

Sticks and Stones on Sabbath

Underneath that pile of stones laid a man who had no understanding of his need for a relationship with his Maker. Bruised and buried, that man represents all of those who do not yet understand that Messiah has come – that Messiah was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities.

Tzedek, Tzadik, & Tzedakah: Matthew 6:3-4 through a Hebraic lens

Charitable giving is tracked, graphed, sought-after, solicited, pleaded for, telethoned for . . . and for good reason – there is a healthy motivation when all parties involved win. But how charitable is our charitable giving, if it is done for a reward?

How Genesis 1:2 can help you lead a friend to the LORD (and away from the Jehovah's

Witness movement)

Parashat B'reishit ([Genesis 1:1-6:8](#)) (Updated 10/13/2022 5783 B"H)

Beginning at the Beginning

Each year after [Sukkot \(The Feast of Tabernacles\)](#), it is customary to begin re-reading through *Torah* (the first five books of the Bible). I personally believe it is vital to supplement *Torah* reading with readings from the rest of the Bible, including the Prophets and the rest of the *Tanakh* as well as, of course, the New Testament (*B'rit Chadasha*).

So it is the time of year when we begin back at Genesis (known in Hebrew as *B'reishit*).

Beginning at the beginning of time.

We do well to understand that in every undertaking in life, we ought embark only with our understanding framed by the history of creation. If we know our Creator and are in right relationship with Him, then we will understand our role as the created and realize our need for restoration and salvation.

Those who do not yet live in right relationship with the LORD, the Creator of All, cannot be called His children.

But there is Good News!

["See how glorious a love the Father has given us, that we should be called God's children—and so we are!" 1 John 3:1](#)

As God's children, it is imperative that we share this Good News so that those who are perishing around us would be able to repent and know our Savior, too, and so, too, become children of the Most High God.

I will show you today a very simple method to share your

faith, beginning at the beginning.

Are you confident in your ability to share and defend your faith?

As followers of Messiah Yeshua (the Lord Jesus Christ), it is our joyous duty to share with others the Good News of salvation.

We also need to be able to defend our faith.

Demonstrate that our faith is unshakeable!

It is so important to be equipped to share with others the Truth!

This is often called “apologetics.”

But rather than *apologizing* for what you believe, your task is to share it!

And be able to explain why you believe what you believe! Be confident! The LORD is with you and will give you the words and wisdom when you need it.

Today, I will focus on how one simple verse from Genesis can be used as a powerful spiritual weapon against one of the fastest growing cults: *The Jehovah’s Witness organization.*

The Jehovah Witness sect presents both a challenge and opportunity to Bible-believing Christians.

Are you ready to challenge yourself to share your faith?

Check out a simple and straightforward way to lead a friend to the True LORD of the Bible!

First, we must recognize that Truth is superior to cult religions and teachings

The Jehovah Witness **cult** continues to grow around the world. It is highly likely you will encounter a Jehovah's Witness follower at some point.

You might think I am being very harsh calling it a cult.

However, given the high level of deception and falsehood, softer terms will not do.

Believers: we need to be educated about sects and cults in order to ask the Spirit of Truth to help us evangelize and minister to members of these erroneous organizations.

We also need to pray that the Spirit of all Truth, God's Holy Spirit, the only True God would help us **show genuine love, kindness, and compassion toward all of those who are trapped in confusion.**

In order to properly witness to a member of a cult religion, we must ourselves be confident in Whom we have believed and know the Truth of Scripture for ourselves.



Genesis 1:2 can help you lead a friend to the LORD (and away from cult doctrines!)

Second, it is wise to have a solid understanding of *trustworthy* Bible translations

My husband and I [pastored](#) a mission congregation in the southern USA for many years.

The influence of the Jehovah's Witnesses in the area astounded us.

It was a region impacted by true spiritual darkness.

The Jehovah's Witness cult members were particularly

successful in sowing their seeds of confusion among the Latino/Hispanic community in that area.

The JW movement convinced many Spanish-speaking farm workers in the community that an adulterated bible, their “New World Translation” was superior to any standard (*ie. reputable*) English or Spanish language Bibles such as the King James Version or Reina Valera 1960.

It is important to educate new believers about trustworthy Bible translations.

We had our work cut out for us teaching the Truth of Scripture as many lay folk didn't seem to really care about the scholastic origins of the Bibles they were reading.

Third, be familiar with the unsettling founding of the Jehovah Witness Movement

If you have ever studied comparative religion or sects, you may know the founding of the Jehovah Witness movement sounds more like a **business enterprise** than a revelatory experience.

A group of men (most say about 30) reportedly gathered in a Brooklyn, NY building and invented the religion.

They produced a “translation” of the Bible without knowing the Biblical languages Hebrew or Greek. Again, this is known as the “New World Translation” or NWT.

The men **changed** generous portions of Scripture to suit their doctrinal inventions (in complete defiance of the command in [Revelation 22:18-19](#) to never add to or take away from the LORD's Book):

[“I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of](#)

[this book. If anyone adds to them, God shall add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his share in the Tree of Life and the Holy City, which are written in this book.” Revelation 22:18-19](#)

It is true many of the first followers of our Messiah Jesus were **not** highly educated men.

However, it is **not** true that folks should wholeheartedly trust translations from people who cannot at least rudimentarily engage the languages they are working to translate.

The sinister nature of the NWT “translation” becomes obvious from the very beginning of the tarnished text: right there in Genesis.

How to use [Genesis 1:2](#) as a Perfect Starting Point for Effective Evangelism (particularly with Jehovah’s Witness followers)

I discovered an easy way to strike up a conversation with Jehovah Witness followers.

