

## 5782 - Genesis 28-32 - Vayeitzei (And he left)

<sup>28:10</sup>Jacob left Beersheba and set out for Harran. <sup>11</sup>When he reached **a certain place, he stopped** for the night because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones there, he put it under his head and lay down to sleep.

1. 11. וַיִּפְגַּע בְּמָקוֹם — *He encountered the place.* Rashi explains: The Torah does not give the name of the place. But **it is "the place" (already known) which is named elsewhere; it is Mount Moriah**, as is written, *Abraham ... perceived the place from afar* (22:4). Our Sages have explained the word וַיִּפְגַּע (*va-yif-ga*) in the sense of praying. Jeremiah uses it in this sense (7:16): *Neither lift up cry nor prayer for them nor make intercession to Me.* From these words וַיִּפְגַּע and וַיִּלָּן ("and he lodged"): we conclude that it was Jacob who instituted the evening prayer—**עֲרֵבִית**

According to the tradition reported in *Berachos* 26b, the morning service was instituted by Abraham, the afternoon service by Isaac, and the evening service by Jacob. These different times of day call to mind the place that each patriarch's destiny occupies in the temporal world. Abraham's destiny appears in light as it rises and radiates outward. Not only is the patriarch not the object of envy or enmity, but he is even revered as the "prince of God." Isaac's place in the world already appears to be smaller; the sun, which had shone brightly on his father, has passed its peak. Around him Isaac sees only jealousy; he is spurned and forced to withdraw into himself and his family. Right from Isaac's birth the prediction, *Your offspring shall be aliens* (15:13), begins to come true. Then for Jacob, destiny becomes overcast with the night shadows; his life is but a series of painful trials and the outward joys of life are his only for a short time, and only very rarely.

Nevertheless, despite their very different destinies, **the three patriarchs came to find the path to God through their prayers**; they bequeathed to us **these prayers** which **teach us how to come closer to God in the different circumstances of our lives**: in the morning rays, the expression of radiant plenitude which calls us to life and gratitude (שְׂחֵרִית); in the setting sun, the symbol of the decline of our own personal destinies, inviting us to a spiritual meditation (מְנַחָה); and at night in the hours of anguish and uncertainty **which urge us to take refuge in God** (עֲרֵבִית).<sup>1</sup>

### a. Genesis 22:1-2

<sup>1</sup>Some time later God tested Abraham. He said to him, "Abraham!" "Here I am," he replied. <sup>2</sup>Then God said, "Take your son, your only son, whom you love—Isaac—and go to the region of **Moriah**. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on a mountain I will show you."

### b. 2Chronicles 3:1

<sup>1</sup>Then Solomon began to build the temple of the LORD in Jerusalem on **Mount Moriah**, where the LORD had appeared to his father David. It was on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite, the place provided by David.

- c. Mount Moriah is the name of the elongated north-south stretch of land (i.e., the ridge) lying between ... between Mount Zion to the west and the Mount of Olives to the east.

The Jebusite "Zion" was situated on the southern slope of Mount Moriah, above the Gihon Spring. After King David captured the city he made it his capital and named it for himself: the "City of David."

