
SEVEN SHEPHERDS AND THE SEVEN SPIRITS OF GOD

Greetings, everyone! Shabbat shalom and welcome to Bible study. Karaite Korner reports that on Thursday, April 11, 2013 the new moon was sighted from Israel at 7:17 p.m. The new moon day was Friday, April 12 and the second biblical month of the new Hebrew year.

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments, and commanded us concerning the counting of the Omer. Today is sixteen days, which is two weeks and two days of the Omer (Week 3—Day 16—*Gevurah* of **Tiferet**: Discipline in Compassion).

During the third week of Counting the Omer, we examine the emotional attribute of Tiferet of compassion. *Tiferet* possesses this power by introducing a third dimension—the dimension of truth, which is neither love nor discipline and therefore can integrate the two. Truth is accessed through selflessness: rising above your ego and your predispositions, enabling you to realize truth. Truth gives you a clear and objective picture of yours and other's needs. This quality gives Tiferet its name, which means beauty: it blends the differing colors of love and discipline, and this harmony makes it beautiful.

I know that people do not understand this and it is not a commandment. People do not have to do this. The Bible just says count for yourself. But the Bible also says that those things that happened to Israel as they were coming out of Egypt were written down for our examples that we might profit from what happened to them. **1 Corinthians 10:1-6**—“Brethren, I do not want you to be unaware (ignorant) that all of our fathers were under the cloud (Moses day) and that they all passed through the sea. They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. They all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual Rock that accompanied them, and that Rock was Christ. Nevertheless, God was not well pleased with most of them; their bodies were scattered in the wilderness.” **Verse 6** gives the key. “Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they did. Do not become idolaters as some of them did; as it is written: The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play (got up to indulge in pagan revelry).” They forgot why they came out of Egypt while Moses was up on Mt. Sinai.” Nor let us commit sexual immorality as some of them did and 23000 of them died in one day. We should not test the Lord as some of them did –and were killed by snakes. And do not grumble, as some of them did—and were killed by the destroying angel. All of these things happened to them as examples and **were written down as warnings for us**, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come. Therefore, let him who thinks he stands, take heed lest he falls!”

So we need to take these lessons to heart. This is what the Omer count is all about. During this time between Passover and Pentecost we take these lessons to heart by counting the Omer, working on a different lesson every day. The way to do that effectively is in a group of seven main attributes and the seven divisions of each major character trait we are to be learning.

But we do this as an exercise every year for spiritual growth and character development as we “**count for ourselves**” from the day after Passover, seven weeks of seven days (49 days) to Pentecost, the 50th day called the Feast of Weeks. The way we get the meaning of the seven weeks is from the seven characteristics of God revealed to us from dealing with mankind on this earth. These seven characteristics are listed in **2 Chronicles** and **Exodus** where God describes his nature – very essence of his being. Jewish

Rabbis have listed these in their studies and found that there are basically seven special shepherds listed in the Old Testament (Zachariah) — Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Aaron and David — that exemplified these seven special characteristics of God. So this exercise is used as building blocks of opportunity to grow in righteous holy Godly character. In other words, it all has to do with overcoming the pulls of human nature, sin and worldly influences surrounding us. Overcoming is a key to being in God's kingdom. If we do not overcome and serve God, we will not be in His kingdom.

These seven characteristics are vital aspects of God's character that we have to develop if we are going to be part of His kingdom. It is not just "believe and you will be saved" as many Protestant religions say and presto, your train gets rerouted to heaven instead of hell. It just does not work that way. Satan, Prince of the Power of the Air, the father of the lie, has deceived the whole world. In order to be in God's kingdom, we have to do something special, "we have to overcome". Right now I want to explain the special significance of this day this year which is day two of week three. *Tiferet* (harmony) equates the peace which goes together with mercy and compassion. This particular characteristic was exemplified in the life of Jacob whose name was changed to Israel. *Chesed*, the outpouring of the love of God with the discipline of *Gevura* (strength and discipline) combined with *Tiferet* is a directed sense of harmony and love. This introduces a third dimension of truth as an underlying foundation. Neither love (*chesed*) nor discipline (*gevura*) have this dimension of themselves, therefore, truth can integrate love and discipline. This results in selflessness which is above personal ego, desires and assumptions.