Simply ask them about the Holy Spirit:

I would ask a Jehovah’s Witness to open their Bible to [Genesis 1:2](#).

A well known verse, it tells us the Spirit of God hovered over the waters at creation:

[“Now the earth was chaos and waste, darkness was on the surface of the deep, and the *Ruach Elohim* was hovering upon the surface of the water.” Genesis 1:2, TLV](#)

Ruach Elohim is Hebrew for the “Spirit of God.”

You may be more familiar with the New King James Version's phrasing:

"The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters." Genesis 1:2, NKJV

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"Now the earth was chaos and waste,
darkness was on the surface of the deep,
and the Ruach Elohim was hovering
upon the surface of the water.

GENESIS 1:2

Help people recognize the spiritual danger:

In the false translation used by the Jehovah's Witness organization (the New World Translation), the word for the Holy Spirit (*Ruach Elohim* in Hebrew) has been completely **eliminated** and replaced by a lower-case and non-personal term, the "active force."

Those who have participated in the JW organization for a long time may be more hostile to you trying to help them, but I found that for those who are newer to the JW ranks, **many would talk to me.**

Many were open to discussing the glaring issue related to [the unpardonable sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit of God \(Matthew 12:31\).](#)

The Holy Spirit gives believers the words we need when we need them.

And I can assure you, He is faithful.

The LORD of Truth can help you to reach those who have been falsely indoctrinated with the lies of the enemy that have been adopted by the Jehovah's Witness organization.

He can save those who have been deceived.

[Nothing is impossible for God! Matthew 19:26](#)

So there is great hope!

The Jehovah Witness cult has injected a stronghold of deception and confusion into vulnerable people looking for answers to life's questions.

There are **SO MANY** false doctrines in the JW religion!

Another easy place to start is with the nature of God.

God has been revealed to humanity as the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. We can discuss semantics on "echad," the doctrine of "Trinity," or the "Oneness of God" another time.

But the point is, we believe in the Holiness and Deity of God. We do not diminish the Son's standing by denying His divinity – He is Fully God, and we certainly do not take away our reverence and respect for the Holy Spirit of God.

The Simple Truth

For today, rejoice that you know the God of all Truth!

He is the Eternal One, Heavenly Father, the Prince of Peace, Lord of All, and the Mighty Comforter!

Our LORD is the one who saves, fully God and fully human revealed in Messiah Yeshua (Jesus Christ our LORD)!

He is the Conquerer of death and the Conquerer of Confusion. He is King forever!

Do not shy away from sharing your faith!

There are SO many people who are hungry for the TRUTH!

You just might be the very person the LORD wants to use to bring others to know Him.

Are you reading this and have questions about the Truth of our Savior Jesus Christ (Yeshua haMashiach)? Please reach out! We would love to help you know more about the True Savior and Messiah who loves you and died for you so you could live eternally with Him. Pray today for members of the Jehovah's Witness organization, that they would come to be free from the lies of the enemy.

Are you a member of the Jehovah's Witness organization? Are you seeking to know the Truth about the Messiah, the Son of God? Please contact us, we would love to help you walk with the LORD:



GENESIS 1:2

Now the earth was chaos
and waste, darkness was on
the surface of the deep, and
the Ruach Elohim was
hovering upon the surface
of the water.

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"Since you were
precious in My sight,
you have been honored,
and I have loved you."

ISAIAH 43:4

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“Since you were precious in My sight, you have been honored, and I have loved you.” Isaiah 43:4

How you can be blessed in your daily routine

Updated 5/25/22 B”H

Do you want to be blessed in your daily routine? Here are some practical ways you can receive God’s blessing in your life:

1. Approach God directly through prayer

Some world religions teach that God is far-off, distant, and unconcerned with the daily activities of human beings.

Some people believe that they **cannot** personally talk with Him: that they need an intermediary or someone “holier-than-thou” to speak to the Almighty on their behalf.

Countless times have people asked me to pray for them, but it becomes clear **they have no intention of doing so themselves.**

Prayer on the behalf of another is never wasted, but **it would be more effective if the requester would join in with true faith of their own.**

You can pray any time! Start your day off right, by approaching the throne of the LORD with a humble prayer of thanksgiving and praise.

Why not listen to this song, [“Awake, O Israel, put off thy slumber”](#) and start giving Him praise right now!?

2. Reject American Christianity's dangerous flirtation with yoga and kundalini in your exercise routine

If you have a morning exercise routine, keep at it! Incorporate praise and worship music when you're on your elliptical or treadmill. Thank the LORD for the ability to move the body that He gave you. **If you've ever had to recover from an injury or medical intervention, you know not to take exercise for granted.**

Pray today for strength. That He would strengthen your every limb and muscle and tendon, that His strength would be made perfect in your weaknesses.

Do NOT follow the New Age movement's suggestions to "look inward," attempting to empty the mind in order to find enlightenment, self-actualization, or nirvana.

More and more Americans turn toward Eastern religion, incorporating yoga and kundalini worship practices into their lives and joining the pop culture fascination with anything decidedly **nonChristian**.

My advice to aspiring yogis: yes, stay healthy, eat some yogurt, but skip the yoga.

Let me explain why:

My friends (natives of northern India) who happen to be evangelical missionaries to that same region attest that yoga **is** indeed rooted in Hindu religion and they are saddened (*appalled, really, but they are shy to show it*) by the Western embrace of these dark influences. **They risk their lives preaching the Good News of Messiah and rejoicing when bondages are broken as people reject idolatry and come back stateside only to be bombarded by American Christians who get all**

defensive about their exercise routines.

