



Every ending brings a new beginning

Parashat v'zot habracha (54) – These are the blessings

Torah: *Devarim* 33:1 to 34:12

Haftarah: *Yehoshua* 1:1-18

Apostolic Writings: *Yohanan* 7:14-36

It is unfortunately the case that some words are learned incorrectly and, like many bad habits, are difficult to unlearn or never unlearned! It is the custom, especially among English speakers, both locally and abroad, to speak of the book of Revelation as 'Revelations' instead of the singular. There was only one revelation given to *Yeshua*, although it contains many events. Even some Afrikaans speakers sometimes make the mistake of talking about Revelation in the plural, but fortunately this is minimal. Chuck Missler, a brilliant teacher, always said that people who use the word 'Revelations', when referring to the last book in Scripture, have never read the book! This seems to be true in many cases...

Just as there was one 'law' given at *Sinai*, with its subdivisions or branches, so is the case with this last *sidrah*: it is one blessing given by *Mosheh*, bestowed on the nation, but distributed separately to each tribe. Most scholars agree that the expression "the man of *Elohim*", as recorded in the opening verse, indicates that these last two chapters were written by another person and added later. This expression is seen again in *Yehoshua* 14:6 and *Mizmor* 90:1. The latter is something we briefly mentioned last time and although the poem is attributed to *Mosheh*, it may be that someone else wrote down the words he spoke. However, this is how people saw him and with the humility we have come to know *Mosheh*, he would not have written about himself in this way.

For the next few minutes, imagine yourself as literally being part of the people on the eastern bank of the *Yardēn* river, waiting to enter the promised land. Regardless of whether you loved *Mosheh* or not, or just tolerated him, the next few days are going to be emotional. You were used to him leading you, giving speeches, scolding you or praising you. Now you will be entering the promised land he always talked about, but without him! Your selfish and arrogant attitude around food and drinking water caused him to lose his temper and now he is being punished for it.

Mosheh was one of two people who blessed a group of people shortly before their death. The first person we learn of is *Ya'aqob*, who blessed his children from his deathbed (cf. *Berēshith* 49:3-28). This was the beginning of the nation of *Yisra'el*, many of whom would perish in the wilderness because of their lack of trust when the spies went to investigate the promised land. Now we also learn how *Mosheh* blesses the entire nation, a new generation, but despite his words this nation would still act negatively and disappoint *YAH* through their disobedience.

Think about what your last words would be if you knew you were dying, or that your death was imminent. Prepare yourself to remove all that is negative from your thoughts and thus allow a channel of blessings to flow from heaven, even to people you know do not love you, people who may consider you their enemy. Make sure that your legacy will be something that your loved ones and your friends can be proud of; even those who hear of you after your death should be able to realise that you were a person who added value to the Kingdom of YAH. While you are still breathing, you should end each day by blessing people, even those who hurt you; this is the only way to be seen as someone who imitates *Yeshua* in all respects.

Last time, a week or so ago, we learned the prophetic *shirah*, song, that *Mosheh* sang and taught the nation. They (including us) were expressly commanded not to stray from the Way of Truth. Now, shortly before his death, *Mosheh* blesses the tribes of *Yisra'el* and bring honour and praise to YAH for the care and concern He has shown to this young nation.

We learn from *the midrash* that *Mosheh* continued the tradition that had already begun when *Ya'aqob* blessed each tribe before his death. These last words of *Mosheh* bless each tribe according to their national responsibilities and individual skills. Both the sages *Ramban* and *R' Bachya* point to the mystical meaning of the word **וְזוֹת** (*ve-Zot*), “and this”, with which *Mosheh* starts his blessing and with which *Ya'aqob* ended it (cf. *Berēshith* 49:28). The repetition of this word indicates that *Mosheh* builds his blessings on those of *Ya'aqob*'s, just as they were blessed when they left *Mitsrayim* as a nation, while now completing that journey when they enter the promised land.