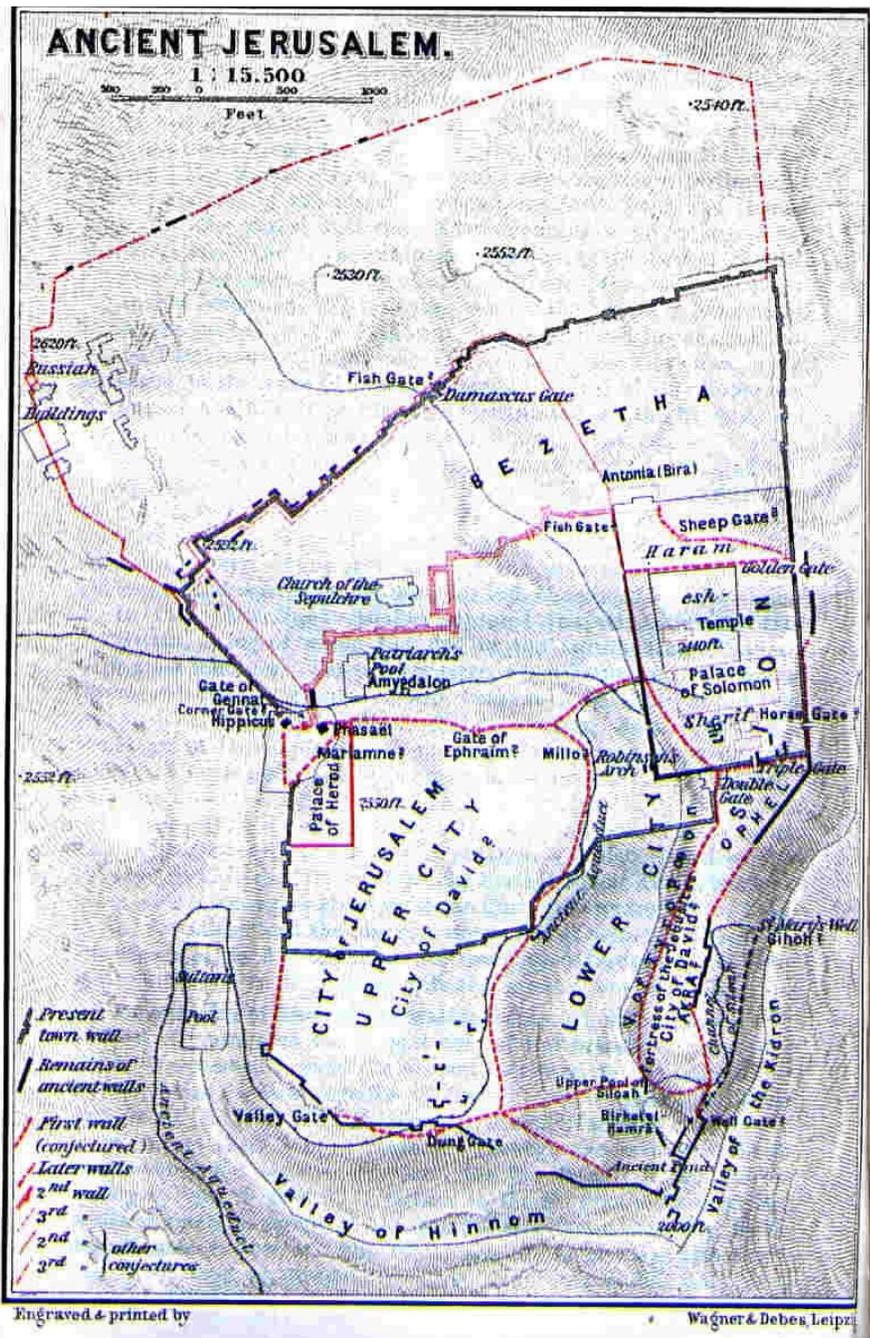
The northern area of the mountain's summit lay desolate for long after Zion's capture by David. It was in fact still the private property of Araunah, the city's former Jebusite king. For various reasons David did not confiscate the site but preferred to buy it from Araunah for full value: "So David paid Ornan [Araunah] for the site 600 shekels' worth of gold. And David built there an altar to the Lord and sacrificed burnt offerings and offerings of well-being" (1Chron 21:25; 2Sam 24:18-25).

In the course of time the mountain had acquired an aura of sanctity ... its sacred status may date back to the early Canaanite period, when it perhaps was the (spiritual) center of "El Elyon," God of Melchizedek, king of Salem: "*And Melchizedek, king of Salem, brought out bread and wine; he was a priest of God Most High [=El Elyon]. He blessed him, saying, Blessed be Abram of God Most High, creator of heaven and earth*" (Gen 14:18).

The best-known tradition related to Mount Moriah is the Binding of Isaac for sacrifice by his father Abraham, related in Gen 22.

The tradition of "Jacob's Dream" is also identified with Mount Moriah: "*He came upon a certain place and stopped there for the night, for the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of that place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place. He had a dream; a stairway was set on the ground and its top reached to the sky, and angels of God were going up and down on it. And the Lord was standing beside him... Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, ... "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the abode of God and **that is the gateway to heaven**" (Genesis 28:10-18).*

<sup>1</sup> Rabbi Ellie Munk, *The Call of the Torah, Bereishis*, (Mesorah Publications, Ltd.), pp. 378-433.



This is perhaps the most colorful representation of the essential nature of the site which some would later claim was the "navel of the world". At the summit of Mount Moriah, traditionally, is the "Foundation Stone," the symbolic fundament of the world's creation, and reputedly the site of the Temple's Holy of Holies, the supreme embodiment of the relationship between God and the people of Israel.