[Missionaries in India] risk their lives preaching the Good News of Messiah and rejoicing when bondages are broken as people reject idolatry and come back stateside only to be bombarded by American Christians who get all defensive about their exercise routines.

The Scriptures used by thousands of believers around the world instruct plainly what ought be done.

Rabbi She'll (Paul, the Apostle) wrote to the Romans that believers should "renew their mind," ([Romans 12:2](#)) and assured the Corinthian believers that by the power of the Holy Spirit (*Ruach haKodesh*) and faith in His Name, they now had the "mind of Messiah"([1 Corinthians 2:16](#)).

Followers of Jesus (*Yeshua*) are to set their minds on things above ([Colossians 3:2](#)). We must choose to live differently. Rather than empty our minds, we must fill our mind with the Truth of God's Word.

There are plenty of ways to demonstrate our faith without compromise. After all, there are plenty of stretching exercises that we as believers can do that are not rooted in yoga's practices. Let us honor our LORD and not invite Hindu spirits into our lives.

3. Meditate on the Psalms

"Meditation" isn't anti-Biblical.

The Bible **exhorts** us to meditate! Meditate as a child of God, on the things of God. Do not meditate as the world does.

["Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever](#)

things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.”
Philippians 4:8, emphasis added

I always recommend that people meditate on the Word of God as a whole but also specifically on the [Psalms](#). This is timely because I very recently reviewed an excellent devotional resource on the [Psalms](#) that uses some of the famous minister Charles Spurgeon’s writings called [“Spurgeon and the Psalms.”](#) You can read that review [here](#).

It is a sad reality that so many people do not realize that their Maker, their Creator, will hear them (and answer them!) if they would call upon His Name. Too many think that spiritual meditation is reserved for Buddhists and Hindus. Too many people appear to feel ashamed by the knowledge that they are sinners that they are afraid to speak to the God of Heaven. **Many choose not to overcome this barrier**, embarrassed that their peers or family will judge them for choosing to enter into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ (Yeshua haMashiach).

Many echo David’s wonderings that we find in [Psalm 24](#):

[“Who may stand in His Holy Place? \(Psalm 24:3b\)](#)

How can I receive a blessing from the Almighty One?

How can I know He will touch my life?

How can I know He will heal a loved one?

[“Who may go up on the mountain of ADONAI?” \(Psalm 24:3a\)](#)

It is easier than you may think.

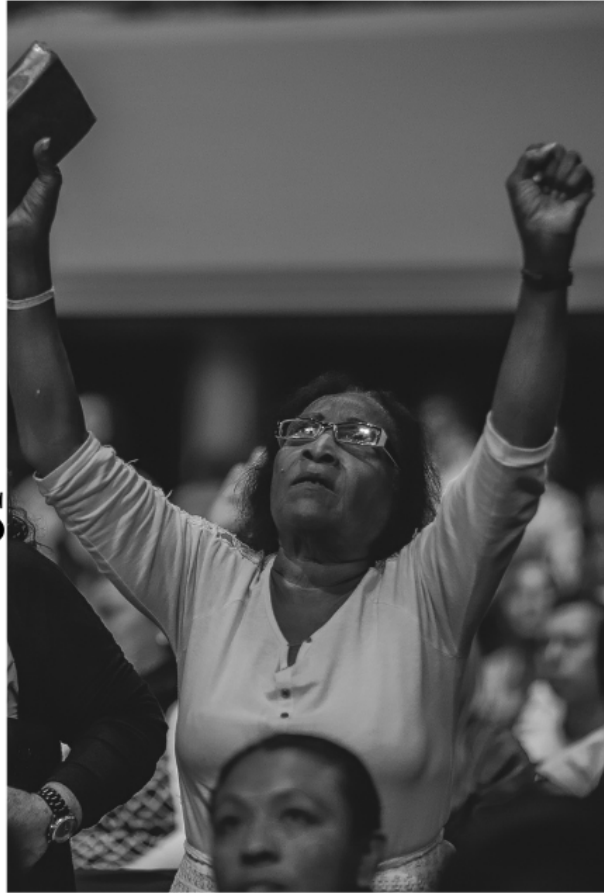
David was inspired to give the answer:

[“One with clean hands and a pure heart, who has not lifted his soul in vain, nor sworn deceitfully.” \(Psalm 24:4\)](#)

The next verse assures us of this:

["He will receive a blessing from ADONAI, righteousness from God his salvation." \(Psalm 24:5\)](#)

"He will
receive a
blessing from
Adonai,
righteousness
from God his
salvation."
(Psalm 24:5)



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If you sincerely come before Him, bearing no agenda, lifting your soul not to the idols of this world but to the Prince of Peace, **He will bless you.**

May it be said of you, like of Nathanael in [John 1:47, "in him there is no deceit."](#)

But if you have failed and your hands are unclean due to dishonest dealings and impurities in your heart, let this be a message of hope for your life.

You *can* be clothed in righteousness if you choose to be

wrapped in the garments of His salvation ([Isaiah 61:10](#)), the greatest blessing available to anyone on this earth. May nothing impede you from the blessing that is yours if you will receive it.

Here is a song by worship leader [Robin Mark](#) that may truly encourage you today called [“Garments of Praise.”](#) I love the lyrics:

[“Put on the garments of praise, for the spirit of heaviness;
Let the oil of gladness flow down from your throne!
Put on the garments of praise, for the spirit of heaviness;
Your joy is my strength alone, my strength alone!”](#)

Make these broken weary bones rise to dance again,
Wet this dry and thirsty land with a river!
LORD our eyes are fixed on you and we are waiting,
For your garland of grace as we praise your Name!

