

# **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.

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# **Korah: the Rebellious Social Influencer**

Today, we have social media "influencers." Korah was the social influencer in his day. He didn't get YouTube awards or Facebook fans, but he had enough followers to cause a major disruption. That generation would never make it to the land of milk and honey.

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# **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:

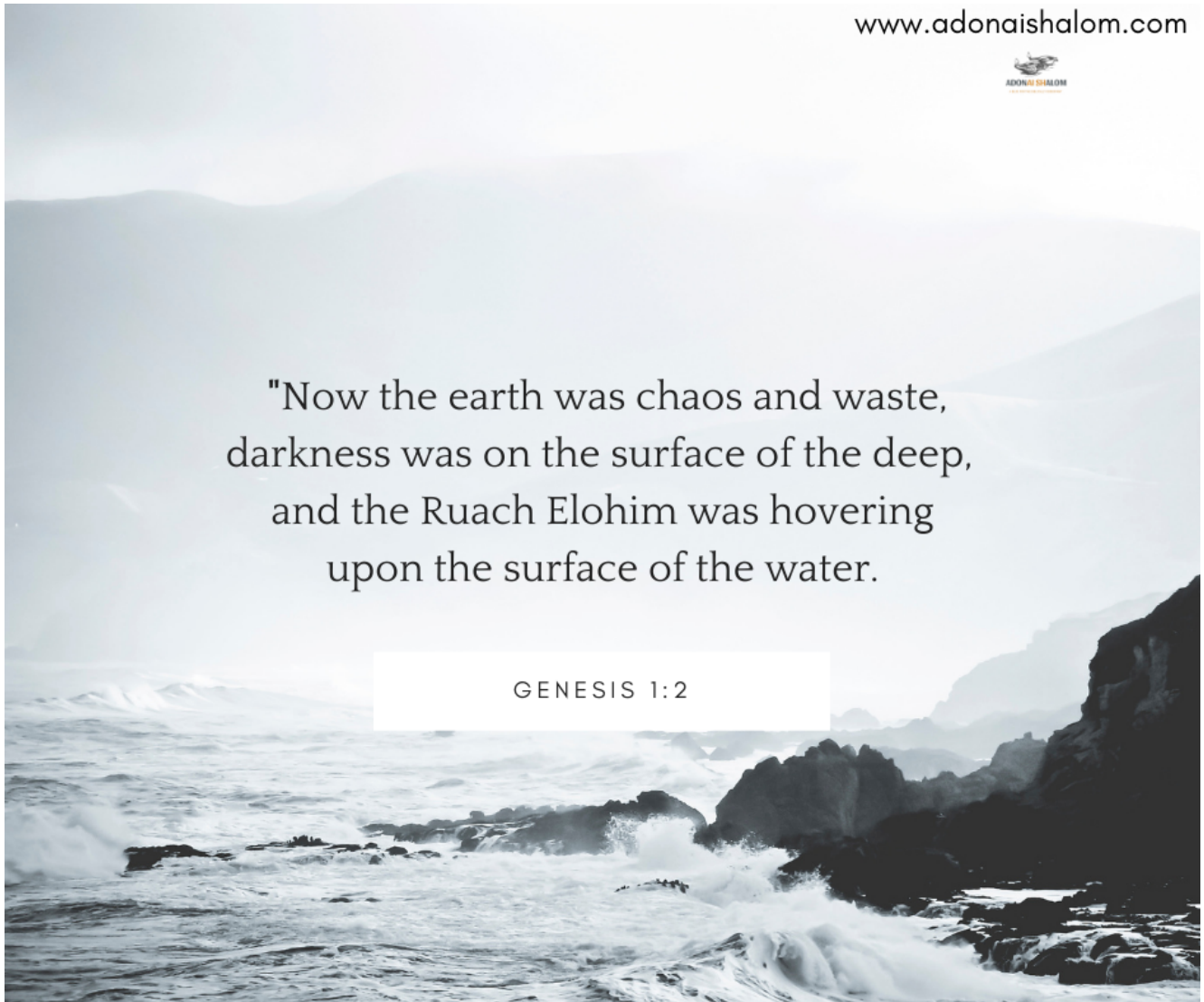
“Now the earth was chaos and waste, darkness was on the surface of the deep, and the *Ruach Elohim* was hovering upon the surface of the water.” Genesis 1:2, TLV