Upon the completion of King Solomon's Temple, famed for its sumptuous splendor, the Ark of the Covenant was placed within its confines. The sanctity of the site is reflected in the graphic description provided by the Book of Kings: "*the priests came out of the sanctuary for the cloud had filled the House of the Lord and the priests were not able to remain and perform the service because of the cloud, for the Presence of the Lord filled the House of the Lord ...*" (1Ki 8:11).

Solomon built his palace in the "miloh" (infill) area which separated the summit of the mountain and the Temple from the city below. This was also a concrete expression of the divine inspiration that was attributed to his kingship. Other palaces were also built nearby, such as the "House of the Forest of Lebanon" and the House of Pharaoh's Daughter. Solomon used dirt to fill in this east-west lateral rift, hence the area's name: "miloh" (in-fill), or Ophel, from a Hebrew word referring to the road that ascended to the Temple from the city which at that time was topographically lower.

<sup>28:12</sup>(Jacob) had a dream in which he saw **a stairway resting on the earth, with its top reaching to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it.** <sup>13</sup>There **above it stood the LORD**, and he said: "I am the LORD, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are lying.

12. וַיַּחְלֵם—*And he dreamt.* Many interpretations are given to this dream. Consistent with the concept mentioned in the preceding verse, that Jacob prayed in the place of the future Sanctuary where his forefathers had also prayed and where "prayer rises to Heaven," the ladder Jacob saw in his dream represents the ascent of prayer toward the celestial spheres. The angels rose up from the earth, carrying the supplications of men to the celestial throne and then came back to them again, laden with heavenly blessings ...
2. מַלְאֲכֵי אֱלֹהִים עֹלִים וְיֹרְדִים בּוֹ—*Angels of God were ascending and descending on it.* R Eliezer explains that Jacob's dream was a prophetic one and in it God revealed the reign and rise and fall of the four kingdoms which would enslave his descendants (the kingdoms of Babylon, Media, Greece, and Edom [Rome]). The angels are the "guardians" of these kingdoms in the celestial spheres. But God appeared at the top of the ladder and promised to give Jacob, the embodiment of the Jewish

people, His protection: *I will guard you wherever you go, and I will return you to this soil.* Abraham had also had a similar vision in the "Covenant Between the Parts" ... and had heard the Divine words promising final redemption after the exile (15:18) (Pirkei D'Rabbi Eliezer 31; quoted by Rambam; cf. *Hilchos Yesodei HaTorah* [The Laws (which are) the Foundations of the Torah] 7:3 on the various forms of prophecy).

3. 13. וַיֹּאמֶר—*And He said.* For the first time in his life Jacob is personally addressed by Divine speech. Just as with Abraham, this first revelation takes place just as he gives up a peaceful existence at home to emigrate to a strange land. This is characteristic of the destiny of the Jews. God invests the family of Abraham with a mission which is destined to be accomplished, above all, in exile. **To be Jewish means to remain faithful to God while in the midst of the other nations.**

a. John 17:14-19

<sup>14</sup>I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. <sup>15</sup>**My prayer is not that you take them out of the world** but that you protect them from the evil one. <sup>16</sup>They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. <sup>17</sup>Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. <sup>18</sup>As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. <sup>19</sup>For them I sanctify myself, **that they too may be truly sanctified.**

CJB—may be **set apart for holiness** by means of the truth.

1) ἁγιαζῶ (*hagiazō*)—to make holy, consecrate, sanctify.

—corresponds to קָדַשׁ (*qadash*)—to consecrate, sanctify, prepare, dedicate, be hallowed, be holy, be sanctified, be separate.

2) Many Gospel and rabbinic parables preach the same theology.<sup>2</sup>

a) During the Second Temple period ... **a fresh intensity for Jewish piety focused greater attention on love rather than fear**, stressing a much more intentional approach to the teachings, "Love the Lord your God" and "your neighbor as yourself."

b) The comparative study of rabbinic parables and Gospel parables ... reveals a strong, shared identity—the significance of Yeshua's parables should be sought in the synagogue, not the church.

c) Yeshua is a teacher of Torah. He focused on the meaning of the kingdom of heaven with an unprecedented vigor.

d) The Jewishness of Yeshua is related to faith in the one God of Israel. Too often **faith in Jesus completely overshadows the faith of Yeshua.**

e) The Gospel records provide insight into the practices of the Jewish people during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Temple period ... In fact, one must seriously entertain another pertinent question: can ancient Judaism be understood apart from the Yeshua of the Gospels? ... Not only must Judaism see the value of studying the Gospel records; Christianity must see also the value of studying the Jewish writings.

