

TIKKUN AMERICA

restore

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FREEDOM

The God Who Reveals His Name

THE CIRCLE OF LOVE EXPLAINED

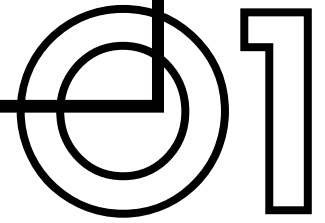
THE PROVERBIAL DISCIPLESHIP MANUAL

Guarding Your Heart and the Generational Transfer of Wisdom

THE PEOPLE OF GOD IN THE LAST GENERATION

Extreme Hope and Triumph at the End of the Story

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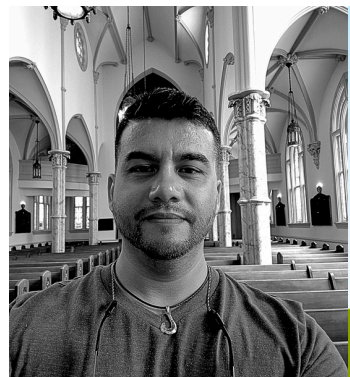


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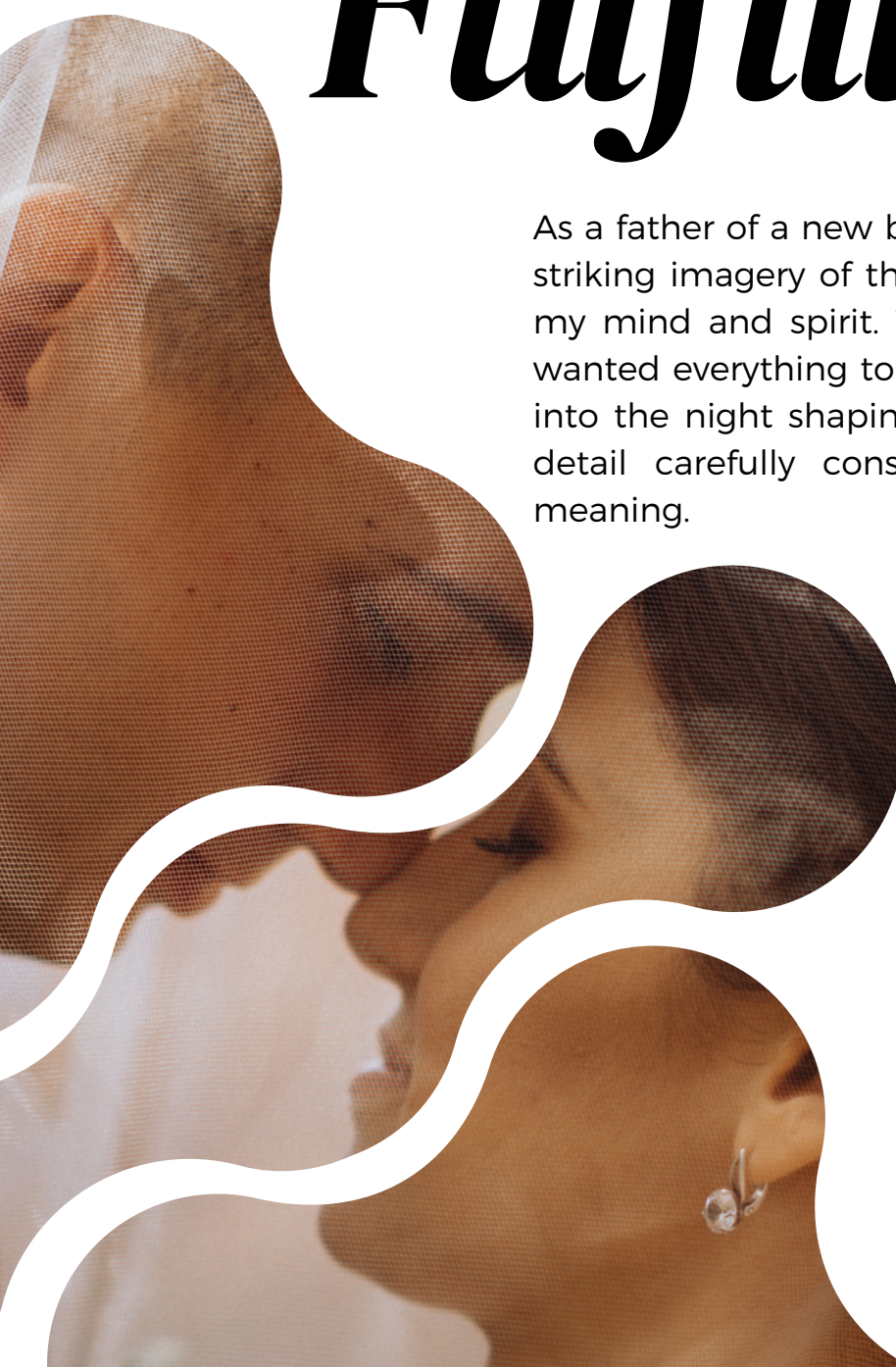
When Love Awaits Fulfillment

As a father of a new bride, the breadth of emotions and the striking imagery of the covenant ceremony are still fresh in my mind and spirit. There were weeks of preparation. We wanted everything to be just right. My wife spent hours late into the night shaping the vision of that special day—every detail carefully considered, every element infused with meaning.

And then the moment came.

Seeing the devotion on my daughter's face as my wife and I gave her to her husband. The sobriety and intimacy of proclaiming vows of faithfulness and love. Witnessing their first covenant seal as they partook together of Shulchan Adonai—the Lord's Table. And then, the giddy, overflowing joy that radiated from them as they stepped into a new life together.

It was holy. It was weighty. It was beautiful.



But in the midst of that earthly celebration, something deeper stirred within me. This was not just about my daughter. It was a reflection, an echo of something far greater. It awakened again a longing that lives within every believer: the longing for reunification with Yeshua, our Bridegroom.

The Greater Story We Are Living

From Genesis to Revelation, the Scriptures are framed by the language of covenant and marriage. The story of redemption is not merely legal—it is relational. It is not just about forgiveness—it is about union.

The prophets spoke of Israel as the bride of Adonai. Even in seasons of unfaithfulness, the Lord's heart burned with covenant love: *"I will betroth you to Me forever; yes, I will betroth you to Me in righteousness and in justice, in covenant loyalty and in compassion."* (Hosea 2:21)

This is not the language of distant obligation. This is the language of passionate commitment.

And when Yeshua came, He stepped directly into that prophetic identity. He referred to Himself as the Bridegroom (Matthew 9:15). His ministry was not only about proclaiming the Kingdom—it was about preparing a people.

