

# וַאֲרָא

## VA'ERA/AND I APPEARED *Shemot/Exodus 6:2-9:35*

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This week we continue on with the saga of Moshe. Last week we read about the birth and the royal upbringing of Moshe and his first attempt at rescuing the Israelites. That ended unsuccessfully after Moshe killed the Egyptian, making necessary a 40-year personal exile into the wilderness of the Sinai desert. We read of his coming upon Yitro's daughters at a well, his subsequent marriage to Tzipora, and his divine meeting with the Almighty at the burning bush. Moshe was given a calling which he reluctantly accepted, heading back to Egypt. His initial attempt to impress the Pharaoh did not go well.

But יהוה had much to teach and many students in his classroom of learning – Moshe and Aharon, the Israelites, the Pharaoh, and the Egyptians. During the next few weeks we will study the important story of redemption. We will return to it also at Pesach/Passover as we parallel the stories of the release from the bondage of Egypt with the release from the bondage of sin, accomplished through the deliverer compared to Moshe – Yeshua the Messiah.

In Hebrew, the word for Egypt is “**Mitzrayim**” (מִצְרַיִם) and has the sense of being squeezed, constricted, or in anguish. The Hebrew word, “**Mitzrayim**” is in the dual form. Hebrew has many words in the dual form – the simplest examples would be words that are something we have two of – two hands, two eyes, two ears. That takes on interesting theological implications as Egypt fulfilled dual roles both as a place of “refuge” and a place of “oppression,” a place to “come up out of” and a place to “flee to.” Avraham did both. He sought refuge in Egypt because “**there was a famine in the land**” (**Bereshith 12:10**). Yet he had to leave when Pharaoh wanted Sarah in his royal harem. That event was also the first recorded encounter between a ruler of Egypt and יהוה, the Elohim of Avraham.

The story of Yosef gives another picture of the duality of Egypt/Mitzrayim. Egypt is a place of oppression, as Yosef is sold, then eventually enslaved and imprisoned in Egypt. But Egypt becomes a place of hope and refuge as Yosef is raised to be second in command in the land. From this position of great power, he is able to provide a refuge from famine for his family. We read how יהוה blessed Egypt as the Pharaoh blessed Yosef's family.

But the land of refuge and hope became the land of slavery when:

**Shemot/Exodus 1:8** ... there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Yosef.

In the next few parashiot, we will read how the struggle becomes a confrontation between the Pharaoh and יהוה. Egypt will thereafter represent all that is opposed to Elohim. Egypt was known for the worship of many, many, different gods. The plagues of this week and the next will knock over each god making a powerful statement to both the Egyptians and the Israelites. Their deliverance from

Egypt would be something they were never, ever to forget. In fact, the first commandment from Mt. Sinai was a declaration and a reminder that יהוה was that Elohim that took them out of “Egypt”:

**Shemot 20:2 " I am יהוה your Elohim, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.**

Even the final verses of the Torah are a reminder about what יהוה did through Moshe in “Egypt”:

**Devarim/Deuteronomy 34:11 in all the signs and wonders which יהוה sent him to do in the land of Egypt, before Pharaoh, before all his servants, and in all his land, <sup>12</sup> and by all that mighty power and all the great terror which Moshe performed in the sight of all Israel.**

By the time of King Solomon, “Egypt” was no longer an oppressor, but a trading partner and a cultural influence. The king even married “Pharaoh’s daughter”:

**1 Kings 10:28 Also Solomon had horses imported from Egypt ...**

**1 Kings 3:1 Now Solomon made a treaty with Pharaoh king of Egypt, and married Pharaoh's daughter...**

The oppressors of the Israelite people shifted from the Egyptians to the Assyrians, followed by the Babylonians. Hosea gives the reasons for the Assyrian exile as a “refusal to repent”:

**Hosea 11:5 " He shall not return to the land of Egypt; But the Assyrian shall be his king, because they refused to repent.**

During the time of the prophet Jeremiah, upon their own request for information, the Jews were given a word from יהוה concerning the Almighty’s desire for them to stay in their own Land and a stern warning about fleeing to “Egypt” in an attempt to flee Babylonian exile:

**Jeremiah 42:10 'If you will still remain in this land, then I will build you and not pull you down, and I will plant you and not pluck you up. For I relent concerning the disaster that I have brought upon you. <sup>11</sup> 'Do not be afraid of the king of Babylon, of whom you are afraid; do not be afraid of him,' says יהוה, 'for I am with you, to save you and deliver you from his hand. <sup>12</sup> 'And I will show you mercy, that he may have mercy on you and cause you to return to your own land.' <sup>13</sup> " **But if you say, 'We will not dwell in this land,' disobeying the voice of יהוה your Elohim, <sup>14</sup> "saying, 'No, but we will go to the land of Egypt where we shall see no war, nor hear the sound of the trumpet, nor be hungry for bread, and there we will dwell' -- <sup>15</sup> "Then hear now the word of יהוה, O remnant of Yehuda! Thus says יהוה of hosts, the Elohim of Israel: 'If you wholly set your faces to enter Egypt, and go to dwell there, <sup>16</sup> 'then it shall be *that* the sword which you feared shall overtake you there in the land of Egypt; the famine of which you were afraid shall follow close after you there *in* Egypt; and there you shall die. <sup>17</sup> 'So shall it be with all the men who set their faces to go to Egypt to dwell there. They shall die by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence. And none of them shall remain or escape from the disaster that I will bring upon them.' <sup>18</sup> " For thus says יהוה of****

hosts, the Elohim of Israel: 'As My anger and My fury have been poured out on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so will **My fury be poured out on you when you enter Egypt**. And you shall be an oath, an astonishment, a curse, and a reproach; and you shall see this place no more.' <sup>19</sup> " יהוה has said concerning you, O remnant of Yehuda, **'Do not go to Egypt!'** Know certainly that I have admonished you this day.

Sadly, the people did not believe the voice of יהוה through **Jeremiah**:

**Jeremiah 43:2** that Azariah the son of Hoshaiiah, Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the proud men spoke, saying to Jeremiah, "**You speak falsely! יהוה our Elohim has not sent you to say, 'Do not go to Egypt to dwell there.'**" <sup>3</sup> "But Baruch the son of Neriah has set you against us, to deliver us into the hand of the Chaldeans, that they may put us to death or carry us away captive to Babylon." <sup>4</sup> So Johanan the son of Kareah, all the captains of the forces, and **all the people would not obey the voice of יהוה**, to remain in the land of Yehuda. <sup>5</sup> But Johanan the son of Kareah and all the captains of the forces took all the remnant of Yehuda who had returned to dwell in the land of Yehuda, from all nations where they had been driven -- <sup>6</sup> men, women, children, the king's daughters, and every person whom Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard had left with Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, and Jeremiah the prophet and Baruch the son of Neriah. <sup>7</sup> So **they went to the land of Egypt, for they did not obey the voice of יהוה**. And they went as far as Tahpanhes.

"Egypt" was a false refuge, as the fleeing Jews placed their trust in a dying nation, rather than in the living Elohim's instructions. **Jeremiah** delivered the final words for those disobedient Jews:

**Jeremiah 44:13** 'For I will punish those who dwell in the land of **Egypt**, as I have punished Jerusalem, by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence, <sup>14</sup> 'so that **none of the remnant of Yehuda who have gone into the land of Egypt to dwell there shall escape or survive**, lest they return to the land of Yehuda, to which they desire to return and dwell. For none shall return except those who escape.' "

**Isaiah** prophecies about a civil war coming in "Egypt." In that day **"five cities of Egypt will swear allegiance to יהוה"**. In an event reminiscent of the Israelite's cry to יהוה for relief, the tables are turned and the **"Egyptians"** are the ones **"crying out"** and in need of deliverance. And by His grace, He will **"send them a Savior"** and **"deliver/heal"** them:

**Isaiah 19: 18** In that day **five cities in Egypt will speak the language of Canaan and swear allegiance to יהוה Almighty**. One of them will be called the City of Destruction. **19** In that day there will be **an altar to יהוה in the midst of the land of Egypt**, and a **pillar to יהוה** at its border. <sup>20</sup> And it will be for a sign and for a witness to יהוה of hosts in the land of Egypt; for **they will cry to יהוה because of the oppressors**, and **He will send them a Savior** and a Mighty One, and **He will deliver them**. <sup>21</sup> Then יהוה will be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians

will know יהוה in that day, and will make sacrifice and offering; yes, they will make a vow to יהוה and perform it. <sup>22</sup> And יהוה will strike Egypt, **He will strike and heal it**; they will return to יהוה, and **He will be entreated by them and heal them.**

**Isaiah** tells us that not only will **Israel** be completely restored in the end of days, but also “**Egypt**” and “**Assyria**” ...those former hostile enemies of Israel.

**Isaiah 19:23** In that day there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian will come into Egypt and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians will serve with the Assyrians. <sup>24</sup> **In that day Israel will be one of three with Egypt and Assyria** -- a blessing in the midst of the land, <sup>25</sup> whom יהוה of Hosts shall bless, saying, "**Blessed is Egypt My people, and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel My inheritance.**"

Guess what? The land referred to in **Isaiah 19** represents the area that יהוה originally gave to **Avram**! It includes not only Avraham’s birthplace, but also Goshen in Egypt!

**Bereshith 15:18** On the same day יהוה made a covenant with Avram, saying: "To your descendants I have given this land, **from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates**



To summarize, “**Egypt**” (Mitzrayim – מִצְרַיִם) in the Scriptures, is not only a specific country, but it is dually symbolic for a place of “**refuge**” which will become a place of “**bondage**” if one plants his roots too deeply there. Throughout the rest of the Bible, “**Egypt**” will represent a way of life that is not meant for followers of יהוה and Yeshua. The Israelites became comfortable in “**Egypt**.” It was only oppression that awakened them to what they had been told hundreds of years ago:

**Bereshith 15:13** Then He said to Avram: "**Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years.**

יהוה saw that the Israelites needed to be rescued. In His famous “**I will**” statements of **Shemot 6**, these are יהוה’s promises:

- I, יהוה, will take you out of Egypt
- I will rescue you from your slavery in Egypt

- I will redeem you
- I will take you as My people
- I will bring you to the Land of Promise
- I will give you the **Land as a heritage**

These statements can directly be applied to believers in Yeshua today. Now in most churches, when one comes to faith in Messiah, they are taught that Yeshua has freed us from slavery to sin, He has redeemed us, and through Him we will become children of the Almighty. We are told that He has gone to prepare a place of promise for us. Without exception, these are the same promises given to **Israel** in the “**I will’s**”. Notice Israel did not do any “**works**” to earn their salvation from oppression. They became a saved people who before they would receive that last promise...the “**Land as a heritage**”... would be taken to Mt. Sinai for further instruction on how to make that happen.

Why is the “**Land**” so important? In the beginning, the **Garden of Eden** was the land given to man. The center of Eden was Mt. Moriah in Jerusalem, known as the navel of the earth:

**Ezekiel 5:5** " Thus says Adonai יהוה: 'This is **Jerusalem**; I have set her **in the midst of the nations and the countries all around her.**



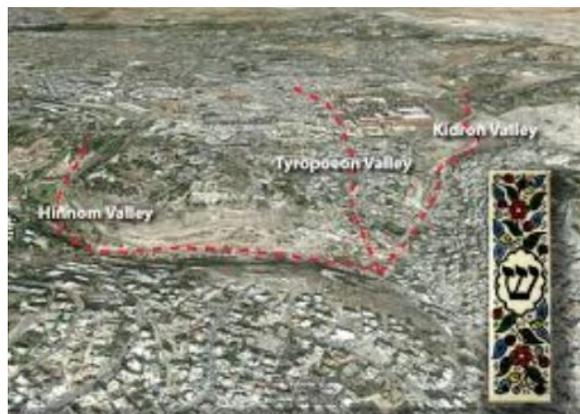
Many people believe that Jerusalem is a portal through which the lifeblood and the nourishment of the Almighty flows between heaven and earth, creating a link between יהוה and man. It is interesting that the name “**Jerusalem**” or “**Yerushalyim**” (יְרוּשָׁלַיִם) in Hebrew is also in the **dual form**. Could this be evidence that “**Jerusalem/Yerushalyim**” is both an earthly and a heavenly city?

