who seek His will. At the same time, prayer invites us into a deeper intimacy and relationship with God, where we experience our heavenly Father's mercy, grace, and love. It is the second-best gift we have ever received.

But any gift, no matter how incredible, is meaningless unless it is used. So take heart and embark on the most extraordinary adventure there is! Whether you're experiencing prayer for the first time or recommitting after a period of prayerlessness, God, your heavenly Father, eagerly looks forward to welcoming you into His presence and communicating with you through this amazing gift of prayer.

You can continue to grow in your corporate prayer and intercession work in many ways. One such prayer style that has become popular in the twenty-first century is "Harp & Bowl." (Rev. 5:8) This is a combination of worship and prayer flowing together in adoration and supplication of God toward the heavens, prompted by the Holy Spirit.



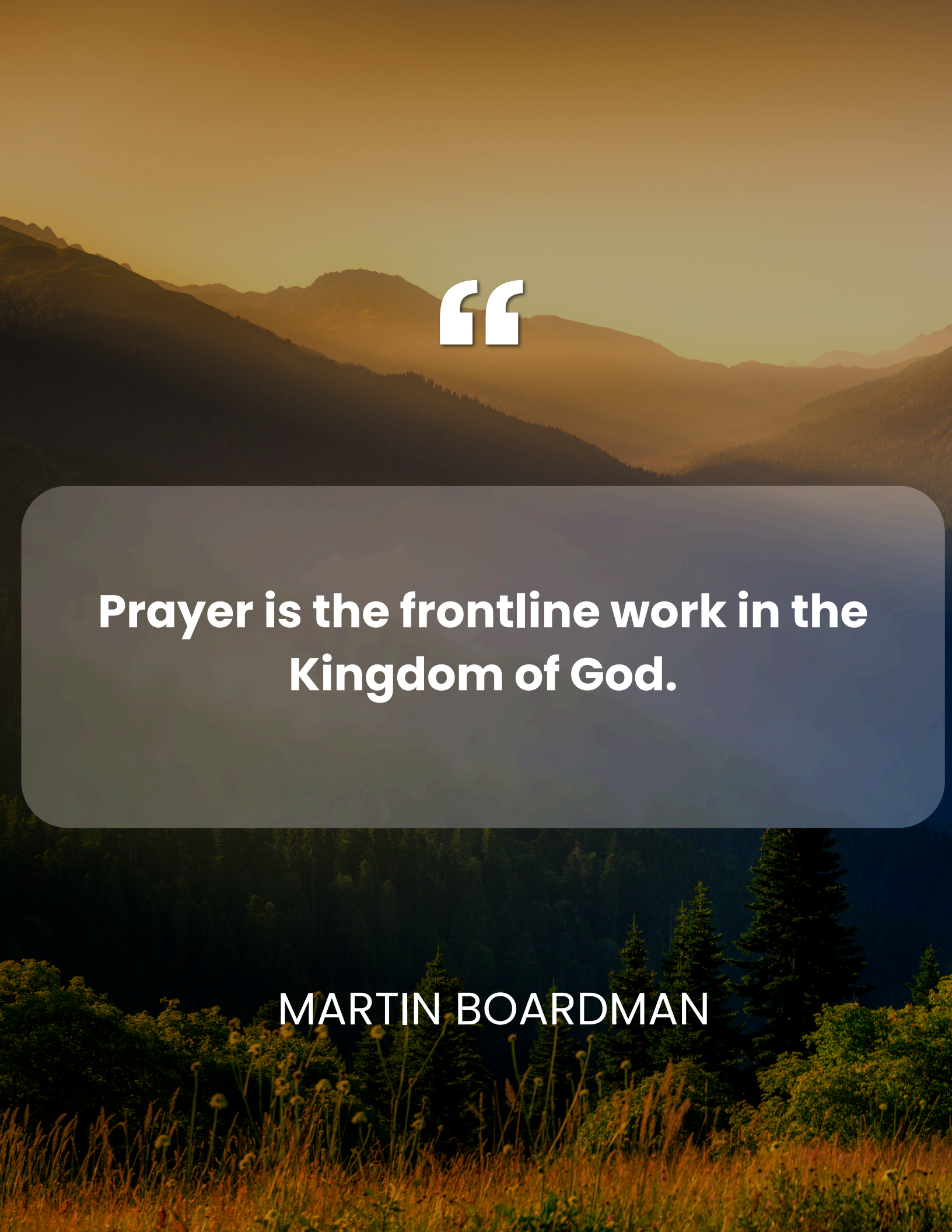
Another type of worship and prayer growing and developing in the Body is “Intercessory Worship,” which is another type of yielding to the Holy Spirit in worship and prayer. Less common but just as important is the need for “Strategic Intercession,” which is more of a targeted type of prayer led by the Holy Spirit.