Truth is arrived at through a painstaking process called study which requires time and effort on our part to acquire truth. Christ said to the Pharisees, search the scriptures for in them they testify of me. If we are going to testify of Christ and learn of him, we really have to search. It will not come to those who sit back and wait for it to come to them. If you are going to find treasure, you have to go looking for it. The greatest treasure of all is finding Christ and his kingdom. Truth therefore is accessed through selflessness, rising above the importance of self and vanity, thereby enabling you to realize the truth of a situation. Truth gives you a clear and objective picture of the real needs of yourself and the need of others. This quality gives *Tiferet* its name, beauty—the blend of love (*chesed*), discipline/compassion (*gevura*), and harmony.

Today is a day to learn discipline and beautiful character by combing love with discipline and compassion together to achieve peace, harmony, mercy and goodness—the quality of **Tiferet**—beautiful character. In order for compassion to be effective and healthy, it needs to be controlled/disciplined and focused. It is recognizing when compassion should be expressed and when it should be contained or withheld. Discipline and compassion is the understanding that being truly compassionate sometimes requires withholding compassion. For instance, in the case of addictions (i.e. alcoholic or drugs) if there is no required change of action, compassion is going to be wasted. This is because compassion is not an expression of the bestower's need but a response to the recipient's needs. *Exercise for today*: Express your compassion in a focused and constructive manner by addressing someone's specific needs.

I find that some like to find fault and criticize (*cancerous behaviors*) and accuse me of being too Jewish. These seven basic characteristics that we are working on are emotional characteristics. We as human beings have an emotional component to our mind. We are not just robots or automatons without feelings. Those feelings are very important that cause us to be moved by inspiring works of sights and sounds of music, art, nature, marvels in creation of birds, galaxies, mathematical formulas—appreciation of beauty. Some minds are beautiful. What does counting the Omer have to do with being a Christian? Some think just counting the 49 days will be sufficient enough without an active plan of how to build the seven attributes of God into our own character. Satan is actively trying to thwart God's word, plan and purpose for mankind. There is a wonderful deep meaning in counting these days. Every one of us as a human

being are lacking from the time of birth. The number one thing is God's Holy Spirit. When born, you are a carnal helpless crying baby. An infant is basically concerned with its own needs and is totally helpless and needing attention. Every baby needs milk to drink, burping, changes of clothing, baths, touch, holding and a loving response. All the infant's physical and mental skills have to be developed day to day, month by month, and year by year as it learns to become physically adept and responds mentally to sound, motor and mental skills and family relationships. Once the basic concrete thinking is accomplished, abstract thinking develops and a child begins to embrace the realization of the world outside of himself.

When Adam and Eve sinned they introduced disobedience and disorder to the world, and their sin began to complicate everything. We are to work toward the goal of "*tikkun olam*" the ethical bettering (literally, perfecting; restoration) of the world, so essentially, "*what is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbor.*" The place to begin restoration is with our own selves and character. Socrates (Greek Philosopher) is famous for arguing that to be wise we must: "Know Thyself! The unexamined life is not worth living." In a sense, he was right. One of the places to begin to really do something worthwhile with your life is to know yourself. It is important to assess both your mental and physical strengths and weaknesses. We are in a world where we are surrounded by temptations and evil. We are to resist sin and shore up the foundations of righteousness within our self in accordance to God's divine principles which define his character and His attributes that he has revealed to us.

We find that students in educational pursuits take tests to reveal to themselves what they know and don't know. Even prospective employees in the business world give tests of aptitude for people who are searching for where they fit, what they want to do and what they do best. After graduating from college, I took a battery of tests from the Human Engineering Laboratories (H.E.L.) which showed what I could do proficiently and would be best suited to do. I found out that I rated 99.9 percentile in clerical work like typing and command of the English language. As far as vocational livelihood my aptitude suggested two areas: 1) rabbi/teacher (this one surprised me—but opened my mind to some extent), and 2) Youth counselor—sports/ activities of youth. The youth counselor never appealed to me, but the idea of rabbi and in depth teaching was interesting. So here I am, teaching the word of God—a calling I really enjoy.