Hallelujah, sing hallelujah!
We give all honor and praise to your Name!
Hallelujah, sing hallelujah!
We trade our sorrows for garments of praise!”

If you begin your day focusing on the LORD and His goodness, the rest of your day will be full of blessing, too. And when there are hard times, you will be spiritually prepared to endure the battle and win. Receive the blessing that He has for you – it is yours, just for the asking. He is willing to give you unmerited favor: what we call, “grace.” And His grace is more than sufficient for you, today.

Also, remember this: we may have our daily routines, but with God, life becomes much more than routine! It becomes full of meaning and joy!

4. Make the decision RIGHT NOW to follow the Savior of mankind and you will certainly receive the blessing and favor of God Most High.

And when you do, let me be the first to say, welcome to the family!!

If you have questions about Messiah Yeshua (Jesus the Christ), please send a message or leave a comment. We would be overjoyed to help you in your spiritual walk. Shalom!

I'll leave you today with another song that will minister to your heart based on [Psalm 24, "Who will Ascend to the Mountain of the LORD?"](#)

Boundaries and Breakthroughs: Parashat Yitro

The boundary set at Mount Sinai

[Shemot/Exodus 19](#) describes the awe-inspiring events at Mount Sinai leading up to the giving of the renowned Ten Words, or

better known as the Ten Commandments in [Exodus 20](#).

The holiness of Adonai, the Eternal One, is such that specific boundaries are given so that the people would not go up onto the mountain or even so much as touch its border. The consequence wasn't minuscule: anyone who dared to touch the mountain in disobedience would be killed. [Exodus 19:13, "Not a hand is to touch it, but he will surely be stoned or shot through. Whether it is an animal or a man, it will not live."](#)

This sounds harsh to our modern sensibilities, but this was not just any spectator event. The *LORD God – YHWH Himself* came down onto Mount Sinai, accompanied by thunderings, lightning, a thick cloud and smoke, fire, and an earthquake.

This was the real deal: real special effects far more emotive than any movie you've seen. The bottom line: The people could *not* handle this.

They needed an intermediary and Moshe (Moses) was the one chosen for the job.

The Almighty Creator came down onto Mount Sinai and called Moses up to meet with Him.

A forbidden breakthrough

[Exodus 19:21, "Then ADONAI said to Moses, "Go down and warn the people, lest they break through to see ADONAI, and many of them die."](#)

There is an interesting term: "break through." יַהֲרִס (transliteration: *yehersu*). The Hebrew root here is "*haras*" יָרָס, but what is interesting is that here in verse 21 and then again in verse 24, this verb appears as the intransitive verb (*yehersu*,) the only two occurrences in the Hebrew Scriptures. Perhaps it is a greater play on words in the English language than even in Hebrew, as what follows should surely grab the reader's attention:

Exodus 19:24, “‘Then ADONAI said to him, ‘Go down. You are to come back up, you and Aaron with you. But **do not let the kohanim and the people break through** to come up to ADONAI, or He will **break out** against them.”



Many well-meaning devotional books and prayer leaders encourage believers to “pray for a breakthrough” or even “demand” that a spiritual door be opened unto them. These ideas are based off of Scripture, but can contribute to a proud, almost defiant attitude when not balanced with true rootedness in Scriptural teaching. Could this be the very attitude cautioned against in Exodus 19? A self-righteous posture can cause people to cross the line, risking quite the chastisement. The Lord God is Holy and His people must be made holy, brought near *only* by the blood of the Lamb.

Indeed, megachurch pastors and TV preachers have coined some phrases that have become extremely popular in Christian circles, but they are not all entirely Biblical:

3 popular Christian phrases that are not entirely Biblical

1. "The Prosperity Gospel."

The "Prosperity Gospel" refers to the teaching and focus on the idea that if a person prays hard enough and gives enough of their money (tithe *plus* offerings) they will *automatically* be prospered with wealth. **It is rooted in a very American mentality of material entitlement.**

A righteous person *will* prosper by faith, but not in the materially-obsessed manner propagated by self-aggrandizing tv "evangelists" who egregiously spend millions of their victims' dollars on private jets.

Might this be an example of how twisting truth *breaks through* what is right? How many famous people ultimately end up in shame?

2. "God won't give you more than you can handle."

Sometimes well-meaning people of faith will use this phrase to attempt to comfort someone in the face of tragedy. The Bible says you won't be *tempted* by more than you can handle([1 Cor.10:13](#)), but that is slightly different.

When I have served as a hospital and hospice chaplain, I have found it helpful at times to explain to fearful or grieving people that sometimes God actually *does* give you more than you can handle. You want to know why? Because then **you have to depend on Him** and "lean not upon your own understanding."

The congregation at Mount Sinai didn't lean upon their own understanding. They obeyed the word of God given through Moses and lived to tell about it.

3. “You need a spiritual *breakthrough*.”

This one truly seems harmless enough. In fact, it *is* partly true. Daniel prayed and fasted for 21 days and there was a “spiritual breakthrough:”

“Then [Gabriel] said to me, ‘Don’t be afraid, Daniel! For from the first day that you set your heart to understand and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard. I have come because of your words. However, the prince of the kingdom of Persia resisted me for 21 days, but behold Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me because I had been detained there with the kings of Persia.’”