Mosheh also used *v'zot* when he summarised the *Torah* (cf. *Debarim* 4:44), all of which indicate that the only way to earn the blessings of their patriarch and teacher can be obtained through *Torah* itself, by studying and imitating every word of it. One of the most important things we already learn in the first verse is that *Mosheh* is given the title “man of *Elohim*”. He was raised from birth, taught and guided by *Elohim* for the exclusive task that was already assigned to him from Creation. After this study we will rewind, even go forward, to tackle everything from the beginning, because everything in YAH's plan works on a circular basis or cycle. It therefore equips us to better understand Scripture, not only *Torah*, but every part of it. The repetition of going through *Torah* once again, when now entering this new, upcoming cycle, we use the knowledge acquired in the previous cycle. Unfortunately, we will never learn or understand everything in our lifetime, so with each cycle we get the opportunity to build on what we already know. Even *Sha'ul* teaches us this:

🏆 *Qorintiyim Aleph* 13 ⁹For we know in part and we prophesy in part.

🏆 *Qorintiyim Aleph* 13 ^{12c} Now I know in part, but then I shall know, as I also have been known.

It may be important to note that the first letter of *Torah* is **ב** (*bet*) in the word *Berēshith*. The last letter at the end of *Debarim* is the **ל** (*Lā-med*) from the word *Yisra'el*. When we put these two letters together, it spells the Hebrew word **לב** (*Wayyiqra*), which translates as ‘heart’, as in the organ, but which we also understand spiritually as our mind, will and emotion. From this we learn that the complete *Torah* reveals to us the heart of YAH, His love for us, the way He wants us to come to know His Character and Authority. In a similar way, we look again at the **ב** from *Berēshith* and the last word of Scripture, ‘*amein*’, in Revelation. The last letter there is **ן** (*noon [sofit]*) and when we put these together, we get the word **בן** (*ben*), the Aramaic word that translates as ‘son’. The entire Scripture, from beginning to end, is therefore all about the son, *Yeshua*!

Although *Mosheh* wants to bless the sons of *Yisra'el*, he begins his words with a praise to YAH. He invokes the merits that makes *Yisra'el* worthy to receive a blessing. This may refer to mentioning two words: *Sē'ir* and *Paran*. The descendants of *Ėsaw* lived in *Sē'ir* and according to tradition, YAH would give them the *Torah*. However, they did not want to accept it because of the prohibition on murder. After that, YAH would pass it on to the descendants of *Yishma'el*, but because *Torah* placed a ban on theft, they also wanted no

part of it. Finally, accompanied by tens of thousands of set-apart messengers (cf. *Deḇarim* 33:2), *YAH* offered the *Torah* to *Yisra'el*, who immediately accepted it without any reservations. Regardless of any poetic freedom that comes with this narrative, *Yisra'el*'s acceptance made them worthy of receiving the blessing that *Mosheh* had promised, which he would now speak over them.

It is important to realise that *Mosheh* had led the nation to the promised land for 40 years, a place he would obviously have wanted to enter. As a result of his own disobedience, *YAH* denied him that privilege; he could therefore have instantly refused to lead the nation any further. However, the servile and humble man that he was, he swallowed his pride to complete, in full obedience, the task imposed on him many years before. He even goes so far as to bless *Yehoshua*, his successor, as we learned last week.

There is something else that strikes us:

Deḇarim 33⁹ who said of his father and mother, 'I have not seen them.' And he did not acknowledge his brothers, or know his own children, for they have guarded Your Word and watched over Your covenant. [emphasis added – explanation follows]

The impression that Scripture gives us here is that family must be disregarded in order to follow *Torah*! However, we must understand the full context of these words before we make any wrong decisions or perhaps unnecessarily condemn anyone. Here the tribe of *Lěwi* is addressed and the explanation is that they were the only tribe that did not participate in the sin with the golden calf. The calling of *YAH* was more important to them than giving recognition to family or close relatives, even other tribes.

