

Torah – Noach

Haftarah Study 2017-2018

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Haftarah Reading Isaiah 54:1–55:5

B’rit Chadashah:

- Yeshua Teaches About Noah: Matthew 24:36–39
- Noah, the Man of Faith: Hebrews 11:7; 1 Peter on Noah: 1 Peter 3:18–22; 2 Peter 2:5
- On Babylon the Great: Revelation 14:8; 16:19; 17:1–17; 18:1–24

Outline of This Week’s Parashah (Torah Portion):

- 6:9 Noah and His Sons
- 6:13 YHVH Elohim Pronounces Judgment Upon the Earth and Instructs Noah on Building the Ark
- 7:1 YHVH’s Final Call to Enter the Ark; the Animals Are Gathered
- 7:10 Elohim’s Wrath Against Wickedness: the Flood Inundates the Earth
- 8:1 The Floodwaters Recede —8:6 Noah Sends Out a Raven and a Dove
- 8:13 The Earth Dries Out and Noah Leaves the Ark —8:20 Noah Makes an Offering to YHVH
- 9:1 The Command to Repopulate the Earth; YHVH Gives Man Basic Moral Guidelines for the PostFlood World
- 9:8 The Noatic Covenant and the Rainbow as the Sign of That Covenant
- 9:20 Noah’s Drunkenness and Shame
- 9:24 Noah Curses Canaan and Blesses Shem and Japheth
- 10:1 The Sons of Noah, Their Descendants and the Seventy Nations
- 10:8 Nimrod and the Descendants of Ham
- 10:21 The Descendants of Shem
- 11:1 The Tower of Bavel

Torah Noah Overview:

We began in the beginning—B'REISHEET! Out of chaos, order. All things perfect. But men failed to rest ... all except NOACH.

In NOACH ...

The Key People include Noah (*Noah*), Shem, Cham (*Ham*), Yefet (*Japheth*), their wives, C'na'an (*Canaan*), Terach (*Terah*), Avram (*Abram*), Nachor (*Nahor*), Haran, Lot, Sarai, and Milcah.

The Scene include the mountains of Ararat, plains of Shin'ar (*Shinar*), Ur Casdim (*Ur of the Chaldeans*), and Charan (*Haran*).

The Main Events include the ark, flood, covenant, rainbow, vineyard fiasco, Shem's blessing, Tower of Bavel (*Babel*), and Terach's move.¹

G-d instructs **Noah**—the only righteous man in a world consumed by violence and corruption—to build a large wooden *teivah* (“**ark**”), coated within and without with pitch. A great deluge, says G-d, will wipe out all life from the face of the earth; but the ark will float upon the **water**, sheltering Noah and his family, and two members (male and female) of each animal species.

Rain falls for **40 days** and nights, and the waters churn for 150 days more before calming and beginning to recede. The ark settles on Mount Ararat, and from its **window** Noah dispatches a raven, and then a series of **doves**, “to see if the waters were abated from the face of the earth.” When the ground dries completely—exactly one solar year (365 days) after the onset of the Flood—G-d commands Noah to exit the *teivah* and repopulate the **earth**.

Noah builds an altar and offers sacrifices to G-d. G-d swears never again to destroy all of mankind because of their deeds, and sets the **rainbow** as a testimony of His new covenant with man. G-d also commands Noah regarding the sacredness of life: **murder** is deemed a capital offense, and while man is permitted to eat the **meat** of animals, he is forbidden to eat flesh or blood taken from a living animal.

Noah plants a vineyard and becomes **drunk** on its produce. Two of Noah's sons, **Shem** and **Japheth**, are blessed for covering up their father's nakedness, while his third son, **Ham**, is punished for taking advantage of his debasement.

The descendants of Noah remain a single people, with a single language and culture, for ten generations. Then they defy their Creator by building a great **tower** to symbolize their own invincibility; G-d confuses their **language** so that “one does not comprehend the tongue of the

¹ Feinberg, J. E., Ph.D. (1998). *Walk Genesis!: In the beginning* (31). Clarksville, MD: Messianic Jewish Publishers.

other,” causing them to abandon their project and disperse across the face of the earth, splitting into **seventy nations**.