Daniel 10:12-13, TLV, emphasis added

But notice, Daniel’s prayer influenced an outcome *in the heavenly realms*. In other words, **he prayed a breakthrough prayer that benefitted heaven, rather than himself**. His was a selfless prayer. The problem is, people get all excited and look to “make a breakthrough,” usually for their own plans or dreams. False preachers profit off of this emotionalism and encourage people to pray for their breakthrough, using quasi-Biblical allusions such as the widow persisting with the unjust judge in [Luke 18](#) or Jacob’s insistence in [Genesis 32](#) that he would not stop wrestling until he received a blessing.

Kingdom of kohanim, Holy Nation

The people were instructed not to come near, but they still had a role. They needed to be clean and part of creating a consecrated boundary around the mountain.

Exodus 19:23 “Moses said to ADONAI, ‘The people cannot come up to Mount Sinai, for You are the One who warned us, saying ‘Set boundaries around the mountain, and consecrate it.’”

Earlier in the chapter, ADONAI reveals to Moses that He

intends for the people to be His own treasure from among all people! He also reveals that He wants them to be a kingdom of priests (kohanim) and a holy nation.

The people responded positively when Moses shared this news.

["All the people answered together and said, 'Everything that ADONAI has spoken, we will do.'" Ex.19:8](#)

They were later given ten specific boundaries – those commands that would shape their identity, the first one recognizing first and foremost that this God, the God of this people, the God of Israel, ADONAI, YHWH, He alone is God.

Yeshua the High Priest

Moshe was a great leader. The Lord used him for so many mighty works, but there came someone even greater than Moses, the One who was and is and is to come, Yeshua ben Elohim:

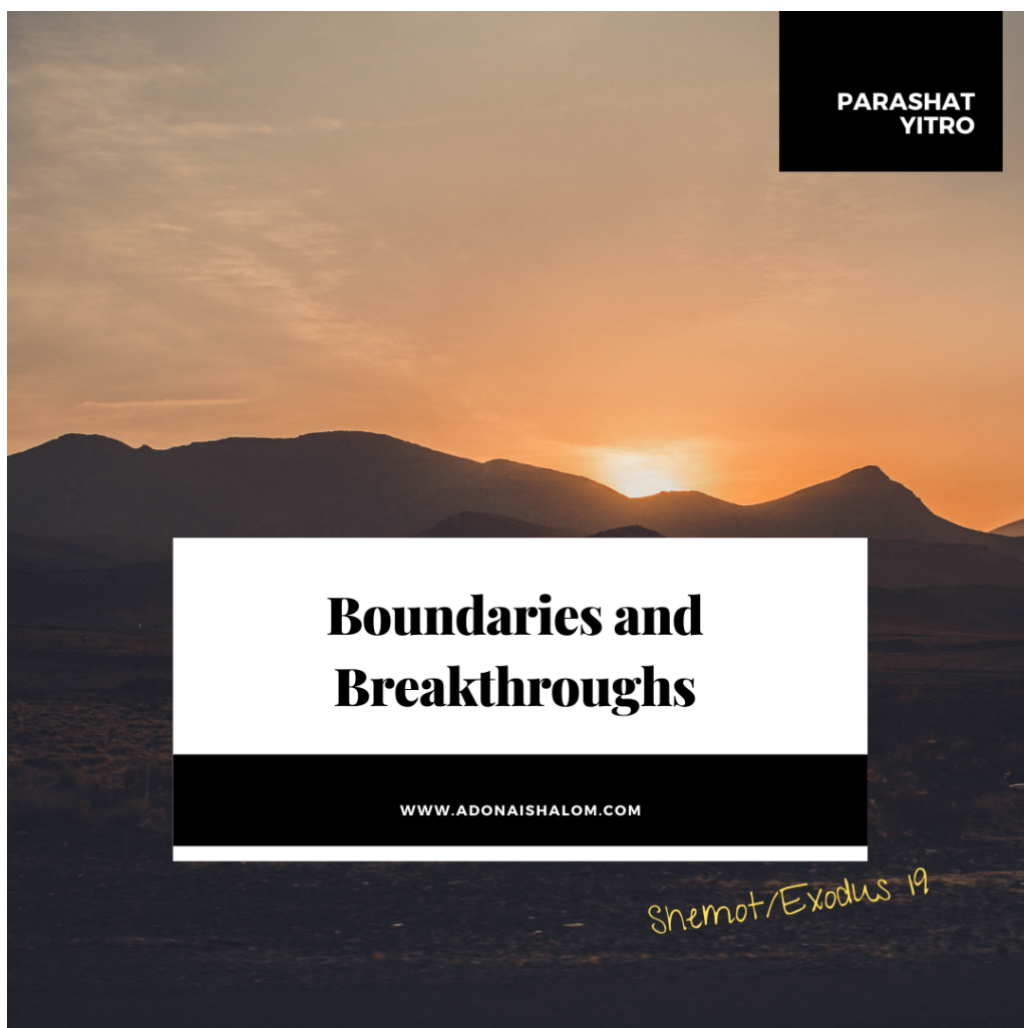
[*Therefore, holy brothers and sisters, partners in a heavenly calling, take notice of Yeshua—the Emissary and Kohen Gadol we affirm. He was faithful to the One who appointed Him in His house—as was Moses also. For He has been considered worthy of more glory than Moses, even as the builder of the house has more honor than the house. For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God. Now Moses surely was faithful in all God's house as a servant, for a witness of things to be spoken later. But **Messiah**, as Son, is over God's house—and we are His house, if we hold firm to our boldness and what we are proud to hope.*](#)