The apostle Paul makes this even more explicit:



“For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Messiah.” (2 Corinthians 11:2)

And the culmination of all things is described in unmistakable terms: *“Let us rejoice and be glad and give Him the glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and His bride has made herself ready.” (Revelation 19:7)*

This is our destiny. We are not just redeemed servants—we are the Bride.

A People Prepared

At my daughter’s wedding, preparation was everything. The dress, the ceremony, the vows—none of it happened by accident. There was intentionality behind every detail.

In the same way, Scripture calls us to be a prepared people. The parable of the ten virgins (Matthew 25:1-13) is not simply about waiting—it is about readiness. Five were wise because they were prepared. Five were foolish because they assumed there would always be more time.

Preparation is not passive. It is active, deliberate, and costly.

We prepare through holiness.
We prepare through obedience.
We prepare through alignment with His Word and His Spirit.
The bride does not prepare herself out of fear—but out of love.

Fanning the Flame of Love

One of the most powerful aspects of a wedding is the unmistakable affection between the bride and groom. There is anticipation. There is delight. There is joy.



But love is not meant to peak on the wedding day and then fade. It is meant to grow. Yeshua spoke a sobering word to the congregation in Ephesus: *“I have this against you, that you have forsaken your first love.”* (Revelation 2:4)

They had doctrine. They had perseverance. They had good works. But they had lost the flame of love. This is a warning for us. We can become faithful in activity while drifting in affection. We can serve the Bridegroom without truly longing for Him.

To long for Yeshua means we cultivate intimacy. We prioritize His presence. We return again and again to that place of first love. Love must be tended. The flame must be fanned.

Confronting Our Own Hearts

Every marriage requires the ongoing work of dealing with selfishness. No couple steps into covenant fully perfected. There are habits, attitudes, and patterns that must be refined over time. The same is true in our relationship with the Lord.

Our propensity toward selfishness and worldliness does not disappear the moment we come to faith. It must be confronted. James writes with piercing clarity: **“Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.”** (James 4:8)





This is not condemnation—it is an invitation. The Bridegroom is not looking for perfection, but for devotion. When we fall short, the pathway is always open: repentance. Repentance is not merely turning from sin—it is turning back toward love. It is how we realign ourselves with the covenant.

Covenant Faithfulness

At the wedding, vows were spoken. Not casual promises, but covenant commitments. Vows like: “In sickness and in health.” “For richer or for poorer.” “Till death do us part.”

These vows carry weight because they are not based on circumstances—they are rooted in covenant. Our relationship with Yeshua is built on the same foundation. He has already demonstrated His faithfulness. At the execution stake, He sealed the covenant with His own blood. He did not waver. He did not withdraw. He did not reconsider.

Now, we are invited to respond.
To walk faithfully before Him.
To remain steadfast in love.
To choose Him again and again—even when it costs us something.

And when we fail—and we will—we do not run from Him. We return to Him because covenant is sustained not by perfection, but by faithfulness.

Is the Joy Stirring In You?

There is a moment at every wedding when the atmosphere shifts. The vows have been spoken. The covenant has been sealed. And suddenly, joy erupts. Laughter. Celebration. Dancing. It is the joy of union. The joy of belonging. The joy of a future secured together.

The questions we must ask ourselves is this:

- Is that joy stirring in us?
- Do we feel the anticipation of what is coming?
- Do we live with the awareness that this present age is not the end of the story?

The Scriptures paint a breathtaking picture of what lies ahead: *“Behold, the dwelling of God is among men, and He shall tabernacle among them. They shall be His people, and God Himself shall be among them.”* (Revelation 21:3)

This is the ultimate wedding. The full reunification of heaven and earth. The Bride and the Bridegroom together—forever!

Don't Lose the Longing

In a world filled with distractions, urgency, and competing affections, it is easy to lose the longing. We can become consumed with the immediate and forget the eternal. We can settle into routine and lose sight of destiny.

But we were not created for routine. We were created for relationship. We were created for union. The longing for Yeshua is not something to suppress—it is something to protect.



It keeps our hearts tender.
It keeps our priorities aligned.
It keeps our vision clear.

Like a bride awaiting her wedding day,
we are meant to live with anticipation.

As I reflect on my daughter's wedding,
I realize that what made it so powerful
was not the decorations, the music, or
even the ceremony itself.

It was love.
Covenant love.

Joy-filled, anticipatory, enduring love.
And that is exactly what Yeshua desires
with us.

So let us be a people prepared. Let us
be a people who fan the flame of our
love. Let us confront our own hearts
with humility and courage. Let us walk
in covenant faithfulness before Him.
And above all—let us not lose the
longing.

Because the day is coming. The
chuppah is being prepared. The
Bridegroom is ready. And soon, very
soon, we will hear the call: "Behold, the
Bridegroom! Come out to meet Him!"

May that anticipation stir within us
again. May it shape how we live today.
And may we be found ready—radiant,
faithful, and full of joy—on the day we
see Him face to face.


Benjamin Juster
Editor in Chief



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And when we fail
—and we will—we do
not run from them.

We return to them

because covenant is

sustained not by

perfection, but by

faithfulness.

||

BENJAMIN JUSTER

By Juleon Akana




Freedom

Biblical Authority and Freedom

Freedom is a word we use constantly, yet rarely stop to define. In our world, freedom is usually understood as personal autonomy: answering to no one, defining your own truth, living without restraint. The Scriptures, however, tells a very different story. Biblical freedom is not the absence of authority or boundaries, but instead, it is the presence of truth. True freedom does not begin when chains fall off. It begins when truth is revealed.

That is why the story of the Exodus does not begin with plagues or miracles. It begins with a Name. Before God moves, before He rescues, before He judges Egypt, He speaks: **“I am YHWH.”** Authority is established before action. Identity comes before deliverance. Exodus 6:6 records God’s promise to Israel:

“I will free you from the oppression of the Egyptians, rescue you from their servitude, and redeem you.”



From the Scriptures, we are repeatedly told why God does this - So that “... *they will know that I am YHWH.*” Freedom in the Bible is never vague or self-defined. It is always anchored to knowing who truly rules.

What Freedom Actually Means

The Torah speaks of *herut*; freedom that leads to right relationship. Not freedom from responsibility, but freedom toward life, covenant, and truth. This is why God says, “*The children of Israel are My servants.*” That language sounds offensive to modern ears, but it reveals a truth we often avoid: everyone serves something, and the true God knows what humanity clings to in secret.

Pharaoh rules by death and submission, while God rules in His kingdom with life and transformation. Pharaoh builds his kingdom through fear and slavery. God builds His kingdom by restoring dignity, identity, and purpose. Pharaoh takes; God gives. This is the dividing line. The question is never whether you will serve, but whom you will serve, and what that service produces in you.