The Parshah of Noach concludes with a chronology of the ten generations from Noah to Abram (later **Abraham**), and the latter’s journey from his birthplace of Ur Casdim to Charan, on the way to the **land of Canaan**.

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HE WHO COVERS THE NAKED – Rabbi Resnik

Parashat Noach, Genesis 6:9–11:32

Rabbi Hama said: What does it mean, “You shall walk after the Lord your God” [Deut. 13:5]? Is it possible for a person to walk and follow in God’s presence? Does not the Torah also say “For the Lord your God is a consuming fire” [Deut. 4:24]? But it means to walk after the attributes of the Holy One, Blessed be He. Just as He clothed the naked, so you too clothe the naked, as it says “And the Lord made the man and his wife leather coverings and clothed them” [Gen. 3:21].⁶

Genesis, the book of Creation, portrays Noah’s Flood and its aftermath is a new Creation. As at the beginning, waters cover the earth, Eventually, as in Genesis 1, a wind from God goes forth (8:1) and the dry land appears. The earth is renewed and the divine order is reestablished. When Noah and his family go forth from the ark, God repeats to them the mandate of Genesis 1:28: “Be fruitful and multiply, till the earth. And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, and upon all wherewith the ground teems, and upon all the fish of the sea: into your hand are they delivered” (9:1–2).

Now we understand why the Lord decrees that a flood will never again destroy the earth. There may indeed be divine judgment in the future, but not this degree of judgment. He will never again return the earth to the primal chaos of the first day, as he did at the Flood.

As in the original Creation, however, not long after the divine order is established, it is disrupted. After the flood waters recede, Noah plants a vineyard, drinks of its wine, gets drunk, and lies down uncovered in his tent.

And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brothers outside. But Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid it on both their shoulders, and went backward and covered the nakedness of their father. Their faces were turned away, and they did not see their father’s nakedness. So Noah

⁶ *Soncino Talmud*, Sotah 14a.

awoke from his wine, and; knew what his younger son had done to him. Then he said: “Cursed be Canaan ...” (Genesis 9:22–25a)

The nature of Ham’s offense is unclear, but its effect is devastating. The earth has just come through judgment and renewal to receive God’s blessing. Now the curse becomes lodged in it again. In the original Creation story, the curse is introduced through the agency of the serpent in the Garden of Eden; here, through the agency of a vine in the garden of Noah.

Rabbi Judah and Rabbi Jose differed as to the origin of this vine. One said that it came from the Garden of Eden and Noah now planted it here. The other said that it had been the earth before the Flood and Noah had plucked it and now replanted it. On the same day it blossomed, ripened, and brought forth grapes. Noah then pressed out from them wine, drank of it and became drunken.⁷

A startling midrash: the vine came from the Garden of Eden. Perhaps Noah is seeking to regain the original bounty and innocence of the human condition. In the recreated earth, he desires to drink of such fruits as Adam and Eve enjoyed before their transgression and exile. But the Garden has not been restored and its produce is too much for Noah. It overpowers him and leaves him vulnerable, so that sin and disorder reenter the scene. God has spared the human race through the family of Noah, but he has not yet restored them to the primal bliss of Eden. The message for us is clear: We have a long journey ahead of us before our exile is over.

The real problem is not the vine, but man’s continuing folly in pursuing divine knowledge or bliss in his own way. Even after the purification of the Flood and the renewal of God’s blessing upon humankind, humans continue to follow their own ways. The action of Shem and Japheth, however, leaves us with a note of hope. Noah’s sons take pains to cover his nakedness.

Here is another reminder of the Creation story, in which the Lord covered the nakedness of Adam and Eve in the Garden after their transgression. They are sent into exile, but their human dignity is affirmed and protected. This act of God is an example of what Jewish writings call *g’milut hasadim*, deeds of kindness, which God performs as an example for us.

Noah’s two sons follow God’s example. In contrast with Ham, they refuse to even look upon Noah’s nakedness, but they cover it, hoping to restore his dignity and maintain the wholeness of the family.

Transgression may be inevitable within our families and communities, but here is a lesson in how we are to respond. When someone offends us, we can magnify their offense by uncovering it for all to see, or we can counter it by preserving the dignity of the offender.

