

## BEYOND THE MOUNTAIN

“Beyond the Mountain”. Several thoughts come to mind in regards to this concept. The first of these concerns the sequence of events that took place while our ancestors sojourned from Egypt to Mount Sinai. Having departed Egypt on the 15th of the first month (Aviv, ref. Numbers 33:3), they arrived in the wilderness of Sin on the 15th day of the second month (ref. Exodus 16:1), where they lodged their complaints against Moses because of seeming food shortage. After the miraculous appearance of the manna, and the giving of the ordinance of the Shabbat they moved on and camped in Rephidim. There they once more voiced their discontent (this time concerning lack of water), and were also attacked by the Amalekites (ref. Exodus 17:8). Such a short time had elapsed yet so many attacks, both from within and from without! Was the enemy trying to prevent the Israelites from getting to the ‘Mountain of Torah,’ and could he be acting in much the same way at present, trying to do the same to us? There is no mention of a departure date from Rephidim, but it is recorded that they arrived at the wilderness of Sinai in the third month, again on the 15th day. Although no details are specified as to where they camped, it would appear from other references they were near the “Mountain of Elohim”.

Immediately upon their arrival, YHVH called Moses to come up to the Mountain, so that He could deliver a message to His people. Notice that this took place before He descended upon the Mountain in the great display of fire, earthquake and sounds. The introductory message delivered then, which from YHVH’s perspective has never changed, was an identity message (in addition to having already called them Israel - His firstborn nation - while they were still in Egypt. Ref. Exodus 4:22).

*“And Moses went up to Elohim, and YHVH called to him from the Mountain, saying, ‘Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: ‘You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to Myself. Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words which*

*you shall speak to the children of Israel. So Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before them all these words which YHVH commanded him. Then all the people answered together and said, 'All that YHVH has spoken we will do.' So Moses brought back the words of the people to YHVH"* (Exodus 19:3-8 emphases added).

YHVH then charged Moses to consecrate the people, for in three days (which would have been the 18th of the third month) He would descend upon the Mountain. In obedience they performed all that they were charged with, washing their clothes and preparing themselves.

Yet it appears that they were not really ready for what was about to take place. Being used to worshipping a variety of gods or idols, it is no wonder that they became fearful at the sounds and sights that brought the Elohim of Israel from the unseen world into a reality to which they could not even begin to relate. Notice that their response to YHVH's first message "*we will do*" (v. 8) changed after experiencing the awesome Presence and "*seeing the voices*" (according to the Hebrew text) of the Almighty. Now they added "*nish'ma – we will hear/obey*" - but under the condition that Moses alone would address them (ref. Exodus 20:19). It is easy to say "we will do", but that does not necessarily mean that the importance of obedience is recognized, because "doing" can also turn out to 'doing it my way'.

This do-it-yourself mind-set pretty much typifies religious systems in general, as we pick, choose, alter and ultimately make up our own rules and regulations, ones that we desire to follow. Thus YHVH's instructions and commandments can be quickly laid aside, especially when we fail to live up to them. Throughout the history of Israel this has been, and indeed still is the case today. The main reason for failing is only realized when we acknowledge and recognize the commandments of Elohim. It is through and by the commandments that we arrive at the knowledge of sin, which is the power that works in our heart causing us to rebel (see Romans 3:20).

Elohim, of course, did not consider for a moment that this mob-being-formed-into-a-people was capable of doing, hearing or even keeping any of His commandments, as He knew only too well what was in their uncircumcised hearts. This is evidenced by a comparison between the ordinance of Passover, just before their journey began, and Moses' speech toward the end of the wilderness wanderings. Let us lay those two side by

side. "... *It [keeping the Passover] shall be as a sign to you on your hand [that is, the "doing"] and as a memorial between your eyes [the thoughts and motives], that YHVH's law may be in your mouth [speech]*" (Exodus 13:9). However, in Deuteronomy 5:29 at the end of the 40 years journey, YHVH has this to say: "Oh, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear Me and always keep all My commandments". YHVH was obviously making an observation regarding the heart condition. Later on Moses adds: "*Yet YHVH has not given you a heart to perceive and eyes to see and ears to hear, to this very day*" (Deuteronomy 29:4). These are but a few of the instances in which the true state of the heart and its motives were exposed during the 40 years spent in the desert.

It seems that as soon as our forefathers heard YHVH's instructions their response was to follow their own inclinations, not obeying or trusting His word. Let us go back to the Mountain and see if walking through the events will help us understand what YHVH's intents were then and how they continue to be applicable for us today, so that we can move beyond Mount Sinai and take with us our true identity, as well as His instructions for a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

## **Why The Mountain In The First Place?**

What was YHVH's purpose for bringing the Israelites to Mount Sinai? Without understanding His reason for revealing Himself to His people there, as He did, we will continue to camp by that Mountain. We will be studying all the details of the commandments, statutes and ordinances, collecting offerings - "trumat" - for the purpose of building a sanctuary for Him and then working hard at doing the mitzvot. We will also keep trying to decide how to carry out what we are hearing. Because the original Hebrew script is so complicated, the poor lay person would feel the need to rely on rabbis and theologians for interpretation. As a result, all this effort will end up morphing into a hierarchal religious system, devoid of the relationship YHVH had intended for us to have with Him. So let us examine the reason that Elohim brought us to the Mountain, so that we may move on. There are two statements in Exodus that not only show YHVH's intent, but also demonstrate His absolute devotion to carry out His plans for His people (past, present and future).

*“And Moses went up to Elohim, and YHVH called to him from the Mountain, saying, ‘Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: ‘You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to Myself’”* (Exodus 19:3-4). Notice *“I brought you to Myself”*. The following verses demonstrate YHVH’s attitude and intentions toward His people, who were to be *“to Me a special treasure, to Me a kingdom of priests and a set apart nation”* (19:5-6). The Almighty was looking to prepare a place for Himself, as seen from a statement in Exodus 25:8: *“And let them make Me a sanctuary, that **I may dwell among them**”* (emphases added). His intentions were not to dwell in a man-made structure, but within a nation of servant priests and kings.

The above statements highlight YHVH’s place in the relationship even though the called out ones were stiff necked and disobedient, a trait that seems to haunt us even in this generation. We have to be careful that we do not become so enamored with discovering our Israelite identity and being called a treasured possession of the Most High and a priesthood, that we forget our first love: *“You shall love YHVH your Elohim with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart”* (Deuteronomy 6:5-6). It is very easy for us to be living for ourselves, using our relationship with Abba for our sake, rather than existing for Him and for His name’s sake.