*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](#)



## 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

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## **The increase of Israel's border, little by little**

The nation of Israel is truly flourishing. The land is prospering. Deserts are blossoming, becoming lush and full of greenery. Israel is an agricultural marvel and nations around the world are beginning to take note of their agri-tech, though it is no surprise to anyone familiar with the Scriptures:

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## **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.” יַחַד (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:

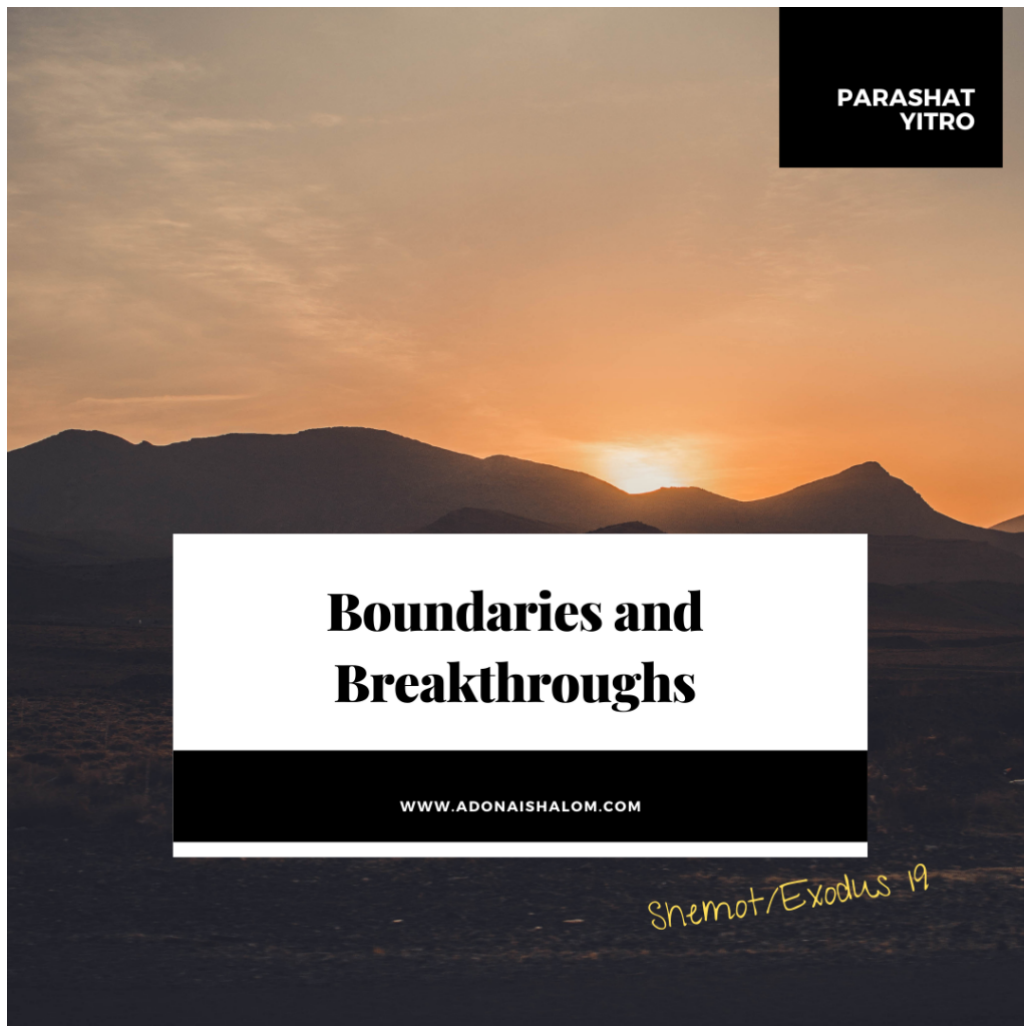
[\*Therefore, holy brothers and sisters, partners in a heavenly calling, take notice of Yeshua—the Emissary and Kohen Gadol we affirm. He was faithful to the One who appointed Him in His house—as was Moses also. For He has been considered worthy of more glory than Moses, even as the builder of the house 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.

