

LE CHAIM – TO LIFE! -- CONSTANCY, CONSISTENCY AND DESTINY

Yours , Almighty God, is the triumph and the glory, the greatness, the strength, and the splendor. There is none like you, God, Who is slow to anger and is abundant in kindness and truth and mighty in holiness. You illuminate the earth and those who dwell upon it with compassion; and in your goodness renew daily, perpetually the work of creation. How great are your works! We gratefully bring praises and thanks to you our God. You have given us life, and sustained us. Continually we seek your presence and instruction and that the expressions of our mouth and the thoughts of our heart find favor before you. Forgive us where we have erred and pardon us in your great mercy. Fill us with your joy and love, keep our mind sound that we might observe, magnify and exemplify your Word toward others and all your creation. In Yeshua's name we pray and commit this service into your hands for greater wisdom, insight, and discernment for us all.

Today is Sabbath, the seventh day of the week and the day God said to rest. My voice is a little scratchy today because I have been fighting off a cold this week which is going around this area. Tomorrow is the fall equinox and the shortest day for us in the Northern Hemisphere which comes at the *solstice*. This means a late dawn, early sunset—short day and long night.

It is five more days until Christmas, or the pagan holiday of Mithra the sun god—the day of the renewed sun. The religion of Mithra preceded Christianity by roughly six hundred years. Mithraic worship at one time covered a large portion of the ancient world, flourishing as late as the second century. The Roman Catholic hierarchy is nearly identical to the ancient Mithraic worship of Mithra. “The Vatican was built upon the grounds previously devoted to the worship of Mithra (600 B.C.)” The Roman Catholic Church wanted to be popular and bring the nations under her influence, so embraced all the pagan festival practices and put the label Christian on them including the most popular Roman festival, Saturnalia. As they embraced paganism and its holidays they gave new Christian interpretations to those days. In the 4th century CE, the Roman Catholic Church imported the ancient Roman festival Saturnalia, hoping to take the pagan masses in with it. The leaders succeeded in converting to Christianity large numbers of pagans by promising them that they could continue to celebrate the Saturnalia as Christians. In order to sanctify (Christianize) Saturnalia, it was decided to call December 25 the birthday of Jesus Christ. There was nothing intrinsically Christian about Saturnalia.

Then in a bid for pagan adherents in Northern Europe, the Catholic Church adopted the Nicholas cult in Bari, Italy and adopted the teachings of Nicholas and the custom of distributing gifts on December 25th instead of December 6th. The Nicholas cult spread north until it was adopted by German and Celtic pagans. The Catholic Church recruited worshippers of the Asheira cult and its offshoots who were long time worshippers of evergreen trees, adopted that practice and Christmas

trees were sanctioned and painted with a Christian veneer. Popular Christmas customs – including Christmas trees, mistletoe, Christmas presents, Yule log burning and Santa Claus – are modern incarnations of ancient corrupt pagan rituals. The influence of *Saturnalia*, Saturn’s great festival, is still felt in the celebration of Christmas and the Western world’s New Year.

Increase Mather of Boston observed in 1687 that “the early Christians who first observed the Nativity on December 25 did not do so thinking that Christ was born in that month, but because the heathens’ Saturnalia was at that time kept in Rome, they were willing to have those Pagan Holidays metamorphosed into Christian ones.” Because of its known pagan origin, Christmas was banned by the Puritans and its observance was illegal in Massachusetts between 1659 and 1681. However, Christmas was and still is celebrated by most Christians.

There is no evidence whatsoever that the birthday of Jesus Christ was born on December 25. All the evidence regarding the birth of Christ indicates that he was born either in the fall of the year, late winter or early spring. Most the evidence that I have read—astronomical phenomena and eclipses and the Star of Bethlehem that occurred and was prophesied in the Bible actually occurred around February 4 B.C.

I learned as a teenager, about fifty years ago (1957-58), that Christmas comes from ancient worship of the pagans. **Jeremiah 10:1-5** —“Do not learn the way of the Gentiles. Do not be dismayed at the signs of heaven, For the Gentiles are dismayed at them. For the customs³ of the peoples are futile. For one cuts a tree from the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the ax.⁴ They decorate it with silver and gold. They fasten it with nails and hammers so that it will not topple.⁵ They are upright, like a palm tree, and they cannot speak; They must be carried, because they cannot go by themselves.” This surely sounds like a Christmas tree and that is what the unbelievers have done since ancient times and still do.