As we will see in the future, there is a great need for Strategic Intercession to come alongside the other types of worship and prayer, as both prayer foci will be needed to achieve God’s end-time plans to help break up the ground and put strongholds under the Lord’s feet.

This article is a chapter in Grant Berry’s groundbreaking book, “Foundations for the Foundation,” available at <https://reconnectingministries.org/foundations-book/>, on restoring Israel and the Church as one family, according to John 17.

Disclaimer: The views of this article may not necessarily reflect all of the views of Tikkun America, but instead, the insights of its author.



A scenic landscape featuring a mountain range under a warm, golden sunset sky. The foreground is filled with tall, dry grass and wildflowers, while the middle ground shows a dense forest of evergreen trees. The background consists of rolling mountain peaks. A large white quotation mark is centered in the upper half of the image.

“

**Prayer is the frontline work in the
Kingdom of God.**

MARTIN BOARDMAN

PERVERTING MORAL SUPERIORITY

Zachary Williams

Difficult Lessons from Job's Story Part 2

As we continue our discussion from part one of Difficult Lessons from Job, this article may be the hardest for some to understand. If you read this article and your response is a simple 'yeah, that makes sense,' then you may be missing the point. The key point I desire to reveal in this article is that even as believers, our sense of moral correctness compared to the world can be another kind of superiority, pride, and even a form of wickedness. We need moral clarity and courage without succumbing to different kinds of moral failure.

Job is a fascinating book because what most people quote from Job is a handful of chapters at the beginning, at the end, and sometimes Job 19 (which we will talk about in the last article). But what about the long discussion between Job and his friends? As the reader, we already know Job to be innocent. We also know at the end of the discussion that Adonai shows up and rebukes Job's friends. So, it is easy to dismiss what is being said throughout most of the book of Job because Job's friends are 'wrong' and Job is 'mostly right.' However, the discussion is more reflective of what we experience in our daily lives when we see that Job's friends were 'mostly right'...until Adonai said they were wrong (Job 42:7-9).