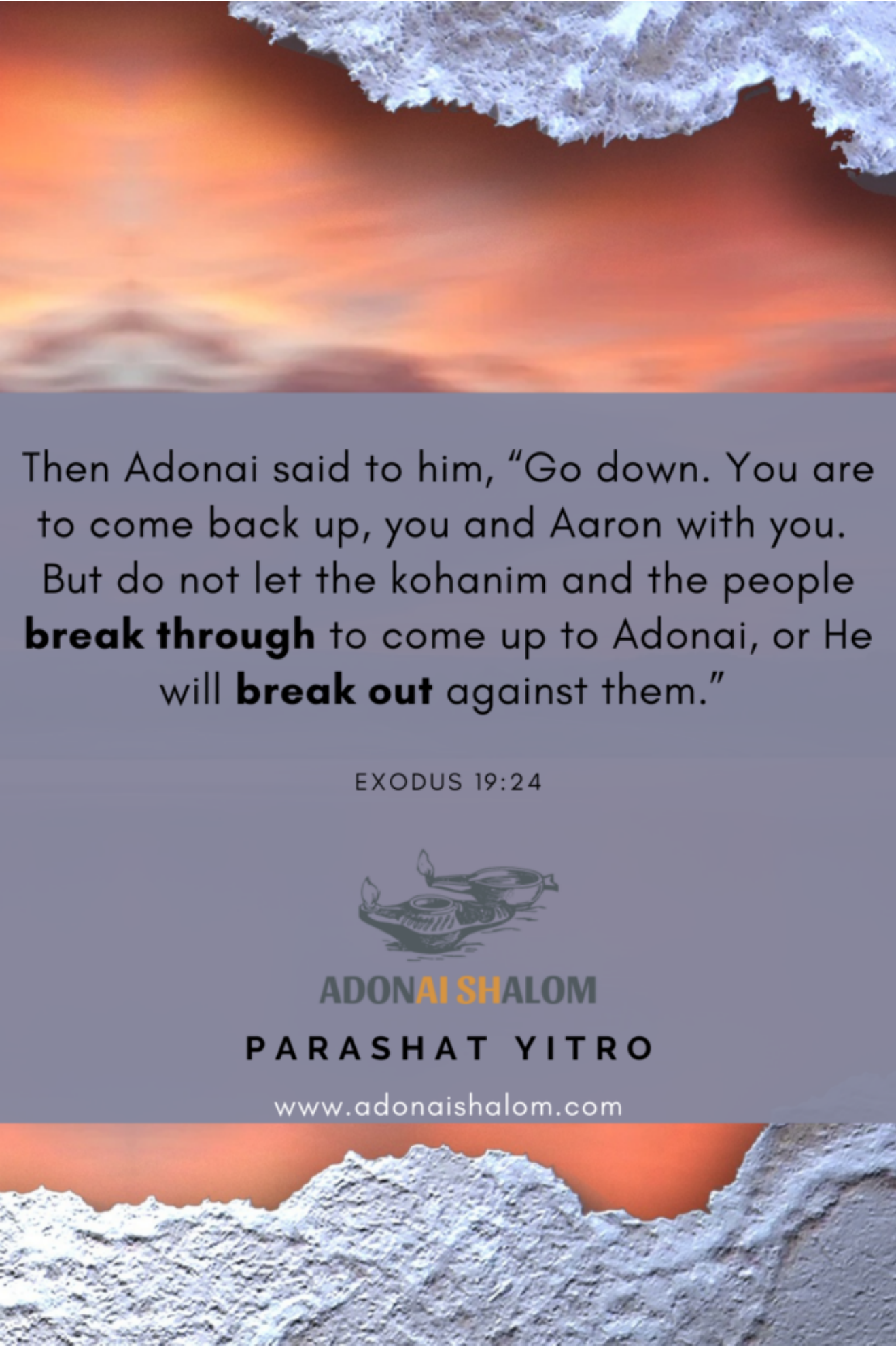
[Hebrews 4:16](#) "Therefore let us draw near to the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and [find grace for help in time of need.](#)"

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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# 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.