Scripture tells us that “**Jerusalem**” is the place where יהוה has chosen to put “**His Name**”:

**Devarim 12:5** "But you shall **seek the place where יהוה your Elohim chooses,** out of all your tribes, **to put His name for His dwelling place;** and there you shall go.

**1 Kings 14:21** And Rehoboam the son of Solomon reigned in Yehuda. Rehoboam *was* forty-one years old when he became king. He reigned seventeen years in **Jerusalem**, the **city which יהוה had chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, to put His Name there.**

An amazing phenomenon is that the Hebrew letter, **shin** (ש), representative of the **Name** and short for **El Shaddai**, literally appears from an aerial view formed by the valleys of Jerusalem. This single letter also appears on every mezuzah on the doorways of Jewish homes. It is said that when יהוה looks down from above, He sees His signature, the Hebrew letter **shin**, (ש) on Jerusalem and on the doors of Jewish homes calling them to His remembrance for protection.



**Jerusalem** is the key to peace, although prophecy tells us contention over **Jerusalem** will erupt into an earthly war:

**Zechariah 12:2** "Behold, I will make **Jerusalem** a cup of drunkenness to all the surrounding peoples, when they lay siege against Judah and Jerusalem. <sup>3</sup> "And it shall happen in that day that I will make **Jerusalem a very heavy stone for all peoples**; all who would heave it away will surely be cut in pieces, though **all nations of the earth are gathered against it**."

So how does יהוה see His people, **Israel**, today? If we are not living in the Land wherein He intended for His people to dwell, then we, as **Israel**, are in a host country which could be termed "**Egypt**." Although the country may be one in which we claim as our identity, (I'm an American) we should consider the pattern of the Israelites in Egypt. Remember...a country can first be a place of "**refuge**," then turn into a place of "**oppression and slavery**".



On **Foundations For Life's** audio program (**FFL**) on **Shemot**, Mike Clayton gave a quote from Rimona Frank (<http://israelitereturn.com/>): "Without **Israel** as our destination, we are destined to become just another denomination wandering around in the wilderness." Mike went on to say, "If your heart has not been moved to **Jerusalem**, then you've accepted slavery in a foreign country. You are a slave in diaspora."

Who is your allegiance to? The Elohim of Israel's ultimate goal in sending Moshe back to Egypt was to release the Israelites from the power of Pharaoh in order for them to serve Him instead. Once they left Egypt, He could take them to the Land He desired for them. He still has the same kingdom goal. Are you in slavery where you live, or are you in the wilderness, headed towards destination – Israel? Have you been called **out** of a place of slavery to Pharaoh, and **into** יהוה's service?

Many of you have heard of the “2<sup>nd</sup> exodus from Egypt.” It’s mentioned in **Jeremiah 16**:

**Jeremiah 16:14** " Therefore behold, the days are coming," says יהוה, "that it shall no more be said, יהוה lives who brought up the children of Israel from the land of Egypt,' <sup>15</sup> "but, ' יהוה lives who brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north and from all the lands where He had driven them.' For I will bring them back into their land which I gave to their fathers.

Note His desire is to “**bring them back into their land which He gave to their fathers.**” It’s described as a two-step process. In the first step, the Almighty will send forth “**fishermen**” to the nations. However, after that, He will hunt for them with “**hunters.**” The 2<sup>nd</sup> step sound much harsher...could we say those being hunted will be “**crying out**” for deliverance?

**Jeremiah 16:16** " Behold, I will send for many fishermen," says יהוה, "and they shall fish them; and afterward I will send for many hunters, and they shall hunt them from every mountain and every hill, and out of the holes of the rocks.

And so, we’ll end with another verse at the end of **Jeremiah 16** that sounds exactly like it came out of our Torah portion, **Va’era**:

**Jeremiah 16:21** " Therefore behold, I will this once cause them to know, **I will cause them to know My hand and My might; And they shall know that My name is יהוה.**

Shabbat Shalom!

*Ardelle*