Accordingly, the Messiah teaches us, “If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother” (Matt. 18:15). We are tempted, when someone has offended us, to imitate Ham and expose the offense, at least to a few sympathetic friends. We couch our act of exposing someone else as a request for prayer,

⁷ Zohar, 73a.

or a need for advice. But somehow we enjoy exposing the fault of the other person. The example of Shem and Japheth, however, leads us to cover the offense by handling it directly with the offender, so that he can turn from the offense, make amends, and regain his dignity.

Rav Shaul, the apostle Paul, writes, “Brothers, suppose someone is caught doing something wrong. You who have the Spirit should set him right, but in a spirit of humility, keeping an eye on you selves so that you won’t be tempted too. Bear one another’s burden—in this way you will be fulfilling the Torah’s true meaning, which the Messiah upholds” (Gal. 6:1–2, CJB).

A respected woman once came to ask advice of the rabbi of Apt. The instant he set eyes on her he shouted: “Adulteress! You sinned only a short while ago, and yet now you have the insolence to step into this pure house!” Then from the depths of her heart the woman replied: “The Lord of the world has patience with the wicked. He is in no hurry to make them pay their debts and he does not disclose their secret to any creature, lest they be ashamed to turn to him. Nor does he hide his face from them. But the rabbi of Apt sits there in his chair and cannot resist revealing at once what the Creator has covered.” From that time on the rabbi of Apt used to say: “No one ever got the better of me except once—and then it was a woman.”⁸

Until Messiah returns, we remain in exile, on the way toward Creation completed, but still far from it. In this exile we inevitably become tainted by sin and vulnerable to shame. The issue is how we handle our vulnerability and that of our brothers and sisters. Will we heighten it, as Ham did, and turn it into a curse, or will we cover it as the brothers did, restoring dignity and peace to the whole family?

For the journey: How do I apply the principle of covering the naked without letting people get away with wrongdoing, or falling into religious denial? As I recall how God has covered my sins and misdeeds, I will look for opportunities to practice this act of loving kindness toward others.²

⁸ Buber 111.

² Resnik, R. (2006). *Creation to completion: A Guide to Life’s Journey From the Five Books of Moses* (7–10). Clarksville, MD: Messianic Jewish Publishers.

Haftarah Isaiah 54:1–55:5

The Eternal Covenant of Peace

Isa 54:1 “Sing, barren one, who has not given birth. burst into singing and shout, you who have not travailed. For more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married one,” says Adonai.

Isa 54:2 “Enlarge the place of your tent, stretch out your tabernacle curtains. Do not hold back—lengthen your cords, strengthen your stakes.

Isa 54:3 For you will spread out to the right hand and to the left. Your offspring will possess the nations and will resettle the desolate cities.

Isa 54:4 Fear not, for you will not be ashamed. Nor cringe, for you will not be disgraced. For you will forget the shame of your youth, and you will remember the reproach of your widowhood no more.

Isa 54:5 For your Maker is your husband—Adonai-Tzva’ot is His Name—the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer. He will be called God of all the earth.

Isa 54:6 “For Adonai has called you back like a wife deserted and grieved in spirit, like a wife of one’s youth that is rejected,” says your God.

Isa 54:7 “For a brief moment I deserted you, but I will regather you with great compassion.

Isa 54:8 In a surge of anger I hid My face from you a moment, but with everlasting kindness I will have compassion on you,” says Adonai your Redeemer.

Isa 54:9 “For this is like the waters of Noah to Me: for as I swore that the waters of Noah should no more cover the earth, so I have sworn that I will not be angry with you, nor will I rebuke you.

Isa 54:10 Though the mountains depart and the hills be shaken, My love will not depart from you, nor will My covenant of peace be shaken, says Adonai who has compassion on you.

Isa 54:11 Afflicted one, storm-tossed, unconsolated, behold, I set your stones in antimony, lay your foundations with sapphires,

Isa 54:12 make your pinnacles of rubies, your gates of crystal, and all your walls of precious stones.

Isa 54:13 All your children will be taught by Adonai. Your children will have great shalom.

Isa 54:14 In righteousness you will be established. You will be far from oppression—for you will not fear—and from terror—for it will not come near you.

Isa 54:15 Behold, anyone fiercely attacking is not from Me. Whoever stirs up strife with you will fall because of you.

