

ONE TORAH FOR ALL

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לך לך

Lech Lecha

(go for yourself)

B'reshit [Genesis] 12:1-17:27

Count the Stars?

B'reshit [Genesis] 15:5

And He took him outside, and said, "Look now toward heaven, and number the stars, if you be able to enumerate them." And He said to him, "So shall your seed be."

When we look up into the night sky we literally see thousands upon thousands of stars visible to the naked eye. How would it ever be possible to count them? It does not seem likely. For when we then view these same stars with a telescope, these thousands of stars become millions, perhaps even billions of stars. How could one man ever hope to begin to number each and every one of those stars in only one lifetime? It is not humanly possible!

Yet, whatever it was that YHWH asked Avram to do that day (night), he apparently did it, because we know that this promise was given to him and then later came to pass. The fact of a promise fulfilled necessitates the reality of Avram successfully accomplishing what YHWH asked of Him.

Let us carefully and prayerfully examine the Scripture to see what it was that this passage speaks of.

The Mazzarot

Iyov [Job] 38:32

“Can you lead forth the Mazzarot in their season? Or can you guide the Bear with her train?”

YHWH is the Creator of heaven and earth and everything in them. He has placed everything in order and in its proper place. This certainly includes the stars of heaven. Please take careful note of the fact that YHWH makes reference to a well-known constellation. Now why would YHWH do this if the constellation was of pagan origin? Since He commands us not to even mention the names of pagan deities, then we can be fairly certain and safe to say, that for YHWH to mention this constellation shows that He is the One who created it!

B’reshit [Genesis] 1:14

And Elohim said, “Let there be lights in the firmament of heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days and years:”

YHWH has given us the lights in the heavens; i.e., the sun, moon and stars, for signs and for seasons. We can easily see that the stars do not really have any effect upon the seasons. Therefore, they must be for signs. In the above passage of Scripture the Hebrew word that is translated as “signs” comes from the root word “mo’edim” (וּלְמוֹעֲדִים). Literally, this means appointed times.

However, speaking of these same lights in the heavens, YHWH warns us that we are to be careful not to make any likenesses of them to bow down to them and worship them.

Devarim [Deuteronomy] 4:15-19

15 “You take therefore good heed to yourselves; for you saw no manner of form on the day that YHWH spoke to you in Horev out of the midst of the fire.

16 Lest you corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image in the form of any figure, the likeness of male or female,

17 the likeness of any beast that is on the earth, the likeness of any winged bird that flies in the heavens,

18 the likeness of anything that creeps on the ground, the likeness of any fish that is in the water under the earth;

19 and lest you lift up your eyes to heaven, and when you see the sun and the moon and the stars, even all the host of heaven, you be drawn away and worship them, and serve them, which YHWH your Elohim has allotted to all the peoples under the whole heaven.”

While YHWH does not want us to worship the sun, moon or stars, He does expect us to use them properly. And the only way to use the sun, moon and stars properly, is to use Scripture to understand their proper place and usage.

But, before we move on, it seems appropriate to make mention of the proper context of the above passage. When we read the above passage with the thought of the Zodiac in mind, then

it becomes quite clear what YHWH (at least in part) is talking about in this passage. YHWH did create the stars for signs and placed them in their proper order. However, what man did (with help from Satan) was to take those signs and to pervert them, and then he began to worship these signs, something that YHWH never wanted or commanded. This began to take place at the tower of Babel.

What we hope to show in this study, is the proper usage of the stars in the life of the believer. It is not too difficult to show the proper usage of the sun and the moon in the life of the believer. The moon from time immemorial has been worshiped in a way that YHWH did not command. This wrong worship of the moon does not mean that there is not a right way to use the moon as a follower of YHWH. A wrong way actually shows to us that there, of necessity, must be a right way to use it. Likewise, we can easily see that there is a wrong way to use the stars; i.e., the Zodiac and astrology. Therefore, there must be a right way to use the stars. However, to actually show what the proper place of stars in relation to the believer actually is, is not a simple matter. In fact, few attempt this noble task, but rather just ignore the stars and assign them and their respective signs to the pagans; an assignment which this writer finds to be woefully inadequate to say the least.