We must understand very clearly that, under no circumstances, will *YAH* allow us to humiliate or disrespect our parents. We may also never disrespect any brothers, sisters, children, or other relatives. The opposite of this is the very essence of *Torah*: you must love your neighbour as yourself (cf. *Mattithyahu* 19:19; *Marqos* 12:31). However, family ties should not be more important than our relationship with *YAH* – He must be put first in everything. The most important thing to realise here is that we will obey *YAH* and respect our parents, no matter who or what they may be. The same goes for brothers and sisters, for our children, because this is a command from *YAH*. When it comes to the obligation of our heart, the most important thing to realise is that we will obey *YAH*'s Word in everything; so we will also be faithful to the covenant He has made with us.

The Hebrew text here reads כִּי שָׁמְרוּ אִמְרָתְךָ (*kee shâm-roo ee-mâr-Te-cha*), because they kept Your word and kept Your covenant. Among other iniquities, the word דָּבָר (*dâ-Vâr* – word, thing) is used, but here we see a softer word, אִמְרָה (*eem-Râh*), utterance, proverb. We learn from this that even words spoken softly by *YAH*, perhaps in a whisper, should not be taken lightly. It is more important to obey that whisper than anything we may owe to people, including close family. If there is any conflict between family and your relationship with *YAH*, it is important to seriously examine your relationship with *YAH* and put it first – you must honour Him in all things, for we cannot serve two masters. Be loyal to your family and friends, but not at the expense of your relationship with *YAH*. You may not do or accept anything from parents, brothers, sisters or your spouse that is not in line with the requirements that *YAH* sets – your devotion is to Him alone, not to any man.

The sin that *Mosheh* committed, which denied his access to the promised land, is something we must take seriously. He walked with *Elohim*, spoke with Him face to face; he could therefore be considered as something like the "inner circle" of *YAH*! At one point *YAH* wanted to exterminate the entire nation and replace them with *Mosheh* and his descendants in the promised land, but the open and public sin with his brother, in front of the eyes of the people he was supposed to lead, suspended his passport to *Kena'an*. This makes us wonder what the future holds for today's 'spiritual' leaders who refuse to observe *Shabbat*, set-apart festivals, even dietary laws and teaching their flocks that it is a sin to follow *Torah*. Chances are good

that they will not enter the “promised land”, the afterlife, just like spiritual leaders who deliberately commit sin and try to claim that “God knows my heart”:

🥂 *Mattithyahu 15* ¹⁹“For out of the heart come forth wicked reasonings, murders, adulteries, whorings, thefts, false witnessings, slanders.

🥂 *Hazon 21* ²⁷And there shall by no means enter into it whatever is unclean, neither anyone doing abomination and falsehood, but only those **who are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life.**
[emphasis original]

Some sages are of the opinion that the order of the blessing as *Mosheh* uttered it, could possibly have been prophetic in nature. *Re’ubēn* is mentioned first, because he was the first to receive his territory and settle on the east of the *Yardēn* (cf. *Yehoshua* 13:15-21). *Yehudāh* is mentioned next, because that tribe was first to occupy their territory in the promised land (cf. *Yehoshua* 15; *Shophetim* 1:2). There are two camps regarding the fact that the tribe of *Shim’on* is not mentioned. One group of scholars attributes this to *Shim’on*’s participation with *Lēwi* to the massacre in *Shekem* after their sister *Dinah* was defiled (cf. *Berēshith* 34) or the leading role that *Shim’on* played during the adultery with the nation of *Mo’ab* at *Ba’al-Pe’or* (cf. *Bemidbar* 25:1-14).

Mosheh teaches us that the tribe of *Lēwi* did *t’shuvah* (cf. *Debarim* 33:9) because they refused to be part of the sin with the golden calf, although *Shim’on*’s tribe showed no repentance. After some time, the tribe of *Shim’on* was absorbed with other tribes, mainly *Yehudāh*, and never had their own territory. The tribe of *Lēwi* became itinerant teachers of *Torah* (cf. *Debarim* 33:10). Except for *Lēwi*, the longest and most telling blessing is that of *Yosēph*, which refers directly to the two strongest tribes of the eventual Northern Kingdom. They are blessed in agriculture and the metaphorical reference to animals suggests that they will become one of the strongest nations. After each tribe has received its unique blessing, *Mosheh* concludes the blessing:

Debarim 33 ²⁹“Blessed are you, O *Yisra’ēl*! Who is like you, a people saved by יהוה, the shield of your help, and He who is the sword of your excellency! And your enemies are subdued for you, and you tread down their high places.”