[*Hebrews 3:1-3, TLV*](#)

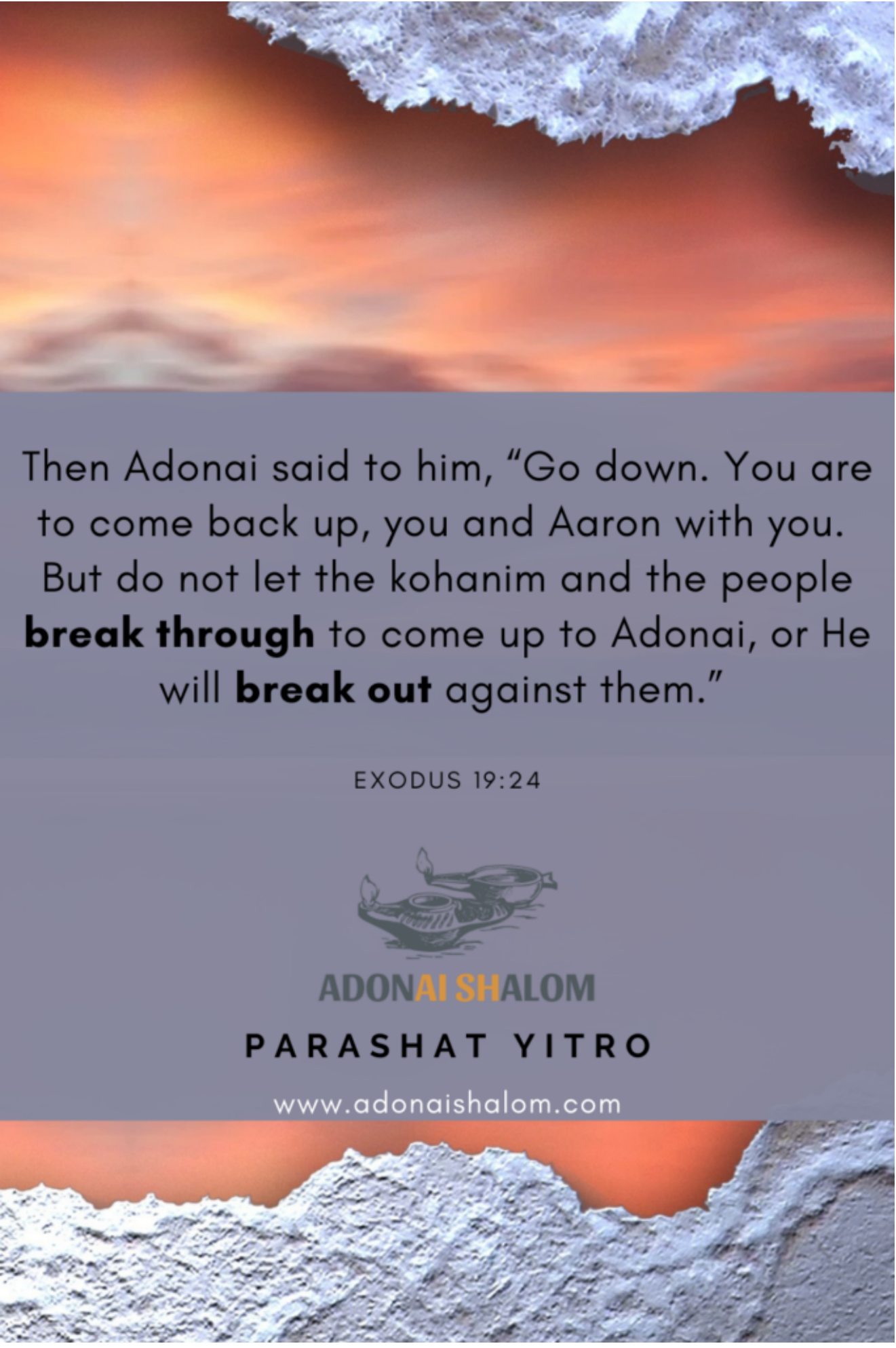
Yeshua's death exemplified the reality that holiness and sin can't mix when He took upon Himself the sin of the world. He took it all upon Himself so that He Himself could consecrate us, and we could now approach the throne of God without fear.

[Hebrews 4:16](#) “Therefore let us draw near to the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and [find grace for help in time of need.](#)”

Never forget the majesty and awe that accompanies the holiness of our God. We must not approach Him casually! Yes, Yeshua is our Friend and our Brother, but He is also the Almighty God and King Forever, the Victorious One who conquered sin and death so that we might be saved from the wrath of God and come to His Holy Mountain.



Boundaries and Breakthroughs



Then Adonai said to him, "Go down. You are to come back up, you and Aaron with you. But do not let the kohanim and the people **break through** to come up to Adonai, or He will **break out** against them."

EXODUS 19:24



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PARASHAT YITRO

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Replacing replacement theology: is the church the “New” Israel?

For many, many, many years . . . centuries, to be more precise, believers were taught that there is a stark contrast between “the Church” and “Israel.” “Israel” was seen as the “rebellious,” “law-bound,” “old,” “outdated,” “Jewish-other” while the “Church” was seen as the “sanctified,” “free,” “mostly-Gentile,” “new,” “grace-based” non-religion, though “religion” it was and has been. This dichotomy has created a needless split between most of Judaism and modern Christianity.

What will be written on the gates in New Jerusalem?

What will New Jerusalem look like?

One day, the Holy City, a.k.a. the New Jerusalem will come down out of heaven. *Voilà!* All things made new!