f) On the one hand, the stress on the last judgment is deeply rooted in the message of (Yeshua), but on the other hand, **the real focus of (Yeshua's) teaching is the cultivation of personal piety and active involvement in helping people.**<sup>3</sup>

4. אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם אָבִיךָ וְאֵלֹהֵי יִצְחָק—I am *HASHEM*, God of Abraham your father. This case is exceptional in the Torah: **the grandfather is called "father" whereas the father is mentioned simply by his first name.** Obviously, it cannot be a question of physical derivation. But this form of address makes it clear to Jacob that **Abraham is his spiritual father**, Isaac being only an intermediary link. You are the son of him to whom I said, הַתְּהַלֵּךְ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה תָּמִיד, *Walk before Me and be perfect* (Genesis 17:1)—you be his son and heir! In Jacob, the first one to build a completely Jewish household, the Abrahamic future was to begin its realization (R' S.R. Hirsch).

a. Galatians 3:6-9

<sup>6</sup>So also Abraham "believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness" (Gen 15:6). <sup>7</sup>Understand, then, that **those who have faith are children of Abraham.** <sup>8</sup>Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: "All nations will be blessed through you" (Gen 12:3).

<sup>9</sup>So those who rely on faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

b. Acts 13:15-26

<sup>15</sup>After the reading from the Law and the Prophets, the leaders of the synagogue (in Psidian Antioch) sent word to them, saying, "Brothers, if you have a word of exhortation for the people, please speak."

<sup>16</sup>Standing up, Paul motioned with his hand and said: **Fellow Israelites and you Gentiles who worship God**, listen to me! <sup>17</sup>The God of the people of Israel chose our ancestors; he made the peo-

<sup>2</sup> Brad H. Young, *The Parables, Jewish Tradition and Christian Interpretation*, (Hendrickson, 1998), pp. 26-28

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 83.

ple prosper during their stay in Egypt; with mighty power he led them out of that country; <sup>18</sup>for about forty years he endured their conduct in the wilderness; <sup>19</sup>and he overthrew seven nations in Canaan, giving their land to his people as their inheritance. <sup>20</sup>All this took about 450 years. "After this, God gave them judges until the time of Samuel the prophet. <sup>21</sup>Then the people asked for a king, and he gave them Saul son of Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin, who ruled forty years. <sup>22</sup>After removing Saul, he made David their king. God testified concerning him: 'I have found David son of Jesse, a man after my own heart; he will do everything I want him to do.'<sup>23</sup>"From this man's descendants God has brought to Israel the Savior Yeshua, as he promised. <sup>24</sup>Before the coming of Yeshua, John preached repentance and baptism to all the people of Israel. <sup>25</sup>As John was completing his work, he said: 'Who do you suppose I am? I am not the one you are looking for. But there is one coming after me whose sandals I am not worthy to untie.'

<sup>26</sup>"**Fellow children of Abraham and you God-fearing Gentiles, it is to us** that this message of salvation has been sent ...

<sup>28:14</sup>**Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring.** <sup>15</sup>I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. **I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.** <sup>16</sup>When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he thought, "Surely the LORD is in this place, and I was not aware of it." <sup>17</sup>He was afraid and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God; **this is the gate of heaven.**

#### 1. Genesis Rabbah LXVIII:12

Bar Kappara taught: No dream is without its interpretation. AND BEHOLD **A LADDER symbolises the stairway**<sup>(2)</sup>; SET UPON THE EARTH—the altar, as it says, An altar of earth thou shalt make unto Me (Ex. XX, 21); AND THE TOP OF IT REACHED TO HEAVEN—the sacrifices, the odour of which ascended to heaven; AND BEHOLD THE ANGELS OF GOD—the High Priests; ASCENDING AND DESCENDING ON IT—ascending and descending the stairway. AND, BEHOLD, THE LORD STOOD BESIDE HIM (XXVIII, 13)—I saw the Lord standing beside the altar (Amos IX, 1).

**The Rabbis related it to Sinai.** AND HE DREAMED, AND BEHOLD A LADDER symbolises Sinai; SET UPON THE EARTH. as it says, And they stood at the nether part of the mount (Ex. XIX, 17); AND THE TOP OF IT REACHED TO HEAVEN—And the mountain burned with fire unto the heart of heaven (Deut. IV, 11). **AND BEHOLD THE ANGELS OF**

**GOD alludes to Moses and Aaron.** ASCENDING: And Moses went up to God (Ex. XIX, 3); AND DESCENDING—And Moses went down from the mount (ib. 14). AND, BEHOLD, THE LORD STOOD BESIDE HIM—And the Lord came down upon mount Sinai (ib. 20).