When Freedom First Looks Like Things Are Getting Worse

There is a moment early in Exodus that reshapes our understanding of freedom. In Exodus 5, Moses and Aaron obey God and speak His word to Pharaoh. This should be the breakthrough. Instead, oppression intensifies. The workload increases. Straw is removed. The people are punished for daring to hope.

This is not failure. This is the beginning of rescue. Israel is still breathing Egyptian air, still enslaved, still trapped in what is essentially an open-air prison. Nothing looks free yet. And that is precisely when God speaks again. When the Word of God enters a system of oppression, it threatens power. However, Pharaoh does not respond with repentance; instead, he responds with pressure. This is how false gods react when their authority is challenged. Freedom is often costly at first because those who profit from bondage do not let go quietly. This pattern does not end in Exodus. It reaches its fullest expression in Yeshua.

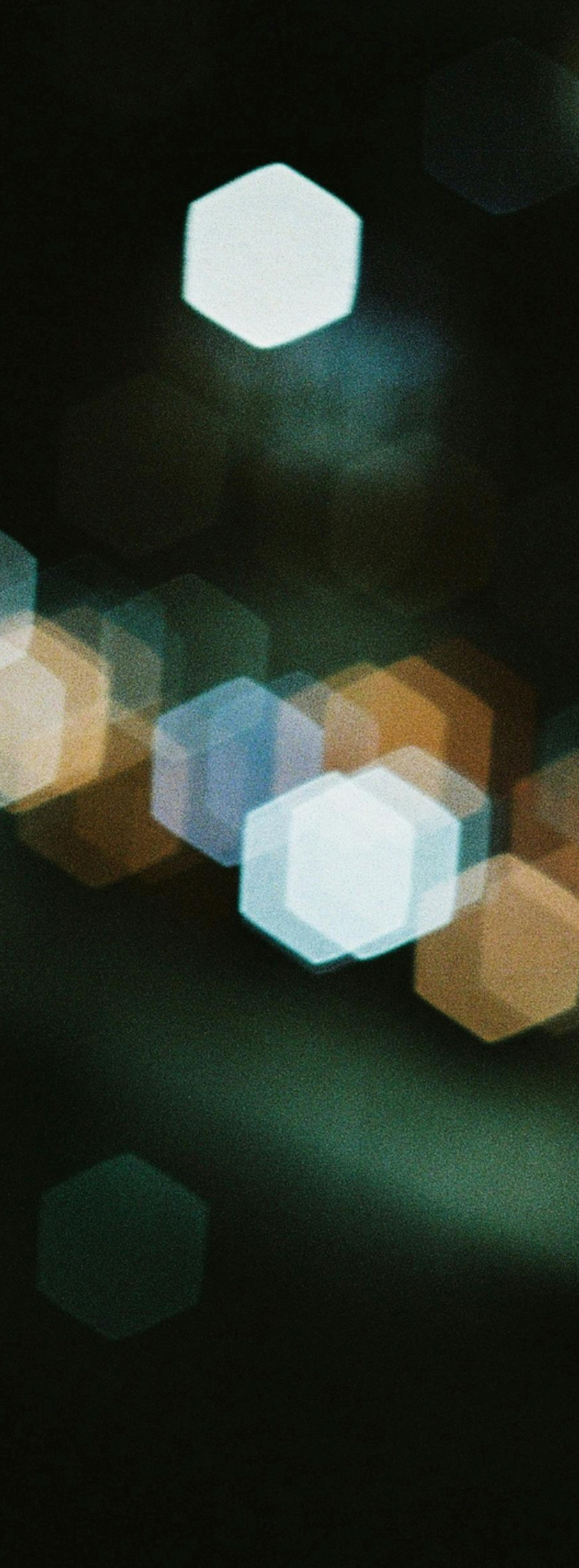
Isaiah prophesied that Messiah would come “to proclaim freedom for the captives,” and when Yeshua arrived, He entered an Israel that had been falsely accused, occupied, exiled, and reduced to vassal status under foreign powers. Rome called it peace. Heaven called it bondage.

When the Word became flesh and spoke truth openly, the response was not immediate liberation. It was resistance, accusation, and ultimately the cross. Freedom always provokes opposition before it produces deliverance.

Rav Shaul explains why: no one is set free unless someone speaks the Word of God. Faith comes by hearing. Chains do not break themselves. Lies do not dismantle themselves. Truth must be proclaimed into captivity.

Yet Yeshua also warns about what happens next. When the Word is sown, it is like a seed. Not every heart is ready soil.





Some receive it with joy, but when pressure comes—when resistance rises, and the cost becomes real—the enemy moves quickly to destroy its growth. Rocky soil cannot sustain what truth demands.


This is why hearing the Word can initially make life harder, not easier. The message threatens false power. Pharaoh responds with oppression. The enemy responds with resistance. That resistance is not proof of failure; it is proof that the Word has landed.

How Empires Justify Themselves

Every empire tells the same story. Egypt said, “These people are dangerous.” Rome said, “Peace requires crucifixion.” Modern ideologies say, “Justice requires silence,” or “Freedom requires blood.” Egypt did not fall because it was pagan. It fell because it claimed divine authority. Pharaohs rise wherever submission is demanded while accountability to God is rejected. Wherever people are required to bow without being transformed, Egypt is alive and well.

October 7th was not complicated; instead, it was revealing. Families were murdered. Women were brutalized, and children were kidnapped. What followed should have shocked the conscience of the world. Instead it was excuses, justifications, and celebrations of violence.

This is how Pharaoh survives. He never says, “I am evil.” He says, “I am necessary.” When a society explains away evil instead of mourning it, it has already chosen its master. Antisemitism always follows moral confusion, because when truth is threatened, the Jewish people are often blamed.



When Israel is demonized for existing, truth itself is under attack.

False Freedom Built on Forced Submission

This is not about ethnicity; it is about systems. Ezekiel condemns Egypt not for being Egyptian, but for ruling without accountability to God. Any religious or political system that enforces submission without transforming the heart is replaying Pharaoh's role.

This must be said clearly: examining ideas is not hatred. Systems can be critiqued without demonizing people. Islam, when functioning as a governing ideology, emphasizes submission enforced externally—socially, legally, politically. Wherever belief becomes coercive power, the pattern repeats: restricted speech, controlled women, punished dissent, justified violence.

When the Islamic regime claims that Iranians are free, it is almost like stating that prisoners are also free to exist within the boundaries of a prison cell. That is not freedom. It is Egypt all over again, existing in oppressive political systems.

Muslims themselves are often the first victims of these systems. Look at Iran. Women burning hijabs. Young men are dying in the streets. People crying out not for chaos, but for dignity. God hears those cries just as He heard Israel's cries in Egypt.

If speaking the truth brings pressure, that does not mean you were wrong. If obedience makes life harder at first,

that does not mean God has abandoned you. If proclaiming freedom provokes backlash, that does not mean the message failed, but that Pharaoh heard you.