I appreciate our Jewish brethren and their love for study of the Torah and some of the wonderful concepts that they share in love with us all by which we may profit. *Reference: The Book of Our Heritage* by Avraham Eliyahu Kitov, Vol. 2, page 682, "the seven attributes". We are not getting into mystics or witchcraft. The word mysticism used here means those who teach Torah and who have delved into the deeper meanings of the law. These Jewish teachers (Sages) see the forty-nine days [seven weeks] as a period in which one can rectify the deficiencies which have marred the seven attributes upon which the temporal world is based. Their Sages teach that in the verse (**Genesis 1:31**) the Torah is referring to the world thus rectified. "**And the Lord saw all that He had done and behold it was very good.**"

"These seven attributes (representing the essence or emotional attributes of God) were replanted in the world – after the sin of Adam had made them deficient – by our great ancestors, "the seven shepherds." After they were reintroduced and strengthened, they remain in place even after the sins that Israel has committed after the giving of the Torah. In every generation and in every time whenever man chooses, he can come and cleave to the attributes of the seven shepherds, for the qualities that they implanted have eternal strength." *These attributes should be, because they come from God in whose image and likeness we are created.* The spiritual image is more difficult than the physical because it takes spiritual effort. "The period during which the Omer is counted is most auspicious, for once Israel left Egypt and became a part of God's portion, a gate of purity was opened for them – gate that the people of that era entered and through which they became purified over a period of forty-nine days. They rose from the status of brick makers and straw gatherers serving the Pharaoh of Egypt, to become a people especially chosen by God, a

nation of *kohanim*, kings, and ministers, all devoted to His service. This path of purification was paved then, and each year when this period arrives, the gate is once again opened and the road made clear for all those who seek to assume the seven attributes in their completeness.”

2 Peter 2:1-4—“To those who through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ have received a faith as precious as ours: Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may be partakers of the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires (lust).”

The church of God has been called out as Peter says in **1 Peter 1:1-9**—“Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking (slander) of every kind. Like newborn babies, crave the pure spiritual milk of the word, so that by it you may have tasted that the Lord is good (gracious). As you come to him, the living Stone –rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him—you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For in the Scripture it says;

- ❖ ‘Behold, I lay in Zion a *chief* cornerstone, elect, precious, and he who believes (trusts) on Him will never be put to shame.

Now to you who believe, He (Christ/ chief cornerstone) is precious, but to those who are disobedient,

- ❖ The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone (capstone) a stone that *causes men to stumble* and a rock of offense (makes men to fall).’
- ❖ They stumble, because they disobey the message (God’s word) to which they were also appointed.”

Verses 9-10—“But you are a chosen generation (people), a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people (belonging to God) that you may proclaim (tell) the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light: who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy, but now you have received (obtained) mercy. Dearly beloved, I beg you as sojourners (strangers) and pilgrims, abstain from sinful desires (fleshly lusts), which war against the soul: have your conduct /conversation honorable (live such good lives among your unbelieving neighbors–Gentiles) **that when they speak against you as evildoers (accuse you of doing wrong) they may see/observe your good deeds** (works), glorify God in the day of visitation (when he comes to judge the world).”

Those who follow Christ are God’s chosen people. The Israelites and Jews in the Old Testament rebelled and failed to obey God and adhere to the covenant, so they were taken into captivity. Now God is working through the church giving us His Holy Spirit and calling upon us to endure and develop His attributes of character and to resist the Devil, temptation and our sinful human nature. We have that gate open for us now and are sojourning toward God’s kingdom. We have the help of the Holy Spirit abiding in us of which we are begotten so Christ can grow in our hearts. **Galatians 4:19**—“my little children for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you (fully developed in your lives).

The Seven Shepherds: **Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Aaron, Joseph, and David.**

1. Abraham (*Avraham*) --was the personification of the attribute of loving-kindness—*CHESED*.

“He fed and sustained everyone with his great love, and with his overwhelming kindness. He had no jealousy, cruelty or hatred in his character.”