The one rabbi who had a clear understanding of YHVH’s perspective of the Sinai covenant, was rabbi Shaul/Paul. In his commentaries he explains the purpose for giving the “Law”. *“For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses”* (Romans 5:13-14). Thus in spite of “sin not being imputed” it did reign and mankind was obviously suffering the consequences (as is evident in the early Torah narratives).

So what is it that took place at Sinai that changed everything? And why is it so important that we, as believers today, understand our relationship to the Torah? For societies to be functional, in antiquity as in our own day, they obviously had to have laws and moral and operational codes. Unknowingly they even observed and upheld some of YHVH’s laws (see, for example, Genesis 26:5). However, there was not a clear spiritual demarcation line. By

and large Man's attempts to set up codices of law stemmed directly from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil.

YHVH's commandments of "you shall" and "you shall not" are based on the Spirit of His Word, with the intent of convicting humanity of Sin. *"What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, 'You shall not covet'"* (Romans 7:7). *"Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin"* (Romans 3:20). Sin could not be atoned for until after YHVH gave the Law, and because in giving it He knew that His laws would be violated, He immediately made provision for a sacrificial system and gave instructions for constructing the Mishkan and the establishment of the Levitical priesthood in order to facilitate the sacrifices.

YHVH's intent was to have a people for His name's sake, so that He might dwell not just among, but IN them. But as long as the heart/spirit of His people was still corrupted by the fallen spiritual condition, it was impossible for His Spirit to unite with theirs. It was therefore necessary for YHVH to prepare the people by this first agreement, or should I say contract, which both parties signed, thus setting in motion His future plan that would make it possible for Him to dwell in them. Through Moses and the blood of oxen the first Sinai covenant was inaugurated.

*"Then he sent young men of the children of Israel, who offered burnt offerings and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen to YHVH. And Moses took half the blood and put it in basins, and half the blood he sprinkled on the altar. Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read in the hearing of the people. And they said, 'All that YHVH has said we will do, and be obedient.' And Moses took the blood, sprinkled it on the people, and said, 'this is the blood of the covenant which YHVH has made with you according to all these words'"* (Exodus 24:5-8).

Now you might be asking "what is meant by the first Sinai Covenant".....?

## An Am Segulah Stamped by the Abrahamic Covenant

As we continue to take a closer look at our ancestors' Mount Sinai experience, let us go back to Moses' first encounter with YHVH on the Mountain, as described in Exodus 19. Elohim calls him up, telling him to inform "the house of Jacob and the children of Israel" who they are as an "am segula", with a very specific calling to be a kingdom of priests and a set-apart nation to Elohim. This calling comes with a condition that YHVH's voice is to be obeyed and His covenant observed (ref. Exodus 19:5-6). What covenant is He referring to? Since the Sinai agreement had not yet been given, could He be referring to the one mentioned in Exodus 6:4-5? Here is what it says: *"I have also established My covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, in which they were strangers. And I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel whom the Egyptians keep in bondage, and I have remembered My covenant"*. Again, what covenant did He remember? *"On the same day YHVH made a covenant with Abram, saying: 'To your seed I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates'"* (Genesis 15:18). Fast forward, four thousand years later; to date there has not been a treasured priestly people living on the entire covenanted land ruled by Elohim's kingdom government.

The one message that all the prophets of old were proclaiming and the fulfillment of which they were hoping to witness, was a massive exodus out of all the nations, made up of the redeemed seed of the forefathers. But where lies the destination of such an exodus? Obviously, based on the pattern of the first exodus and according to the prophets it would be, once again, the covenanted land. This, however, cannot take place unless the lost tribes regain their Israelite national identity and become cognizant of the fact that the ultimate covenant that YHVH desires to fulfill is the one He made with Abram, when He walked between the cut pieces, and later reiterated at Sinai. It is commonly thought that Solomon ruled these areas, and/or that the return of the Jewish people to the present land is the fulfillment of this first covenant, being a prelude to Yeshua's second coming once the temple is built.

However, in preparation for Yeshua's first coming the Almighty began a process almost 500 years beforehand, by raising Cyrus and Darius the

Median kings who amazingly decided to dispatch the Jews, from the house of David and Levi and the tribe of Benjamin, to Jerusalem, and to encourage and support their endeavors to restore the city and rebuild the temple. And so we see that the times are in YHVH's hands as He brings about the necessary changes for His segula people, preparing them and the land. We don't like to think that it could take another 500 years for this expected exodus and for the "glory of all lands" to be inhabited by YHVH's am segula (Israel)... but then again, the times *are* in His hand!

What does it mean to be an "am segula"? Peter quotes the same Sinai scripture in his first letter, making some additions: "*But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light*" (2:9). In ancient times each king had a special singular and unique treasure of his most precious riches. He also had his most trusted and capable special force protecting it. Yeshua also makes mention of this precious treasure in a couple of parables, when He refers to the pearl of great price and to the treasure buried in a field (ref. Matthew 13:44-46). What does it mean for us, once when we realize that we are YHVH's segula, His treasure, His pearl?

In the eyes of the Almighty, Israel is still His kingdom-people. We cannot separate, add to, or take away from what He has covenanted with the forefathers. It is all one big package deal - land, people, nation, and kingdom government. Regardless of where the Israelites are (geographically and spiritually), nor who is living on their land or occupying it, YHVH still watches over them and His "*eyes are always on it [the land], from the beginning of the year to the very end of the year*" (Deuteronomy 11:12). But the condition remains the same, "*and it shall be that if you earnestly obey My commandments which I command you today, to love YHVH your Elohim and serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul...*" (v.13) that, you will be allowed to live in the land and possess it.

How are we perceiving our lives in terms of bearing a testimony to being YHVH's "segula"? Identity, of course is of vital importance, as mentioned above, but if we are indeed going to take on the identity from YHVH's perspective, as Ephraim or Israel, we must recognize that "we do not belong to ourselves" and that we are here for the One who has called us out of

darkness into His marvelous light. Do we have a keen sense of how our Messiah-King is looking at us? Ezekiel's warns (in chapter 20), that out of the many who will be called out, no small number will remain in the wilderness of the people/nations outside the covenant land. So like our Israelite forefathers at Mount Sinai, do we hear "*if you will obey My voice and keep my covenant then you will be to Me...*"? How many times did our forebears want to return to Egypt? How many times do we give in to the pull of the world?

Unfortunately we are not much different than our forebears. But 'fortunately' YHVH takes into account that we are still a stiff-necked people.

