

“It’s gonna come to a head!...

Coming soon – to a head near you!”

A Message based on Parashat וַיַּצֵּא

תורה

Torah:

Genesis (בראשית) 28:10-32:2(3) (חנ"ד)

הפטורה

Haftarah:

Hosea (הוֹשֵׁעַ) 11:7-14:9(10) (תב"ד)

ברית החדשה

Breet Chadasha (New Covenant):

John 1:19-51 (Jeff Feinberg, John Parsons)

John 1:43-51 (David Stern, Jack Farber)

תהלים

Tehilim (Psalms):

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Once every year, Jews around the world cycle through the **Torah**<sup>1</sup>. This week, we remember a **Torah** event well known, both inside and outside church and synagogue. **Ya'akov** (the patriarch Jacob), who G-D later renamed **Yisrael** (Israel)<sup>2</sup>, had his famous dream about a מֶלֶךְ, a ladder or staircase connecting heaven and earth, and angels going up and down this ladder<sup>3</sup>. Late in 1971, the band Led Zeppelin released one of the most successful rock songs of all time: Stairway to Heaven. 20 years after its release, *Stairway to Heaven* had played on U.S. radio just under 3 million times. If all those times played were put back-to-back, it would amount to some 44 years of continuous playing. In 1990, a Florida radio

<sup>1</sup> Some Jews read through the Torah once every 3 years.

<sup>2</sup> Genesis 32:28

<sup>3</sup> Genesis 28:10-15

station actually aired *Stairway to Heaven* for 24 hours non-stop<sup>4</sup>. In 1986, Bruce Hornsby wrote a popular song for the group [Huay Lewis and the News](#) called: [Jacob's Ladder](#). So we see that the hearts of people yearn for the connection of heaven and earth. Whether it be through the lyrics of modern songs, or through the tower of Babel built by the world's first empire<sup>5</sup>, clearly, humans long to bridge the divide between this world and the world beyond. But if we try to build our own ladder or tower to heaven, it will fail. If we try to climb such a ladder, however slowly or carefully in our own strength, without heavenly help, we will fall, and strike our spiritual feet (and other body parts) against stones<sup>6</sup>. Sadly, the "ladder" many try to climb is a construction of their own imaginations. If we don't separate fact and fiction about what the real Stairway to Heaven is or how it works, we are outside The L-RD's will: "THY will be done, on earth, as it is in heaven"<sup>7</sup>. Every day, we have the choice to pray and live out "THY will be done", or "My will be done".

Initially, our first parents, **Adam** and **Chavah** (Eve), walked this earth with the complete dignity and integrity that every person alive today longs for, whether they know they long for it or not. All the things we can do on this earth have no meaning without the light of G-D in our hearts and minds guiding our actions, what we think about, and the ways we think about what we think about, and the ways we do what we do. Before giving in to sin, **Adam** and **Chavah** were fully aware of how they were made in the image of HaSHEM. There was not only the **light** of G-D's revelation within them, but the **warmth** that comes from that light. We learned from Messiah that whenever an increase in wickedness happens, the love of the heart tends to grow cold<sup>8</sup>, to the point that the heart can catch a cold or pneumonia, leading to coma or death<sup>9</sup>. Ya'akov while dreaming saw angels going up and down between heaven and earth. No doubt before sinning, **Adam** and **Chavah** saw things like that while awake<sup>10</sup>. After The Fall, their awareness and experience of the complex connections between earth and heaven was severely impaired. But in **חֶסֶד** (**Chesed**), in mercy, G-D HIMSELF encouraged them with a prophecy, the key prophecy of all scripture. Everything about Redemption, Messiah, The Beast, The Antichrist, all of it hinges on the prophecy in Genesis 3 which G-D spoke to **HaSattan**, the enemy of all mankind. This prophecy was spoken in **Adam** and **Chavah**'s hearing:

...I [G-D]will put enmity  
between you [Sattan] and the woman [Chavah],  
and between your offspring and hers.

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<sup>4</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stairway\\_to\\_Heaven](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stairway_to_Heaven)

<sup>5</sup> Genesis 11; Josephus, [Jewish Antiquities](#), Book 1, Chapter 4, Sections 2 and 3

<sup>6</sup> Psalm 91:12; Luke 4:10-11

<sup>7</sup> Matthew 6:10

<sup>8</sup> Matthew 24:12

<sup>9</sup> Sin leading to death vs. sin not leading to death – see 1 John 5:16

<sup>10</sup> Elisha prayed and the L-RD opened a servant's eyes to see what would otherwise not be seen: hills full of horses and chariots of fire (2 Kings 6:17).

