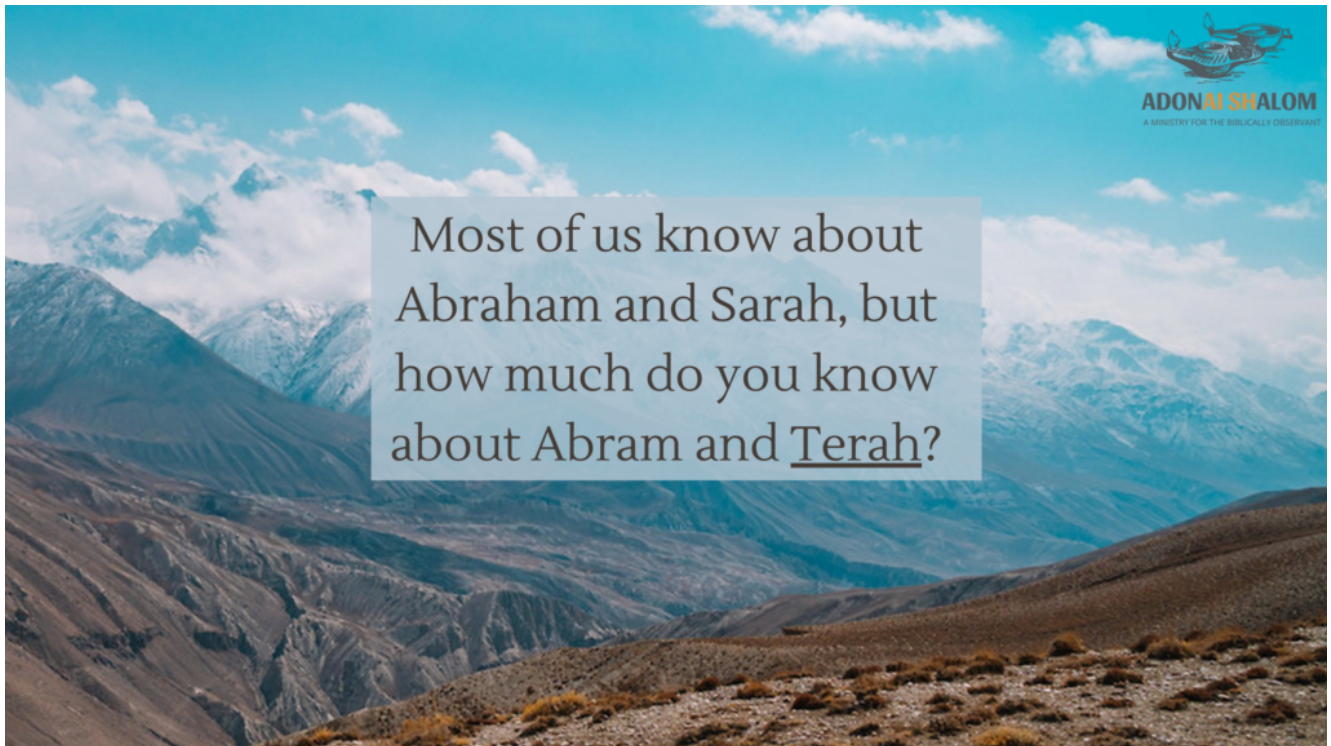


Led by the One True God: Abram & his father, Terah

Parashot Noach (B'reishit/[Genesis 6:9-11](#)) & Lech L'cha (B'reishit/[Genesis 12-17](#)) 5783 B"H

Most of us know about **Abraham and Sarah**, but how much do you know about **Abram and Terah**?



Abram's father, Terah

[Genesis 11:27-32](#) gives a genealogy leading up to Abram and Sarai, beginning with Terah, Abram's father.

Abram had two brothers, Nahor and Charan (often anglicized as "Haran"), but Charan died. Charan was Lot's father so he lived to be at least a young man, but he died before his own father Terah did.

They lived in a city called Ur, situated in Chaldean Mesopotamia.

Ur was known to be a prosperous place. The exact location is not definitive, but scholars find it reasonable to assume that Chaldea was located in the Fertile Crescent and that Ur was likely situated at the river delta where the Tigris and Euphrates rivers came together to spill into the Persian Gulf.

The city of Ur would've provided Terah and his family the benefits of urban life.

They would have had easy access to markets and trade opportunities as well as close proximity to fishing.