After this, *Mosheh* went up to mount *Nebo* in obedience, to the top of *Pisgah*, from where he could even see as far as the Mediterranean Sea (cf. *Debarim* 34:2). Although Scripture teaches us that *Mosheh* had no physical defects, we cannot rule out the possibility that, because of his relationship with *YAH*, he may have been endowed with supernatural sight:

Debarim 34 ⁷And *Mosheh* was one hundred and twenty years old when he died. His eyes were not dim nor his freshness gone.

It is generally accepted that *Mosheh* died on 7 *Adar*. This is done by working backwards from the date of the nation’s arrival in *Kena’an* on the tenth day of the first month (cf. *Yehoshua* 4:19), after thirty days of mourning for *Mosheh*’s death (cf. *Debarim* 34:8) and three days to let the nation pass through the *Yardēn*. However, this cannot be accepted as a fact, because then it would have been pertinently recorded in Scripture, as was the death of *Aharon*. *Mosheh* was buried by *YAH* and to this day no one knows where the grave is. We will return to it later.

Yehoshua officially takes over as leader of the nation and everything is set for a new beginning, similar to what *Noah* experienced after the flood, although on a much smaller scale. *YAH* opens the door for us to a new beginning when we discover the Way of Truth. This is also what the festival of *Sucot* is all about, with the eighth day almost seeming to be an afterthought:

Wayyiqra 23 ³⁹On the fifteenth day of the seventh new moon, when you gather in the fruit of the land, celebrate the festival of יהוה for seven days. On the first day is a rest, and on the eighth day a rest.

This sounds like a contradiction, because how can a seven-day festival have a rest on the eighth day? It almost doesn't make sense, until we realise that *YAH* reveals many mysteries to us when our spirit is receptive and we are willing to spend time in Scripture. This eighth day is known as "*sh'mini atzeret*" and we will shortly get back to it.

One of these mysteries is the birth of our salvation, *Yeshua*. This is not recorded anywhere in Scripture, as with most other personalities, but because man has the desire to honour something or someone higher, he constantly seeks various ways to satisfy that compulsion. This is how the inhabitants of *Mitsrayim* began to welcome the sun's rebirth daily about four thousand years ago. This god was given the name *Ra* and was appointed above any other god. This spilled over to other peoples in Mesopotamia, but they realised that the sun moves in a cycle and during the winter months certain crops die. Eventually their astronomers established the cycle and instead of a daily rebirth, an annual rebirth arose, during what we know today as the northern solstice.

This event was celebrated towards the end of the secular year, around December 21 to 25. Almost all the peoples in the northern region began to follow the customs, until the Norse peoples took it so far as to decorate trees, burn a special log of wood, the yule, and hold feasts, all in honour of this god who would make crops grow anew! Before the birth of *Yeshua*, the celebrations spread throughout Europe, Scandinavia and even certain countries in the Middle East. The custom later became very popular with most people when christianity made its appearance, and so christmas was born as we now know it.

Ironically, the Romans instituted a festival lasting seven days, usually starting on December 17th, known as Saturnalia, a celebration of the god Saturn – the same name from which the seventh day gets its secular name. These festivals were just as barbaric as in other countries and included unbridled sex, excessive drinking, and other indecencies. It may also have been a mockery of the festival of *Sucot*. Meanwhile, *Yeshua* appeared on earth, but as with many other lies, the enemy made a mockery of this too. *Yeshua's* name was transliterated into Greek and Latin and instead of the salvation he would be to humanity, a new god was born. In this way christianity was established and as it grew and the Roman Empire became more influential, it was later decided to set a single date on which to commemorate the birth of this new god, *jesus*. This *jesus* was highly revered and even set above *YAH*. In fact, *YAH* disappeared into thin air due to the strange rules and erroneous assumptions of christianity. Various other pagan customs and signs were added, as well as the modern crap that we have to watch and listen to every year in supermarkets, radio stations, television and other forms of media.