When we consider what a sign is, we begin to see that a sign is something that really has nothing to do with the object itself. We use signs every day of our lives and often do not see them for what they actually are. For example, take letters and words. They are only signs for and of sounds that we make. We have agreed upon certain sounds to mean certain things, but they are not the things themselves, they only represent the things agreed upon. The same is true no matter what language one uses and that includes the language of music. Without an agreement of what the signs mean there could be and would be no communication.

Therefore, when YHWH tells us that He placed the stars in the heavens for signs, then what are those signs and what do they represent? That is the task before us: to discover what the signs of the stars mean according to the meaning placed there by their Creator.

One of the main clues that we have was looked at briefly above in B'reshit 1:14. The next passage that has significant meaning for us in understanding the stars is found in Iyov.

Iyov [Job] 38:31-32

31 "Can you bind the cluster of the Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion?

32 Can you lead forth the Mazzarot in their season? Or can you guide the Bear with her train?"

In one of YHWH's responses to Iyov, He makes reference to three separate constellations and to something called the "Mazzarot". While most of us would have heard of the different constellations, few have heard of the word "Mazzarot". The only other place that a form of this word appears in Scripture is in Melekim Bet.

Melekim Bet [2nd Kings] 23:5

And he put down the idolatrous priests, whom the kings of Yehudah had ordained to burn incense in the high places in the cities of Yehudah, and in the places round about Yerusalem; them also that burned incense to Ba'al, to the sun, and to the moon, and to the constellations, and to all the host of heaven.

As we see in the above passage, these men were doing exactly what YHWH had commanded them not to do. Basically, what Satan often does is to get us to substitute true service and worship of YHWH with something else. That way we can still feel like we are doing right, when in fact we are not doing right.

What we need to understand here at this point, is that YHWH is the Elohim who created the stars (as well as everything else). In fact, He is the only Creator that there is! Satan cannot create anything. The only thing that Satan can do is to take something that YHWH has created and get us to twist and pervert it and to use it for something other than what YHWH has intended.

That is basically what Satan (and man) has done with the Mazzarot. He has done this by taking the signs (constellations) of the Mazzarot and getting mankind to twist them into something that many people look to for guidance. This is directly contrary to and completely against Scripture. What we are supposed to do is to look to YHWH for guidance by hearing and obeying His Voice.

Satan did not create the Mazzarot, he twisted them into the Zodiac. What he did do was to take the stars that YHWH created for signs (the mazzarot) and get man to start to worship them. This, of course, is wrong and it is sinful to do this.

However, if Satan took something that YHWH created and twisted it and enticed mankind to misuse it, then what does the legitimate article look like? And can we find evidence of this in Scripture so we know what it is and how should we use it? The answer may be surprising, but there is quite a lot of evidence in Scripture concerning the stars in the constellations.

Tehillim [Psalm] 147:4

He counts the number of the stars; He calls them all by their names.

Please notice that it was YHWH that not only numbered the stars, but He also named them. He placed them in exactly the places in the heavens where He wanted them to be located.

Let us look at one example of a constellation to illustrate the truth that it contains.

The constellation that goes by the modern name of Virgo (the Virgin) would have the Hebrew title of Almah (virgin). It is interesting and instructive to note that in one hand of this constellation she holds wheat (seed). It is from the seed of the woman that Mashiach came forth. In the other hand she holds a branch. Can these ancient symbols be accidental or even

coincidental? It would not seem very likely. And personally, I cannot believe that anything in our world is coincidental because YHWH is Sovereign of His Creation.

Yeshayah [Isaiah] 7:11-14

11 "Ask thee a sign of YHWH thy Elohim; ask it either in the depth, or in the height above."

12 But Ahaz said, "I will not ask, neither will I tempt YHWH."

13 And he said, "Hear ye now, house of David: Is it a small thing for you to weary men, that ye will weary my Elohim also?"

14 Therefore YHWH himself will give you a sign: behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."

The language of this passage is striking when one considers that the prophet Yeshayah asked King Ahaz to choose a sign from under the earth or from the heavens above. King Ahaz would not choose so YHWH chose for him. It seems apparent that YHWH chose a sign from the heavens above.

Likewise, we can also go to Avraham and look at an incident that is quite similar.

B'reshit [Genesis] 15:5

And He took him outside, and said, "Look now toward heaven, and number the stars, if you be able to enumerate them." And He said to him, "So shall your seed be."

