

# THE OPEN BIBLE

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## **Parasha B'Shelach**

- Exodus 13:17-17:16
- Judges 4:4-5:31
- Revelation 19:1-20:6

### **The Torah Portion at a Glance**

Soon after allowing the Children of Israel to depart from Egypt, Pharaoh chases after them to force their return, and the Israelites find themselves trapped between Pharaoh's armies and the sea. YHWH tells Moses to raise his staff over the water; the red sea splits to allow the Israelites to pass through, and then closes over the pursuing Egyptians. Moses and the Children of Israel sing a song of praise and gratitude to YHWH.

In the desert, the people suffer thirst and hunger and repeatedly complain to Moses and Aaron. YHWH miraculously sweetens the bitter waters of Marah, and later has Moses bring forth water from a rock by striking it with his staff; He causes manna to rain down from the heavens before dawn each morning, and quails to appear in the Israelite camp each evening.

The Children of Israel are instructed to gather a double portion of manna on Friday, as none will descend on Shabbat, the divinely decreed day of rest. Some disobey and go to gather manna on the seventh day, but find nothing. Aaron preserves a small quantity of manna in a jar, as a testimony for future generations.

In Sephardim, the people are attacked by the Amalekites, who are defeated by Moses' prayers and an army raised by Joshua.

### **The Messiah in the Torah Portion**

Our current Torah portion is full of direct and indirect references to Messiah Y'shua. The Moshiach is referenced so many times this week that it's hard to believe that anyone could read this portion and not believe in Him. Re-read the weekly portion and consider Him in the words of the Torah:

- Y'shua is the breath of YHWH that held back the waters of the Red Sea.
- Y'shua is the dance of Miriam as they crossed the Red Sea.
- Y'shua is the manna from heaven that fed the Israelites.
- Y'shua is the Shabbat day of rest that gives man joy from labor.
- Y'shua is the stone that Moses and the elders struck once for water.

- Y'shua is like Joshua who defeated the Amalekites through the steady hands of the Lawgiver.
- Y'shua is the cloud by day and fire by night presence of YHWH that never leaves us.
- Y'shua is the tree that turned the bitter waters sweet.
- Y'shua is the double portion of manna that came as a suffering servant and will return as a conquering king.
- Y'shua is the manna preserved in a jar as a future testimony as His divinity was placed in a jar of clay.
- Y'shua is the word made flesh.

### **Applying the Portion to Life Today**

"I urge you, brothers, in view of Elohim's mercy, to offer your lives as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to YHWH—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to know and approve what Elohim's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will," Romans 12:1-2.

Be prepared to let go of some false teachings and accept the truth found in this week's Torah Parasha. Let your mind be renewed with this portion that recounts the newly-freed Hebrew people's journey towards the Promised Land. Be transformed by the *emet*, the truth, about the encounter between the army of an angry Pharaoh and his former slaves.

What does transpire between the Egyptian army and the Israelites is no secret. By YHWH's power Moshe leads his group to safety across the dry ground of the Red Sea. When Pharaoh follows his army and their chariots are swept away. "Then Moshe and the Israelites sang this song to YHWH," Shemot/Exodus 15:1.

The song of Moshe is the first mention of singing in the scriptures. All Yisrael sung this as they realized their freedom. The Israelites were rejoicing because they were finally totally liberated. They had watched with their own eyes the destruction of Egypt by the ten plagues and now they had witnessed the death of the evil army through the waters of the sea. Their response to YHWH is jubilant worship with singing and dancing. The song at the sea is a beautiful poem describing YHWH and His works. Hidden in the text of this serenade is the first mention by the Israelites of a very important Hebrew concept. Found in this song is the notion of grace. Grace? Grace is in the Old Testament? Yes, contrary to popular belief the idea of grace was not invented by New Testament writers. Grace is found throughout the Bible, starting with creation and finding no end. Lay aside the false teachings of an "age" or "dispensation" of grace and accept the truth about "chesed."