What none of these people were willing to do, possibly due to intense deception, was to try to determine when *Yeshua's* actual birth would have occurred. Any person with half an active brain cell will realise that no shepherd would have his flock outside in the middle of winter – not in the land of *Yisra'el*, nor anywhere else where the mercury drops below freezing. It would therefore be necessary to study Scripture in order to determine an accurate date. We also realise through this that only serious students of Scripture have access to mysteries in Scripture, since *YAH* would let these people understand them. During this type of study we would also learn about *YAH's* appointed times and realise that He would never give any recognition to pagan dates or festivities.

Therefore, how do we determine specific dates and are they really important? Throughout Scripture, days and months are mentioned to give us guidelines as to when certain events would occur. Before *Yeshua's* earthly mother, *Miryam*, became pregnant, the messenger *Gabri'el* appeared to her relative, *Elisheba*. Although several translations claim that the two women were cousins, both the Hebrew קרובת (*qâ-Rô-vet*) and the Greek συγγενίς (*suggenes*) indicate that they were closely related. *Elisheba* is from the tribe of *Lěwi* and *Miryam* from the tribe of *Yehuḏah*, but it is possible that intermarriage between tribes occurred¹.

¹ <https://bibleask.org/how-were-mary-and-elizabeth-related/>

Elisheba's husband, *Zekaryah*, was a priest and part of one of the 24 priestly orders established by *Dawid* many years earlier (cf. *Dibrei haYamim Aleph* 24:1-19). The priests each served for a week at a time and therefore it is possible to determine when *Zekaryah* would be on duty. He was from the division of *Abyah*, the eighth order, and when we compare this with *Dibrei haYamim B't* 23 we get very insightful information.

According to *Luqas*, *Zekaryah* received a visit from the messenger *Gabriel* during which he was told that his wife would conceive. Since both were advanced in years, *Zekaryah* initially did not believe it and was rendered speechless until the child was born. In the sixth month of *Elisheba's* pregnancy, *Gabriel* appeared to *Miryam*, possibly in her sixteenth year. This young woman was terrified, especially since she had never known a man. In order to comfort her, *Gabriel* told her that *Elisheba* was also pregnant and we read the beautiful, innocent and humble words of the woman who would become the mother of our Messiah:

Luqas 1³⁸ And *Miryam* said, "See the female servant of יהוה! Let it be to me according to your word."
And the messenger went away from her.

This is a long passage and not intended for this study, so we will only briefly mention that the information given above from both scrolls of *Dibrei haYamim*, other sources from Scripture and apocryphal books is sufficient to determine the period during which *Zekaryah's* temple service would take place. Shortly after *Gabriel's* visit to *Miryam*, she visited *Elisheba* and prayed for peace upon her. At the moment the two women greeted each other, the baby leaped in *Elisheba's* womb while she was filled with the *Ruach HaQodesh*:

Luqas 1⁴² and called out with a loud voice and said, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!

After this, we read one of the most beautiful praises to *YAH* in Scripture. *Miryam* returned to her home, *Elisheba* gave birth and the son was named *Yohanan*, as *Gabriel* had commanded *Zekaryah*. Immediately afterward he was able to speak because of his obedience; he first gave a praise to *YAH* and then a prophecy concerning the life of his son (cf. *Luqas* 1:67-80).

We see in the apocryphal book, *Ya'aqob* (incorrectly referred to as James), a long account of *Miryam's* parents, her birth and much more. When we come to chapter 18, we see the first evidence why *Torah* returns to *Bereshith* from the end of *Debarim*. The universe freezes shortly before and during *Yeshua's* birth; then we learn the following:

Ya'aqob 18² Now I, Joseph, was wandering but not wandering. And I looked up to the dome of heaven and saw it standing still, and into the sky, and I was astonished to see that even the birds of heaven were still. And I looked at the ground and saw a bowl lying there, and workers reclining, and their hands were in the bowl, and they were chewing but not chewing, and they were picking up food but not picking up food, and they were bringing it to their mouths but not bringing it to their mouths. Rather, all their faces were looking up. And I saw sheep being driven, but the sheep stood still. And the shepherd lifted his hand to strike them, but his hand was raised. And I looked into the torrent of the river and saw young goats, and their mouths were in the water but not drinking. And suddenly, everything resumed its course.