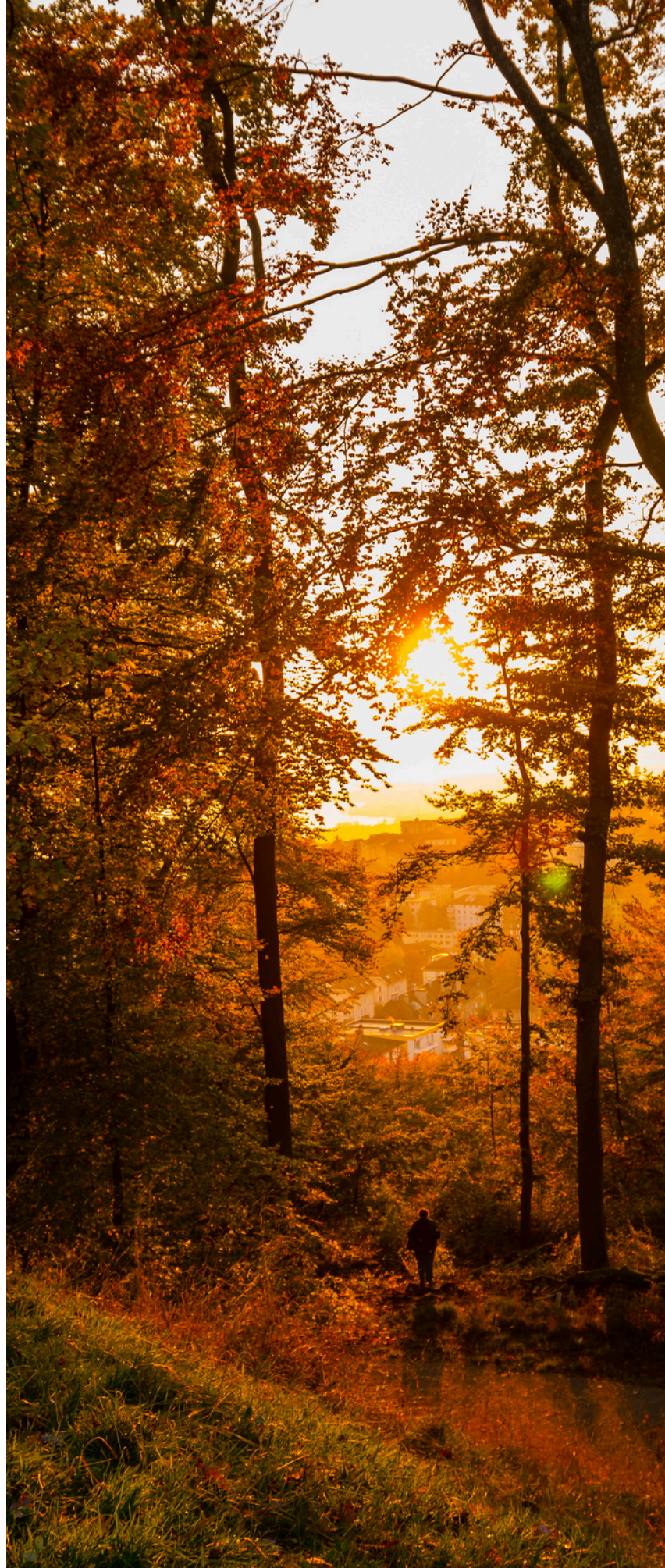
Here are a few examples of things that Job's friends say that I think most believers would agree with ...

“Behold, happy is the one whom God corrects, so do not despise the discipline of Shaddai. For He inflicts pain, but He also binds up; He injures, yes, His hands also heal.” (Job 5:17-18)

“If you devote your heart to Him and spread out your hands to Him, if you put away the wickedness that is in your hand, and allow no iniquity to abide in your tent, then you will lift up your face without reproach; you will stand firm and without fear.” (Job 11:13-15)

“Dominion and awe are with Him; He establishes shalom in His heights... How then can a man be righteous with God? How can one born of a woman be pure?” (Job 25:2,4)

Those statements sound good, moral, and even honoring to Adonai. So what's the issue? What did they say that was wrong when most of what his friends say is along these lines? Nothing is wrong with their general statements, *per se*. Job even agreed with them sometimes (Job 9:2). The fundamental issue is the way they used 'moral certainties' to accuse Job of sin. They conclude that because Adonai is 'just', He would never allow something like this to happen to Job unless Job in fact had sinned. Job's friends were using morality and their understanding of Adonai against Job to accuse him of some unknown sin.



Their morality is what I would call an outcome-based morality. It suggests that there is a linear and strict relationship between righteous or wicked actions and the consequences of those actions. Good actions equal a blessed life, while bad actions result in punishment. No exceptions! Therefore, suffering and punishment MUST be because of Job's "sin." Stop for a minute and consider how often we as believers fall into this same line of thinking. We are trained this way by our parents, which is generally good as children. However, by laying out the over-simplified judgmentalism of this kind of morality, it makes Job's friends look like little more than children accusing and bullying a classmate. Job's friends were not wrong, but they were only mostly right about their general statements, and they were flat wrong about their accusations of Job.

There is also a crucial aspect of morality that considers context in judgments. Even Job's words must be taken in the context that he is being falsely accused. Initially, Job does not necessarily justify himself or even accuse Adonai of doing wrong. Instead, he simply makes factual statements that prove his friend's wrong in the absoluteness and 100% certainty of their statements (Job 12). The most convincing proof from Job is the obvious fact that wicked people often prosper. Job 21, for example, is an entire chapter that is one of the most accurate descriptions of reality in the whole book of Job. That description is correct and honest instead of biased by perverted moral superiority.