Our responsibility is not to control outcomes, but to speak faithfully. To plant even when conditions worsen. To trust that God is working beyond what we can see.

Israel did not leave Egypt the day Moses spoke, but Egypt's days were numbered the moment God's truth entered the system, and the same is true now. Stand for truth in a world that desperately needs moral clarity. Speak the Word into oppressive systems. Dismantle the enemy's strongholds.

More than ever before, this is what is needed in modern times to “open the prison doors to those who are bound.”



Freedom always provokes
opposition before it
produces *deliverance*

JULEON AKANA



The Circle of Love Explained



WAYNE HILSDEN

A beautiful picture emerges in Scripture in the New Covenant of the mutual love and unity shared between Jewish and Gentile believers in the family of God. We call this the “Circle of Love.” When rightly understood, in an alignment, it reveals a flow of blessing and mercy going first from Israel to the Nations and, ultimately, returning from the Nations back to Israel, fulfilling God’s end-time purposes.

This article will demonstrate—through biblical exegesis and a more careful look at history—that such Reconnection between Jew and Gentile is central to God’s plan of salvation and intimately tied to the Lord’s return. The following are six fundamental components of the Circle of Love that are necessary to achieve The Reconnection.





1. THE FOUNDATION FOR THE CIRCLE OF LOVE: YESHUA'S CALL TO ONENESS

In John 17, Yeshua prays that all believers “*may be one ... so that the world may believe*” (vv. 21-23). This unity is rooted in love. He had already commanded, “*A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another.... By this all people will know that you are my disciples*” (John 13:34-35 ESV).

Yet this “new command” is actually the deepening of the Great Commandment of Israel, the Shema: “*Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one*” (Deut. 6:4). Yeshua affirmed the Shema and added the second commandment: “*Love your neighbor as yourself*” (see Mark 12:29-31).

Yeshua did not overturn Israel’s central creed but revealed that faithful obedience culminates in sacrificial love for God and neighbor and that through this love, the world would know Him and us. Love is the greatest call and must now melt away many of the divisions that exist between us in the Ecclesia (Body of Messiah).

The oneness that Yeshua prays for is not merely abstract. In Ephesians 2:14-16, Paul explains that our Messiah has broken down “*the dividing wall of hostility*” so that Jews and Gentiles “*might be reconciled ... in one Body.*” This “One New Man” (v. 15) is a core part of Paul’s vision for the Body of Messiah, *combining* both Israel’s heritage and the Gentiles’ inclusion to form a single family in the Messiah.

We see, then, that God's Heart for love and unity in John 17 and Ephesians 2 necessarily includes the healing of the oldest breach in salvation history: the separation between Jew and Gentile. This love—vertical (God and us), full of the Father's and Yeshua's love, and horizontal (our love for one another)—constitutes the Circle of Love. This love equation must now be realized to bring us to the complete unity that Yeshua prayed for before entering Gethsemane (see John 17:23).

2. THE FLOW OF COVENANTS AND THE ROLE OF ISRAEL

Romans 9:4-5 (ESV) reminds us that to Israel belongs "the adoption, the glory, the covenants ... and from their race, according to the flesh, is the [Messiah], who is God over all, blessed forever." Every covenant—Abrahamic, Mosaic, Davidic, and even the promised New Covenant—was first entrusted to Israel. Jeremiah prophesied this New Covenant to the house of Israel and Judah, whereby the law of God would be put into our minds and written on our hearts (see Jeremiah 31:31-34). The New Covenant points forward to the day the Messiah will inaugurate it through His death and resurrection.

Yeshua, a Jewish Messiah, fulfilled the law and the prophets. He then commissioned the early Jewish apostles to carry the Good News outward: "*You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth*" (Acts 1:8 ESV). Paul, in Romans 1:16 (ESV), affirms that the Gospel is "*the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.*"



3. LOVE'S RETURN: GENTILES PROVOKING ISRAEL TO JEALOUSY

Nevertheless, Paul looks forward to a day when the mercy poured out on Gentile believers will provoke those of Israel who are still hardened to faith: *“Just as you who were at one time disobedient to God have now received mercy as a result of their disobedience, so they too have now become disobedient in order that they too may now receive mercy as a result of God’s mercy to you”* (Rom. 11:30–31).

According to this mystery in Romans 11:25–26, Israel’s ultimate acceptance of Yeshua as Messiah is linked to *“the fullness of the Gentiles”* coming in, and in this way, “all Israel” will be saved. Paul envisions a future when Israel’s partial hardening will cease, and the circle of divine mercy will be complete—Jew and Gentile together, One New Family in the Messiah.

This mutuality—Jewish believers carrying the Gospel to the Nations, followed by Gentile believers returning mercy and blessing to Israel—perfectly completes the Circle of Love.

4. THE FIG TREE AND THE TRANSFER OF AUTHORITY—AN EXAMPLE OF COVENANT TRANSITION

In Mark 11:12–14, Yeshua cursed a fig tree that bears no fruit and immediately confronted the temple’s corrupt leadership. From a parallel passage referring to this incident, Yeshua says to the religious leaders, *“May you never bear fruit again!”* (Matt. 21:19).

Then, returning to the Mark 11 passage, we see that following the fig tree episode, Yeshua speaks about a mountain being moved into the sea, which requires a greater understanding (see Mark 11:20–24). While interpreters vary on the specifics, some evangelical commentators recognize that the barren fig tree and the mountain cast into the sea symbolize the fruitless religious authority that refuses to heed the Messiah.