### **Consequences resulting from a Leader's Delay**

Continuing to explore the wilderness journey of our ancestors, and by implication ours too, we find that one of the reasons that we seem not to be able to move beyond the Mountain, is that we are still stuck on a major issue; the disappearance of our leader. "*Now when the people saw that Moses delayed coming down from the Mountain, the people gathered together to Aaron, and said to him, 'come, make us gods that shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him'*" (Exodus 32:1). This was the response of the sons of Israel when their leader went up into the cloud and disappeared for what turned out to be a 40 day period. They, therefore, took matters into their own hands. Today as messianic believers, we too have a Leader who went up into the clouds over two thousand years ago, with the promise to return. Are we responding to this 'delay' in a manner similar to that of our forefathers?

Over the two millennia of Christianity there has always been an expectation of Yeshua's imminent return. Generation after generation of believers has turned to their leaders in an attempt to resolve the dilemma, or question, regarding their Lord's promised return to set up His kingdom. At such times of expectations, clouded by uncertainty, doubt and unbelief can easily set in and cause major disappointments. Leaders, like Aaron, must somehow preserve the faith of their flock, either in man or in Elohim. In the case of the

Israelites, one would have thought that all the signs and wonders that YHVH performed during the first part of the Exodus would have been sufficient to carry them through each of the future stages of their journey. A careful reading of the words used when they cried out to Aaron is very revealing: *“This Moses, the man who brought us up out of Egypt”* smacks of cynicism, bitterness and unbelief.

Apparently all the miracles that they saw firsthand did not sustain their faith, nor cause a deep reverence and fear of YHVH. In the land of their sojourn they were accustomed to tangible, material gods/idols, like Aaron’s rod (that no doubt left a deep impression upon them). Aaron, knowing this about the people and in order to maintain unity, order, and his leadership position responded to their need by asking them to hand over their most precious possessions, articles made of gold. Those items were the jewelry with which they adorned themselves, being part of their own (self) image.

Thus, in a sense, they corporately produced a golden calf, an Egyptian god, which they now perceived as the god that took them out of Egypt. The irony of this situation speaks for itself. But to make things worse, Aaron made a proclamation, saying: *“Tomorrow is a feast to YHVH”* (Exodus 32:5). Moses’ brother dared to name an image of a calf, Yod Hey Vav Hey, or, at the very least, to describe it as being a representative of Elohim! *“Then they rose early on the next day, offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play”* (Exodus 32:6).

A mere 40 plus days had elapsed from when they first heard the voice of Elohim, establishing the fact that He was the One who had brought them out of their bondage in Egypt. Moreover, He emphatically commanded them to have no other gods before Him, especially graven images which were absolutely forbidden. To that He added not to take His name in vain (see Exodus 20:2-7). Yet, in such a short time the people of Israel violated every one of these commands. Paul makes mention of this scenario, and its relevance to his generation (and to all others): *“Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. And do not become idolaters as were some of them. As it is written, ‘the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play...’”* *“Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our*

*admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall” (1 Corinthians 10:6-7, 1112).*

The greatest threat to our relationship with an unseen Elohim and a Messiah who is not physically present, but yet is working in us by His Spirit, is “religion”. Religion is a spiritual system imported from Babylon and Egypt, which our ancestors reverted to in exchange for the faith and genuine relationship with their Creator and Savior. Religion keeps us in this world’s reality and traditions, worshiping the works of our hands or our intellectual abilities, all of which can produce pride and self-righteousness. This type of worship is in fact a form of humanism, being centered on Man.

The gold and silver is handed to leaders in order to build adequate edifices and to offer peace offerings to the media gods. We gather together to be entertained by the most charismatic and dynamic expositors, and love to listen to predictions of future events that will produce what is deemed to be the scenario of Yeshua’s return. Would-be prophets keep us in hope and faith that their predications will help us remember and not forget our Messiah, as He waits in the heavens.

Being steeped in this type of atmosphere, our love towards each other grows cold, as the religious mind-set propels us instead into focusing on being ‘right’, while others (by inference) must be ‘wrong’ regarding prophetic or theological matters. We look for an ‘Aaron’ who will build us a golden calendar to follow, so as to prevent us from falling into error, thus making it easy to judge our brothers and sisters and, again, break relationships with those who will not bow down to the Aaron of our choice. Religion uses the plum-line of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil for its temple building, while ignoring YHVH’s instructions as to how He desires to be worshiped.

## **Sin Exposed by the First Sinai Covenant**

At this point in time in the wilderness journey (ref Exodus 33-34) it doesn’t look like the people of Elohim will be progressing “beyond the Mountain”. They had just demonstrated their complete unworthiness, unfaithfulness, and infidelity to their Redeemer. No other people had ever heard the voice of the Almighty Creator, let alone witnessed His signs and wonders, and yet so

quickly walk off, turning instead to rebellion, stubbornness, and insolence as the nation of Israel. YHVH, understandably, was ready to destroy them had it not been for the intercession of one man, Moses. Elohim even proposed to this Levite that He would make a nation out of him. This is all a little bit puzzling, because YHVH already knew what was at stake. Had He indeed destroyed the seed of the twelve tribes of Israel, that is, except the Levitical, He would have actually proven Himself to be just like them by being unfaithful to His covenants and promises to the forefathers and to Himself, as He called Himself after the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Such a scenario, of course, would have been implausible. In 2 Timothy 2:13 there is a very revealing and categorical statement regarding YHVH's character: "*If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself*". YHVH has to remain faithful to His word, for He is the Word. Moses did not have to remind the Almighty as to Who He was/is.

Please note that, the first time that Moses went up the Mountain YHVH gave him the ten words on two tablets of stone, sealing the first Sinai Covenant. However, the Israelites' worship of the golden calf actually annulled this covenant. They were now totally at the mercy of the Almighty's judgments. They had promised to "do and obey" His instructions. Hence, the act of smashing the tablets by Moses was not just due to his anger, but was also a response stemming from knowing what their rebellion meant from YHVH's perspective. Elohim was fully aware of what was in their hearts, and actually used this opportunity to reveal it to them.

This first Sinai Covenant was not meant to make the people righteous but, as written: "*to bring... to the knowledge of sin*" (ref. Romans 3:20). The end result, therefore, could only be the consequence stated in the contract: "*If you do all these commandments you will live*" (Deuteronomy 5:33), but if not, you will die. YHVH had no other choice but to carry out His portion of the contract by declaring that He would not go with Israel, for if He did they would be consumed by Him (ref. Exodus 33:3). Upon hearing this, the people removed their gold jewelry, symbolic of their repentance, and wept.