Why do people keep Christmas today and call it Christian? I’ve given you a nutshell view of how it has evolved, but if you would like to read more about this the Encyclopedias discuss it. I also have in depth articles on Christmas, Easter and Halloween. However, if you want to really get the story straight, I recommend reading Alexander Hislop’s , *The Two Babylons* which is the best book ever written on the transference of pagan customs by the Roman Catholic Church into Christianity. He lays bare and makes it plain in exposing 90% of the pagan origin of modern Christianity. The rest comes from the Bible relating to the birth of Christ in Matthew 1 and 2, Luke 2 and the shepherds in the field.

A wonderful account of Jesus Christ’s birth is written in the Bible, which is the breathed, inspired word of God that tells us, “we are to live by every word spoken by the mouth of God.” The Old Testament prophesied the birth of Christ. The New Testament corroborates the Old Testament prophecy and narrates the historical reality of exactly what happened, how it happened, when it happened and where it happened. All we have to do is search out the truth. The best way to begin to do that is read the scriptures—read the Bible which is the foundation of truth. The more we read it, the more we will grasp and understand God’s plan and purpose. The explanation begins with the Bible which is the entire word of God—both the Old and New Testaments. Torah is the first five books of the Old Testament.

The past few weeks I have been studying in greater depth the question, “Why are we here?” In the *International Jerusalem Post* (9.12.14) Rabbi Shlomo Riskin has an interesting

commentary entitled “The Inner Divinity” (Weekly Portion). I find the information very apropos for those who understand that God has given those who follow him His Holy Spirit indwelling as a begettal. In a sense, all mankind is born with a portion of God’s Spirit because it says in **Genesis 2:7**—“ the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living being (Hebrew: *nephesh*). The Hebrew word used here is *ruach* and it is the same word as used for God’s Spirit. **John 3:8**—“The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit.” The wind cannot be seen, just its impact and the results of it. God’s Spirit is like the air and wind everywhere and God infuses us with it at the time we receive breath.

Deuteronomy 30:15, 19—“Behold, I give before you this day the life and the good, the death and the evil ...blessing and curse; and you shall choose life, so that you will live, you and your seed...” What does it mean, to choose life? Is it then, whether one lives or dies? We have been told to choose life. It is an ongoing daily choice, a moment by moment choice. We either chose life or we chose death. Life or death depends upon our constant decisions in what we decide to do, how we decide to live, what we are going to say, and what pathway we are going to follow. The actions we take will make the difference whether we inspire and bless others or curse them by digging a verbal trap. What we say and do is based on love of our neighbor or on selfish purposes.

Riskin says, “I believe it worthy of note to raise another linguistic curiosity within this context: The Hebrew word *hayyim* (life) is a plural noun, ending in the two Hebrew letters *yod* and *mem* which signals the plural case. I do not know of any other language in which the word for “life” is a plural form. Why here? The Hassidim have a cute play on words which provides an interesting insight explaining the composition of the Hebrew word for “life” on an occasion of joy—an engagement, a marriage, a birth – it is only when drinking wine or liquor that we cry out, “le’hayyim” to life. Why not also say *le’hayyim* when drinking water, which is so basic to the formation of life (remember the amniotic fluids which “beak” before an impending birth) and to its continuity.”“They answer that the Hebrew word for wine, *yayin*, has two *yods*, as does the Hebrew word for liquor, *yash* (literally *yayin saraf*, or fiery wine). The Hebrew letter *yod* is phonetically and homiletically tied to Yid (Yehudi) or Jew – a toast usually being invoked to celebrate two Jews coming together in marriage, in joining for a birth celebration or generally within the familial context of Kiddush on Friday evening. The Hebrew word for water, *mayim*, has only one *yod*, and God Himself has declared that “it is not good for the human being to be alone” (**Genesis 2:18**).”