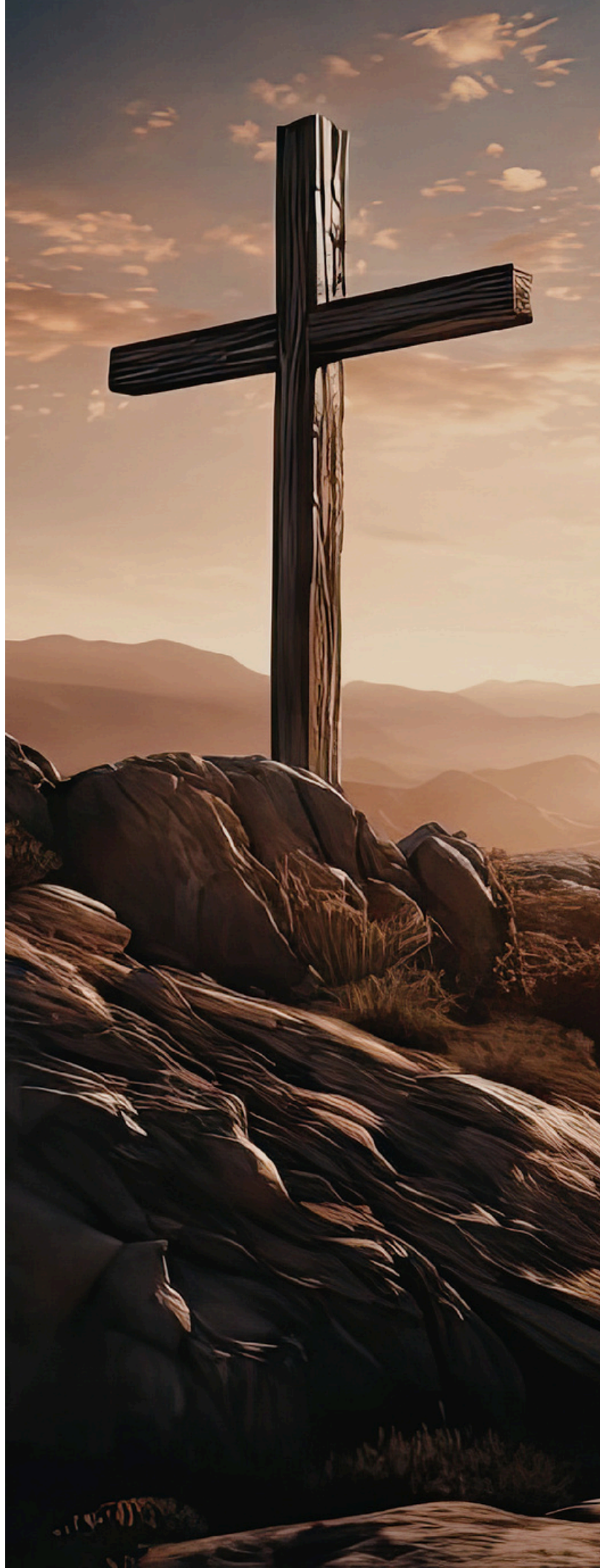


Through His crucifixion and resurrection, Yeshua establishes the New Covenant in a new era, implementing a leadership transition. The point is, it is still Israel bringing out the message of the Gospel so the Nations may share and be grafted in. Shortly thereafter (Acts 2), Yeshua pours out the Holy Spirit in Jerusalem at Pentecost/Shavu'ot. He thereby shifts the locus of authority to a renewed Israel: the apostles and the Jewish believers who embraced His atoning work, who ultimately take Yeshua out to the Nations.

Even before His crucifixion, Yeshua anticipated the spread of the Gospel beyond the Jewish people. In John 10:16 (KJV), He declares, *“And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice, and there will be one flock with one shepherd.”* Furthermore, in John 17, He addressed the Father: *“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message”* (John 17:20 TLV).

Just who are “those” if it was not principally the Gentile world that was to receive the message of the Gospel, the Lord commissioned to His disciples? (See Matthew 28:18–20.)

From there, the Gospel went to Samaritans (see Acts 8) and Gentiles (see Acts 10). In this sense, Yeshua did not cast off Israel entirely; instead, He transferred spiritual leadership from unbelieving authorities to the faithful remnant within Israel who would now fulfill Israel's call—those who would



bless the Nations: *“I will make you as a light for the Nations, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth”* (Isa. 49:6 ESV).

Some see this transfer of authority symbolically completed by Yeshua through the imagery of the mountain moved into the sea, paving the way for the New Covenant to be fully revealed while maintaining Israel’s calling. Then, through the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, believing Jews took the message to the Nations so that Gentiles might also believe, become united with Messiah, and become one with Israel. This act of transfer was granted to Yeshua and His Jewish and non-Jewish followers, who together are now members of Israel and its Commonwealth—forming the One New Humanity that the Father seeks to restore as Israel comes back to life spiritually.

Yet the broader point is that, for the New Covenant era, the family torch is now meant to burn in *both* Jewish and Gentile hands. We need to *appreciate* what believing Israel has done for us, where we came from, and how we are a part of Israel and connected to them, and the significance of this oneness. **We need to understand our responsibility to give back to the rest of Israel now to complete the final *arc of the circle* and to fully restore the family of God.**

When we read Romans 11 holistically, it becomes clear that this transition does not end with Israel’s rejection; *it anticipates Israel’s return*, which is





now in process. Thus, the cursing of the fig tree and the moving of this mountain symbolize Yeshua transferring the Father's authority to prepare the way for a renewed Israel—those who honor the Messiah as LORD and Savior—first among Jewish believers and then expanding to Gentiles, ultimately culminating in Israel's restoration.

5. CHURCH HISTORY AND THE NEED FOR RESTORATION

Tragically, as the Body of Messiah grew in the Roman world, anti-Jewish sentiments also grew. Councils and the Church Fathers (notably after the fourth century) increasingly distanced the Christian faith from its Jewish roots. While the Council of Nicaea (325 AD) brought needed order and doctrinal clarity (e.g., affirming Jesus's deity against Arianism), it also reflected and accelerated a schism from Israel's biblical heritage. Harsh attitudes and policies against Jews began to shape the wider Body, introducing a wedge between Christians and Jews.

This rift deepened through Medieval Europe and beyond, with Replacement Theology asserting that the Gentile Church had superseded Israel entirely. This development ignored Paul's warning: *"Do not be arrogant ... remember it is not you who support the root, but the root that supports you"* (Rom. 11:18 ESV). In time, they lost much of this dynamic love and unity seen in Acts 2–4. It became internally divided (eventually leading to the Reformation) and overshadowed by institutionalism.

However, the horrors of the Holocaust, the rebirth of the State of Israel in 1948, and the taking back of Jerusalem's sovereignty in 1967 initiated a significant move in the Spirit, with many thousands of Jewish souls once again coming to know Yeshua. The stage was set for restoring what was lost in that ancient breach—namely, genuine love and partnership between Jewish and Gentile believers and a practical outworking of Yeshua's prayer in John 17 to achieve love and unity as the "One New Man" of Ephesians 2.

6. COMPLETING THE CIRCLE: RETURNING LOVE TO ISRAEL

Today, the Circle of Love calls for believers from the Nations to echo Ruth's words to Naomi: *"Your people will be my people, and your God my God"* (Ruth 1:16). Ruth, a Gentile, devoted herself to the well-being of a Jewish family, foreshadowing how Gentile believers can stand with the Jewish people in prayer, service, and Gospel witness. This is no mere sentiment: it is Scripture's invitation to help bring Israel to jealousy and ultimate salvation (see Romans 11:11-15).

Ultimately, this circle—Jewish believers blessing the Nations and Gentile believers returning mercy to Israel—points us toward the day our Messiah Jesus returns in glory. As Yeshua said in Matthew 23:39 (ESV), *"You will not see me again, until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'"*

Many biblical interpreters conclude that Israel's national recognition of Yeshua of Nazareth as Messiah is deeply intertwined with His Second Coming. Yeshua ties His future return to the reception He receives from Jerusalem, indicating that Israel's acknowledgment of Him is part of God's redemptive timetable.