Moses, for his part, took up the tent and pitched it outside the camp and had a 'pow-wow' with the cloud. Apparently Moses' tent, or another special tent, was used during the journey as a meeting place (before the Mishkan), but only outside the camp. It was there where the people would go, to see

Moses and inquire of YHVH (see Exodus 33:7). Upon returning to their tents they would wait for Moses to enter this tent and for the cloud to descend in front of the entrance, at which point everyone would worship at the opening of their respective tents (v. 8-9). (This was most likely the same tent mentioned in regards to Moses' and Jethro's meeting when the latter came to see his son in law, ref. Exodus 18:7.)

Moses' tent was named "the tent of meeting" (Ohel Moed), being pitched, as mentioned, outside the camp. Later, after the Mishkan was erected *it* became the "Ohel Moed" in the midst of the camp. Why was the first tent always pitched outside the camp, while the Mishkan was situated in the midst of the camp? Initially YHVH could not be present in the heart of the camp because sin had not been atoned for. Only after He instituted the priesthood and the sacrifices within the Mishkan could His presence be in the middle of the camp (although hidden away inside the Holy of Holies).

This little phrase here, "outside the camp" is important to ponder, especially in light of Hebrews 13:11-13, where it says: "*For the bodies of those animals, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned **outside the camp**. Therefore Yeshua also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, **suffered outside the gate**. Therefore let us go forth to Him, **outside the camp**, bearing His reproach*" (emphasis added).

As mentioned above, Moses had a 'discussion' with the cloud, setting the stage for his next aliyah (ascent) up the Mountain. There is much to say regarding Moses' intercession but far more about the Holy One of Israel's response.

## Moses Interposes

After Israel's display of outright rebellion against the Redeemer and His covenant (a covenant that Israel consented to), their leader went with fear and trembling before a wrathful and angry Elohim to intercede on behalf of the people. Moses and Joshua entered the tent of meeting, pitched outside the camp, and waited to see if the cloud would descend and land in front of the entrance. YHVH's words were still ringing in Moses' ears: "*Whoever has sinned against Me, I will blot him out of My book. Now therefore, go,*

*lead the people to the place of which I have spoken to you... Nevertheless, in the day when I visit for punishment, I will visit punishment upon them for their sin" (Exodus 32:33-34).* This did not bode well with Israel's leader, who knew what the consequences may turn out to be. YHVH's recent proposal, to destroy the people and to start all over again with his seed, was fresh on his mind (Exodus 32:10).

Fortunately the cloud did come down and positioned itself in front of the tent, while Moses intoned the following: *"See, You say to me, 'Bring up this people.' But You have not let me know whom You will send with me. Yet You have said, 'I know you by name, and you have also found grace/favor in My sight.' Now therefore, I pray, if I have found grace in Your sight, show me now Your way, that I may know You and that I may find grace/favor in Your sight. And consider that this nation is Your people"* (Exodus 33:12-13).

Moses was not ignorant of YHVH's "grace", as he understood the deliverance and remembered the "eagles' wings", the manna, the water from the rock, and the total provision for the people of Israel. Yet there was still something missing in his relationship with the Almighty. He did not have that quiet assurance that YHVH would totally forgive them and would not forsake them. The grace that he had in mind was still somewhat shaky.

When the people first arrived at the Mountain, Israel's Deliverer presented Himself to His 'subjects' in an awesome and overpowering way that left them in fear and trepidation. This initial impression, upon the initiation of the first Sinai covenant, was at the foundation of their relationship with their Elohim. Signed and sealed by the blood of the bulls that Moses sacrificed and sprinkled on the people, this covenant had been a conditional agreement. It is worthy to note that this overwhelming display of sight and sound did not instill in the people a desire to walk in obedience to their Deliverer. Their attitude was similar to that of children who grow up in families where strict laws and punishments are enforced.

In his quest for a deeper relationship with Elohim, Moses suspected that there was another "face" to this Master of the Universe, and so his intercession continued: *"If Your Presence [panim – face] does not go with us, do not bring us up from here. For how then will it be known that Your people and I have found favor/satisfaction/appeasement in Your sight, except You go with us? So we shall be separate [palah - distinguished,*

marked out], *Your people and I, from all the people who are upon the face of the earth*" (33:15-16 emphases added). What was Moses driving at here? Was he reminding YHVH that these people, this nation, was His own testimony as to Who He was/is? Moses remembered full well what Elohim had said to him during the negotiations with Pharaoh, at the time when the Hebrews were extremely upset at him and Aaron for making their burdens even more difficult.

Here is what Elohim said to Moses at that auspicious time: "*And Elohim spoke to Moses and said to him: 'I am YHVH. I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as Elohim Almighty [El Shaddai], but by My name YHVH I was not known to them. I have also established My covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, in which they were strangers. And I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel whom the Egyptians keep in bondage, and I have remembered My covenant. Therefore say to the children of Israel: 'I am YHVH; I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, I will rescue you from their bondage, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. I will take you as My people, and I will be your Elohim. Then you shall know that I am YHVH your Elohim who brings you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. And I will bring you into the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and I will give it to you as a heritage: I am YHVH'*" (Exodus 6:2-8). In this declaration YHVH repeats His name five times. It is necessary to take to heart this entire speech, when we intercede for Yah's people. But more important will be the next episode, as YHVH is about to call Moses back up the Mountain.

## **Back up the Mountain**

Just before the cloud lifted from the tent of meeting, Moses made his last plea: "'Please show me Your glory.' Then He said, 'I will make all My goodness (tuv) pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of YHVH before you. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.' But He said, 'You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live'" (Exodus 33:18-20).

Moses no doubt was greatly relieved by YHVH's positive response to allow him to get a glimpse of the glory of His presence. In order for that to happen YHVH needed to put him in the cleft of a rock, but not only that – also to cover him with His hand and only afterward would His glory would pass by and He would lift off His hand, so that Moses would see His... back. This event is encouraging for us, who have been placed in the cleft of the Rock of our salvation - “Yeshua” - so that we too may get a glimpse of the glory of the great goodness (tuv) of our Elohim, “for it is this goodness of YHVH that leads to repentance” (Romans 2:4).

Before Moses left the Tent of Meeting to meet up with YHVH for the second 40 day period, he was instructed by Him to cut two stone tablets (like the ones he had broken), and carry them up the Mountain the next morning. But while the first tablets originated from YHVH and were hewn at the top of the Mountain, these new ones were going to originate from the bottom of the Mount and be brought up to YHVH, where He would inscribe on them once again the ten words (Exodus 34:1, 2, 28), being an indication that the stony hearts of the people have to be brought up to Him. As we will see, Moses was about to have a completely different experience than his former 40 day stay on the Mount. YHVH had already agreed to reveal to him His glory - “kavod”, His goodness - “tuv”, and His favor - “chen”, all of which constituted, as it were, the ‘backside’ of His glory (see Exodus 33:18ff).