Isa 54:16 Behold, I created the smith who blows the fire of coals and produces a weapon for its work, and I created the destroyer to ruin.

Isa 54:17 No weapon formed against you will prosper and you will condemn every tongue that rises against you in judgment. This is the heritage of Adonai’s servants—their vindication is from Me.” It is a declaration of Adonai.

Isa 55:1 “Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the water, and you who have no money, come, buy and eat. Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost!

Isa 55:2 Why do you spend money for what is not bread? Your wages for what does not satisfy?

Listen diligently to Me, and eat what is good, and delight yourself in abundance.

Isa 55:3 Incline your ear and come to Me. Listen, so that your soul may live. I will make an everlasting covenant with you, the trustworthy loyalty to David.

Isa 55:4 Behold, I made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander for the peoples.

Isa 55:5 Behold, you will summon a nation you do not know, and a nation that did not know you will run to you, because of Adonai your God and the Holy One of Israel, for He has glorified you.”

“You will summon a nation you do not know, and a nation that doesn’t know you will run to you, for the sake of ADONAI your God, the Holy One of Isra’el, who will glorify you.”

—*Isaiah 55:5*

Great joy and jubilation are destined for Tsiyon (*Zion*)! No more will she be exiled, reduced in numbers, and forsaken by the LORD (Is. 54:1).

The LORD is still married (Is. 54:5), and He would never disown Yisra’el, whom He compares to the wife of one’s youth (Is. 54:6). “Briefly I abandoned you” (Is. 54:7), but “just as I swore that no flood like Noach’s would ever again cover the earth, so now I swear that never again will I be angry with you or rebuke you” (Is. 54:9).

The LORD envisions a glorious Y’rushalayim (*Jerusalem*), with foundations, pinnacles, gates, and walls of precious stones (Is. 54:11–12; Rev. 21:9–27). He Himself will personally teach all children of Tsiyon (Is. 54:13; Jn. 6:45).

The Holy One has glorified Yisra’el!

The covenant of a dynasty and kingdom among nations now becomes the sacred heritage of Yisra’el among the nations! (Is. 55:4–5).³

Isaiah 54:1⁴

Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear,.... The Targum interprets this of Jerusalem, paraphrasing the words thus,

"sing praise, O Jerusalem, which was as a barren woman that bears not;"

and so the apostle applies the words of the text to the Jerusalem above, the mother of us all, the then present Gospel Body of Messiah, Gal 4:26, which, at the first setting of it up, in the times of Messiah, during his life and at the time of his death, and before the day of Shavuot, was like a barren woman; the number of converts were very small; few believed the report of the Gospel, professed Yeshua The Messiah, and submitted to his ordinances; the names of the disciples were

³ Feinberg, J. E., Ph.D. (1998). *Walk Genesis!: In the beginning* (42). Clarksville, MD: Messianic Jewish Publishers.

⁴ Commentary – John Gill’s Exposition of the Bible E-Sword.com

but a hundred and twenty. Though some understand this of the Jewish Body of Messiah, under the Teanch, whose members were not many, and whose proselytes from the Gentiles were but few; and others of the Gentile world, before the coming of Messiah, and the preaching of the Gospel in it; but the former sense is to be preferred, having the suffrage of the apostle:

break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child; among whom there were few instances of conversion, scarce any begotten and born again of incorruptible seed by the word of God, and no signs thereof; but now it being otherwise, and multitudes being converted both in Judea and in the Gentile world, the Body of Messiah and its members are called upon to express their joy aloud in songs of praise, setting forth the glory of efficacious grace, in the regeneration of men; for as this is matter of joy to the angels of heaven, so to the saints on earth:

for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the Lord; more souls were born again, and added to the Body of Messiah after the death of Messiah, when she was in a desolate condition, like a woman deprived of her husband, and in a widowhood state, then there were while Messiah was here on earth, personally present with his people, and preaching the Gospel himself unto men; three thousand were converted under one sermon, and great numbers afterwards were added, so that the Body of Messiah at Jerusalem was in a much more flourishing condition after the death of Messiah than before; more fruitful when it was become like a widow than when the bridegroom was with her; and the Body of Messiah of Messiah Yeshua still increased yet more and more afterwards, as the following verses predict. The Targum is,

"more shall be the children of Jerusalem than the children of the habitable city."