John, the author of Revelation, describes this:

Jerusalem will have the **glory** of God ([Rev.21:11](#)).

Jerusalem will be like a radiant precious stone like [REDACTED] ([Rev.21:11](#)).

Jerusalem will be [REDACTED] like crystal ([Rev.21:11](#)).

Will it have the famed “streets of **gold**?” Of course! *You can find that in [Revelation 21:21](#).*

Jerusalem will also have a **great, high wall** made of [REDACTED] around it ([Rev.21:12, 14](#)) with **12 gates** and **12 angels** above the gates. The Holy City will be laid out as a square shape ([Rev.21:16](#)) and is made of pure **gold**, “clear as glass” ([Rev.21:18](#)). Besides the gates, the city wall will have 12 foundations. On each of those will be written the names of the 12 apostles/emissaries of Yeshua (Jesus).

These believers made a huge evangelical impact on the world during their lifetimes and history shall never forgotten their contribution.

The foundations of the city wall will reflect the beauty of their devotion, for in order, the foundations will be made of [REDACTED], **sapphire**, [REDACTED], **emerald**, **sardonyx**, **carnelian**, [REDACTED], [REDACTED], **jacinth**, and [REDACTED] ([Rev.21:19-20](#)).

But history has more-than-occasionally forgotten the contribution of some very important others. Which leads to this question:

What is so special about the gates?

The gates are 12 pearls, *dare I say, of great price* – each gate from a single [REDACTED] ([Rev.21:21](#)). There are 3 gates per cardinal direction: north, south, east, west ([Rev.21:13](#)).



Each gate will be inscribed with the names of the 12 tribes of Israel ([Rev. 21:12](#)).

Wait? Doesn't traditional Christianity say that the 12 tribes have been basically replaced by the 12 apostles?

Doesn't mainstream theology teach that the "New" Testament is far more relevant to us today than the contents of the "Old"?

Isn't it taught in most seminaries that the "Church" has replaced the Jews as the chosen people?

Sadly, the answer is, "yes" . . . despite the flawed theology.

Supersessionism is (*lamentably*) alive and well. Antisemitism flourishes due to these types of errant doctrines.

Will the gates be etched with the names of Israel's tribes as though it were some type of politically correct memorial to days gone by?

Or is there a greater meaning here?

The God of the Bible is the God of ISRAEL

An honest hermeneutic (interpretation) must allow Scripture to speak, not impose an agenda on the Biblical text.

We must ask questions. What is Scripture saying to us? What is it that the Eternal One wants us to glean?

How have we injected our own biases into the text?

Are we reading from a posture of humility or from the lens of an entitlement culture?

Do we recognize that the God of the Bible is the God of *Israel*?

In regards to those 12 gates, we can ask a very simple question:

What is the function of a gate? Does it not “allow for”, or “inhibit” as the case may be, an entrance?

Would the church even have a prayer if it were not for God’s chosen people and the revelation of God entrusted to them?

Could the church even know a Savior if it were not for the prophetic words of the Hebrew Scriptures?

The gates allow for all to come in who have accepted and love our Messiah Yeshua (Jesus!).

The names of the 12 tribes of *B’nei-Yisrael*, the house of Israel, will be forever etched on the eternal gates.

No longer shall their names be diminished, forgotten, or

tossed aside.

Their heads shall be lifted up in redemption.

We must pray for Israel, for those who do not yet know that Messiah has come!

*Lift up your heads, O gates,
and be lifted up, you everlasting doors:
that the King of glory may come in.*

“Who is this King of glory?”

ADONAI strong and mighty,

ADONAI mighty in battle!

*Lift up your heads, O gates,
and lift them up, you everlasting doors:
that the King of glory may come in.*

“Who is this King of glory?”

ADONAI-TZVA’OT—He is the King of glory! Selah

Psalms 24:7-10 TLV (emphasis added)

The foundations of the wall are bound by the apostolic witness of the first believers, who themselves kept the very Jewish (and of course, Biblical) practices of keeping the Sabbath day holy, participating in the *moedim* (Biblical feast days), and honoring the **entirety of the Scriptures** available to them which at that time included most prominently the *Torah*.

The first believers, Jew and Gentile alike, had joined themselves to a *Jewish* movement founded by a Jewish Rabbi who also happens to be the Messiah – the Promised One, Yeshua haMashiach (Jesus the Christ), who came to save all of Israel, both the native born Israeli and the grafted in.

We must re-evaluate our

relationship to Israel

Yesterday was Holocaust Remembrance Day. It coincided this year with Tu B'Shevat, a tree planting day in Israel.

For too much of history, the church as a whole has held a very poor witness toward the Jewish people.

Some orthodox Jewish rabbis have concluded that the Holocaust was a judgment of *Christians* – demonstrating that the Christian Gospel fails the Jew due to the church's inaction and willingness to look the other way as Jewish lives were lost to Hitler's evil monstrosities.

Even today, many Christians seem indifferent to the Jewish homeland despite the miracle that is modern day Israel.

We are living in a time when prophecies are constantly being fulfilled and the favor of Adonai continues to rest upon His people, Israel.

As believers, we must take up the task of a course correction!

We need to re-evaluate our frame of reference and **pastors must commit to preaching *accurately* from the entirety of Scripture.**

The enemy, *ha-satan*, has worked diligently to sow confusion among believers and has been successful.

Many believers today are **incredibly distanced** from the Truth, and don't realize it. It is no coincidence that the Catholic Church changed the Sabbath Day observance to Sundays, that new liturgical seasons were invented, and the Biblical feast days were **abandoned** in favor of manmade celebrations that focus on egg-laying rabbits and decorated evergreen trees. All of these **distractions** have lured the church as a whole away from the very Gospel we want to share!