[**Sattan**, Chavah's offspring] *will crush your head,*  
*and you [Sattan] will strike [her offspring's] heel.*<sup>11</sup>

Years later, after we left Egypt, HaSHEM used the pagan prophet Beelam (Balaam) to give this related oracle:

*I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near. A star will come out of Jacob; a scepter will rise out of Israel. He will **crush the foreheads** of Moab, **the skulls** off all the people of Sheth. Edom will be conquered; Seir, [Israel's] enemy, will be conquered, but Israel will grow strong. A ruler will come out of Jacob... (Numbers 24:17-19 [NIV], emphasis added)*

Some only focus on the parts these prophecies fulfilled by Yeshua's 1<sup>st</sup> coming, but these prophecies will have more fulfillment when HE returns. G-D calls **us** – US - to be HIS feet to help do the head crushing. Rav Sha'ool (Paul) wrote near the end of the letter to the Romans:

*The God of peace will soon **crush HaSattan under your feet** (Romans 16:20, added emphasis)*

That's our feet – yours and mine. Our calling is to "Take no part in the fruitless works of darkness, but instead expose them" (Ephesians 5:11). We don't take unbelievers, throw them to the ground and "put the boots to their heads", but making disciples<sup>12</sup> means we teach people *how*, by The Spirit, to stomp on the heads of their old natures (Romans 8:13). It means speaking the truth in love<sup>13</sup> when falsehood is proclaimed, and not passively allowing what is good to be spoken of as evil (Romans 14:16). A **coelenterate** is a creature that doesn't have a backbone. We are not called to be coelenterates. If we are scared to declare the truth because it's "offensive", this is a coelenterate reaction inspired by the Enemy. This does not show love to the person we need to speak the truth to. If people live in a termite infested house and don't know it, and we're afraid to tell them, when the house collapses on them, WE are responsible.

**Adam** and **Chavah**, after eating the forbidden fruit, knew they made a mess they couldn't fix. But with the prophecy of Genesis 3, **Chavah** learned and passed onto her children the knowledge and hope that the Enemy who goads us on to make messes will be crushed. **Ya'akov** was one of the men that G-D worked through in the fulfillment of this prophecy. The L-RD passed HIS heart-warming torch of love through many generations. It went through:

Set (Seth, **Adam** and **Chavah**'s son born after Cain and Abel [Genesis 4:25-26])

**Noach** (Noah)

**Avraham** (Abraham)

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<sup>11</sup> Verse 15

<sup>12</sup> Matthew 28:19

<sup>13</sup> Ephesians 4:15

**Yitzchak** (Isaac)

**Ya'akov**

Y'hudah (Judah), Ya'akov's son. On his deathbed<sup>14</sup>, Ya'akov spoke this prophecy over Y'hudah:

*The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he to whom it belongs shall come and the obedience of the nations shall be his. (Genesis 49:10 [NIV])*

Yeshua

Of course, Yeshua was way more than just one man in list of righteous men, but HE was a link in this chain – the key link...

The 12 sh'leecheem (apostles) and Rav Sha'ool

The martyrs – From Stephen to today's victims of ISIS - the souls under the altar waiting to be avenged<sup>15</sup>. Martyr doesn't just mean someone who dies for the faith, but someone who is a witness<sup>16</sup>.

You and me

As time went on, the L-RD revealed HIS plan of Redemption more and more specifically, especially through the promises to Avraham, Yitzchak and Ya'akov. Let's have a look at those.

In Genesis 15, G-D spoke to Avraham (before he was called Avraham) and said:

*"Look up at the sky and count **the stars**—if indeed you can count them... **So shall your offspring be.**" (Verse 5, NIV)*

Later, G-D called Avraham to take his son Yitzchak to Mount Moriah at Jerusalem, and offer him there as an **אַלְעָגָם**, a burnt offering<sup>17</sup>. Seconds before slaying his son, the L-RD provided a ram to be offered in place of Yitzchak. HaSHEM told Avraham:

*"I swear by myself, declares the LORD, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me." (Genesis 22:17&18 [NIV])*

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<sup>14</sup> Genesis 48:21

<sup>15</sup> Revelation 6:9

<sup>16</sup> Strong's Concordance, Word G3144  
(<https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G3144&t=NIV>)

<sup>17</sup> Strong's Concordance, Word H5930  
(<https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=H5930&t=NIV>)

G-D passed Avraham's covenant onto his son **Yitzchak**, and HE showed **Yitzchak Eretz-Israel** (the land of Israel), and told him:

*"...to you and your descendants I will give all these lands and will confirm the oath I swore to your father Abraham. I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and will give them all these lands, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed" (Genesis 26:3, 4 [NIV])*