“Chesed” is the Hebrew term often translated as “grace” or “mercy” in English Bibles. Chesed or grace is usually understood to mean unmerited favor, yet its real definition is much greater. This is because chesed is one of the sefirot (attributes) of YHWH. YHWH is gracious and imparts grace because chesed is part of who YHWH is. To receive chesed is to receive YHWH. To better understand chesed is to better know YHWH. But, how can you comprehend the incomprehensible? How can you understand the unfathomable? How can the “amazing grace” of YHWH be realized? This is done through YHWH's word, His Torah.

You may be confused because you will not find the word “grace” in this week's reading. That's because chesed is found in this week's portion in the Hebrew but not in the English. YHWH's chesed is so great that translators have to use various words to describe it. It is hidden in this verse...“In your unfailing love (chesed) you lead the people you have redeemed,” Shemot/Exodus 15:13. According to this verse through chesed, redemption or salvation comes. Sound familiar? “You are redeemed/saved by chesed through trusting belief—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of YHWH,” Ephesians 2:18. Chesed is sometimes translated as grace and at other places mercy. Though the words may change the definition remains the same. Chesed is YHWH doing for man what man can not do for himself. To help you better understand the vast scope of chesed here are a few other potentials:

Loving-kindness, favor, faithfulness, unconditional giving, deep love, bliss, tenderness, abundance, achievement, preservation, respect, enthusiasm, leadership, optimism, caring, safety, protection, trust, success, rewards, generosity, gratitude, love, union, insight, knowledge, understanding, and learning, loyalty, kindness, benevolence, and commitment.

Chesed is all of the above and more. Friend, much can be learned about chesed from numerous verses in the Tanakh. For example Psalms 89:3 teaches that, “the world is built through chesed.” The act of creation and every act of the Almighty that has followed has happened through grace/chesed. YHWH created because of and through His chesed. He did not have to create, yet through His love he chose to. Through His own sefirot or attributes YHWH brought forth creation, redemption, and restoration. This is because through grace flows the merciful qualities of the Divine. Man deserves absolutely nothing yet because of chesed man receives everything.

Chesed is not only given from YHWH to humankind, but also from man to fellow man as this Parasha reading shows. We receive chesed from El Shaddai and we should reflect that chesed to those around us. “Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering YHWH's chesed in its various forms,” 1 Peter 4:10.

Even today, in Judaism, chesed is any act of mercy or kindness that is given towards those less fortunate or those who cannot reciprocate it. For example the Rabbis consider this a great mitzvah, indeed the greatest act of chesed to be the “chesed shel emet.” This Hebrew term of “chesed shel emet” literally means “true chesed.” According to the Sages, true chesed is only performed to those who can not pay it back. “Chesed shel emet” is in direct reference to acts of kindness towards the dead. Because they have passed away, the dead can never repay the act of chesed. This is true chesed. Even this week's Torah Parasha shows the power of “chesed shel emet” with the action of Moshe taking the bones of Yoseph out of Mitzrayim and to the Promised Land. Moshe shows “chesed shel emet” as an example for us today. “Moshe took the bones of

Yoseph with him because Yoseph had made the sons of Yisrael swear an oath. He had said, "Elohim will surely come to your aid, and then you must carry my bones up with you from this place," Shemot/Exodus 13:19.

Grace did NOT start with the death of the Savior. Chesed has always been. "Give thanks to YHWH for He is tov, His chesed endures forever," Tehillim/Psalms 136. YHWH's chesed is FOREVER!

Sorry folks, but the preacher is wrong. The "age of grace" did not begin with the crucifixion of the Savior. Nor is the seminary teaching of a "dispensation of grace" correct either. The gracious and forgiving Son of the New Testament has not – REPEAT - has not, pitted Himself against the vicious picky Father of the Old Testament. Such teachings are like dense fog that blinds people to the truth that is clearly before them. If you've ever driven in heavy fog, then you understand how dangerous misunderstanding grace can be. You've got your low beam lights on and you are creeping along the road with caution, but you can't see ten feet in front of you. You think the road is clear so you speed up. Suddenly your car impacts another! You crash because the fog hinders your judgment, actions, and future. A false understanding of grace can do the same.