LIVING OUT THE CIRCLE OF LOVE

In practical terms, living out the Circle of Love involves four key steps:

Gentile Believers embrace the biblical Jewish roots of their faith—not to become “Jewish” but to reconnect in love and unity in the Heart of the Father and stand beside their Jewish brothers and sisters in partnership, with humility, love, and prayer (see Romans 11:18–20).

Jewish Believers likewise affirm the full inclusion of Gentiles as coheirs in Messiah (Ephesians 3:6). Both groups hold equal standing in salvation, and each brings unique gifts.

Together, we fulfill John 17 oneness in daily acts of love, unity in worship, collaborative Gospel outreach, and theological understanding that cherishes both unity and diversity.

We remain watchful for God’s end-time purposes, remembering that Israel’s salvation and the global harvest among the Nations are interdependent (see Romans 11:12, 15). Romans 11:36 says, *“For from him and through him and for him are all things. To him be glory forever! Amen.”* This glorious doxology emerges after Paul’s discourse on God’s mysterious plan to save both Gentiles and Jews.

May we joyfully participate in completing this divine Circle of Love, allowing God’s reconciling power to shape us into the “spotless bride” that Yeshua prayed for (see John 17:23; Ephesians 5:27).



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WAYNE HILSDEN



THE PEOPLE OF GOD IN THE LAST GENERATION

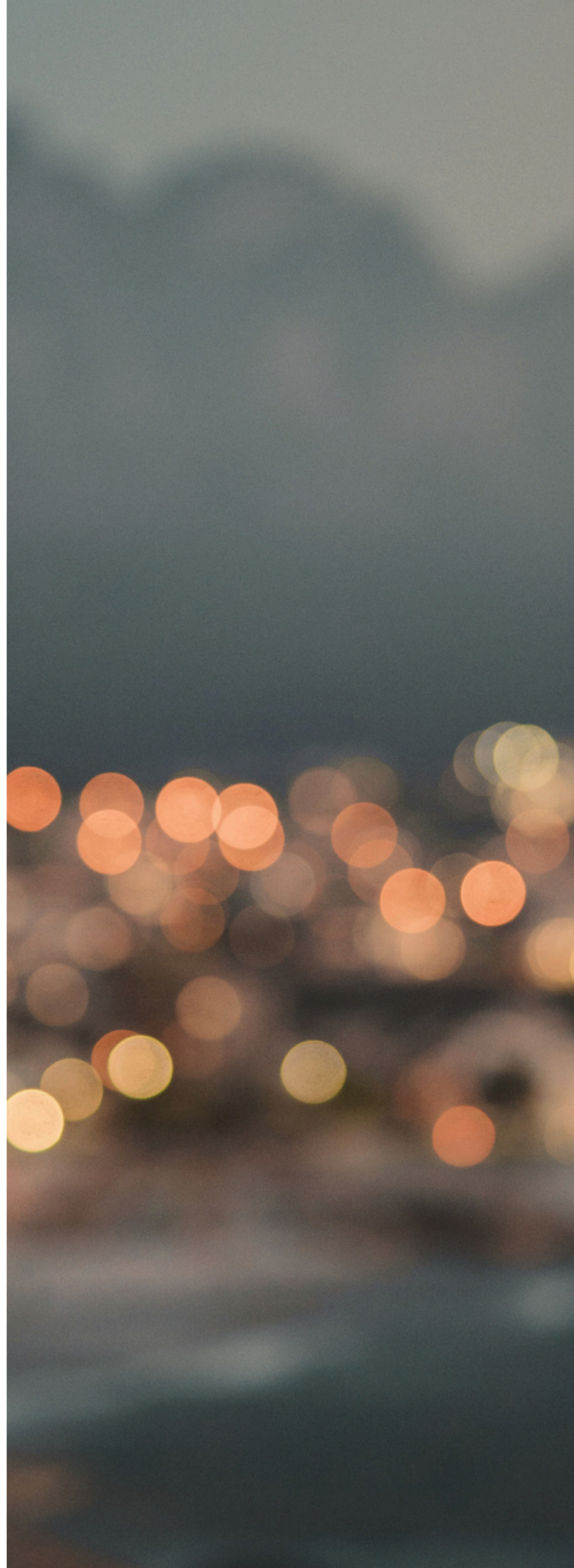
ALEXANDER BLAIR

Few passages have captured the believer's imagination as much as the prophetic events surrounding the Second Coming of the Messiah. Even in Matthew 24, Yeshua's own discourse on wars, rumors of wars, deception, persecution, and lawlessness has echoed through every century since it was spoken. Each generation, reading the signs of its own moment, has felt the weight of imminence. In the first century, John, the writer of the book of Revelation, ended the book by saying, "Come Quickly!" It is hard for me to believe that the people of God in the First or Second World War were without the sense that they were in the generation of the return.

Plagues, collapsing empires, moral decay, technological upheaval, and global conflict have repeatedly convinced believers that they were standing at the edge of prophetic times. In that sense, the question is not whether this generation feels the impending return of Yeshua the Messiah, but whether any generation has not.

Paul, writing to the Thessalonians, urges caution and patience. He insists that the “day of the Lord has not yet come” and exhorts the body not to be shaken by rumors or prophetic claims (2 Thess. 2). Rather than fueling anxiety or triumphalism, Paul calls believers to endurance. To a faithful suffering in the present age. The apostolic posture is not frantic calculation, but steady perseverance and witness, even when Titus was slaughtering Jerusalem or Nero was burning believers at the stake.

This tension has given rise to different theologies of the timing of the Messiah's return. Some emphasize imminence, reading current events through an eschatological lens that sees the tribulation ready to kick off at any moment. A position that I typically feel the strongest pull towards. Others stress the "already-and-not-yet" nature of the kingdom, warning against overconfidence in assigning timelines or making assumptions about the importance of current global figures within prophecy. What unites these perspectives, however, is the recognition that the people of God live in a prolonged season of waiting and witnessing.





Understandably, many believers today feel as though the world has never been more sinful or self-absorbed. It is the truth that the level of corruption seems to be greater than in any generation before us. The acceleration of technology, the fragmentation of community, and the erosion of shared moral frameworks can make the present moment feel uniquely dark. We earnestly long to be freed from this life of bondage. Romans 8 recounts that the entire creation itself is groaning while it waits for the “Sons of God” to be revealed.

And yet, paradoxically, we are often slow to cultivate the kind of hearts and communities capable of standing through the type of persecution which the Scriptures speak of.

The New Testament offers an extreme hope and triumph at the end of the story. But also discusses great suffering and struggle as we approach the generation before the Second Coming. In Hebrews 11:32-38, the author recounts not only the victories of faith, but its costs. After naming great figures of deliverance and conquest, the text turns abruptly to “the others” in verse 35 - those who were tortured, imprisoned, mocked, and even killed.