HaSHEM then passed the covenant onto **Ya'akov**, telling him:

*"Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring" (Genesis 28:14 [NIV])*

There's a progression, from **Avraham**, to **יַצְחָק** (Yitzchak), and to **Ya'akov**. There is also a progression in how their descendants are described:

- 1<sup>st</sup>, as the stars in the sky
- Then, like the sand on the seashore
- Then, as the עֲפָר of the earth, the dust, or dirt of the earth<sup>18</sup>

All 3, the stars, the sand and the dirt, obviously speak to a large number, but there's more to be understood here. The universe contains myriad stars, but the distance between individual stars is huge, measured in light-years. Grains of sand are closer to each other, but if they are just dry grains without water, they don't stick together. Pieces of dirt though, stick to each other easily, and have even less space between each other. As more time passed, G-D bound the Jewish people closer and closer together. Wildebeest far apart and alone get picked off by predators. Together, they can stand up to the roaring lion (1 Peter 5:8). And as the roaring gets louder; as the lion gets closer; and as fewer and fewer of us wildebeest are left, we need to stand closer together.

Not everyone agrees where **Ya'akov** was when he had his dream of the מֶלֶךְ, the ladder. The place was 1<sup>st</sup> called Looz, then after **Ya'akov**'s dream, it was renamed **Beit-el** (Bethel)<sup>19</sup>. Some think this is today's **Beit-el**, some 30 kilometers north of Jerusalem, but I think our sages make a good case that the place where the מֶלֶךְ dream happened was Jerusalem itself. This week's **Torah** portion begins with **Ya'akov** traveling from **B'er-sheva** in **Eretz-Yisrael**, heading north to Harran in modern Turkey<sup>20</sup>. The sun had set, and most bibles say **Ya'akov** reached "a certain place", took 1 stone from a group of stones, laid his head on that rock, fell asleep, and had his dream. But the Hebrew is clear that **Ya'akov** arrived at **the** place, not just **a** place (מִלְכָה). Other times in scripture when a geographic place is mentioned, and that place not named, but has the definite article, Jerusalem often was meant.

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<sup>18</sup> <http://www.morfix.co.il/%D7%A2%D6%B8%D7%A4%D6%B8%D7%A8>

<sup>19</sup> Genesis 28:19

<sup>20</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harran>

It's likely that all 3, **Avraham**, **Yitzchak** and **Ya'akov** – grandfather, father and son, all had life changing, covenant experiences at Jerusalem. You don't need to believe this, and maybe I'm getting mystical here, but I am convinced that the stone that **Ya'akov** laid his head on that night, was from the same altar that **Avraham** bound and laid his son on. And the same way that G-D spared **Yitzchak**, HE spared **Ya'akov**. Note two verses from Genesis 28:

*When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he thought, "Surely the LORD is in this place, and I was not aware of it." He was afraid and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven."*<sup>21</sup>

**Ya'akov** was terrified. He just desecrated a holy place by sleeping in it. He knew he deserved to die. ADONAI rightfully could have crushed his head on that rock while he laid there. Even in Judaism today, sleeping in shool, in Yeshiva or with tefillin on is discouraged<sup>22</sup>. But the מֶלֶךְ, the ladder, took **Ya'akov**'s place. In his dream, **Ya'akov** didn't just see an inanimate object: he saw Messiah Yeshua. As Yeshua told Natanael in John 1:

*"Very truly I tell you, you will see 'heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on' the Son of Man."* (Verse 51, NIV)

Like his father, **Ya'akov** was spared from becoming the ashes of a burnt offering. HaSHEM promised that **Ya'akov**'s descendants would be like the עָפָר of the earth, the dust of the earth. עָפָר can also mean ashes<sup>23</sup>.

**Ya'akov** anointed the stone he slept on with oil. In scripture, the purpose of anointing with oil was to *prepare* someone or something *for future service*. What future service could that rock have performed? Roughly 2000 years later, Messiah would die for the sins of the world near that very stone.