Comment: God made a wife for Adam so he would not be alone. God’s plan is based on the family—a man and woman coming together to have children and form a family—that brings life. Two men or two women coming together brings death and is perverting God’s natural created and established norm. But for a woman and man to come together in marriage produces life. I think the two *yods* surrounded by the exterior letters *het* and *mem* spelling warmth, love surrounding two *yods* completely together and **not separated by any other letter** represents the two people—husband and wife, a type. Life comes from God—the original life-giver. The original *yod* is a symbol of God meaning Yehovah or Yahveh, and refers also to Christ the second member of the Godhead. Thus, the two *yods* surrounded by the *het* and *mem* which is

love are the foundation of love and the source of all love. The husband and wife are a counter type of that Divine relationship. The out-flowing expression to the world around us should be love. We are to lead the world in the way of life, love and light of God's word. The two *yods* come together to form one unit and from this oneness comes children causing the family to expand. It has continuity.

Genesis 1:26-27—God created man in His own image.²⁶ “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; ²⁷So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.” Adam and Eve became living souls (*nephesh*) with the breath of life breathed into them by God by His Spirit.²⁸ “Then God blessed them, and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it.’ ”

Riskin continues. “Hence, say the Hassidim, the Hebrew word for life consists of four letters, the exterior letters being *het* and *mem*, spelling *hom*, warmth, love – surrounding two *yods* completely together and not separated by any other letter. And the beverages which go along with the toast also require two *yods* (Jews) together as in the Hebrew words *yayin* and *yash*.” Allow me to present an alternative interpretation which proves a profound theological truth at the same time. In **Genesis 2:7**—“And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.” Apparently the Bible is here explaining in more graphic language the difficult term “*tzelem Elokim*,” image of God, used in the first creation chapter, “And God created the human being (Adam) in His image, in the image of God created He him...” (**Genesis 1:27**). “Whoever exhales, exhales from within himself,” from the innermost ‘stuff’ of his essential being.”

“This teaches us the important insight into the essence of the human being defined by the Bible, the one element which qualitatively separates the human from all other creatures of the earth: a “portion” of God from on High resides within every human being.” “The challenge facing each of us is which aspect of our beings we choose to develop, the bestial (selfish) or the celestial (spiritual—love, compassion, loving kindness, truth. Idolatry idealized the physical, the bestial. God commands that we idealize the spiritual, the celestial. The good news is that to help us in this existential struggle within ourselves is that very portion of God from on High who dwells within us, and that the human being is never alone. God is always with us, within us, the still small voice which we must listen for and hearken to. That is why the Hebrew word for life *hayyim*, is a plural noun. The “soul of life” is the God who dwells within each of us, the essence of our being to whom we must return and with whom we must live if we are to realize our truest human potential.” Are we going to be impatient, or patiently wait on God, thanking him and giving him praises and have faith in him? If we stray and depart from his laws we eventually wind up in death. We are given free choice that boils down to the two natures within man—Human nature and God nature. The nature from God is the spirit of love and produces the fruits of His Spirit.

Galatians 5:22-23 —“the **fruit of the Spirit** is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,²³ gentleness, self-control”. It is disciplining of oneself. “Against such there is no law.²⁴ And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.” **Galatians 5:19-21**—Human nature produces “works of the flesh”. “Now the **works of the flesh** are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness,²⁰ idolatry, sorcery,

hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies,²¹ envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.” Every day we have to choose between life and death—what is good for us or what is bad for us that leads to evil. These two choices are epitomized in the life stories in the Old Testament of Jacob and his brother, Esau. Their archetypal story resonates down through history to us. We have a physical body and a physical mind. We can go the way of Esau of self-gratification or the way of Jacob through study of God’s word and perfecting our self in the service of God—the way of true life and blessings.

Deuteronomy 30: 19-20—“I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live; ²⁰ that you may love the LORD your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He is your life and the length of your days; and that you may dwell in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them.” Beginning from the point of inception of life (*hayyim*) is the continuity of life and where we are going, our destiny.