Just before we accompany YHVH's faithful servant on his ascent up the Mountain, let us take note of some of the differences between the previous scene and this one. YHVH sealed the first covenant with the blood of bulls. Immediately after that Moses, Aaron, and the elders all went up the Mountain, where they ate and drank and saw Elohim (see Exodus 24:8-11). Following the golden calf episode and the breaking of YHVH's stone tablets, the Mountain became off limits, this time to everyone except Moses (34:3). It seems that the first episode had a potential of launching an intimate relationship between Israel and their Redeemer, but instead ended with a colossal failure which speaks volumes of their condition and ability, or lack thereof, to observe the covenant. Moses, having interceded on behalf of the people, is now called back up to witness the “favor” and the “goodness” of YHVH and much more.

Moses' earlier plea is about to be answered. The Almighty promised him that He would call out His name and make His glory known to him (ref. 33:19-23), and now the time has come. Thus, when Moses arrived at the Mountain top the cloud came down and surrounded him, while YHVH passed by in front of him calling out His own name: *"YHVH, YHVH Elohim, merciful - "rachum", and gracious - "chanun", longsuffering - "erech apayim", and abounding in goodness/grace - "chesed", and truth - "emet"...* (Before we go on let us recall another text: *"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory - "kavod", the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of "chesed" – goodness/grace and "emet" - truth" John 1:14.) ...keeping "chesed" – goodness/grace for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation"* (Exodus 34:6-7). Moses was so overwhelmed with what he had just seen and heard that all he could do was *"to make haste and bow his head toward the earth and worship"* (v.8). Through this encounter Moses was assured of his Master's faithfulness and favor, and so proceeded to ask on behalf of the people: *"If now I have found grace in Your sight, O Lord [Adonai], let my Lord [Adonai], I pray, go among us, even though we are a stiff-necked people; and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us as Your inheritance"* (Exodus 34:9).

What we are witnessing here is the kind of worship and intercession that Elohim desires - worship or adoration in "spirit and truth", as a result of knowing Him and seeing Him as He is. This is the worship that He will respond to and expects from His people. In other words, worshiping Him for who He is, not for what He does for us, nor causes to happen. Moses saw His intrinsic and quintessential glory and 'met up' with YHVH's very character and nature. Again, unlike the previous meetings with Elohim, Moses' skin was set aglow by this encounter. After he returned to camp he had to cover his face, removing the cover each time he entered the tent to meet up with Elohim (ref. 34:29-34).

## Hinting at another Covenant

Immediately following this incredible declaration and manifestation of His name and disposition YHVH, hearing Moses' plea for His people, declared that He would make a covenant with him and with them. But hang on, what is going on here? Is YHVH referring to the same covenant that Israel has just messed up, or is He? *"Behold, I make a covenant. Before all your people I will do marvels such as have not been done in all the earth, nor in any nation; and all the people among whom you are shall see the work of YHVH. For it is an awesome thing that I will do with you"* (Exodus 34:10). While it seems that He is referring to conquering the land and destroying its inhabitants, and indeed eventually Israel was going to have some awesome experiences while taking their inheritance, yet for a covenant to be legally in effect it had to be sealed with blood. When we examine closely the full content of the said "covenant" and YHVH's real intent, we find that it has more to do with forgiveness of sin, iniquity and transgression, including marvels and awesome wonders. What covenant was sealed by blood and accompanied by wonders (of healing the sick, blind and deaf, and raising the dead)? **It appears that the signs and marvels promised here point to Yeshua and the "miracles, wonders, and signs which Elohim did through Him" (Acts 2:22), and his followers. However, the capstone of Yeshua's life was the shedding of His blood that sealed this second covenant of Sinai and atoned for the sins of the people so that they could become the royal priesthood and holy nation that YHVH declared them to be.**

In the meantime, in order for Israel's Elohim to dwell in their midst, the Israelites would need the instructions that were given to Moses at his first 40 day stay on the Mount (instructions which He repeated during the second ascent). Thus, if the 'current' covenant that YHVH has just announced to Moses is indeed linked to the new covenant as declared by Jeremiah (31:31), then the Ten Commandments and the Torah remain valid. Yeshua declared: *"For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the Torah till all is fulfilled... "For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote of Me"* (Matthew 5:18; John 5:46).

Moses' climactic epiphany of Elohim on the Mountain has made it possible to now leave that location, and carry out the instructions to erect a portable

“holy place” instead, signifying that the Almighty’s presence is not limited or bound exclusively to one spot. And so, while He came to dwell in this portable sanctuary, and later in a stationary one, His desire all along was to abide in a people – individuals who together form a holy abode for His presence. But this would have to wait until the second ‘covenant of Sinai’ could come to its completeness (more on this in Hebrews chapters 8 -10). Until then YHVH is committed to carry and move His people Israel along, under the shadow of His wings to their prophetic destiny ‘beyond the Mountain’.

*“How precious is Your “chesed” [loving kindness], O Elohim! Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Your wings. They are abundantly satisfied with the fullness of Your house, and You give them drink from the river of Your pleasures. For with You is the fountain of life; in Your light we see light. Oh, continue Your “chesed” to those who know You, and Your righteousness to the upright in heart” (Psalm 36:7-10).*

## **Preparations to leave the Mountain**

After the second forty days on the Mountain Moses descended with the two stone tablets and a glow which indicated to everyone in the camp of Israel that he had been in the presence of the Almighty. It seemed that now that the golden calf episode and its aftermath was behind them, that the Children of Israel were willing to take seriously the instructions they had received after Moses’ first encounter with Elohim. However, YHVH was not going to go with them as before (that is, He was no longer going to carry them on the proverbial eagles’ wings; see Exodus 32:34, 33:3). Yet He still desired to dwell in the midst of their tribes, within the nation (ref. Exodus 25:8). But without a Mishkan, a priesthood and sacrifices this could not happen. A Holy Elohim could not dwell among sin-bearing, stiff-necked people without an arrangement that would satisfy His righteousness.

YHVH had already left the instructions with the people before the golden calf rebellion. So now when they were asked to give a contribution toward a portable abode the people’s response was tremendously generosity. In fact, some were moved in heart to give so liberally that Moses had to command them to stop. *“The children of Israel brought a freewill offering to YHVH,*

*all the men and women whose hearts were willing to bring material for all kinds of work which YHVH, by the hand of Moses, had commanded to be done.”* (Exodus 35:29). Following this, the skilled workmen said to Moses: *“The people bring much more than enough for the service of the work which YHVH commanded us to do”* (Exodus 36:5).