Despite all of that, **Terah decided to leave it all behind.** [Genesis 11:31](#) tells us that the family left Ur with plans to reach Canaan.

Terah took his son, Abram, his daughter-in-law, Sarai, as well as Lot (his grandson) to Canaan. Scripture does not tell us why Nahor stayed behind nor why Terah decided to leave Ur.

Why Canaan?

If Terah had grown tired of the riotous idolatry rampant in the city of Ur, Canaan wouldn't be a good place for relocation: Canaan was well-known for their plethora of gods.

You will find that sometimes Scripture leaves us with more questions than answers.

Was Terah a spiritual (albeit pagan) person, believing that the Canaanite gods could heal his broken heart after losing his son Charan?

Or similarly, was mourning the death of his son too unbearable – with all the memories associated with life in Ur – that Terah was simply seeking to move away, unconcerned with the Canaanite deities, just content to get away?

I don't think it is unreasonable to believe that God Himself

put it in Terah's heart to leave Ur, preparing for the day when He would promise blessing to Terah's son, Abram.

Regardless of the reason, Terah set out for his new life in Canaan.

Terah settled in *Charan*

Terah reached a place that the Bible calls, "Charan," and stayed there.

So once again, we have more questions than answers:

Did Terah name this desert place, "Charan," in honor of his son?



Was this place known as "Charan" before he got there, and therefore felt an affinity to it?

Whatever the reason, Terah stayed there and later died there, never making it to Canaan.

Did grief interfere?

Mourning a loss can be debilitating, and if we are not careful to seek the LORD as we mourn, our grief can begin to interfere with our ability to move forward.

We do not necessarily need to move “on” as though we will forget our loved one.

But we do need to continue taking steps in this life, walking . . . even if just baby steps, to move *forward* into the plan and calling that God has for us, despite any of our difficult circumstances and sorrows.

I heard a rather **harsh** interpretation of this passage once. The preacher said Terah stopped at “good enough”: that Terah never got to the Promised Land because *he lacked vision*.

Some then would argue Terah not only settled in Charan, he *settled for* Charan.

This *could* be the case.

We all know people who seemingly cannot conceive of anything more than what they have already seen or experienced; people who are limited in their ambitions and dreams. [Proverbs 29:18](#) rightly warns, “Where there is no vision, the people perish...”

But **I am not convinced** that Terah was unambitious or lazy.

Sometimes grief can take on that appearance.

Given that Terah was 205 years old when he died, maybe he had some age-related health issues and didn’t feel like journeying all the way to Canaan.

The place called Charan was, in a sense, “good enough” for Terah. It was just that – a good place of solace, far from the bustling noise of Ur. A good place to heal. A good place to emotionally move forward.



The place called Charan was, in a sense, "good enough" for Terah.
It was just that - a good place of solace,
far from the bustling noise of Ur.
A good place to heal.
A good place to emotionally move forward.

Scripture does not record a divine mandate given to Terah. Could it be that God was leading Terah to Canaan, just as He would lead Abram there? We don't know, but it would seem that if that were the case, Scripture would've recorded it.

What we do know is that Terah's action in leaving Ur paved the way for future generations to live in blessing.

In that quiet, remote place, Terah's son, Abram, was able to hear the voice of YHVH clearly.

Abram is called by the One, True God

If you look carefully at [Genesis 12:1](#), you will notice the use of the tetragrammaton (the Name of God: YHVH). [Genesis 12:1](#) says, ["Now the LORD had said to Abram:"](#)

The reason, "LORD" is in all caps there is because in the Hebrew manuscript is found the most Holy Name of God: YHVH.

Why doesn't the text read, "Now *God* had said to Abram . . ." ?

Well, Scripture was not put together haphazardly. It was inspired by God Himself ([2 Timothy 3:16](#)), so it is orderly and cohesive. Everything you read in Scripture is there purposely. Purposefully.