Another reason **Ya'akov**'s dream was likely at Jerusalem is that previously the place was called Looz<sup>24</sup> (לוֹז), which means "almond tree"<sup>25</sup>. I am now convinced after studying this week's parasha that the Tree of life in the garden of Eden was an almond tree. The cross of Messiah Yeshua is the Tree of Life. The 7-branched candlestick, the m'norah in the holy place of the tabernacle and both temples was meant to look like a tree, and was decorated with almond buds<sup>26</sup>. 7 is the number of The L-RD. "Cursed is anyone...hung on a tree"<sup>27</sup>; HE took the curse for us. Instead of having our foreheads crushed with the enemies of G-D, Yeshua hung on the Tree of Life for you and for me. Remember how in the garden, G-D blocked the way to the Tree of Life with a flaming sword flashing back and forth (Genesis 3:24)? It is still

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<sup>21</sup> Verses 16 & 17

<sup>22</sup> [http://www.yutorah.org/lectures/lecture.cfm/711265/Rabbi\\_Daniel\\_Z\\_-Feldman/Tefillin\\_Without\\_Distraction](http://www.yutorah.org/lectures/lecture.cfm/711265/Rabbi_Daniel_Z_-Feldman/Tefillin_Without_Distraction)

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.morfix.co.il/%D7%A2%D7%A4%D7%A8>

<sup>24</sup> Genesis 28:19

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=H3870&t=NIV>

<sup>26</sup> Exodus 25:31-36

<sup>27</sup> Deuteronomy 21:23; Galatians 3:13

the same today. To come near the cross, we have to pass through that sword, the sword of The Spirit (Ephesians 6:17).

*Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it. (Matthew 10:39)*

For these and other reasons, any attempt to climb a stairway to heaven is blasphemy. Yeshua is the stairway to heaven. But climbing up Yeshua? When we are standing on his shoulders and want to go higher, would we put a foot on his face or head and push ourselves up? Unthinkable. Trying to climb up to heaven is trying to achieve something that no one has ever had. John 3:13: "No one has ascended into heaven except he who descended from heaven". There were no escalators in Ya'akov's time, but Yeshua is the escalator to heaven. At the bottom before you step on, and at the top before you step off, there are sensors on both sides that you have to pass through. And if there is something on you that shouldn't be, an alarm will go off.

Both Led Zeppelin's song and Huey Lewis and the News' song have references that people can purchase the stairway, or buy salvation<sup>28</sup>. Again - blasphemy. Blasphemy is hurting someone's good reputation, in this case, Messiah's<sup>29</sup>. Yeshua purchased our redemption; we can't purchase our own. Revelation 22:

*Let the one who is thirsty come; and let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life. (Verse 17)*

Twice in the book of Job, we get a description of how **HaSattan** the Enemy operates:

*The LORD said to Satan, "Where have you come from?" Satan answered the LORD, "From roaming throughout the earth, going back and forth on it" (Job 1:7; Job 2:2)*

If we don't hold to the clear direction of the scriptures, the guidance of the word of G-D, we will end up going back and forth through the empty rhetoric of man's philosophies and world-views. Just as **HaSattan** physically goes back and forth through the earth, one of his goals is to get people to go back and forth through anti-G-D teachings and philosophies. There is a principle in the occult, to try to do different kinds of things backwards. It is known as The Law of Reversal<sup>30</sup>. A number of songs exist, which have evil lyrics, and with some of them, if you play them backwards as well as forwards, you can actually hear whole phrases and sentences that should not be there. Choosing songs at random and playing them backwards, what you will usually hear won't make sense. But Led Zeppelin's *Stairway of Heaven* is understandable both forwards and backwards. Some bands have purposely made recordings so that when you play them backwards, you heard messages, but when you play them forward, they don't make sense. In Led Zeppelin's song, the recording makes sense played in both directions. To achieve this on purpose, Led Zeppelin would have had to sing just the right lyrics in just the right way, and no one is

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<sup>28</sup> In Led Zeppelin's song, the refrain is repeated a number of times: "...and she's **buying a stairway to heaven**". In Huey Lewis and the News' song, one stanza is: "I met a fan dancer Down in Southside Birmingham; She was running from a **fat man Selling salvation** in his hand".

<sup>29</sup> Strong's Concordance, Word G988  
(<https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=G988&t=NIV>)

<sup>30</sup> <http://amos37.com/lor/>

that smart. It seems that a dark supernatural influence was working through Led Zeppelin as they played their song. I won't repeat those phrases and sentences I heard (if you want, check it out for yourself), but suffice it to say, the demonic was discernible. When we encounter evil, G-D can always be trusted to help us see it as such. We have the choice; to follow the righteous path of the heavenly inspired scriptures, or follow any number of counterfeit world-views that will take us away from the bible and will make us useful idiots in the service of the Enemy. It's up to us.

The lion that goes back and forth seeking whom he may devour (1 Peter 5:8), has a future appointment. Things are coming to a head. The flaming sword, which also goes back and forth is going to render the lion into treif (un-kosher) lion cutlets. In the days of the Judges, the righteous Ya'el held a spike in her left hand, and an upraised hammer in her right. The hammer came down and drove the spike through the head of an enemy of Israel (Judges 4:21). It came to a head. And it will again.

**Meeshpochah** - Let's pray

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