The edition of it, in the king of Spain's Bible, has it,

"than the children of Rome;"

and so it is quoted by R. Elias (h), and by Buxtorf (i). The Jews understand this prophecy of their deliverance from their present condition by the Messiah; and of the rebuilding of Jerusalem, and the prosperity of it.

(h) In Tishbi, p. 227. (i) Lexic. Talmud. col. 996, 2229.

O barren: Isa 62:4; Son 8:8; Gal 4:27

break: Isa 42:10-11, Isa 44:23, Isa 49:13, Isa 55:12-13; Psa 67:3-5, Psa 98:3-9; Zep 3:14; Zec 9:9; Rev 7:9-10

for more: 1Sa 2:5; Psa 113:9; Heb 11:11-12

Isaiah 54:9⁵

מֵעֶבֶר	אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי	לִי	זֹאת	נֹחַ	כִּי־מַי	
מִן · עֵבֶר	שָׁבַע	אֲשֶׁר	לִי · אֲנִי	זֹאת	נֹחַ	כִּי · מַיִם
from · pass over	swear	which	to · I	this	Noah	for · water
from · the passing over of	I swore	which [is] to · me	this	Noah	for ¹ · the waters of	
P · VaF---C	VdP1-S	C	P · RS1-S	RD-FS	NPMSA	C · NCMPC
				עוֹד	מִי־נֹחַ	
				עוֹד	מַיִם · נֹחַ	
				again	water · Noah	
				again	the waters of · Noah	
				NC-SA	NCMPC · NPMSA	

For this is as the waters of Noah unto me,.... Some copies, as Kimchi and Ben Melech observe, read these two words, כִּי מַי, as one, thus, כִּי־מַי, "as the days of Noah"; and this is followed by the Targum, Vulgate Latin, and Syriac versions; both readings may be kept, and joined in one, and the sense be, "for this is as the waters that were in the days of Noah unto me"; so Kimchi and Menachem join them. The meaning is, that God's dispensation towards his people, at the time the prophecy refers to, is like that of his to Noah and his family; and the love he bears to them is like that which he bore to him; and the covenant he has made with them is as that he made with him:

for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; he gave his word for it, which is as firm as his oath; he made a covenant with Noah, and confirmed it by a rainbow, that the waters should no more go over the earth as they had, and that the world should be no more destroyed by a flood, Gen 9:9,

so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee; for though the Lord's people are by nature children of wrath, as others, he has not appointed them to it, nor will he suffer it to fall upon them, but saves them from it through the righteousness of Messiah, who has borne it for them; and though he rebukes by his Spirit, by his word and ministers, and by his providences, yet not in wrath, but in love; and of this he has given the strongest assurances; he has not only said it, but swore to it in covenant, Psa 89:3. The Jews (r) refer this prophecy to the times of the Messiah.

(r) T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 99. 1.

Isa 12:1, Isa 55:11; Gen 8:21, Gen 9:11-16; Psa 104:9; Jer 31:35-36, Jer 33:20-26; Eze 39:20; Heb 6:16-18

⁵van der Merwe, C. (2004). *The Lexham Hebrew-English Interlinear Bible* (Is 54:9). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