Isaac pleaded with the LORD for his wife, because she was barren; and the LORD granted his plea, and Rebekah his wife conceived. The children struggled together within Rachel’s womb; and she said, “If all is well, why am I like this?” So she went to inquire of the LORD. “Two nations are in your womb, two peoples shall be separated from your body; One people shall be stronger than the other, and the older shall serve the younger.” Brothers Jacob and Esau were sibling rivals. Rachel gave birth to twin boys when she was sixty. Esau was the first-born. He came out red and was like a hairy garment all over; so they called his name Esau.²⁶ Afterward his brother came out, and his hand took hold of Esau’s heel; so his name was called Jacob. As the boys grew, Esau became a skillful hunter, a man of the field; but Jacob was a mild man, dwelling in tents.” Esau was a powerful man of the world. Jacob was a strong student and scholar in the study of God’s law.

²⁸ “And Isaac loved Esau because he ate of his game, but Rebekah loved Jacob.” “Now Jacob cooked a stew; and Esau came in from the field, and he was weary (He had just fought and killed Nimrod and taken the fleece God had made Adam).³⁰ And Esau said to Jacob, “Please feed me with that same red stew, for I am weary.” Therefore his name was called Edom.³¹ But Jacob said, “Sell me your birthright as of this day.”³² And Esau said, “Look, I am about to die; so what is this birthright to me?”³³ Then Jacob said, “Swear to me as of this day.” So he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob.³⁴ And Jacob gave Esau bread and stew of lentils; then he ate and drank, arose, and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright.”

Genesis 26:34 –“When Esau was forty years old, he took as wives Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Basemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite.³⁵ And they were a grief of mind to Isaac and Rebekah” (Gen. 27:46) **Genesis 27:1-12**—“when Isaac was old and his eyes were so dim that he could not see, that he called Esau his older son and said to him, ‘My son, I am old. I do not know the day of my death.’³ Go out to the field and hunt game for me.⁴ And make me savory food, such as I love, and bring it to me that I may eat, that my soul may bless you in the

presence of the Lord before my death.’ Esau went to the field to hunt game and to bring it.” Rebekah was listening when Isaac spoke to Esau. She told Jacob “obey my voice as I command you. Go get two choice kids from the goats. I will make the savory food your father loves that he may eat and bless you.” Jacob replied, “Look, Esau my brother is a hairy man, and I am a smooth-skinned man.¹² Perhaps my father will feel me, and I shall seem to be a deceiver to him; and I shall bring a curse on myself and not a blessing.”

Rebekah said, “Let your curse be on me, my son; only obey my voice, and go, get them for me.” Jacob followed her commands and Rebekah made savory food, such as his father loved and she dressed Jacob her younger son in choice clothes of her elder son Esau. She put the skins of the kids of the goats on his hands, the smooth part of his neck and gave the savory food and bread which she had prepared into the hand of Jacob and he went to his father. Isaac asked, ‘who are you my son?’ Jacob said, ‘I am...Esau your firstborn; I have done just as you told me; please arise, sit and eat of my game, that your soul may bless me.’ Isaac questioned, ‘How is it that you have found it so quickly my son?’ ” Isaac asked Jacob to come near so he could feel him to see whether he was Esau or not. He felt him and said, “ ‘The voice is Jacob’s, but the hands are the hands of Esau.’ He did not recognize him, because his hands were hairy like his brother Esau’s; so he blessed him. Then he said, ‘Are you really my son Esau?’ Jacob said, ‘I am.’ So Isaac ate the savory meal and drank the wine Jacob brought to him. Then Isaac said, ‘Come near and kiss me, my son.’ And he came near and kissed him.” Isaac smelled the smell of his clothing which was like the smell of a field and blessed him.