Here we come to a difficult passage to truly understand. YHWH takes Avram outside and tells him to count the stars. Now wait just a minute! How is that possible? How is it possible for a human to count the stars? Well, it is not possible!

Before we get into actually understanding this passage in the nuts and bolts, let us consider one aspect that will help us in determining what it was that YHWH told Avram to do. At the end of verse five YHWH tells Avram that if he is able to do as He requested him to do, then his Seed would be as he (Avram) had done.

Shaul tells us that this promise was granted (see Galatians 3:16). So, since this promise was granted, that means that Avram not only was able to do what YHWH asked him to do, but that he, in fact, did do it. So with this information, let us see if we can determine exactly what it was that YHWH asked Avram to do. Conversely, if Avram would not do as YHWH had requested of him, then he should not expect the promise to be fulfilled. But since it was fulfilled, then the only logical conclusion is that Avram did as requested, whatever that request was. Let us see if we can increase our understanding of this passage to see what the actual request was.

First, let us put the Hebrew text of this passage "Look now toward heaven, and number the stars, if you be able to number them" before us.

הבט-נא השמימה וספר הכוכבים אם-תוכל לספר אתם

Literally it reads, "Look now to the heavens and enumerate them if you are able to enumerate them."

Basically what YHWH is asking Avram to do was not to count the stars per se, but rather He is asking Him to tell Him the stars in their proper order. As we saw in Tehillim 147:4, YHWH placed each and every star in its exact proper location and then gave each and every star a name.

From our perspective, often when we look up into the night sky we do not see order. Rather what we see is complete randomness (chaos). But when we contemplate this in its full implications we can see that this simply cannot be so, for the Elohim of Creation is an Elohim of order and not of chaos.

Qorintyah Aleph [1st Corinthians] 14:33

for Elohim is not an Elohim of confusion, but of peace. As in all the assemblies of the set apart ones,

So when we look into the night sky what we should see is order. However, because His ways have been twisted and given other meanings, it is difficult for us to do this in our day and in our time. Let us consider this matter further to see if we can come to a deeper understanding of His ways and His truth concerning the stars that He created and placed precisely where He wanted them to be.

A possible rendering of the passage in B'reshit could read something like this:

"Look now at the heavens and the story of the stars if you are able to tell the story of them."

Then YHWH adds, "So shall your Seed be."

In other words, the story that is contained in the stars was going to be the seed that came forth from Avram, if and only if he could tell the proper story. This story had become perverted from the days of the tower of Babel. So, it seems that YHWH was testing Avram to see if he had received the proper story, to see if he knew the true story. This is one of the things that trip many people up in our day; they wrongly conclude that the first story written down has to be the oldest, right, and true story. But such is not the case. YHWH allowed the false, twisted perversion of the truth, to be written down first as a test to see who would actually seek Him and listen for the sound of His Voice in this matter. That is the only way to truly discern His ways: by the sound of His Voice!

One word in particular will help us to understand this passage. It appears twice in the verse above. It is the word ספר (safer), which means "book", "story", and by extension, "scribe".

So what was it that YHWH asked Avram to do and what is it that Avram successfully did? Avram told YHWH the proper story of the stars.

One of the studies that I hope one day to write, YHWH willing, is a full study concerning this topic of the Mazzarot. This word appears twice in the Tanak. However, the concept of the Besorah (Good News) being written in the stars by YHWH is found throughout the Scriptures, both in the Tanak and in the Brit.

It would seem that this is what Avram most likely did on that night; he told the story of the coming Mashiah as found written by YHWH in the stars. His Seed was in fact our Mashiah, indicating the validity of this passage of Scripture.

Some Very Unusual Language

Tehillim [Psalm] 19:1-6

1 For the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David. The heavens declare the glory of Elohim; and the firmament shows His handiwork.

2 Day to day utters speech, and night to night shows knowledge.

3 There is no speech nor language; their voice is not heard.

4 Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them He has set a tabernacle for the sun,

5 Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoices as a strong man to run his course.

6 His going forth is from the end of the heavens, and his circuit to the ends of it; and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.