So we should believe it is significant that YHWH makes Himself known to Abram; and it would seem to make sense that the reason the Divine Name is written in this verse is to make very clear that the God who was speaking to Abram is the One, True God rather than one of the Canaanite gods:

[“For the LORD is the great God, and the great King above all gods.” Psalm 95:3](#)



[“For You, LORD, are Most High above all the earth; You are exalted far above all gods.” Psalm 97:9](#)

The LORD's Promises to Abram

[“Now the LORD had said to Abram:](#)

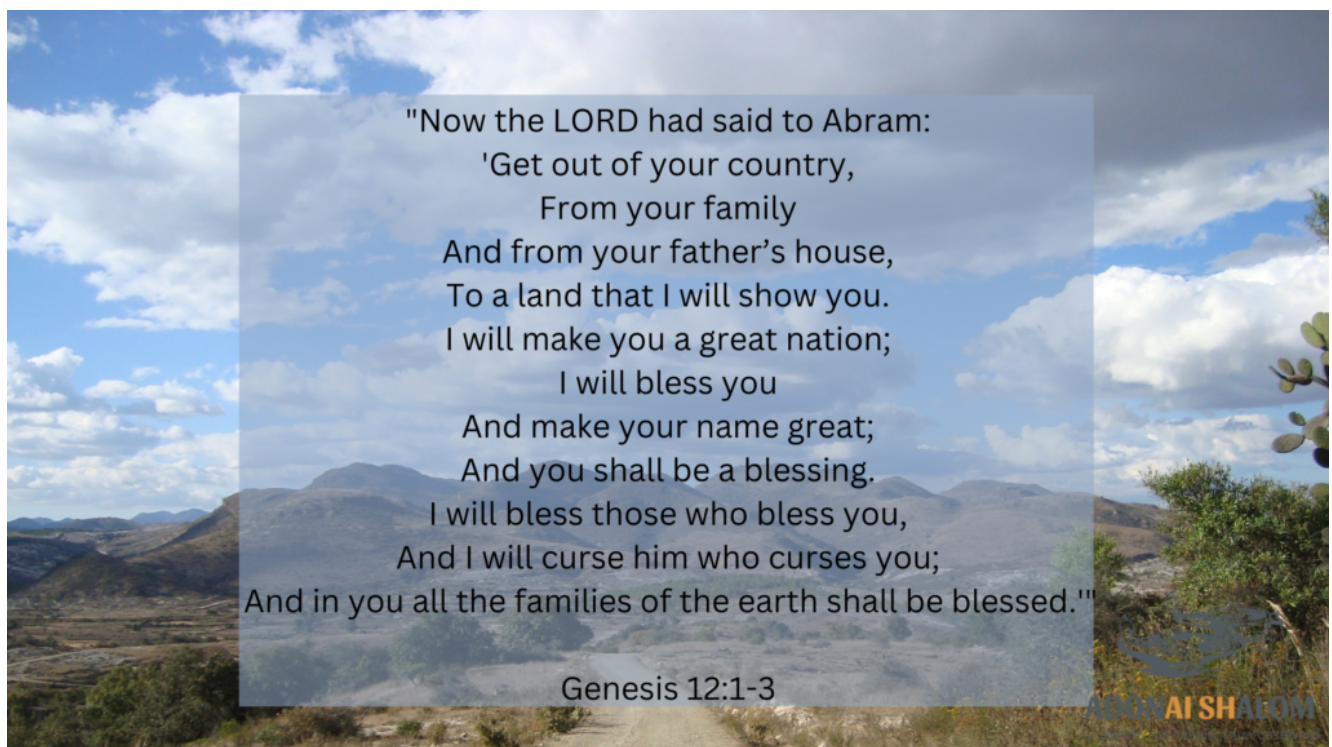
[‘Get out of your country,](#)

[From your family](#)

[And from your father's house,](#)

To a land that I will show you.
I will make you a great nation;
I will bless you
And make your name great;
And you shall be a blessing.
I will bless those who bless you,
And I will curse him who curses you;
And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.'"

Genesis 12:1-3



This passage contains a 7-point covenant if you look closely.

God promises to Abram:

1. "I will make you a great nation" ([Genesis 12:2](#))
2. "I will bless you" ([Genesis 12:2](#))
3. "I will make your name great" ([Genesis 12:2](#))
4. "You shall be a blessing" ([Genesis 12:2](#))
5. "I will bless those who bless you" ([Genesis 12:3](#))
6. "I will curse those who curse you" ([Genesis 12:3](#))
7. "In you all the families of the earth shall be blessed" ([Genesis 12:3](#))

7 is the Biblical number for perfection or completeness. Messiah Yeshua (Jesus Christ) had not yet come to earth, so how can this be a perfect covenant?

Because the Author is Perfect and His Promises are Perfect!

What was required of Abram?

The promises required much of Abram, if you consider it.

He had to leave his country and his clan, and even his father's house, meaning he was to give up his leadership role as leading the family. Abram would've likely wrestled with the feeling that he was abandoning his responsibilities and obligations as the leader of his family's group now that his father was deceased.