Genesis 27:30—Jacob had scarcely gone out from the presence of Isaac his father when Esau returned from hunting and brought savory food to his father. Isaac said you have already been here , and trembled when realized he had been deceived. “Esau cried out with an exceeding great and bitter cry with weeping and said, ‘Is he not rightly named Jacob? He has supplanted me these two times. Look! Jacob took away my birthright, and now he has taken away my blessing!’ Esau said to his father, ‘Have you not reserved a blessing for me?’ ”

Genesis 27: 41—Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing with which his father blessed him, and Esau said in his heart, “The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then I will kill my brother Jacob.” Rebekah was told about Esau’s words of intent and warned Jacob. “Obey my voice: arise, flee to my brother Laban in Haran.⁴⁴ And stay with him a few days,⁴⁵ until your brother’s fury and anger turn away from you, and he forgets what you have done to him; then I will send and bring you from there.” **Genesis 28:1-5**—“Isaac called Jacob and blessed him and said: ‘You shall not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan.² Go to Padan Aram (Syria), to the house of Bethuel your mother’s father; and take yourself a wife from there of the daughters of Laban,’ and sent Jacob away.” “Esau saw and heard that “Jacob had obeyed his father and his mother and that the daughter’s of Canaan did not please his father Isaac. So Esau went to Ishmael and took Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael, Abaham’s son to be his wife in addition to the wives he had.”

In the meantime in Padan Aram, Jacob had married Leah and Rachel. Leah was blessed with sons . Rachel remained barren. Jacob became exceedingly prosperous, with large flocks, female and male servants, and camels and donkeys. After twenty

years of working for Laban Jacob departed with his wives, children and all that was his and started back to his homeland. **Genesis 32** says Jacob sent messengers ahead of his entourage to his brother Esau who heard Jacob was returning. He heard Esau was coming to meet him with a greeting brigade of four hundred men (potential warriors). This caused Jacob to be greatly afraid and distressed. So Jacob divided the people that were with him, and the flocks and herds and camels, into two companies and said, "If Esau comes to the one company and attacks it, then the other company which is left will escape." He then sent three of his servants each with a drove of animals as a present before him to meet and appease Esau with each repeating the same message: "It is a present from your servant Jacob sent to my lord Esau: and behold, he also is behind us."

Then Jacob prayed, "O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, the LORD who said to me, 'Return to your country and to your family, and I will deal well with you': ¹⁰ I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies and of all the truth which You have shown Your servant; for I crossed over this Jordan with my staff, and now I have become two companies. ¹¹ Deliver me, I pray, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau; for I fear him, lest he come and attack me and the mother with the children. ¹² For You said, 'I will surely treat you well, and make your descendants as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.' "

Article (part two) by Rabbi Shlomo Riskin (*The International Jerusalem Post* -11.28.14) — "*Continuity and Destiny*"— choosing life (Deuteronomy 30: 6, 15, and 19). Rabbi Riskin takes up the story of Jacob leaving Laban and Syria behind, determined to return to the land of Abraham and to the house of Isaac. Jacob had learned his lesson and felt it was time to leave and he must return to his ancestral home. Esau is described as having a strong sense of familial identity. Once Esau actually sees his younger brother and his family his heart apparently melts with brotherly love: "Esau ran to meet him; he hugged him, fell upon his neck and kissed him" (**Gen. 33:4**). Esau even wishes for the two of them to travel together.

It is Jacob who politely refuses: "You know that my children are weak and I have responsibility for the nursing sheep and cattle. Please go ahead of me, I shall eventually come to you in Seir" (Genesis 33:13-14). Jacob chose where God wanted him to go, and not to follow Esau. So their paths diverged: Esau to seek to conquer the world and Jacob to Sukkot to raise his sheep and family in peace separate from the world. Jacob took his family to Jerusalem to the site where the holy temple would be built one day. This is the place where, when the kingdom of God comes to this earth, out of Zion the law of God shall go forth, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem (Isaiah 2 and Micah 4).

"Despite strong familial identity Esau lacks two crucial characteristics of Abraham—continuity and destiny. Continuity is most meaningfully expressed in marrying a suitable mate. A suitable mate creates a foundation for continuity of establishing a dynasty. From the modern perspective taking a spouse of the same faith is the Biblical perspective, not marrying an immoral Canaanite. Esau had taken Hittite wives (Gen. 26:34). Even when he realizes how upset his parents are with his marital choice, he still doesn't look to his mother's family for a mate, but rather chooses a daughter of Ishmael the 'wild ass of a man whose hand is over everything.' And he takes this wife not instead of but in addition to his Hittite wives" (Gen. 28:9).