To better grasp the Hebraic concept of chesed you should meet chesed's twin concept named gevurah. "Gevurah" is the Hebrew term for "might" or "judgment." To have chesed without gevurah would be like having a car without tires. To really get somewhere you need both. The two simply must go together. Gevurah brings about the fear of Elohim in man. Yet gevurah is balanced by chesed. For simplicities sake just consider chesed to be the "motherly" side of YHWH – merciful, forgiving, and bliss. Also, consider gevurah to be the "fatherly" side of YHWH – stern, strong, and disciplinary. If you have one without the other you only have part of the family; and everyone knows that children need a mother and a father. In the same sense, man needs chesed and gevurah. Just consider only showing your children chesed - imagine that you never discipline them or stop them from doing what they want. Now imagine that all you do is discipline your children – imagine that they are restrained by your might from disobeying. Either way there will be problems. Chesed needs gevurah and gevurah needs chesed. These two attributes of YHWH are balanced through Messiah Y'shua. "For the Torah was given through Moshe; chesed and gevurah are realized through Y'shua HaMoshiach," John 1:17.

YHWH desires observance to His Word from all mankind. He has not given grace as an excuse to disobey His commands, see Romans 7:7. YHWH Y'shua in His wisdom and power balances chesed and gevurah.

To accept one side of YHWH without the other will lead to false teachings and false understanding about the Almighty and His word. It is easy to rejoice with Yisrael when the waters of the Red Sea kill the Egyptians, but should we? Should we celebrate when the wicked are punished? "Do not gloat when your enemy falls; when he stumbles, do not let your heart rejoice, or YHWH will see and disapprove and turn his wrath away from him," Proverbs 24:17.

Maybe the Israelites were not singing because the evil Egyptians were dead. Maybe they were celebrating the greatness of YHWH! "At the overthrow of the Egyptians by the Red Sea, the ministering angels wished to offer a song of triumph to YHWH; but He stopped them, saying, "The

work of my hands is drowned in the sea, and you would offer me a song," says the Talmud. YHWH does not want any to perish says 2 Peter 3:98.

You must see what really happened at the moment in time that the waters overtook the Egyptian army. At that very moment, at that second in history's clock, one nation experienced the chesed of YHWH and one experienced the gevurah of YHWH. Grace and judgment were supremely balanced when the waters were released. Friend, it was the view of these opposing forces that led to the song of Moshe. Am Yisrael was astounded with YHWH's chesed and gevurah and offered to YHWH an amazing song found in Exodus 15. When mercy and grace are balanced how can we help but respond like the Israelites in Shemot/Exodus 15:11 and say, "who is like you YHWH among the elohim?" Selah.

### **Portion Points to Ponder**

1. The Hebrew name for this portion is "B'shelach." What does this mean?
2. Read Jeremiah Judges 4:4-5:31. How does this relate to the story of Exodus this week?
3. Consider the words found in Revelation 19:1-20:6. What did you learn from studying this passage?
4. How does this Torah portion speak of the Messiah Y'shua?
5. Describe two ways that you can apply this week's Torah portion to your life.
6. Why didn't YHWH lead the Israelites through the quickest path out of Egypt?
7. Why did they take the bones of Yosef/Joseph with them?
8. What visible signs did YHWH use to lead the nation of Israel? Why was a sign to the entire nation important?
9. How did crossing over the red sea spread the knowledge and fear of YHWH through the entire world?
10. Where in the New Testament is the Red Sea crossing spoken of?
11. How many chariots did Pharaoh use to chase his ex-slaves?
12. The children of Israel saw Pharaoh and then complained. How is grumbling and complaining often a sign of fear?
13. What Hebrew word is used for "salvation" in Exodus 14:13? Why is this verse significant?