At last it seems that YHVH’s called-out ones are on the right track, ready to obey, help and participate with His program wholeheartedly. When all the individual parts that made up the Mishkan were completed, they were brought before Moses who examined the work and found every article to be exactly as YHVH had commanded. (Exodus 39: 43). This may be compared to our own situation with Yeshua being at the helm, as He prepares each of us to be a part of His national Mishkan of priests! There are those among us who like Bezalel *“have been filled with the Spirit of Elohim, in wisdom and understanding, in knowledge and all manner of workmanship”* (Exodus 35:31), in order to assist in the perfecting of each part, so that all will fit together and will bear the image of the heavenly. *“And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, for the edifying of the body of Messiah [the Mishkan], **till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of Elohim, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Messiah**... ...speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head -- Messiah -- from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love”* (Ephesians 4:11:14 -16 emphases added).

Moses was commanded by YHVH to set up the Mishkan on the first of the first month in the second year after the exodus. One cannot help notice the significance of that day and what follows. A whole new chapter in the life of YHVH’s redeemed family was about to unfold. But first YHVH’s dwelling place had to be intact. Moses anointed it and all its holy articles. He then washed, dressed and anointed Aaron and his sons. On the days to come, from the second to the thirteenth of the first month each tribal leader brought to the Levites all the necessary sacrifices and offerings required for the dedication of the altar (ref. Numbers 7); one tribe each day. One would

think that the order in which the offerings would have been brought would be according to the birth order, but surprisingly this was not the case.

Judah was first. *“His [and all the others’] offering was one silver platter, the weight of which was one hundred and thirty shekels, and one silver bowl of seventy shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering; one gold pan of ten shekels, full of incense; one young bull, one ram, and one male lamb in its first year, as a burnt offering; **one kid of the goats as a sin offering**; and for the sacrifice of peace offerings: two oxen, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs in their first year”* (Numbers 7:13-17 emphasis added).

The men who brought the offering for each of the tribes turned out to be, the following month, the chief tribal officers of the Israelite army (ref. Numbers 10:14-28), who were lead them to the mountains of the Amorites/Canaanites. With the completion of the last tribe’s offerings on the 13<sup>th</sup> day, YHVH told Moses that the hosts of Israel were to observe the Passover on the 14<sup>th</sup> day at evening, according to all its statutes and ordinances (Ref Numbers 9:1-5).

The Passover that was observed on that day was a game changer, just like it was the first time they observed it in Egypt. But with a difference. YHVH was now dwelling in the very midst of the camps of Israel, and ready to take them into the land and vanquish their enemies by His Mighty Right Arm.

When the Father sent Yeshua the first time, as the Passover Lamb and High Priest, inaugurating a new covenant with Israel and Judah, He changed entirely the dynamics of the spiritual powers and authorities in high places. In this way a complete victory was won for His people (and the entire human race). But just as it should have been in the case of our ancestors. So too now; there has to be an implicit and unreserved trust and obedience to Him who has won the battle, being in full submission to His combative headship and leadership (as an example, see Matthew 8:5-10).

For a comparison to Yeshua’s Passover events and their ramification regarding personal and corporate salvation and redemption, we typically focus on the Passover of Egypt. But we should also take a good look at the significance of the Passover which occurred *after* the giving of the Torah on the first Shavuot. Its timing is symbolic of the *aftermath* of Yeshua’s Passover, and its resulting outpouring of the Spirit of Holiness.

## Passover a Gateway

Passover is of course the first of all of YHVH's feast days, and one that is mentioned the most throughout the scriptures. When examining the various aspects of Passover, there are several questions that come to mind: Why was a lamb chosen to be sacrificed in order for the firstborn of the Hebrews to be "passed over" (by the angel of death), thus also enabling Israel to leave Egypt (ref. Exodus 12:3)? Why did YHVH remind Moses to observe the Passover before His firstborn nation Israel could take leave of Mount Sinai and begin the (intended) 'take over' of the land (ref. Numbers 9:1-5; 10:12-29)? Why was Passover celebrated, again, when Israel first crossed into the land of promise (ref. Joshua 5:10)? Why is the Passover lamb (Yeshua) also *our* gateway into newness of life and victory over our enemies?

These questions may be answered by the 'cosmic' Passover, alluded to in Revelation 13:8: "*All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the **Lamb slain from the foundation of the world***" (emphasis added). Likewise 1 Peter 1:19-20 states: "... *the precious blood of Messiah, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. He indeed was **foreordained before the foundation of the world**, but was manifest in these last times for you*" (emphasis added).

Thus it would appear that Passover was already established before the foundation of the world, as a means to pronounce and execute a judicial sentence against YHVH's enemies (the kingdom of darkness). Similarly, the Passovers mentioned above also have to do with a release or change that the Almighty was bringing about in the lives of His people. In every one of the cases YHVH was confronting an enemy that was standing in His way of fulfilling His purposes. The specific timing of Passover (at the commencement of a new year), along with all of its statutes and ordinances is how YHVH ensures His peoples' victories over their enemies. The importance of this appointed time for Israel's Elohim is illustrated by the fact that even the cloud did not lift from the Tabernacle until all had been fulfilled concerning the Passover requirements. Thus this feast was the gate through which YHVH's redeemed would move on beyond the Mountain.

Back at Mount Sinai, where YHVH has just enjoined Moses to observe the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the 1<sup>st</sup> month. Immediately after, provision is made for those who were not able to celebrate at the prescribed time, so that they may do so

on the 14<sup>th</sup> of the second month (ref. Numbers 9:10-11). On the first of the second month, a census is taken of all the tribes' males, 20 to 50 years old, for the purpose of conscripting them into the army (ref. Numbers 1:1-3). At the same time, Moses makes two silver trumpets in order to communicate specific messages to the leaders, and to the people as a whole (ref. Numbers 10:2-10).

*“Now it came to pass on the twentieth day of the second month, in the second year, that the cloud was taken up from above the tabernacle of the Testimony. And the children of Israel set out from the Wilderness of Sinai on their journeys; then the cloud settled down in the Wilderness of Paran. So they started out for the first time according to the command of YHVH by the hand of Moses”* (Numbers 10:11-13). Next is the detailed description of all the hosts of Israel being arrayed according to their tribal (and not birth) order (ref. Num. 10:14-28).