2. **Isaac** (*Yizchak*) — personifies the attribute of strength—*GEVURAH*. “Though his fear of God was introduced to the world. All of his strength was devoted to serving God and fearing Him. In this he did not falter. When he was bound on the altar it was not his faith that was being tested, but Abraham’s.” Isaac was an obedient son, single and about 35 years old when he went with his father to Mt. Moriah to be sacrificed. He had brought the wood for the fire but no sacrifice. Isaac was joyful and happy (without fear or anger), willing to die to fulfill God’s purpose if that is what God required. He had been taught Torah and the ways of God by Shem and Abraham from a child.
3. **Jacob** (*Ya’akov*) —personifies glory/beauty— *TIFERET*. “Everything that he accomplished was done with simplicity and perfection. He was pure in his relationship to Heaven and to his parents. All that he did, he did with perfection. In his relationship with Laban, in his relationship with Esau, in his struggle with the angel. He was devoid of deceitfulness and treachery. We might think that he was devious or crooked in his dealings with his father or his brother Esau, but the Torah (**Genesis 25:27**) testifies to his true stature before God and man: And Jacob (Ya’akov) was a perfect man—perfection to an extent that had never been seen before. There are people who seem righteous in their nature and just in their actions, but are really corrupt. On the other hand, although Jacob’s actions may appear devious, when we closely examine his character, we find that he is the epitome of glory and uprightness.” Jacob was a man without pretense—without hypocrisy. In God’s sight he was simple. The Apostle Paul spoke of the *simplicity* of Christ to the Corinthians. The truth of God has a certain genuine simplicity to it. Read it for what it says without reading opinions into it. With an open mind and a humble contrite heart, and God will give you understanding. Jacob had wisdom and understanding—harmony and peace. Tiferet produces harmony and peace with discipline and love. Jacob’s struggle with the angel who became Christ. Jacob’s name was changed to Israel. (**Genesis 32:24-28**—“Your name shall be called no more Jacob, but **Israel** (prince/champion of God): *for as a prince have you power with God and with men, and have prevailed.*” This is why glory is applied to his character. He was a well-balanced man; what we might call a “renaissance man”. Of course, he had to learn how to become this well-balanced man who received the birthright blessing that Esau despised. He was deceived by Laban—worked seven years for Rachel to wife and received Leah instead, so Jacob worked seven more years for Rachel, then worked another six years to build flocks and herds for himself and his growing family. He learned through hard lessons.
4. **Moses** (*Moshe*)—personifies endurance/eternity—*NETZACH* –the eternity of Torah. “All that man acquires is transient. But if one acquires Torah from others, or if others acquire it from him, it is an eternal asset and both buyer and seller benefit. There is nothing transient or temporary as regards the Torah; thus, Moses—who was willing to give his life for the Torah—merited to become its teacher and to transmit it to all the generations.” For 40 years Moses endured and put up with Israel and their complaining, dissatisfaction and outright rebellion. These are characteristic of God to incorporate into our character. We can learn from Moses’ example.
5. **Aaron** (*Aharon*)—personifies the attribute of splendor/humility—*HOD*—loving peace and pursuing it, loving mankind and bringing them close to the Torah. Anyone who saw Aaron’s splendor and holiness was immediately drawn to emulate him and his way. Humility is by inference because splendor can lead a person to be proud and arrogant—narcissistic. Grandeur and glory without humility. Hod or humility is modest—acknowledgment (from the root or the

Hebrew word ‘*Hoda’ah*). It is saying “thank you” to God, clearly recognizing your qualities and strength and acknowledging that they are not your own; they were given to you by God for a higher purpose than just satisfying your own needs. When you empty yourself before something greater than yourself, your capacity to receive increases beyond your previously perceived limit. The high priest of God in his special garments wearing the breast-plate and ephod was a glorious figure but he had to be very humble. No one but the high priest was allowed to enter the holy of holies which he did once a year to make atonement for all Israel’s sins. Rigorous cleansing by the priest occurred as commanded by God before he entered where God was present on the mercy seat. A rope was tied around his ankle before entry so that if he died, the people would be able to drag his body out of the holy of holies. Aaron’s glory was not of himself, but of God’s calling. He was a very humble, self-effacing man of peace. Even when his two sons were struck down by fire from heaven for offering an unauthorized sacrifice before God and fire came down from heaven consuming their bodies to ashes, but the clothes they were wearing were left untouched. This was miraculous. Because it was of God, Moses told Aaron do not weep or mourn, but continue to perform your duties as normal. God wants us to have humility. He has all the power in the Universe, yet he humbles himself to behold us and intervene for us when we ask for his guidance and help.