Isaiah 55:1

Ho, everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters,.... These are the words not of the prophet, but of the Lord, as what follows throughout the chapter shows; and are directed to the Gentiles, as Aben Ezra thinks: and indeed their conversion is manifestly spoken of in it; and who, Kimchi says, after the war of Gog and Magog, shall know that the Lord reigns, and shall come and be desirous of learning his judgments and laws. The word "ho" is expressive of calling, as the Jewish commentators rightly observe; and carries in it an invitation, in which there seems to be a commiseration of the case of the persons called and it is delivered in indefinite terms, and very openly and publicly; and has in it the nature of a Gospel call or invitation, to persons described as "thirsty"; not in natural, much less in a sinful sense, but in a spiritual one; thirsting after forgiveness of sin by the blood of Messiah; after justification by his righteousness; after salvation by him; after more knowledge of him, more communion with him, and more conformity to him; and after the milk of the word, and breasts of ordinances; being sensible of sin and danger, and having a spiritual appetite, and a desire after spiritual things. Such as these are persons made alive; are in distress, and sensible of it; and have desires formed in them after divine things: and these are invited and encouraged to "come to the waters"; by which are meant not Messiah, though he is as "rivers of water"; and sensible sinners are directed to come to him, and that as in a starving and famishing condition, and having nothing to help themselves with; and such things are to be had of him, which like water are refreshing and reviving, as his grace, and the blessings of it; and which serve to extinguish thirst, and free from it; yet not he, nor the grace of the spirit, are intended, which is often signified by water in Scripture; but rather the ordinances of the Gospel, which are the means of conveying grace, and of refreshing and comforting distressed minds; in order to which, such may come and hear the word, come and partake of all ordinances. The allusion seems to be to such places by the waterside, where ships, laden with provisions, come and unlade; and where persons, by a public crier, are informed of it, and are called to come and buy. So water means the water side, Jdg 7:4. Aben Ezra, Jarchi, and Kimchi, interpret them of the law, and the doctrines of it; and so the Targum,

"ho, everyone that would learn, let him come and learn;"

but the Gospel, and the doctrines and ordinances of that, seem rather designed:

and he that hath no money; not in a natural, but in a spiritual sense: unconverted persons have nothing to support themselves or pay off their debts with, though they fancy they have, and that they are rich, and stand in need of nothing; but sensible souls know they have none, and that they are poor and needy; yet these are invited to come where provisions are to be had, since they are to be had at free cost:

come ye, buy and eat; come to the ordinances, partake of them freely, and feed upon the provisions therein made:

come, buy wine and milk, without money, and without price; by wine and milk are meant the Gospel and its doctrines, compared to good old generous wine, for the antiquity of them, and for their being of a reviving and refreshing nature; and to "milk", for its purity and sweetness, and for its cooling and nourishing nature, and because easy of digestion; these are to be bought, and not to be sold. Pro 23:23, but not in a proper sense; no valuable consideration can be given for them, for they are of more worth than thousands of gold and silver; nor have we anything to give to God for them, and the blessings of grace conveyed by them, which is not his own, or can be

profitable to him; but in an improper sense, when something thought valuable is parted with for them, as sinful and righteous self, and even everything in life, when called for, and that itself; these are bought without any money or price on our part; they are freely given and received; and on this basis may men expect them, and have them. The Targum is,

"he that hath no silver, come, hear and learn; come, hear and learn, without price and money, doctrine better than wine and milk."

Ho: Rth 4:1; Pro 1:21-23, Pro 8:4; Zec 2:6

every: Isa 41:17-18; Psa 42:1-2, Psa 63:1, Psa 143:6; Joh 4:10-14, Joh 7:37-38; Rev 21:6; Rev 22:1, Rev 22:17

and: Mat 13:44; Rev 3:18

buy wine: Son 1:2, Son 1:4, Son 5:1; Zec 9:15, Zec 10:7; Mat 26:29; Joh 2:3-10

milk: Joe 3:18; 1Co 3:2; 1Pe 2:2

without money: Isa 52:3; Rom 3:24; Eph 2:4-8

Isaiah 55:6

Seek ye the Lord while he may be found,.... The Lord is to be sought unto at all times, whenever the people of God meet together, especially on sabbath days, and while the external ministry of the word lasts, and life itself; so the Targum,

"seek the fear of the Lord, while ye are alive."

Kimchi compares it with Ecc 9:10. The Jewish writers, as Aben Ezra and others, generally interpret it before the sealing of the decree, or before the decree is gone forth. It may be understood of place, as well as time, and be rendered, "seek the Lord in the place where he may be found" (1); God is to be found, as Aben Ezra observes, in all places, and at all times; under the Old Testament there was a particular place appointed for the worship of God, the tabernacle and temple, where he was to be sought unto, and might be found; under the New Testament, all places are alike, and wherever the Body of Messiah and people of God meet together, there he is to be sought, and there he may be found, even in his house and ordinances:

call ye upon him while he is near; the same thing designed by different words: seeking and calling design not only prayer, but the whole of public worship, and the time and place when and where the Lord is to be found, and is near. Aben Ezra thinks it refers to the Shechinah in the sanctuary. Perhaps it may have some respect to the time of Messiah's incarnation, and his being in the land of Judea; and to the destruction of the temple by the Romans, when the Lord could be no more sought unto, and found in that place; or when the Messiahians were obliged to move from Jerusalem, because of the siege of it; and when the Jews had no more an opportunity of hearing the Gospel there.