I have often borrowed Yeshua's statement that narrow is the road that leads to life (Matthew 7:12-14) to make an analogy. I say that the road of righteousness is a narrow, elevated highway. Many people who are trying to walk the narrow road have simply fallen into the ditch on one side of the road and are yelling at people in the other ditch, and vice versa. They are not continuing to walk the road because they are stuck in the ditch. Those who are truly walking in righteousness are more concerned about staying on the road than accusing others of being in the ditch. If you do not stay focused on the road, you could easily fall into the ditch yourself. Considering this analogy, ...have you ever met somebody who thought the ditch was the road and they were right to be exactly where they were? Have you been that 'somebody' at times?

Perhaps that is the lesson Solomon is trying to teach us in Ecclesiastes when he says neither be too wicked nor be too righteous (Eccles. 7:16-18). You would think he should just say "Be not wicked, be righteous!" Instead, I think Solomon has the wisdom to understand that we cannot avoid all wickedness and need the mercy of Adonai to forgive our sins, and that by trying to be perfect in righteousness we may end up not being righteous at all. As Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur teach us, true righteousness is in the context of a relationship with Adonai (Eccles. 12:13-14), and we need to be humble enough to realize we never get that righteousness on our own.





The difficult lesson of Job's friends is that even if we know perfection is not achievable, we often still try and then look down on others' failures to reach the perfection that we cannot reach ourselves. We often find it easy to relate to Job's suffering in his innocence. It is just as true, but more difficult to relate to how we behave like Job's friends in their arrogant, false moral superiority. Adonai, have mercy on us!

As noted in the end of the first article, I wish that I could wrap up these difficult lessons nicely. Instead, I think we just need to use them to approach Adonai in humility and to seek wisdom in our judgments of ourselves and over others. In this case, it can be hard to accept that even what we think is correct about the relationship between cause and effect regarding righteousness and wickedness is not always so straightforward. Worse yet, thinking we understand it well and making accusations of others could be the very evidence that we have not learned it well either. Like Job's friends, Adonai might rebuke us with a simple, "You are wrong."

In the last article of this series, we will explore Job's mistake and his redemption...because our redemption is no different!



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ZACHARY WILLIAMS



FROM EVERLASTING TO EVERLASTING, THE LORD GOD (ADONAI ELOHIM) IS ONE

What Did God's Self-Revelation In History Reveal About His Eternality? What is His Personal Name? Should Followers of Yeshua Make a Practice of Saying It?

According to the Shema and the Bible as a whole, New Covenant Jews and Gentiles are to fully affirm and celebrate the truth that the LORD God is (echad) one. And because God is one, He is the God of Israel and the Gentile Nations. Many are rediscovering today that God has a personal Name. Examples of a personal name would be Abraham or Sarah. So what is God's personal Name that is found in the Hebrew Bible pretty close to 7,000 times? To first clarify, it is true that He has many 'names' in the Bible which describe who He is and how He acts, such as El Shaddai. Yet, the eternal God, the I AM, also has a proper personal Name. A Name that distinguishes Him from all others in heaven and on earth. It is a four-letter Hebrew Name.

This is represented in English as YHWH (or YHWH). And according to Exodus 3:15, as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Israel), this is His Name forever, and by which He is to be remembered throughout all generations. His Name is of ultimate importance because it is who the eternal God is. Also, did you notice that God's personal Name is attached to a specific people? This fact should deeply inform our interpretive (hermeneutical) approach to the unfolding story of Scripture, as well as our understanding of the unity of the Bible as a whole. For would God attach His eternal personal Name to His people Israel and then ultimately reject them? This is highly doubtful and suspect. We would say, impossible. For this would call into question the immutable nature of God's character and the unalterability of the covenant words of His sworn oath to Abraham.

Yet, before we tackle that vital theological and ethical question further down the road in future planned articles, it is important to ask, Should followers of Yeshua (Jesus) seek to pronounce God's personal Name like they do other personal names? We would say that the answer is a humble "no." And we want to briefly explain our answer.