Another test for continuity is a unique daily lifestyle, the ability to delay gratification and act with discipline, especially in the sexual and gustatory realms. Esau sells his birthright for a portion of lentil soup. He even expresses his desire to have the soup “poured into his mouth.” Esau wanted what he wanted, when he wanted it—now—like a two year old who proceeds to have a tantrum if he doesn’t get what he wants. Men and women can choose to be this way as well. In order to fulfill a historic mission, to realize the goal of why God put us on this earth and that he is creating the kingdom of God so that all the nations of the earth might be blessed by us through our “lifestyle of commitment to an ideal and delayed gratification which is foreign to – and even impossible for – the character displayed by Esau.”

God made this promise to Abraham in **Genesis 12:3**—“I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing.³ I will bless those who bless you, I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” “Before Jacob could affirm his covenantal continuity and begin to achieve his destiny, he wrestled with a man (confronted the angel who became Christ—the Logos) until the light of day preceding the Esau-Jacob-face-to-face confrontation. Jacob is all alone (Gen. 32:25); his struggle is an inner battle, to rid himself of the grasping hand of Esau in his soul which had taken over his personality—he had to face himself. And he prevails, both over divine forces and human powers (Gen. 32:29); he has seen God (Elohim) face-to-face whom he would not let go until he blessed him, and succeeded in restoring his own divine image by exorcising Esau’s grasping-hand and now stands as *Israel* the righteous representative of God and the fitting recipient of the Abrahamic birth-right.” Verse 28-Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for you have struggled with God and men and have prevailed.”

Jacob had to repent of stealing the birthright promises and deceiving Isaac to receive the first-born blessing of Esau and overcome the Esau-part and Laban-part of his personality that rubbed off on him. He resisted the temptations, wrestling the angel all night seeking to overcome. Because of prevailing, His name was changed to Israel which means that “he shall emerge triumphant” (a conqueror). Jacob kept his eyes on the final outcome and blessing at the end of the struggle. He was no longer the heel-sneak. He is now ready to be made into the image of God and Christ spiritually, eternally. He is now ready to return to the sort of individual who dwelt in tents, a student of the Torah to fulfill his real life and commission. Jacob’s battle was to rid-himself of his grasping selfish nature.

The Chumash page 175. Jacob was left alone and a man wrestled with him until the break of dawn. When he (the angel) perceived that he could not overcome him, he struck the socket of his hip; so Jacob’s hip socket was dislocated as he wrestle with him. Then he said, “Let me go, for dawn has broken.” And he said, “I will not let you go unless you bless me.” He said to him, “What is your name?” He replied, “Jacob.” He said, “No longer will it be said that your name is Jacob, but Israel for you have striven with the Divine and with man and have overcome.” “Jacob inquired, and he said, ‘Divulge, if you please, your name.’ And he said, ‘Why then do you inquire of my name?’ And he blessed him there.” But he would not give his name.³² “The sun rose for him as, he passed Penuel and he was limping on his hip. Therefore, the children of Israel are not to eat the displaced sinew on the hip-socket to this day, because he struck Jacob’s hip-socket on the displaced sinew.”

Abraham represented kindness, Isaac represented service. Kindness and service are two of the three indispensable pillars of the world, but the third pillar (*Avos* 1:2) – Torah (the law of God) – “is the crucial one for Israel’s success in carrying out its mission on earth. Jacob represented Torah and without it Israel will fail. That is why Satan did not confront Abraham and Isaac, only Jacob.” Torah is what is necessary to go out to the world to redeem the nations—the word of the Lord is to go out from Mt. Zion and Jerusalem. Christ is going to teach the world. Jacob was a

man of the Torah. Abraham kept the laws of God and was noted for his kindness and hospitality. Isaac was noted for his discipline, self-control and service to God. Jacob had to overcome his grasping nature through affliction and finally coming to depend on God for his prosperity. When Jacob cried out to God, God began to bless him. Jacob had to turn to God in faith that God would be with him and his family in returning home and meeting Esau, he wrestled with the angel proving his tenacity, perseverance and willingness to fight and struggle and not let go until God blesses him.