(1) So in the Jerusalem Talmud, as quoted by Abendana on the place,

"seek the Lord, where he is found, in the synagogues, and in the schools; call upon him, where he is near, in the synagogues, and in the schools."

And so another Jewish writer, mentioned by him, interprets the words,

"whilst the Shechinah is found in the sanctuary; before he hides his face, and causes his Shechinah to remove from you."

Seek: Isa 45:19; 1Ch 28:9; 2Ch 19:3; Job 8:5; Psa 14:2, Psa 27:8, Psa 32:6, Psa 95:7; Jer 29:12-14; Amo 5:6; Mat 5:25, Mat 7:7-8, Mat 25:11-12; Luk 13:25; Joh 7:33-34, Joh 8:21, Joh 12:35-36; 2Co 6:1-2; Heb 2:3, Heb 3:13

while he is near: Isa 12:6, Isa 46:13; Deu 4:7; Psa 75:1, Psa 145:18, Psa 148:14; Eze 8:6; Eph 3:13

Isaiah 55:8

For my thoughts are not your thoughts,.... In some things there may be a likeness between the thoughts of God and the thoughts of men, as to the nature of them: thoughts are natural and essential to them both; they are within them, are internal acts, and unknown to others, till made known; but then the thoughts of men are finite and limited, whereas the thoughts of the Lord are infinite and boundless; men's thoughts have a beginning, but the Lord's have none; though not so much the nature as the quality of them is here intended: the thoughts of men are evil, even the imagination of their thoughts, yea, every imagination is, and that always and only so; but the thoughts of God are holy, as appears from his purposes and covenant, and all his acts of grace, in redemption, calling, and preparing his people for glory: the thoughts of men, as to the object of them, are vain, and nothing worth; their thoughts and sentiments of things are very different from the Lord's, as about sin, concerning Messiah, the truths of the Gospel, the people of God, religion, holiness, and a future state, and in reference to the business of salvation; they think they can save themselves; that their own works of righteousness are sufficient to justify them; their privileges and profession such, that they shall be saved; their wisdom, riches, and honour, a security to them from damnation: however, that their sincere obedience, with repentance for what is amiss, will entitle them to happiness: but the thoughts of God are the reverse of all this; particularly with respect to pardoning mercy their thoughts are different; carnal men think of mercy, but not of justice, and of having pardoning mercy in an absolute way, and not through Messiah, and without conversion and repentance; and so this is a reason why men's thoughts are to be forsaken, because so very unlike to the Lord's. Or else these words are to be considered as an argument, proving that God does abundantly pardon all returning sinners; since he is not like men, backward to forgive, especially great and aggravated crimes, but is ready, free, and willing to forgive, even those of the most aggravated circumstances.

Neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord; the ways which God prescribes and directs men to walk in are different from theirs; his are holy, theirs unholy; his are plain, theirs crooked; his are ways of light, theirs ways of darkness; his are pleasant, theirs not so, at least in the issue; his lead to life, theirs to death; and therefore there is good reason why they should leave their evil ways, and walk in his. Moreover, the ways which he takes in the salvation of men are different from those which they, naturally pursue, and especially in the pardon of sin; he pardons freely, fully, without any reserve, or private grudge, forgetting as well as forgiving.

2Sa 7:19; Psa 25:10, Psa 40:5, Psa 92:5; Pro 21:8, Pro 25:3; Jer 3:1; Eze 18:29; Dan 4:37; Hos 14:9

Closing Questions: For Personal Introspection

What were G-d's purposes and objectives in preserving this portion of the Scriptures to this day?

What benefit do these Scriptures have for Torah observant believers today?

What other insights has the Ruach HaKodesh given you in your study of this portion.

What impact do you think the study of the words from your Father in this portion will have on your life?

How do you plan to implement his instructions in this parsha in your life?

Silently ask the Ruach HaKodesh to implant these words of our Father like seeds, to nurture their growth in your heart, and to enable you to respond fully as they do.