(2) Leading to the top of the altar in the Temple.

#### 2. Pesikta de-Rav Kahana 23:2; Tanhuma, Va-vezze, #3; Yalkut, Jer., #312

The verse "**Therefore fear thou not, O Jacob My servant, saith the Lord; neither be dismayed, O Israel**" (Jer. 30:10) applies to an episode in Jacob's life, when "**he dreamed, and behold a ladder ... and ... angels of God ascending and descending on it**" (Gen. 28:12). **These angels were the princes of the nations of the earth.** Further, this verse indicates that the Holy One showed to our father Jacob the prince of Babylon climbing up ... the ladder, then climbing down; the prince of Media climbing up ...; the prince of Greece, ...; and the prince of Edom [Rome] climbing and climbing, no one can tell how many rungs. At the sight of Edom's climbing, our father Jacob grew afraid and said: Is one to suppose that this prince will have no comedown? The Holy One replied, "Fear thou not, O Jacob My servant" (Jer. 30:10). **Even if—as though such a thing were possible!—you were to see Edom come up and sit next to Me, I will have him eventually brought down from there.** Indeed, Edom is told in Scripture, "Though thou make thy nest as high as the eagle, and though thou set it among the stars, I will bring thee down from thence, saith the Lord" (Obad. 1:4).

#### a. Yoma 10a

R. Judah said in the name of Rav: **[Messiah] son of David will not come until the kingdom of Edom [Rome] will have spread its power over the whole world** ... as is said, "Therefore will He give them up, until the time that she who is with child hath brought forth; then the residue of his brethren shall return with the children of Israel" (Mic. 5:2).

#### b. Daniel 2:40-44

<sup>40</sup>Finally, there will be a fourth kingdom, strong as iron—for iron breaks and smashes everything—and as iron breaks things to pieces, so it will crush and break all the others. <sup>41</sup>Just as you saw that the feet and toes were partly of baked clay and partly of iron, so this will be a divided kingdom; yet it will have some of the strength of iron in it, even as you saw iron mixed with clay ... <sup>43</sup>And just as you saw the iron mixed with baked clay, so the people will be a mixture and will not remain united, any more than iron mixes with clay. <sup>44</sup>**In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed,** nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever.

3. Genesis Rabbah LXIX:7

7. AND JACOB AWAKENED OUT OF HIS SLEEP ... AND HE SAID: SURELY ... THE LORD IS IN THIS PLACE, AND I KNEW IT NOT (ib.). Where dwells the Shechinah? IN THIS PLACE, yet I did not know. AND HE WAS AFRAID, AND SAID: HOW FULL OF AWE IS THIS PLACE (XXVIII, 17). R. Leazar said in the name of R. Jose b. Zimra: **This ladder stood in Beersheba and [the top of] its slope was over the Temple.** What is the proof? And Jacob went out from Beer-sheba, etc.—AND HE WAS AFRAID, AND SAID: HOW FULL OF AWE IS THIS PLACE.<sup>(1)</sup> R. Judah b. R. Simon said: **This ladder stood on the Temple site ... THIS IS NONE OTHER THAN THE HOUSE OF GOD AND THIS IS THE GATE OF HEAVEN (XXVIII, 17).** R. Aha said: **[God assured him]: 'This gate will be opened for many righteous men like thyself'<sup>(2)</sup> ...** Another interpretation: **This teaches that the Holy One, blessed be He, showed Jacob the Temple built, destroyed, and rebuilt again.** Thus: AND HE WAS AFRAID, AND SAID: HOW FULL OF AWE refers to the Temple built, as in the verse, *Awful is God out of thy holy places* (Ps. LXVIII, 36). THIS IS NONE [OTHER] hints at it destroyed, as in the verse, *For this our heart is faint* (Lam. V, 17). **THIS IS NONE OTHER THAN THE HOUSE OF GOD AND THIS IS THE GATE OF HEAVEN refers to it rebuilt and firmly established in the Messianic era,** as in the verse, For He hath made strong the bars of thy gates (Ps. CXLVII, 13).

(2) Mah.: Jacob said, THIS IS... HOUSE OF GOD, to which God replied, THIS IS THE GATE OF HEAVEN, and it will be opened for many more.