14. What did YHWH mean when He said to Moshe, "why do you cry to Me?" Are there times that obedience and not simply prayer are needed? Have you ever prayed about something even though you knew it was something you were supposed to do?
15. Describe how the pillar of fire moved to lead Israel through the Red Sea?
16. What direction of wind made the waters move?
17. The waters of the Red Sea were a type of salvation for Israel and judgment for Egypt. How is the red blood of Y'shua salvation for those who believe and at the same time judgment for those who do not believe?
18. What happened to Pharaoh, his horses, and his riders?
19. Chapter 15 begins with a song by Moses about the Exodus from Egypt. How is this song spoken of again the book of Revelation?
20. Besides this week's Torah portion, where else in the Bible does the phrase "YHWH is a man of war" appear?
21. Explain how this week's portion compares YHWH to a man.
22. What and where is the mountain of YHWH's inheritance as spoken of in Exodus 15:17?
23. How did Miriam, the sister of Moses, and the women of Israel respond to YHWH's miraculous deliverance?
24. Is it acceptable to dance during worship today?
25. How many days did Israel journey without water? Why is this number important?
26. What is the Hebrew word for bitterness? Where is bitterness described in this Torah portion? How does this compare to Ruth 1:20?
27. The bitter waters were made sweet by a tree. What is the prophetic meaning of such a miracle?
28. According to Exodus 15:26, how could Israel avoid the plagues, disease, and judgments that Egypt faced?
29. The Torah states that Elim there were twelve wells of water and seventy palm trees. Research the significance of the numbers 12 and 70. What do they mean? Why does the Torah make the distinction that these were "palm" trees?
30. Where did Israel go after Elim? On what day to they reach their destination?
31. Who murmured against Moses and Aharon?
32. Where is the Wilderness of Sin in the Middle East?

33. Were the Israelites justified to expect their journey to free to be easy?
34. Exodus 16:4 states that one purpose of the manna from heaven was to test the Hebrew people to see if they would obey the voice of YHWH. Does YHWH test people today? Describe a spiritual test you have recently faced.
35. On what day of the week should the Israelites gather twice the manna? Are we to worry about cooking and preparing food on the Sabbath?
36. Why did YHWH bring quail into the Israelite camp and not chicken or turkey?
37. Explain the miracle food "manna." What do you think it tasted like? Was it leavened with yeast or was it flat?
38. How does bread play a central role in the Exodus?
39. What type of measurement was used for counting the amount of manna each day?
40. When is the "omer" again used as a measurement in relation to the festivals of YHWH?
41. "Bake what you will bake and boil what you will boil for tomorrow is the Sabbath of YHWH," is a quote from Exodus 16:23. Does this mean that we should not cook or bake food on the Sabbath? Why or why not?
42. Did some people disobey the words of Moses by going to gather food/manna on Shabbat? What did they find?
43. Exodus 16:29 says, "Bear in mind that the LORD has given you the Sabbath; that is why on the sixth day he gives you bread for two days. Everyone is to stay where he is on the seventh day; no one is to go out." Does this mean that we should not leave our homes on the Sabbath or does this mean that you shouldn't leave your home on Shabbat to specifically gather food?
44. Why would manna be kept in a jar for future generations? Would it rot or would it last for generations?
45. What happened at the camp at Rephidim?
46. In your opinion, does the striking of the Rock for water by Moses and the elders symbolize Y'shua? How?
47. Why was Joshua chosen by Moshe to enlist people to fight against Amelek?
48. Moses used the rod of YHWH to help the nation of Israel defeat the Amalekites. Who helped Moses hold up his hands? From what tribes were these two men descendant from?
49. Who did Israel win the war against Amelek?
50. Why does Moses sit on a stone or a chair?

51. Where are the descendants of the Amalekites today?
52. What did Moses call the place where YHWH gave Israel victory over the Amalekites?
53. Why would Israel always be at war with Amelek?
54. What did you learn from this Open Bible study?

The Open Bible is a teaching series written by Daniel Rendelman of Emet Ministries. Find more teachings, audio messages, videos, and music at [www.emetministries.com](http://www.emetministries.com).

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