Think about this. You can pray, fast and give alms to the poor all day long, but neglect Bible study. Your human nature does not mind a bit. Satan the devil doesn’t mind a bit. Neglecting daily Bible study, is neglecting your life preserver. We are fed through the umbilical cord of God’s word. Jacob was renamed Israel which means over-comer—champion of God. This is what God has called us to be, *over-comers*. If we obey and follow him, he will give us power over the nations—authority in the kingdom of God and to help rule the universe as part of the extended family of God. Do you ever wrestle in your prayers, agonize and strive when talking with God to overcome selfishness, the pulls of the flesh and the human mind, to overcome sin and temptation.

According to the *Chumash*, Jewish history illustrates this principle. American history does too. When America was founded, the Pilgrims came to America so they could live according to God’s word, the scriptures. Now what we see today in America is just a small thin shell of the former God-centered country founded on God’s word. The education system has departed from God. The leaders have departed from God’s word and church after church has become the synagogue of Satan really serving a false god—hijacked by Satan. **Matthew 4:4** and **Luke 4:4** Christ said, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.” Of all the countries in the world, America to a large degree, has a lot of Abraham’s kindness and exemplifies loving kindness and aid when disasters strike other countries. America also has the attitude of service in education, health, agriculture, and conservation. But we fail on pillar number three. We fail to teach the law of God/ Torah represented by Jacob.

The Chumash says, this is tragically borne out by the Jews as well. There are countries where the Jews have invested in synagogues and charities, but have not invested in institutions of Torah study. In those countries the Jews have been assimilated and nearly disappeared. Only where they remained loyal to the *Torah* (word of God), the legacy of Jacob, did they remain strong. This applies to us today. We must remain strong in teaching the laws of God, reading it and keeping it in our heart and mind. Not just the five books of Torah written by Moses, the

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Deleted: Abraham represented kindness, Isaac represented service. Kindness and service are two of the three indispensable pillars of the world, but the third pillar (*Avos* 1:2) –Torah (the law of God) –“is the crucial one for Israel’s success in carrying out its mission on earth. Jacob represented Torah and without it Israel will fail. That is why Satan did not confront Abraham and Isaac, only Jacob.” Torah is what is necessary to go out to the world to redeem the nations—the word of the Lord is to go out from Mt. Zion and Jerusalem. Christ is going to teach the world. Jacob was a m

beginning of the Bible. The Torah is all the oracles of God (his laws) which God committed to the Jews (Romans 3:1-4).

Deuteronomy 8:3—“Every commandment which I command you today you must be careful to observe, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land of which the LORD swore to your fathers. ² And you shall remember that the LORD your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. ³ So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, **that He might make you know** that man shall not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD. ⁴ Your garments did not wear out on you, nor did your foot swell these forty years. ⁵ You should know in your heart that as a man chastens his son so, the LORD your God chastens you.”

Our life depends upon the words of God. They are our life. Christ came that we might have life.

John 14:6-7—“Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you had known me, you would have known my Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him. ’ ” Jesus came to reveal the Father.

John 15:7, 16—“If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. ⁸ By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be my disciples (become my students, my followers, and my church). You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in my name He may give you.¹⁷ These things I command you, that you love one another.” Christ called us and God the Father called us and appointed us that we could go and bear fruit. Each one of us, he called us into his church (his body). He chose us by giving us the gift of his Holy Spirit as a begettal (promise) and He is working with us that we might go out and bear much good fruit. To do this we need to know what the good news is.

John 17:3—“And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.” Christ gives us the program laid out before us. **Romans 10: 4-13**—“For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.⁶ But the righteousness of faith speaks in this way, ‘Do not say in your heart, “Who will ascend into heaven?”’ (that is, to bring Christ down from above) or, ‘Who will descend into the abyss?’ (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). ⁸ But what does it say? The word is near you, **in your mouth and in your heart**” (that is, the word of faith which we preach): ⁹ that **if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.** ¹⁰ For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. ¹¹ For the Scripture says, whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame. ¹² For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. ¹³ For ‘whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.’” Righteousness is obedience to God’s law.

¹⁴ “How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a

preacher? ¹⁵ And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: How beautiful are the feet of those who **preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things!**" Faith comes by hearing the word of God, by studying it and obeying it.

Brethren, now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, ²¹ "make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever." Amen.