6. **Joseph** (*Yosef*) – personifies bonding—*YESOD*—foundation: moral virtue. The foundation of God’s word is truth or faithfulness (Hebrew—“*emmet*”). Joseph’s foundation was truth and faith. The foundation of our Christian life is truth and faith. As followers of Christ we are to be rooted and grounded in the truth of God and our faith is our belief and conviction that God means what he says. He will perform for us that which he has said in his word. We can trust and believe him without staggering or wavering. The righteous morality of Joseph was so great that he achieved the highest level of sanctity. This characteristic is called the foundation, for it is the main base upon which the world rests. Had the generation of the Flood not sinned by deviating from the foundation of morality, their other sins would not have been considered sufficient grounds to bring the destruction that they caused.

7. **David** (*ha-Melech*=king)—personifies sovereignty, leadership—*MALCHUT*. “David did not attain rule on his own. He did not become king through his might or wisdom, nor did he wear the crown because he had inherited it. His kingdom was granted him by the King of all kings, who took him from tending of the sheep to become the faithful shepherd of the flocks of Israel. God chose David because He knew that even if he were granted the ability to rise to the greatest of heights, he would forever remain a servant in his own eyes. David remained humble –when he tended the sheep and when the kings from west and east came to his court to pay homage. It was David who made God sovereign among mankind. It was he who provided humanity with the means to sing God’s praises. He rejoiced in the greatness of others and combined that greatness with his own to pay tribute to the One to whom greatness belongs.”

1 Chronicles 29:10-14 –“And David blessed God in front of the entire congregation, and David said: ‘Blessed are You, God... Yours is the greatness, and the power (strength), and the glory, and the eternity (victory) and the majesty (splendor). All that is in the heaven and in the earth is yours; yours is the kingdom. O Lord, and yours is the sovereignty. You are (exalted) uplifted above all. Both riches and honor come from you, and you reign over all; and in your hand is power and strength to give to all. Therefore, our God, we thank you, and praise your glorious name. Who am I and who are my people that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand’.”

“Each of these seven attributes is related to the others; without strength there is no loving-kindness, for the latter attribute becomes soft-heartedness if it is not joined to strength. Similarly, loving-kindness lacks an element of glory, it can degenerate into sin. In the same vein, none of the other attributes can be considered complete if they lack an element of loving-kindness. Each attribute has a light of its own that shines forth from its combination with the others. The forty-nine days from Passover to Pentecost counting the Omer are divided into seven weeks, during which we emphasize correcting the deficiencies of each attribute and all those joined to it. The first week is devoted entirely to kindness. Each week one attribute reigns supreme. On each subsequent day of that week, the emphasis is placed on a different quality combined with kindness. During the second week the stress shifts to strength, with which each of the other characteristics is interwoven in turn on consecutive days. This pattern is repeated throughout the seven weeks.”

It often takes more than one English word to summarize the meaning of the Hebrew word. The Hebrew words are like building blocks and they can have several related meanings and they are all true. We need to try to investigate the fullness of the meaning. Sometimes it takes four or five English words to capture the real lesson of that Hebrew building block word. “When the Children of Israel came out of Egypt, they counted the forty-nine days until they reached Horeb (Mount Sinai) and stood at the foot of the mountain to receive the Torah. Throughout this period they gradually improved adding each virtue in turn and combining it with the one previously acquired, until, on the last day, they achieved a level of purity that they had never expected.”