It is as if the world is being created anew. Our Salvation has been part of the world from the beginning and manifests in various ways, but now he comes to earth as a man to bring new life to each of us. He comes as the living *Torah*, he comes to fulfil every word of *Torah*; he is the Voice of *YAH*, literally the Word, yet he is a man like you and me. The only difference is that he is completely sinless, because he comes to teach us how to live a sinless life. This is precisely one of the reasons why we celebrate *simchat Torah*, a joyful dance with the Word of *YAH*, because *Yeshua* is our dancing partner! Most orthodox Jewish and some Messianic communities celebrate *sh'mini atzeret* as it should be at the end of *Sucot* as the eighth day, but then end

with simchat Torah as a ninth day. We prefer to celebrate both on the eighth day, as the meaning of joy is still maintained and Scripture mentions only eight days, not nine.

In orthodox Hebrew circles, they sometimes celebrate *simchat Torah* with an open, unrolled *Torah* scroll where many people stand in a line, holding it – see accompanying image. During all the fun, the two people on the ends move closer together to symbolise the start of the new cycle. This is typically how YAH's systems work: in circles, always returning to the beginning. When we have completed one circle, it places us at a level where we are ready to study the next circle. This is about the only case in Western civilisation where our current dispensation in educational institutions follows the correct methods.



Every time something comes to an end, YAH gives us a new beginning, most of the time much better than the one that had ended. As we now come to the end of *Sucot*, the anticipation of our life with the Bridegroom begins. During *simchat Torah* The annual circuit is completed in every gathering worldwide, whether in Orthodox synagogues or among Messianic followers of Yeshua. *Simchat Torah* not only ends the old *Torah* cycle, but also begins the new cycle again. It is customary to read and study the last two chapters of *Debarim*, *V'zot Habracha* on this day, but immediately afterwards, on the next day, the first *aliyah* of *Bereshith* begins. It is for this reason that the title *simchat Torah*, is given to this occasion, as there is rejoicing for the completion of *Torah*, but that it can once again be studied anew. Seven days of celebrations are now summed up in the eighth day when the summit is reached, that extra day, of which we read:

Wayyiqra 23 ³⁶For seven days you bring an offering made by fire to יהוה. On the eighth day there shall be a set-apart gathering for you, and you shall bring an offering made by fire to יהוה. It is a closing festival, you do no servile work.

Shortly after this command follows a repetition, a confirmation:

Wayyiqra 23 ³⁹On the fifteenth day of the seventh new moon, when you gather in the fruit of the land, celebrate the festival of יהוה for seven days. On the first day is a rest, and on the eighth day a rest.

When we experience this narrative regarding *Torah*, it is rather strange that a festival like this is not celebrated during *Shavu'ot*. After all, this is the time during which *Torah* was given to humanity! This is when find these words:

Debarim 33 ⁴Mosheh commanded us a *Torah*, an inheritance of the assembly of Ya'aqob.

However, we may never question or instruct YAH, therefore we notice other verses that may be more appropriate:

Debarim 4 ⁴⁴And this is the *Torah* which Mosheh set before the children of Yisra'el.

Again, this points to the differences in the festivals of *Shavu'ot* and *simchat Torah*. *Shavu'ot* is the day when YAH took us as His bride, as it were, shortly after we received all the rules, but also heard the promises He made. The sin with the golden calf was a painful event, because we strayed and broke our "marriage vows" to YAH. When Mosheh came down the mountain, he had no choice but to break the two stone tablets with all ten rules, because we had already done so in our thoughts and through our actions.