These faithful ones refused release, choosing suffering in hope of a better resurrection. They wandered destitute and homeless, living in caves and in deserts. The world, the author concludes, was not worthy of them.

Paul echoes this same reality in 1 Corinthians 4:8-13, dismantling any notion that apostolic faith leads to honor or ease. He describes the apostles as a public spectacle - paraded before the universe, condemned like criminals in an arena. Hungry, thirsty, poorly clothed, brutally treated, and homeless, they respond to curses with blessings and to slander with kindness. *"We have become the scum of the earth," Paul writes, "the garbage of the world - right up to this moment."* This is not the language of political ascendancy or cultural dominance; it is the language of cruciform faithfulness.

And yet, in much of the Western church, there is a growing desire to be platformed rather than purified. Visibility is often prized over obedience, influence over integrity. This is why we see so much territorialism in the body, and leaders falling from moral failures monthly.

Many long for prophetic relevance, cultural clout, or political salvation from the current administrations, imagining a near future in which things will finally "get better" through the right leaders or movements. Scripture, however, offers no promise that the people of God's final chapter before the Messiah's return will be one of comfort or acclaim.

The sobering truth is that most of the faithful will never be known. Hebrews 11 deliberately leaves many unnamed.



Their stories are not recorded in Scripture, their works not celebrated in sermons, their lives not remembered by history. And yet their names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life. Heaven remembers what earth forgets. Quiet obedience, unseen endurance, and patient suffering matter profoundly in the records of Heaven.

Perhaps the true sign of the times is not how close we think we are to the end, but whether we are becoming the kind of people who can remain faithful if the end is not yet. Yeshua's warnings in Matthew 24 are less about predicting dates and more about forming a lifestyle of discipleship. People who will not be deceived, who will endure to the end, and whose love will not grow cold.

The call of God's people in every generation is not to escape suffering, but to bear faithful witness through it. Trusting that whether the Messiah returns tomorrow or in a future generation, obedience is never wasted.

I am deeply persuaded that the generation that which will be present on the earth before the King's arrival will be the greatest company of sufferers and witnesses ever born. Let us pursue the upward call of the Messiah, and that strength may be granted to us to stand in these days.



QUIET
Obedience
UNSEEN
ENDURANCE
PATIENT
Suffering

MATTER PROFOUNDLY IN THE RECORDS OF HEAVEN

ALEXANDER BLAIR



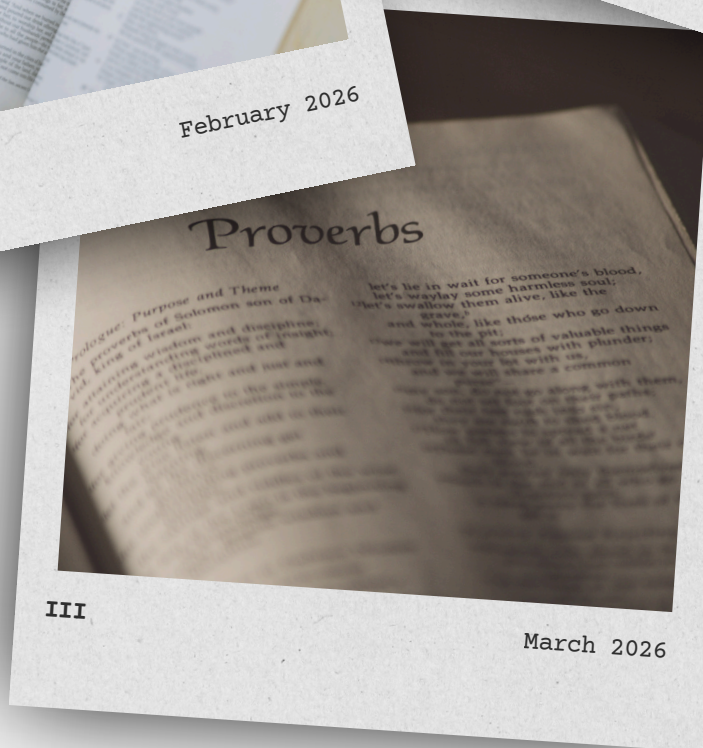
II

February 2026



I

January 2026



III

March 2026

The Proverbial Discipleship Manual

MARTY SHOUB

In the 1980s, I served as a counselor at an alternative-to-custody residential program for young criminal offenders. The program director exemplified the “tough love” hero from a troubled-teenager redemption film—a charismatic yet stern cowboy, always in his Stetson hat and boots, with a short fuse and a heart of gold. Each morning, he led eight young men through a “life skills” program rooted in an unconventional curriculum: the Book of Proverbs.



The Generational Transfer of Wisdom

The Book of Proverbs serves as a discipleship manual. It is structured as a father's instructions to his sons, passing down the wisdom he once received from his own father. As Proverbs 4:3-4 recounts: "*When I was a son with my father, tender, the only one in the sight of my mother, he taught me and said to me, 'Let your heart hold fast my words; keep my commandments, and live.'*" This generational transfer of wisdom reflects God's purpose in choosing Abraham to bless all the families of the earth. The blessing for all families begins with personal instructions to Abraham's own family, "*For I have chosen him, that he command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice, so that the LORD may bring to Abraham what He has promised him.*" (Genesis 18:19)

Similarly, Yeshua's call to make disciples of all nations—like Abraham's call—starts at home, first with our own discipleship. It is our responsibility to teach and guide our own children. The book of Proverbs is divided into thirty-one chapters.

Is it a coincidence that this predisposes one towards reading one chapter a day every month? Perhaps, but I have always found reading schedules to be helpful.

Proverbs 4: The Discipleship Manual Outline

Proverbs 4 outlines the essential values Solomon wished to instill in his sons. These values are not limited to children; they serve as foundational principles for disciples of all ages. To glean important discipleship principles, I am highlighting four key passages within the chapter that begin with the call to pay attention. Each passage (Prov. 4:1; 10; 20; and 23) calls for sons to "hear" their father's instructions.

Paying Attention: The Foundation of Discipleship

Proverbs 4:1 begins: *"Hear, O sons, a father's instruction, and be attentive, that you may gain insight..."* Educators sometimes complain of instructions "falling on deaf ears." To receive instruction requires focused attention, careful listening, and a willingness to internalize these teachings into one's everyday life.

Attentiveness is essential for every disciple, especially in times of uncertainty. As Yeshua warned, *'See that no one leads you astray'* (Mark 13:5). Staying alert helps us recognize the truth and avoid deception in our daily walk. The Olivet Discourse, Yeshua's instructions to His disciples for enduring the tribulation, and repeatedly urges us to stay alert, to be on guard, and not fall asleep.