Reference: The Interlinear Bible, Vol.1, **Exodus 34**. God’s character is described and revealed to Moses. Verse 6—“YHVH passed before the face of Moses and called out YHVH, YHVH God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, great in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgressions and sin.” The word for goodness and mercy is the Hebrew word: CHESED. Its basic meaning is loving-kindness. The number one attribute of God, in his dealings with us is loving-kindness with mercy toward his people keeping the truth. Vol.2, page 1133--**1 Chronicles 29:11**—David praises God for his greatness, power, glory, the victory and the majesty—all the heavens and the earth belong to you. Yours is the kingdom. The Hebrew words describing God’s character are *netzach* for victory, *tiferet* for majesty, *gevurah* for power, the word *hod* for majesty, *tiferet* for glory, *malchut* for the word kingdom. Here we have all these characteristics in the Bible and putting them together we have seven.

In the book of book of **Zechariah 4: 8** –“I see a solid gold **lampstand** with a bowl (of oil) at the top and seven lights on it, with seven channels to the lights (spouts with wicks).” **This lampstand (or Menorah)** is divided into seven channels with wicks representing God’s Spirit which goes out to the whole earth. In this case we are talking about God’s own characteristics that go out to the earth on behalf of mankind. Also there are *two olive trees* by it, one on the right of the bowl and the other on its left.” “This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: “not by might nor by power, but *by my Spirit*’ says the Lord Almighty. These seven are the eyes of the Lord which ranges throughout the earth.” **Verse 14**—“The two olive trees on each side of the lampstand and the two olive branches that pour out golden oil through two gold tubes” –these represent the two anointed ones who assist (serve) the Lord of all the earth.” (Rev. 1:4; Rev 3.1; Rev. 4:5).

Revelation is the book of seven: seven churches, seven seals, seven trumpets. **Revelation 5:5-6**—to the lion of the tribe of Judah (the Lamb/Christ), has prevailed to open the seven seals. “In the midst of the elders stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, **which are the seven Spirits of God** sent out into all the earth.”

God reveals himself in seven aspects of divinity which we are to work on and build into our lives.

1. LOVING KINDNESS — *CHESED*

Matthew 22:36—Christ was asked: “Teacher which is the greatest commandments in the Law?”

Answer: This is the *first* and great commandment: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. And the *second* is like it. You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and Prophets.”

1 John 4:6-7—“He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. This is how we know (recognize) the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error (falsehood/deception). Beloved, let us love one another for love is of God and everyone who loves is born (begotten) of God and knows God. Whoever does not love, does not know God, because **God is love**. This is how God showed his love among us. He sent his only begotten Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, *if God so loved us we also ought to love one another.*” **1 Peter 4:8**—“Above all things have fervent love for one another, for love will cover a multitude of sins.”

2. JUSTICE AND DISCIPLINE—*GEVURAH*

I Corinthians 9:24—“Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. Everyone who competes for the prize is disciplined in all things. They do it to obtain a corruptible perishable crown, but we (run) for an imperishable crown. Therefore I run not with uncertainty. I fight, not as one who beats the air, but I discipline my body (control and force it into obedience) and bring it into subjection. Less, when I preach to others, I myself might become disqualified.”

3. HARMONY, COMPASSION, glory, beauty, unity, the bonds of peace—*TIFERET*

Isaiah 25:3—“You will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you. Trust in the Lord forever, for in YHVH is everlasting strength.” God will keep us in perfect peace and harmony if we trust in him. **Philippians 4:7**—“the peace of God which surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds through Messiah /Christ Jesus/Yeshua.” God has called us to peace of mind without upset and worry—*peace that passes understanding*. **John 16:32**—“Indeed the hour is coming, that you will be scattered and leave me alone, yet I am not alone because the Father is with me. These things have I spoken to you: that in me you may have peace (tranquility and confidence). In the world you will have tribulations, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.” **Matthew 11:28-29**—“Come to me all you who labor and are heavy laden (downcast) and oppressed, and I will give you rest/peace for I am gentle and lowly in heart and you will find peace for your soul. My yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” **1 Corinthians 10:12-13**—“There is no temptation that has taken you but such as is common to man. But with the temptation, he will also provide the means of escape that you might be able to bear it.” God will give us the strength through his Holy Spirit, no matter what trials or tests come upon us.