Please read the above passage very carefully. Note the following phrases:

- ✓ Day to day utters speech – this is followed by
- ✓ There is no speech nor language
- ✓ Their voice is not heard
- ✓ Their line is gone out
- ✓ Their words to the end of the world
- ✓ He set a tabernacle for the sun
- ✓ Bridegroom coming out of his chamber
- ✓ As a strongman

These phrases are preceded by the declaration that the heavens declare the glory of Elohim. If we are honest, these phrases do not make much sense either individually or collectively. And if they do not make much sense, then how is it that they declare the glory of Elohim?

In order to understand this Psalm we need to have a little astronomical information, and then this Psalm will come sharply into focus.

In the earliest times of man, a record of the star groups (constellations) was set down and then was passed on to every other civilization. In every civilization that has ever existed, there has been a record of the signs of the stars. Furthermore, this record is consistent from one civilization to another, in that they all pretty much carry the same names (even if in different languages) and are of the same number (48 – twelve main with each having three lesser associated with them). Whether one is religious or secular, it stands that all writers acknowledge their existence and titles regardless of what circumstance one would be writing or making mention of them, whether that was just a passing note, or it was about them in particular that they were writing.

Those who originally set forth the record of these star groups had to have been thoroughly versed in astronomy, for their grouping indicates an intimate knowledge of astronomy and how our universe functions. Many have decried these star groupings as completely arbitrary, but once you know the truth of how they are arranged one can see clearly that it can only be of Divine design.

While modern man has added a few constellations to the original 48, we are not concerned with those so added. What we are interested in is those original 48 that have been handed down through the generations from antiquity. Each and every one of these 48 constellations is along a line which the sun follows through the heavens during a year's time. This line or path is called the "ecliptic". That line is, in reality, the path of the earth around the sun, but it appears to us as a line through the heavens by the sun. Along this path, the sun advances thirty degrees each month (one degree for each day). And since there are twelve major signs (one for each month), the sun is in that sign for that thirty days. The moon and planets also follow this same line and can always be seen within about eight degrees of this line or path of the sun or in a belt of sixteen degrees wide. The moon travels around the earth twelve times in a year's time, thus suggesting that the year is divided into twelve months. This then suggests that the path of the sun is divided into twelve equal parts of thirty degrees, for a total of 360 degrees or a full circle. We are thus given twelve equal stages or steps in the path of the sun, six in the southern hemisphere and six in the northern hemisphere, half ascending and half descending during the path of the sun; much like Ya'aqov's ladder.

We are given the first prophetic utterance concerning the history of man in the third chapter of B'reshit.

B'reshit [Genesis] 3:15

"and I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed: He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel."

And so we find the basic tenet of all Scripture: the conflict between the seed of Elohim and that serpent of old, the devil, Satan. And so we should expect to find, and in fact do find, this basic conflict recorded in the stars. This is the main theme of the Besorah as recorded in the stars, the conflict between the seed of the woman and the serpent.

In fact, the very first sign in the heavens is the sign of the virgin. In order to begin the story and to understand properly the order of the signs, one begins with this sign. It is interesting and instructive to note, that this sign occurs in the month of Tishri, the month in which our Mashiach was born. We will list the signs in order of their appearance in the heavens and list them with their current modern names. However, do not let the use of these modern names deter you in understanding His truth in this matter. For it is apparent that astrology has taken these signs and perverted them into something never intended by our heavenly Father. Evil is always good perverted, as dirt is only matter out of place. Likewise, these signs properly used and understood are, in fact, good.

1. Virgo the virgin – she is lying prostrate and has a shock of wheat in one hand and a branch in the other hand.
 - a. Coma the infant, the branch, the desired One
 - b. Centaurus a centaur with a dart piercing the foe
 - c. Bootes or Arcturus the great shepherd and harvester holding a rod and sickle walking before his flocks
2. Libra the scales – one side is up and the other side is down as if weighing
 - a. The cross over which the centaur is advancing
 - b. Victim of centaur slain and pierced to death
 - c. The crown which the serpent aims to take
3. Scorpio the scorpion – this deadly insect is shown in a position as ready to strike; some ancient planispheres show the strongman with his head on the head of the scorpion and the scorpion's stinger in the heel of the strongman
 - a. The Serpent struggling with Ophiuchus
 - b. Ophiuchus wrestling with the serpent
 - c. Hercules the strongman wounded in his heel
4. Sagittarius the bowman – a centaur with bow drawn pointed at the head of the scorpion
 - a. Lyra, an eagle holding the lyre as in triumphant gladness
 - b. Ara the altar with consuming fires burning downward
 - c. Draco the dragon, the old serpent winding himself about a pole in horrid links and contortions
5. Capricornus the goat – depicted as sinking down to death
 - a. Sagitta the arrow or killing dart sent forth – the naked shaft of death
 - b. Aquilla the eagle pierced and falling
 - c. Delphinus the dolphin, springing up, raised out of the sea
6. Aquarius the water bearer – he is in the act of pouring out a great stream in the sky
 - a. The southern fish drinking in the stream
 - b. Pegasus the white winged horse speeding with good tidings
 - c. Cygnus the swan on the wing going and returning, bearing the sign of the cross
7. Pisces the fishes – two fish in the act of swimming, one northward and the other with the ecliptic
 - a. The band holding up the fishes and held by the Lamb is doubled end and fastened to the neck of Cetus the sea monster