Leaving family behind was really not something that was done in those days!

But when God is going to bless you, He requires that you're all in.

God required Abram to leave the life he knew.

The Bible records Abram acting in obedience, departing Haran with Sarai and Lot ([Genesis 12:4-5](#)).

Interestingly enough, Abram was not required to leave his *possessions* behind.

[Genesis 12:5](#) tells us Abram, Sarai, and Lot gathered all their possessions (including people they had "acquired.")

The evangelist in me really hopes those are people they had acquired for the cause of faith. Members of a pilgrim congregation.

But realistically speaking, it is apparent these people served as slaves. When we hear that term, we tend to immediately

think of American slavery, which was horrific, violent, and completely unacceptable. We must hope that Abram and Sarai did their best to treat their servants well.

God had promised to prosper Abram, so Abram was permitted to take his possessions along with him on the journey to Canaan.

Have you left your old life behind?

Abram's calling to leave his old life behind should resonate with you if you follow the LORD.

If you have not yet made the decision to trust the LORD with all your heart for your salvation, let this be an invitation today.

Remember, Abram had grown up in Ur and had gotten married there. He was accustomed to idolatry and the worldly pleasures offered to him by the city. Chaldea was known for astrologers and fortunetellers.

Abram had willingly moved to Charan with his father, Terah. If he was old enough to remember his brother, Abram, too, probably did a lot of mourning. **He was an overcomer and a pioneer.**

Today's world is so very similar.

Idolatry and witchcraft have become mainstream.

Even many churches are participating in the devil's holiday this month.

What you and I are called to do is to be different.

The LORD asks us to bury our old lives.

Leave the past in the past.

Sometimes that does include our griefs. We need to surrender

to the LORD and allow Him to heal our broken hearts.

So today, turn away – repent – of your sin, be baptized by immersion, and follow Messiah Yeshua (Jesus Christ).

[Allow the LORD to enter your life and ask Him to fill you with the Holy Spirit](#) (Ruach haKodesh) with the evidence of speaking in tongues ([Acts 2:4](#)). He will bless you and heal you, restore you, and prosper you, if you will walk in His ways. The Good News of the Gospel is for you and your family!

Be willing to leave everything behind, because if you do, you will gain eternity!

He will give you new life!

[“Therefore if anyone is in Messiah, he is a new creation. The old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.” 2 Corinthians 5:17](#)

Thanks for reading today! Please share any thoughts or comments below! I love to hear from you!

A blessing that changed history: Birkat Kohanim

Parashat Naso ([B'midbar/Numbers 4:21-7:89](#)) 5782 B”H

Have you heard the beautiful song titled, “*The Blessing*,” by Cody Carnes, Kari Jobe, and Elevation Worship?

The lyrics for the beginning of the song come directly from [Numbers 6:22-26](#).

Many of us know these verses as the “Aaronic Benediction.”

But that is a very formal way of talking about these verses.

The LORD told Moses to tell *Aaron* and his sons to bless the children of Israel using these words, so from this we get the term “Aaronic.”

“Benediction” is just a fancy word for a “blessing” but we usually associate it with an “ending” or “final blessing.” Many church services end with a “benediction.” *When I was small, that translated to, hurry and gather your crayons, it’s almost time to leave.* Yes, I used to color in church.

The Aaronic Benediction (or Aaronic Blessing) is also known as the Priestly Benediction (yet another reason *pastors* tend to use this at the close of worship services).

In Hebrew, this blessing is called “*Birkat Kohanim.*” (Also spelled *Cohenim* or rendered *HaKohanim.*)

It is a blessing that has withstood the test of time, continuing to minister to hearts around the world.

Birkat Kohanim: The Priestly Blessing

[“ADONAI bless you and keep you!](#)

[ADONAI make His face to shine on you and be gracious to you!”](#)

[ADONAI turn His face toward you and grant you *shalom*!” Numbers 6:24-26, TLV](#)

אֲדֹנָי בֵּרֵךְ אֶת עַמּוּךְ וְיִשְׁמְרֵם

אֲדֹנָי יִשְׁמַח בְּפָנָיו וְיִהְיֶה רַחֲמָיו

אֲדֹנָי יִפְתָּח לָנוּ אֶת חַיֵּינוּ ,אֲדֹנָי יִשְׁמַח בְּפָנָיו וְיִהְיֶה רַחֲמָיו



This blessing was particularly unique in the time in which it was originally transcribed. The other nations worshipped multiple deities and they did not have the sense of a personal connection or relationship with their gods in the way that the God of all Israel was so closely attentive and interactive with the Israelites.