It is now approximately 34 days after the celebration of Passover, and *“they **departed from the mountain** of YHVH on a journey of three days; and the ark of the covenant of YHVH went before them for the three days' journey, to search out a resting place for them. And the cloud of YHVH was above them by day when they went out from the camp”* (Numbers 10:33-34 emphasis added).

Hallelu-Yah! This is the moment we've been waiting for. It's almost a cliff hanger... *“they departed from the Mountain of YHVH...”*. At last we are starting to move “beyond the Mountain”!

Safe under the cloud, the army of Israel is about to follow their Commander and Chief.

We read on: *“So it was, whenever the ark set out, that Moses said: ‘Rise up, O YHVH! Let Your enemies be scattered, and let those who hate You flee before You”* (verse 35). YHVH was about to march in battle before His (obedient and believing) army. He was going to fight for them. And *“when it [the ark] rested, he said: ‘Return, O YHVH the many thousands of Israel’”* (verse 36, literal translation). The army's entrance to the land would have, by necessity, excluded the many non-combatants. But upon the cessation of the battles and with the ark coming to its rest, the others, *“the many thousands of Israel”*, would come in and join their countrymen. This is also a powerful prophetic picture pointing to the ultimate ingathering of

YHVH's people – the returning of the many thousands of Israel, after the battles' termination.

In addition to the above accounts, it is also worthwhile to cite Moses' reflections about that particular time, as he does retroactively in Deuteronomy. In 1:8, 21 he recalls what has been said to the Israelites at that time: “*See, I have placed the land **before you** [“to your faces”, emphasis added] *go in and possess* [“r’shu” – wrest it by impoverishing its present residents] *the land which YHVH swore to give to your fathers... and to their seed after them*”. This declaration is preceded, in 1:7, by the imperative “p’nu” (turn), which stems from the same root as “face” (see also Deuteronomy 1:40, 2:1, 8). It seems that before YHVH was going to “give/place” the land *before His people*, they were required to make a “turn”, set *their* faces toward Him, as He has stated that He has already “given/placed” the land *before* them (Deuteronomy 1:20, 21, 39). After “turning” they had to “see”. That is, they had to realize, by exercising faith, what their heavenly Father had already accomplished. Secondly, they had to go and take/wrest the land, based upon the former realization and premise, and act, again, in faith.*

Although YHVH declares (in Deuteronomy 2:5, 9, 19 respectively) that He also “*given Mount Seir to Esau as a possession*” and “*Ar [Mo’av] to the sons of Lot as a possession*”, which also includes the Amonites, but nevertheless, He significantly omits the expression “*before them*”. Thus, although YHVH is sovereign over all peoples, He was notably going to treat His own in an exceptional manner. He declares again to Israel (literal translation): “*See, I have begun to give/place – “natati” – Sihon and his land over to you. Impoverishing begin to impoverish his land*” (Deuteronomy 2:31). It is YHVH who has also “*hardened his [Sichon’s] spirit and made his heart obstinate that He might deliver him into your hand...*” (2:30), having “*mercy on whom He will, and whom He wills He hardens*” (ref. Romans 9:18).

Well and good. Now all is in place – the army, YHVH's presence in the Mishkan, and His encouraging and strengthening promises. Nothing more need be said. It is time to act! Elohim has demonstrated His faithfulness, and the time has come for His people to respond in kind.

## Road to Victory

The Israelites are off to a new beginning as they prepare to march forward following the mighty cloud that was now leading the six hundred thousand strong army; banners waving, troops all in order under the leaders of thousands, hundreds and tens. The day that they all were waiting for had finally come. Excitement was building throughout the tribes, camps and families of all Israel. Their unity was like “One Man”, at least for the moment.

Alas, but within a hair’s breadth away, a mere one verse later (Numbers 11:1) there occurs a sharp turn in the road to fulfillment. *“And the people were like those who are looking for a pretext, so as to make an evil complaint, within the hearing of YHVH. And He heard it and He was fuming. So the fire of YHVH burned among them, and consumed the outskirts of the camp”* (literal translation). End game. Everything comes to a screeching halt. This one verse launches a chain of tragic events. The “Beyond the Mountain” venture failed at its very inception, and a new path will have to be charted though it will be a much longer one, more winding and painfully arduous. Much of the rest of Numbers (chapter 11-14, 16&17, 20-21:7, 25, 31:9-20) recounts a variety of a series of spiraling and sad episodes of rebellion, unbelief, complaints, bitterness, idolatry and fornication. It is no wonder that YHVH makes the following ominous declaration (this is after the spies’ failed mission) : *“...but truly, as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of YHVH, because all these men who have seen My glory and the signs which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have put Me to the test now these ten times, and have not heeded My voice, **they certainly shall not see the land** of which I swore to their fathers, nor shall any of those who rejected Me see it...”* *“The carcasses of you who have complained against Me shall fall in this wilderness, all of you who were numbered, according to your entire number, from twenty years old and above. Except for Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun, you shall by no means enter the land which I swore I would make you dwell in. But **your little ones**, whom you said would be victims, **I will bring in**, and they shall know the land which you have despised. But as for you, your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness. And your sons shall be shepherds in the wilderness **forty years, and bear the brunt of your infidelity, until your carcasses are consumed in the wilderness.** According to the number of the*

*days in which you spied out the land, forty days, for each day you shall bear your guilt one year, namely **forty years**, and you shall know My rejection. I YHVH have spoken this; I will surely do so to all this evil congregation who are gathered together against Me. In this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there they shall die"* (Numbers 14:21-23, 29:35 emphases added).

The generation that consisted of the would-be military forces, those born in Egypt, who left Egypt physically but failed in ridding Egypt from their hearts, forfeited their opportunity to come into the land (except of course for Joshua and Caleb). Not only did they not have the faith and fortitude to venture the territory of the enemy and possess their inheritance, they even found the wilderness (with fewer enemies in sight) and its conditions, although all provisions were miraculously made available to them, to be too daunting and threatening. Thus they had to be exhorted to move beyond the mountain/mountains, not once but twice (Deuteronomy 1:5-6, 2:1-4), something which they failed to do (in spirit).