Why is it that whenever we read in our English translations of the Hebrew Scripture "LORD" or "ADONAI" in small capital letters, this is in place of the personal Name of God that is found in the Hebrew text? Is this just a man-made tradition to be discarded? We don't think so. And surprising to some, why does the New Testament, in accord with Jewish practice at the time, always refer to the personal proper Name of God with reverent circumlocutions or oblique indirect speech of God's personal Name, without actually pronouncing or transliterating it? And while it is true that not all traditions are worthy of acceptance and Yeshua corrected some of these among His own people, He never sought to correct this practice concerning the Name. Actually, based on all the New Testament evidence that we have, the Jewish practice of treating the Name with reverence was apparently accepted and practiced by Yeshua, the Jewish Messiah, and His Jewish Apostles. The evidence of this fills the pages of our Apostolic New Testaments as Jewish texts! Let's start with Rabbi Yeshua, our Lord. Nowhere in the Gospels does Yeshua ever say the personal Name of God.

But He does demonstrate the Name's central importance to everything He does and is. For example, Yeshua taught us to pray: "Our Father who is in the Heavens, may Your Name be treated as Holy..." He also commanded His disciples to: "make disciples, baptizing them into the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit..." Before His death, the Son declared, "I have manifested Your Name to the people you gave Me out of the world" and prayed, "Holy Father, keep them in Your Name, which you have given Me, that they may be one just as we are one." Or before the Jewish High Court, He testified under oath that He was the Messiah, but referred to the Name with a reverent circumlocution, saying: "But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of Heaven."

Hundreds of examples could be cited where God's personal Name is alluded to in love, delight, worship, intimacy, and reverence, *without ever saying it*. As we have already alluded to, a primary *indirect* way of referring to *the Name* in the ancient Septuagint, as well as in the New Testament itself, is *Kyrios*. The equivalent in Hebrew is ADONAI, or in English, LORD. The *all-capital letters* in our English versions of the Hebrew Bible help the reader to *distinguish* when we are reading an oblique reference to the personal Name of God from His title and function as *Lord, meaning Master or Ruler*. Many Jews, when referring to the four-letter Hebrew Name of God in daily speech, often say **HaShem**,



meaning the Name. Many scholars and theologians refer to His Name as the Tetragrammaton, a Greek word meaning four-letters.

So while seeking to pronounce the personal Name of God has become more commonplace today among Christian scholars, theologians, pastors, writers, and singers, we don't think we as Messianic believers are to follow this trend. And we actually would encourage any Christians willing to listen to reconsider. Yes, to a degree, we should overlook this insensitivity. And we certainly still can learn much from our Christian brothers and sisters about who our God is. Yet we can also work to create better awareness of this matter of great importance in Theology and call those willing to listen and dialogue to consider afresh the evidence of the NT and the practice of the Son Incarnate Himself.

As we do, let's keep in mind who the Eternally Pre-existent Son is. He is the Word of God who became Jewish flesh and dwelt among us, the One who was given the Name *Yeshua*, meaning YHVH/ADONAI is Salvation. He is the Incarnate Son in whom "the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily." He embodies *the Name!* Yet, He still treated the Name with deep respect and reverence out of delight.

The LORD God Always Was, Is, and Will Be the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

Yet before the Son's incarnation, before the existence of Israel, before the existence of all the Gentile Nations, even before creation itself, the one true living God simply was ADONAI. And the LORD God was, is, and always will be the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, one in Name and Nature. Moreover, the Father, Son, and Spirit's oneness is expressed in their mutual indwelling of one another in a perfect unity and distinction without any separation.

Therefore, as New Covenant Jews and Gentiles, we affirm the LORD is one indivisible God, not three gods. Yet we can also fully affirm that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are eternally distinct in their personal identities, without conflation or confusion between them. This unity with distinction of the one LORD God is a great mystery of the faith. In the next article, we will begin to look at the Divine attributes and essence shared by the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. So stay tuned!





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RICHARD CLEARY

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