4. ENDURANCE—VICTORY, TRIUMPH—*NETZACH*

Matthew 24:12—“Lawlessness shall abound; the love of many will grow cold, but **he who endures to the end shall be saved.**” When Israel came out of Egypt, the Amalakites attacked them and the fight lasted all day. As long as Moses’ arms were raised, Israel was winning, but his arms got tired and went down Israel began to lose the battle, so Aaron and Hur held up the arms of Moses and Israel achieved a great victory in battle that day. They had to endure and help each other, but God gave them the final victory. **Luke 9:62**—Christ warned that no one who has put his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God. We can’t waste time looking backward. Look ahead—go forward to victory.

Philippians 3:8—Paul counted “all things as lost for the excellence (surpassing greatness) of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in him not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the **righteousness that comes from God and is by faith**. I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, to obtain to the resurrection of the dead. Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that *for which Christ Jesus took hold of me*. I am still not what I should be, but one thing I do: forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead. **I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me** heavenward in Christ Jesus.”

James 1:2—“Consider it pure joy, when you fall into various trials knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.” We are on a journey, escaping Babylon, looking and preparing for the coming kingdom and building the characteristics (attributes of God) into our character according to the acceptable will and likeness of our Creator.

5. HUMILITY—MAJESTY AND SPLENDOR—HOD.

To have true majesty and splendor we must have humility with sincere dedication to serve God and our brethren as a servant, otherwise it is pride and puffed up. God serves our every need. **James 4:6**—God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Therefore, submit to God in humility of mind; resist the devil and he will flee from you. Human emotions have a breaking point, so it is important to be careful about what we think and say, and bring our thoughts into subjection lest we hurt others with what comes out of our mouth.

6. BONDING—YESOD. Bonding means connecting and feeling for another. It is the emotional spine of the human psyche and gives the sense of belonging; “that I matter”. Every person needs bonding to flourish and grow, i.e. bonding between mother and child; between husband and wife; between brothers and sisters; between close friends. Bonding is an affirmation and establishes trust in yourself and trust in others.

Love establishes a reliable base on which bonding can build with discipline that is necessary to withstand challenges and setbacks. Joseph was sold by his brothers into Egypt. Joseph forgave his brothers and endured Pharaoh’s dungeons. He was a man of faith and did not compromise the law of God. He believed God’s promises and had a strong **foundation of faith combined with obedience based upon truth**.

Romans 1:19—the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith. As it is written, the just shall live by faith. We are to live by faith. **2 Corinthians 5:7**—“We walk by faith, not by sight.”

Romans 4:19—“Abraham, not being weak in faith, did not consider his own body (already 100 years old) dead nor the deadness of Sara’s womb.” Abraham had a strong foundation of faith combined with obedience. He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God. Abraham was fully convinced that what God had promised, he was able to perform.” He staggered not at the promise of God. Faithfulness and truth go together and are the foundations of the Christian life. Without faith we can do nothing. **Hebrews 11:6**—“Without faith it is impossible to please God. He who comes to God must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who diligently seek Him.” I absolutely believe God is real. I know the Bible is God’s word and is the truth and pure. I know His promises are sure. I believe as Abraham believed in faith and obedience. Build your sure foundation on the Rock—Jesus Christ.

7. SOVEREIGNTY, LEADERSHIP –MALCHUT.

Sovereignty is a state of being rather than an activity. Nobility is a passive expression of human dignity that has nothing of its own except that which it receives from the other six emotions. True leadership is the art of selflessness. It is a reflection of a higher will. A ruler must be just, righteous and rule in the fear of God (2 Samuel 23:3).

Revelation 21:7—“He who overcomes shall inherit **all** things”—all of God’s creation unlimited—“and I will be his God and he shall be my son.” In **Revelation 2:26** –in the messages to the seven churches, every message says “to him that overcomes” and keeps my works to the end will be saved. “I will give him power over the nations. He shall rule them with a rod of iron, and they shall be dashed to pieces like a potted vessel, and I will give him the morning star. He, who has an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit of God says to the churches.”

Brethren, let’s count the Omer faithfully and in truth be filled with the righteous Godly character of Christ and God the Father. Use the time effectively to be over-comers so that we may join him as his co-rulers and inheritors of eternal life. Amen.