During *simchat Torah*, when we read the last verses of *Debarim* 34 and *Mosheh* has finished blessing the nation, he dies on mount *Nebo* as the only person at that stage who had direct contact, face to face, with *YAH*. However, we received a promise previously that we can hold on to, something that was fulfilled about two thousand years ago:

Debarim 18 ¹⁵“יהוה *Elohim* shall raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brothers. Listen to Him,

This Prophet was not only sent to be listened to, but also to be followed; this Prophet is the living *Torah* who came to teach us how to read *Torah*, living it to the maximum degree. For this express reason we now begin the entire cycle of *Torah* anew to learn more about *Yeshua*, even be able to observe him in it, making sure that what we may have missed last time, can now be observed and studied. It may sometimes feel as if we, like *Mosheh*, only sees the promised land from a distance, never entering it; however, we first have to be very sure that we are completely clean and ready on every level, because we will only enter the promised land with our Bridegroom, *Yeshua*, where nothing unclean is allowed:

Hazon 3 ⁵“He who overcomes shall be dressed in white robes, and I shall by no means blot out his name from the Book of Life, but I shall confess his name before My Father and before His messengers.

It is essential to ensure on a regular basis that we will stand pure before our Bridegroom, therefore we start anew reading the Word that *YAH* gave us, *Yeshua*, investigating from scratch all the necessary facts, in order to lack nothing. As we start studying *Torah* from scratch, we read these words again, which make us realise that our lives used to be like the earth, yet this time with a fresh perspective:

Berëshith 1 ¹ When *Elohim* (God)² was about to create heaven and earth, ² the earth was a chaos, unformed, and on the chaotic waters' face there was darkness. [The *Torah*: A Modern Commentary]

We see something very similar in the Living Bible:

Berëshith 1 ¹When *Elohim* (God) began creating the heavens and the earth, ²the earth was³ a shapeless, chaotic mass, with the Spirit of *Elohim* (God) brooding over the dark vapors.

Words and translations like these give us another angle from which to look at next time, when, in the will of *YAH*, we study *Torah*. Until then we celebrate our festival, dance in and with *Torah* and thank *YAH* for His favour in everyone's life, for the privilege we had, spending every day during the past week His Word, in anticipation of the Bridegroom we are expecting soon.

As is customary, at the end of a book from *Torah*, we all say aloud together:

חֲזַק! חֲזַק! וְנִתְחַזַּק!

This, in the original, is “*Chazaq! Chazaq! Venitchazeq!*” (pronounced *châ zâq, châ zâq, vê neet châ zêk*) and translates as: “Be strong! Be strong! And may we be strengthened!” The first ‘*chazaq*’ is a personal plea to strengthen the individual, while the second ‘*chazaq*’ also includes the congregation. The expression “May we be strengthened” is the call to continue with the next book of *Torah*, and when *Debarim* is finished, the ‘next’ book is simply *Berëshith*!

It is our prayer that everyone in the upcoming cycle will learn anew from *Torah* to be strengthened in the Word of *YAH*, in His rules and also to be able to serve Him better.

² We prefer to not use the word ‘God’, because of personal conviction. In most cases, unless quoted from another source, it will be replaced by ‘*Elohim*’ or inflections of the same word.

³ The Hebrew word used here is יָתַח, the past tense of יָחַ (ha-yah) and correctly translated as “it happened so”

Shabbat shalom!

Hein Zentgraf

theway146@silvertrumpet.net

[Silver Trumpet Ministry](#)

17 Etanim, 5786 / 9 October 2025

Sources:

We prefer to not use the word 'God', because of personal conviction. In most cases, unless quoted from another source, it will be replaced by 'Elohim' or inflections of the same word.

All citing of Scripture is taken from The Scriptures 2009⁴, unless indicated differently.

Albert Barnes' Notes on the Bible

Messianic *Torah* with Commentary – Gary Gardner Ph.D. (Kindle Edition)

Artscroll Sotne Edition *Chumash*

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible

The Expository Notes of Dr. Thomas L. Constable

Faithlife Study Bible

Adam Clarke's 1810/1825 commentary and critical notes on the Bible

The Word of יהוה is free, therefore this study may be distributed free of charge, provided no changes are made.

⁴ <https://isr-messianic.org/>