We need not take up more time discussing that destined-to-die-in-the-wilderness generation. It is now time to focus on the second generation. Will they have the faith and courage to move on and to follow their (new) leader – Joshua? The prophet Ezekiel, many generations later, also makes reference to a group of people who are destined to be in the wilderness, on the way to the land of promise, but who will not make it there (20:38). With all this being said we may now turn the spotlight to *our* day and age. It is not the physical entrance to the land, and the enemies lurking there, which is what *we* are facing at the moment. At this point if “am Yisrael” is to move beyond the proverbial Mountain/s which face us, or where we are camping, it will take implicit obedience to the Leader. Following and moving behind the Leader, in this case, is *also* for the purpose of entering the land, at some point, and establishing YHVH’s Kingdom there. But how can that take place if the enemy which is close at hand (individually and corporately), or the mountain of obstacles nearby are not defeated? As those who are constituted the ‘redeemed’ of the House of Israel we have every reason to move on and do so victoriously, if we but obey our Leader who “*led captivity captive*” when “*He ascended on high*” (Ephesians 4:8), and exercise the faith of our father Abraham.

Let us allow the Word of Elohim as It speaks to us concerning this foundational truth, the bedrock of our salvation and redemption.

*“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in Elohim for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of Elohim, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Messiah, and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled” (2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 10;3-6). “Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. And do not present your members as instruments/weapons of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to Elohim as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments/weapons of righteousness to Elohim. For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law [subject to its penalties] but under grace” (Romans 6:12-14).*

What is it that enables us to be so sure of these victories? And what makes the following statement credible, regarding *“the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe”*? (Ephesians 1:19). It is based on *“... the working of His mighty power which He worked in Messiah when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come”* (Ephesians 1:19b-21 emphasis added). So that *“...now the manifold wisdom of Elohim might be made known by the assembly [kahal – kehila – that is us] to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Messiah Yeshua our Master”* (Ephesians 3:10-11). That eternal purpose is that *“we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of Elohim, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Messiah; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head -- Messiah -- from whom the whole body [nation] joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love”* (Ephesians 4:13-16).

As we believe and obey, we benefit from the victories of Him who has *“disarmed principalities and powers, [and] made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it... He is the forerunner who has entered for us”* (Colossians 2:15, Hebrews 6:20). *“Therefore, [Israelite] brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Yeshua by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, and having a High Priest over the house of Elohim, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works”* (Hebrews 10:19-24)

*“... You have come [now away from Mount Horeb] to Mount Zion and to the city of the living Elohim, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and congregation [the kahal] of the firstborn [Jacob/Israel] who are registered in heaven, to Elohim the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to Yeshua the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel”* (Hebrews 12:22-24).

And seeing that it is not the generation which died in the wilderness that we want to identify with, regardless of our chronological age, the words of Yochanan to the “young men” have much to say to us in regards to living out our victories over the enemy: *“I write to you, young men, because you have overcome the wicked one. I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of Elohim abides in you, and you have overcome the wicked one...”* *“You are of Elohim, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world...”* *“For whatever is born of Elohim overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world -- our faith”* (1 John 2:13, 14; 4:4; 5:4).

## Beyond the Mountain - Conclusion

After our Israelite forefathers passed through the waters of the Sea of Reeds, they were awe struck as to what their Almighty Elohim did for them. They

were filled now with what is called in Hebrew “yir’at Adonai” - the fear of YHVH. Later, when they came to Mount Sinai, this Elohim demonstrated again His presence through fire, smoke, loud sounds and quaking earth. But this time, although their physical senses were stirred by this outward demonstration, as it was awesome and fearful, it did not affect the condition of their hearts. The proof of the ancestral rebellion (inherent in Adam’s family) was evident in them. Thus, even though called to be a priestly nation unto YHVH, the Israelites turned out to be no different than any other people group in the human family. YHVH’s love, sovereign calling and anointing upon their forefathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob/Israel, was the reason why He wrought redemption out of slavery for them and why He brought them to the Mountain and beyond. All through the Torah He declares that what He was doing for Israel was for *His* namesake, as Moses, for example, recollects in Deuteronomy:

*"Therefore understand today that YHVH your Elohim is He who goes over before you as a consuming fire... Do not think in your heart, after YHVH your Elohim has cast them out before you, saying, 'Because of my righteousness YHVH has brought me in to possess this land'; but because of the wickedness of these nations that YHVH your Elohim drives them out from before you, and that He may fulfill the word which YHVH swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob"* (Deuteronomy 9:3-5). As we know from the Gospel accounts, YHVH, again, for the sake of His name *"disarmed principalities and powers, making a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in Him [Yeshua the Messiah]"* (Colossians 2:15).

The descriptions of the Israelite nation and its exploits were intended for our instructions (see 1 Corinthians 10: 5-11). So what have we learned about them that is now going to take *us* Beyond the Mountain? It is not hard to assess. The ‘bottom line’ is, as YHVH Himself says it: “You are a stubborn and obstinate people”. What does that mean other than being selfish, self-centered, proud, self-righteous, still attached to the flesh, gratifying its desires, and quickly forgetting the reverence that is due His name? As soon as it seems to us that we lack some physical need or comfort the “fear of YHVH” along with the knowledge of Elohim and His wisdom disappears like the morning mist. In that we are just like our ancestors. Instead of wielding the power to overcome our flesh and spiritual enemies, we are succumbing to the same influences and temptations on a daily basis. In his

book “Apostolic Foundations”, Art Katz speaks to these tendencies: “Our little impatient moods, our critical spirits, our irritations with one another are already evidence of how little prepared we are for the cosmic struggle before us.”

So, what is it that will make us different than our forebears, and will help us move Beyond the Mountain?

It is incumbent upon us to own to the all-time truth that, our struggle is not against flesh and blood. In other words, we are not one another’s enemy. It is time to no longer be babes, tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine, which causes us to be in strife and contention with one another as we contend for our “rightness” or “correctness”. In Joshua 5:9 YHVH tells Joshua that He has “rolled [a verb connected to dung-ball-like idols] away the reproach of Egypt” off of Israel. We too need to roll back the flesh (the dung balls of this world and its religions) and get on with the spiritual battles that we can only win when we are in the unity of the faith, believing what the Father has already accomplished by being **present** in Messiah, reconciling the world unto Himself (ref. 2 Corinthians 5:17).

What we need to take from the history of our Israelite ancestors, is not so much about them, but about the Elohim who has brought their progeny (us) through thousands of years of faithfulness, love, and mercy and will continue to do so until He fulfills all that has been spoken by the mouths of the prophets of old, and on into the future of the millennial kingdom where the redeemed and restored nation of Israel will rule with Him for a thousand years. Then the reality of the following words of Isaiah will become clearly evident: *“Come, and let us go up to the mountain of YHVH, to the house of the Elohim of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths.’ For out of Zion shall go forth the Torah, and the word of YHVH from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations, and rebuke many people; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore. ‘O house of Jacob, come and let us walk In the light of YHVH’”* (Isaiah 2:3-5).