- b. Cepheus a crowned king holding a band and scepter with his foot planted on the pole star of the great victor and Master
 - c. Andromeda, a woman in chains and threatened by the serpents of Medusa's head
- 8. Aries the ram – a strong ram with great horns lying down in the field and looking around it
 - a. Cassiopeia the woman enthroned
 - b. Cetus the sea monster, closely and strongly bound by the Lamb
 - c. Perseus, an armed and mighty man with winged feet, who is carrying away in triumph the cut off head of a monster full of writhing serpents and holding aloft a great sword in his right hand
- 9. Taurus the bull – the figure of a great bull pushing forward with great energy
 - a. Orion a glorious prince with a sword girded on his side and his foot on the head of the Serpent
 - b. Eridanus the tortuous river, accounted as belonging to Orion
 - c. Auriga the shepherd carrying a she-goat and two little goats on his left arm and holding cords or bands in his right hand
- 10. Gemini the twins – sometimes depicted as a man and woman (Adam and Eve) seated in endearing affection
 - a. Lepus a serpent (sometimes wrongly portrayed as a hare) the mad enemy under Orion's feet
 - b. Canis Major, Sirius the great dog, the coming prince
 - c. Canis Minor, Procyon, the second dog following after Sirius and Orion
- 11. Cancer the crab – in the act of holding on; in Egypt this is a scarab beetle
 - a. Ursa Minor, anciently the lesser sheepfold close to and including the pole
 - b. Ursa Major, anciently the greater sheepfold in connection with Arcturus the guardian and keeper of the flock
 - c. Argo the ship, the company of travelers under the bright Canopus their Prince, the Argonauts returned with the Golden Fleece
- 12. Leo the lion – the figure of a great lion leaping forth to rend Hydra the serpent which is in the act of fleeing
 - a. Hydra the fleeing serpent trodden under foot by the Crab and Lion
 - b. Crater the cup or bowl of wrath on the Serpent
 - c. Corvus the raven or crow, the bird of doom tearing the serpent

It is not too difficult to see the perversions in each of these signs and the myths that arose around each one. However, can you also begin to see the truth each sign contains? Do Scripture verses and passages come to mind as you read down through these? Do not ignore these little promptings for they are His Spirit trying to tell you His truth.

Let me state once again, that just because YHWH allowed the perversion to be written down before the truth, does not in any way negate the truth. To be sure it hides it, but if it was just a simple matter then what would be the need of listening for and obeying His Voice?

We do not here have the time to go into great detail on each of these signs as that will have to be for another time. Consider the following passage keeping these signs in mind.

Romans 1:23

and changed the glory of the incorruptible Elohim for the likeness of an image of corruptible man, and of birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things.

YHWH place before us His truth, but man took that truth and corrupted it and began to worship the signs that YHWH had given to us, rather than worshipping Him and Him alone.

The truth of the Mazzarot is very much like the concept of the two houses of Israel. Once you understand it, you see it quite easily and it pops up all over Scripture. Likewise, the truth of the Mazzarot is very much like that. We have only selected a few key passages to bring to your attention and for your consideration. Perhaps one day I will be able to give this subject a full treatment. But as you continue to read and study Scripture you will see this truth pop up again and again, for all the apostles knew of this truth and many make reference to it.

ABBA YHWH, please lead and guide us into all of Your truth, and only Your truth; and show to us the error of our ways that we have inherited from our fathers; in the Name of Yeshua our Mashiach, Amein.

Shabbat Shalom

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