Even Bible Studies tend to focus on what the apostles

achieved, and would likely highlight their place in the New Jerusalem, but so many gloss right over the fact that **united within the design of the city wall will also be the heritage of the twelve tribes of Israel.**

The New Jerusalem shows us the continuity from Old to New Testament.

All of the confusion that the devil has sown will be forever defeated. Continuity, unity, and justice will all be restored.

The gates of the enemy shall be forever torn down and the New Jerusalem gates will gleam in all their glorified splendor. Won't it be amazing?!

Hope for Israel

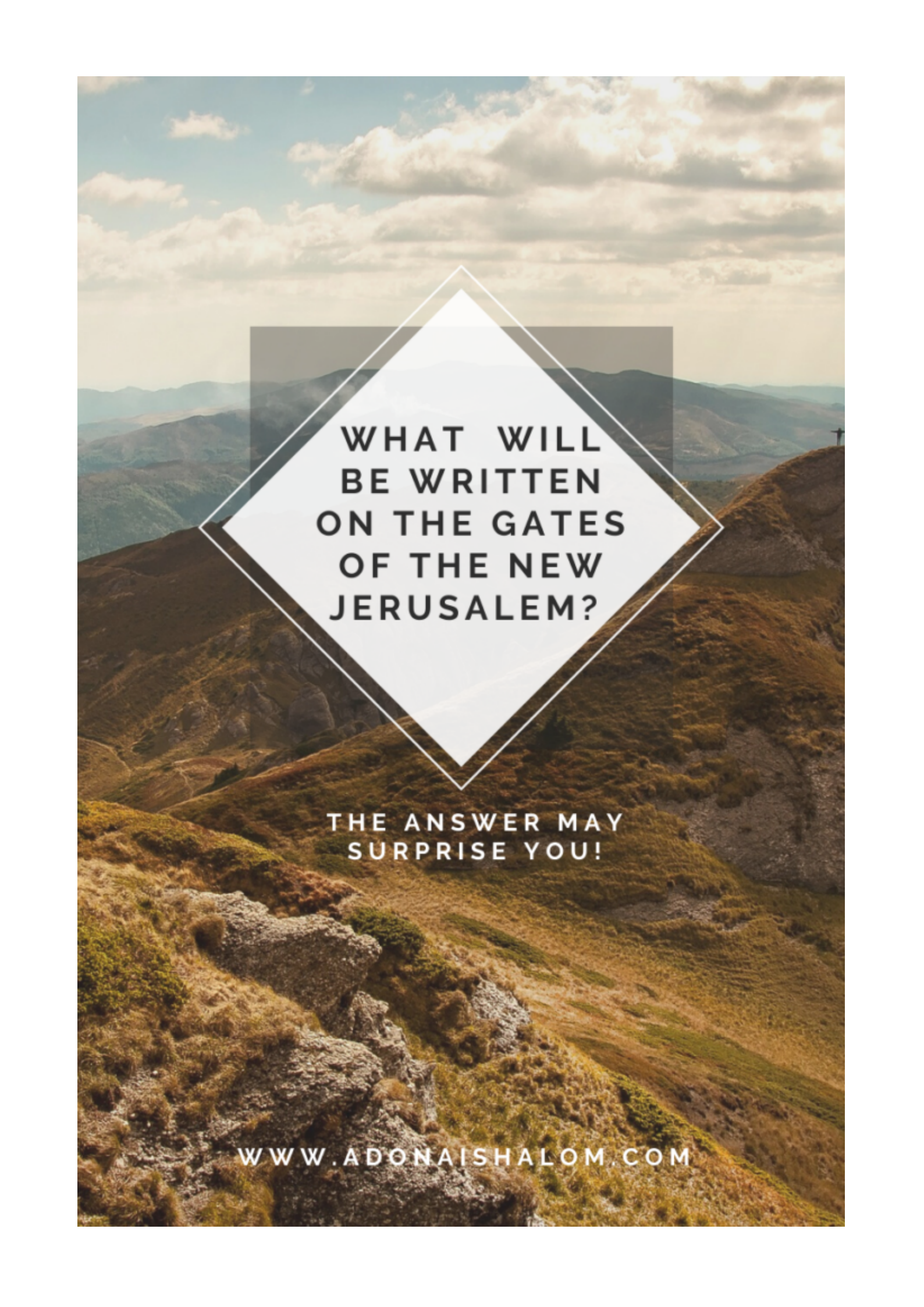
Lift up your heads, O gates!

For the King of Glory shall come in, shall restore all things, and His people shall forever live together with the Lord Most High in the New Jerusalem!

The New Jerusalem will be a beautiful place! Whenever you feel discouraged, remember one day all things will be made new!

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WHAT WILL
BE WRITTEN
ON THE GATES
OF THE NEW
JERUSALEM?

THE ANSWER MAY
SURPRISE YOU!

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What will be written on the gates of New Jerusalem?

6 stone jars, 120 gallons of wine, and an extraordinary wedding in Cana

But: have you ever thought about the mechanics of this miracle?

Let's look to the John's account: John 2:6. "Now there were 6 stone jars, used for the Jewish ritual of purification, each holding 2-3 measures."

Besorah: the Good News

"For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through Him. The one who believes in Him is not condemned; but whoever does not believe has been condemned already, because he has not put his trust in the name of the one and only *Ben-Elohim*."

John 3:16 TLV