4. Zohar, Vol. 1, p. 150a

**And inasmuch as that ladder is situated between two sides, God said to him: I AM THE LORD, THE GOD OF ABRAHAM THY FATHER, AND THE GOD OF ISAAC , these two being respectively of the two sides, one of the right and the other of the left. According to another explanation, the Lord was standing over him, to wit, over Jacob, so as to form the Divine Chariot, with the Community of Israel, EMBODIED IN JACOB, AS THE UNITING LINK IN THE MIDST, BETWEEN THE RIGHT AND THE LEFT.** That Jacob was in the midst is proved by the fact that the text here calls Abraham “thy father,” but not Isaac, thus showing that Jacob was next to Abraham; and hence the text naturally continues: THE LAND WHEREON THOU LIEST, showing that the whole formed one sacred Chariot. Here Jacob saw that he was to be the crown of the patriarchs. **The words “the God of thy father Abraham and the God of Isaac” SHOW THAT JACOB WAS ATTACHED TO EITHER SIDE AND HOLDING FAST TO BOTH OF THEM.**

5. John 1:43-51

<sup>43</sup>The next day Yeshua decided to leave for Galilee. Finding Philip, he said to him, “Follow me.” <sup>44</sup>Philip, like Andrew and Peter, was from the

town of Bethsaida. <sup>45</sup>Philip found Nathanael and told him, “We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote—Yeshua of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.” <sup>46</sup>“Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?” Nathanael asked. “Come and see,” said Philip. <sup>47</sup>When Yeshua saw Nathanael approaching, he said of him, “Here is a true Israelite (*lit.*, “truly an Israelite”), in whom there is nothing false (*KJV, NAS - in whom is no guile*).” <sup>48</sup>“How do you know me?” Nathanael asked. Yeshua answered, “I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you.” <sup>49</sup>Then Nathanael declared, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel.” <sup>50</sup>Yeshua said, “You believe because I told you I saw you under the fig tree. You shall see greater things than that.” <sup>51</sup>He then added, “I tell you the truth, **you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.**”

a. Romans 5:15-17

<sup>15</sup>But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by **the grace of the one man, Yeshua the Messiah,** overflow to the many! <sup>16</sup>Again, the gift of God is not like the result of the one man's sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification. <sup>17</sup>For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, **how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Yeshua the Messiah.**

b. 1Titus 2:1-7

<sup>1</sup>I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone—<sup>2</sup>for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. <sup>3</sup>This is good, and pleases God our Savior, **who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.** <sup>5</sup>For **there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Messiah Yeshua,** <sup>6</sup>who gave himself as a ransom for all men—the testimony given in its proper time. <sup>7</sup>And for this purpose I was appointed a herald and an apostle ... and a teacher of **the true faith (i.e., Judaism)** to the Gentiles.

17. וְזֶה שַׁעַר הַשָּׁמַיִם—*And this is the gate of the heavens.* R' Shimon bar Yochai said that **the earthly Sanctuary is situated just opposite the celestial Sanctuary.** The distance distance separating them, he adds figuratively, is only eighteen miles (corresponding to the word וְזֶה [6 + 7 + 5 = 18] in our sentence). This statement expresses the idea that **the distance one must go through to raise himself from the temporal to**

**the spiritual and from the profane to the sacred is not at all that great.** The two spheres are side by side; and if reality often shows them to us as separated by a deep gulf, **then it is the fault of man**, not of the Creator (*Rabbah* 69).

a. Deuteronomy 30:19-20

<sup>19</sup>This day I call the heavens and the earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. **Now choose life, so that you and your children may live** <sup>20</sup>and that you may love the LORD your God, listen to his voice, and hold fast to him. For the LORD is your life, and he will give you many years in the land he swore to give to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

b. 1Kings 18:21

<sup>21</sup>Elijah went before the people and said, "How long will you waver between two opinions? **If the LORD is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him.**" But the people said nothing.

c. Matthew 7:13-14

<sup>13</sup>"**Enter through the narrow gate.** For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. <sup>14</sup>But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.

d. John 10:1-9

<sup>1</sup>"I tell you the truth, **the man who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber.** <sup>2</sup>**The man who enters by the gate is the shepherd of his sheep.** <sup>3</sup>The watchman opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice ...

<sup>7</sup>Yeshua said again, "I tell you the truth, **I am the gate for the sheep.** <sup>8</sup>All who ever came before me were thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. <sup>9</sup>**I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved.** He will come in and go out, and find pasture.