Torah means “instruction.” This blessing was a part of the “instructions” that the LORD gave to the nation of Israel. The Torah and its fulfillment have changed history, and the Birkat Kohanim has long been a part of the unfolding reality of salvation. The Birkat Kohanim remains central to Judaism, but since it is also now so beloved among Christians it is a wonderful starting point for believers to share with unbelieving Jews the Good News of Messiah.

Birkat Kohanim transliteration and translation

Would you like to learn how to say the Birkat Kohanim in Hebrew? Here is a transliteration:

Ye'varechecha ADONAI v'yishmerecha,
Ya'er ADONAI panav eleicha v'ichuneca
Yisah ADONAI panav eleicha v'yasem l'cha shalom. B'midbar
6:24-26

"The LORD bless you and keep you;
The LORD make His face shine upon you, and be gracious to you;
The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you
peace." Numbers 6:24-26, NKJV

The first track on [Adonai: The Power of Worship from the Land of Israel](#) begins with this very blessing if you would like to hear the Hebrew.

Why is this blessing so special and timeless?

The Birkat Kohanim has touched hearts for generations because of its simplicity but also because of its profundity.

Notice the repetition of the Divine Name YHVH 3 times. *In Hebrew, something repeated 3 times means pay attention! It is important!*

The LORD uses His instruments – saints willing to bless others to pronounce blessing in His Name. It isn't just any saying. **It is a blessing containing the Holy Name of God infused in each phrase. There is power in His Name – so there is power in this blessing.**

In fact, you continue reading [Numbers 6](#) through [verse 27](#), you will see that the LORD says, "In this way, they are to place My Name over B'nei-Y'israel, and so I will bless them." Yes, there is power in His Name!

May the LORD bless you.

The LORD, the Maker of the Universe, your Creator, the

Almighty Sovereign LORD MOST HIGH. May that specific, wonderful God be the One who blesses you. May you know exactly who He is. He isn't just any god, He is God Most High, the God of Israel.

May He keep you.

The Hebrew term for “keep” contains the connotation of “guarding” as well. May the Almighty One guard you, protect you, keep you.

May the LORD make His face shine upon you.

This is beyond amazing. Even Moshe (Moses) was only allowed to see God from the back. But this blessing indicates that His fullness of His glory is available to us! This blessing prays that the light of His face would shine in our direction. Could anything be more glorious than that? Our Father loves us that much that His countenance would be lifted upon us, His graciousness would be made known, and He endows us with His peace, His *shalom*.

We all need peace. We all need that sense of wholeness. It allows us to relax and to de-stress when we know He holds us in perfect peace. Peace in the Hebrew language refers to that completeness, a very holistic peace that permeates.

The Aaronic Blessing provides us the comfort in knowing the LORD God Almighty cares about us, is in relationship with us, and has granted us favor enough that He would want to shine His face upon us and be gracious to us.

The Aaronic Blessing in Song

There are many traditional renditions of the Aaronic Blessing that are frequently used in synagogue services and at Shabbat tables to bless our children and families.

Here is a beautiful symphonic rendition of “The Blessing” song

sung by Passion City Church:

And a special treat:

Here is “The Blessing” sung in Hebrew (Ha Bracha) by Joshua Aaron.

So today, may you feel the weight of His glory, knowing that the LORD desires you to walk in blessing.

May He indeed make His face to shine upon you and give you peace today.

And ask yourself this:

Who will *you* bless? Who will you pass along this blessing to? Who around you needs to know that the LORD loves them and wants to be in this type of blessing relationship with them? How can we pray for you? Proclaim the Name of the LORD upon your life and your family today!

Related: [How you can be blessed in your daily routine](#)

Also, have you subscribed? To get our newsletter directly to your inbox, please subscribe today!

Balaam & Balak: Conspiring to curse Israel

King Balak was terrified of what would come to his kingdom once the Israelites arrived. Israel had just decimated the Amorites, so this king had reason to be concerned. Balak’s

fear rubbed off on his people. Numbers 22:3 says “Moab was filled with dread because of B’nei Y’Israel [the children of Israel]” (Numbers 22:3). The Moabites knew Israel was strong, both in number and in power.

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)



WWW.ADONAISHALOM.COM

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?"](#)