Attentiveness is foundational to the process of discipleship.



The Necessity of Walking the Right Path

Listening is the beginning; putting what we have heard into practice is the required next step. Solomon repeats his admonition to 'hear' his words and follows the admonition with a promise: "Hear my son, and accept my words... when you walk, your step will not be hampered, and if you run, you will not stumble" (Proverbs 4:10-12). We pay attention so that we can walk in the right path. Discipleship is dynamic—we must "walk it out" in our daily lives. Hearing must be followed up by doing.

The earliest manual for Messianic discipleship, the Didache, was written sometime around the end of the first century. The manual emphasizes the importance of practically living out these teachings. The first line of instruction of the Didache focuses on walking the right path: "There are two ways, one of life and one of death, and there is a great difference between the two ways."

Sometimes we balk at the admonition to focus on what we do. We remember that our salvation is by faith, not works. But a disciple knows that what we do matters. It is not an issue of justification. It is remembering who we are. Paul put it this way: "*At one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light*" (Eph. 5:9).

Jacob's Example

Solomon continues, "*Keep hold of instruction; do not let go; guard her, for she is your life*" (Pr. 4:13). This grabbing on and not letting go reminds me of Jacob wrestling with Yeshua in Genesis 32. Jacob was far from the perfect disciple, but after years of struggle, he knew that once you found the source of life, you grasped hold, and no matter what, you did not let go. Disciples press on; we stick to it. Like Paul, we keep pursuing... taking hold of that for which Messiah Yeshua took hold of us. (Phil. 3:12)





The Heart is the Heart of the Matter

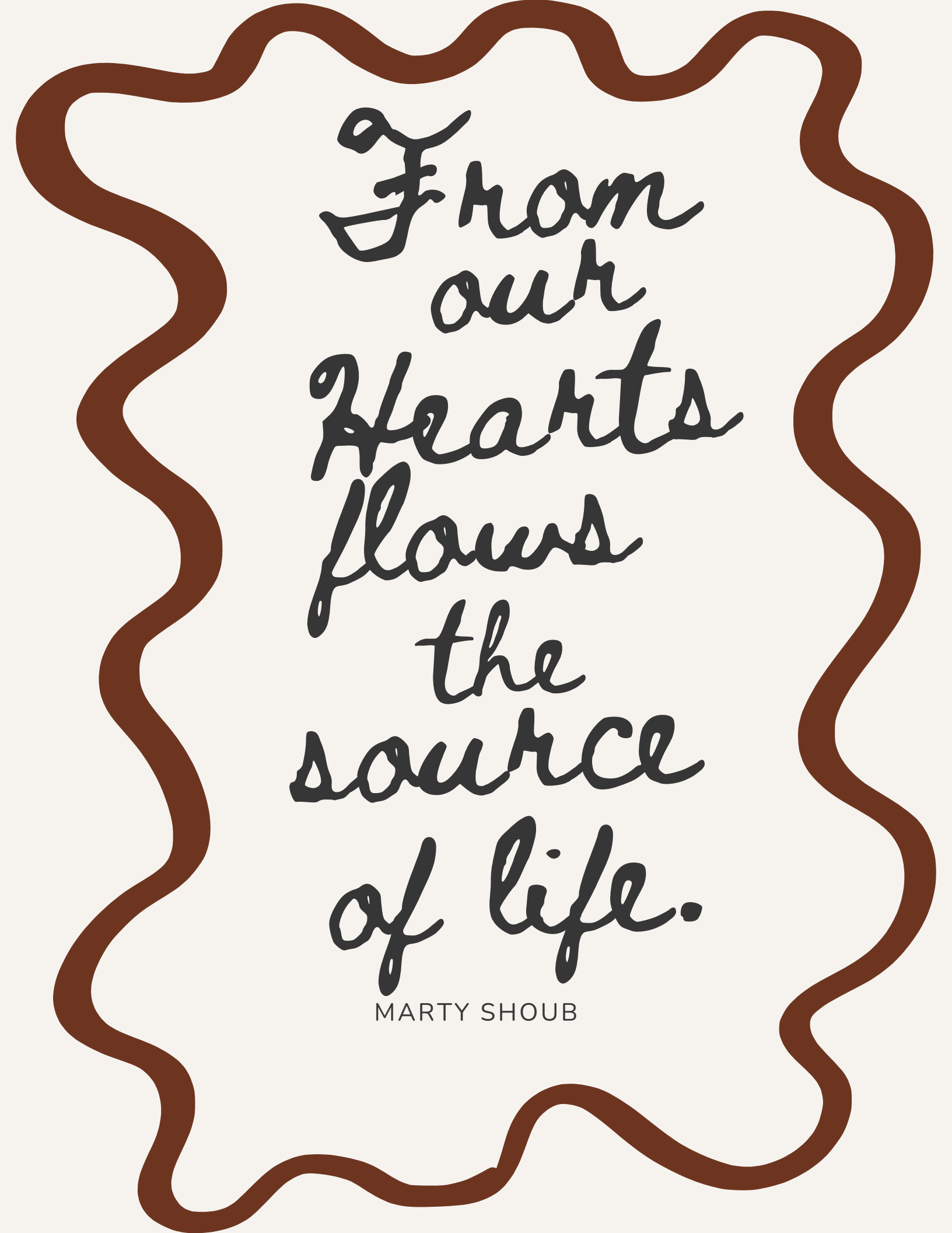
Solomon's final *"Pay attention"* centers on the guarding of one's heart: *"My son, be attentive to my words; incline your ear to my sayings. Let them not escape from your sight; keep them within your heart. For they are life to those who find them, and healing to all their flesh"* (Prov. 4:20-22). We have come full circle, back to hearing attentively, guarding the precious word we have received that is both healing and life-giving. Yeshua said, *"The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life"* (John 6:63).

Holding fast to the Word of God is a matter of the heart. We pay attention, we walk on the righteous path, we stick to it because we love Him with all our heart. Solomon warned us, *"Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life"* (Prov. 4:23). Discipleship flows from our hearts. If our heart is protected from evil, we pay attention, we walk the righteous path, we endure hardship, and we treasure God's word.

The NASB translates the word 'diligence' for the Hebrew word *"mishmar."* Mishmar is the nominal form of the common Hebrew word *"shomer"*, meaning to 'keep/guard.' In the Torah, *mishmar* is often translated as 'custody.' Solomon is not saying, "put your heart in jail," but the imagery is helpful. We are to guard our hearts with the same diligence required to guard prisoners in confinement.

From our heart flows the source of our life. We begin the journey by intently hearing the words of life, treasuring them in our hearts, guarding them with all diligence as we walk the path of righteousness. This is a template for discipleship. The words of wisdom we apply to move forward on the path of righteousness.





From
our
Hearts
flows
the
source
of life.

MARTY SHOUB

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