



#14 Va'era Exodus 6:2-9:35

**Torah Teaching
By Moshe Schwab**

Names

Avraham – Abraham

Kefa – Peter

Messiah – English for Mashiach; anointed one;

Christ in the Greek means to be smudged

Moshe – Moses

Pesach – Passover

Shaul – Paul

Ya'akov – Jacob

Yeshua – Jesus' real name

Yĕhōvāh – God's real name forever (Ex. 3:15)

Y'hudah – Judah

Yitzchak – Isaac

Yochanan – John

Terms

Haftarah – reading from the prophets

Tanakh – Old Testament portion of Bible

Torah – 1st 5 books of the Bible

Torah portion – there are 54 portions of the Torah

Va'era – the 14th Torah portion

Va'era means, "and I appeared." This portion begins with God telling Moshe (Moses) **that He, Yĕhōvāh, appeared** to Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya'akov as El Shaddai. God also made His name, **Yĕhōvāh**, known to them. Isn't that interesting. Our patriarchs also knew the name of God. Remember, last portion God said His name is **Yĕhōvāh** (Exodus 3:15). We now have over 2,363 manuscripts that point God's name as Yĕhōvāh. Also, Yeshua said that He declared God's name. "And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them." John 17:26 NKJV. It is wrong not to use God's real name at all. Perhaps someday people will come to understand that the true God is Yĕhōvāh and begin using His name out of respect for Him.

The words va'era (means and I appeared) and the name Yitzchak add up to 208 (Hebrew letters are also numbers). Yitzchak prefigured the Messiah by freely giving himself on Mt. Moriah, but Abraham did not have to use him as a sacrifice because God provided a ram as a substitute sacrifice. Yeshua came (He appeared) as our substitute sacrifice for our sins to bring us closer to God, rescue us, redeem us, and take us to be God's people. God delivered Israel from the Egyptians so they could avoid sin and serve God. Yeshua also came to deliver us from sin so that those who believe in Him could serve God.

We are commanded to tell the story about God's deliverance from the Egyptians for Pesach and we use Exodus 6:6-7 NKJV in the telling of the story:

"I am the LORD; I will **bring you out** from under the burdens of the Egyptians,
I will **rescue you** from their bondage,
and I will **redeem you** with an outstretched arm and with great judgments.
I will **take you** as My people, and I will be your God."

From this scripture we drink the 4 cups commemorating what God did for us at Mt. Sinai and what God did for us through Yeshua HaMashiach.

- 1) God **brought us out** from the pagan Egyptians so we could avoid sin through His commandments and also through the work of the Messiah and the Holy Spirit.
- 2) God **delivered us** from the slavery to the Egyptians and from the bondage of sin so we could serve God through His commandments and the Messiah.
- 3) God **brought us back** (redeemed us) to Him both at Mt. Sinai and through Yeshua.
- 4) God **took us** to be His people both at Mt. Sinai and through Yeshua.

During these cups, we commemorate what Yeshua did for us. Yeshua said that He gave us another helper, the Holy Spirit. God gave us the Torah at Mt. Sinai to help us and Yeshua gave us the Holy Spirit to help us. Yeshua said, "And I will pray the Father, and **He will give you another Helper**, that He may abide with you forever — the Spirit of truth;" John 14:16-17 NKJV.

Remember, the Torah gives us wisdom and understanding, "Therefore be careful to observe them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes, and say, 'Surely this great nation is a **wise and understanding people**;" Deuteronomy 4:6 NKJV. We need to repeat this scripture frequently so people will hear the truth about the Torah. The Torah was given by God to help us and we should want to follow God's commandments.

It is not true the Torah is too hard to keep; that is a lie. "For this mitzvah which I am giving you today is not too hard for you." Deuteronomy 30:11 CJB. Most of the Torah applied to the priests. We have some 2 million laws in the United States and no one complains about that, but people seem to have to complain about the 200 or so commandments in the Torah. Yeshua gave us the Torah. He said, "For My yoke is easy and My burden is light;" Matthew 11:30 NKJV. The word "yoke" in Jewish understanding refers to the Torah.

The Messiah also came to help us and give us the Holy Spirit. The forth cup is most often associated with the ritual remembrance ceremony of Yeshua, but all the cups apply well to both Israel and the Messianic believers.

We tell the story about God's deliverance at Pesach. God delivered Israel and it is was God in the form of Yeshua that gave Himself so that we could have eternal life through following God. Yeshua was truly God and even healed everyone in in some of the towns He was in. He even created food from nothing for thousands a couple of times, "And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written;" John 21:25 NKJV.

God made a covenant with them that He would give them the land of Canaan and now He is going to set them free from their oppressive bondage in Egypt so they can return to Canaan. El Shaddai means mighty God according to the Septuagint.¹ God has heard the groaning of the people of Israel who the Egyptians are oppressing and using as slaves. Moshe had told the people that God would deliver them from their oppression and that they would be His

¹ The Septuagint was translated into Greek from the Hebrew manuscripts by 70 rabbis in the 2nd century BC.

people. Pharaoh would not listen to Moshe and Pharaoh instead made them work harder. Moshe tells them again, but this time the people wouldn't listen to him because they were discouraged.

God told Moshe and Aharon to go tell Pharaoh to let Israel go in spite of what was going on. If you remember, the midwives decided to fear God instead of Pharaoh and not kill the baby boys. God gave them peace and blessing (Exodus 1:17-21). Moshe too decided to fear God and stand up to Pharaoh.

Then some genealogy is given in the portion. God then tells Moshe that he will be like god to Pharaoh and Aharon will be like Moshe's prophet. God will harden Pharaoh's heart and he will not let the people go, but God will bring them out with great judgments. Moshe was 80 and Aharon were 83 at this time.

When the leader of some of the churches in the Amazon jungle told me that he sees me as Moses, I wasn't exactly excited about that. After all, Moshe didn't start his ministry until he was 80! Then a prophetic lady said the same thing shortly after that. Two people who live some 6,000 miles apart said I was like Moses. So I decided to use Moshe (the Hebrew name for Moses) as my pen name and I now at times refer to myself as Moshe or Rabbi² Moshe. Our congregation has also agreed to allow me to use my pen name.

When they first talk to Pharaoh, Aharon throws down his staff and it turns into a snake, but so does the staffs of Pharaoh's magicians. Aharon's staff eats the other snakes. Pharaoh wouldn't listen to Moshe and Aharon though. Next Moshe turns the river and even water in buckets into blood and it stinks and the fish die. The magicians also did the same and Pharaoh wouldn't listen. Pharaoh would also not let Israel go after the frogs covered the land. This time Pharaoh asked them to ask Yehovah for the frogs to go, but when they were gone, he still wouldn't let Israel go.

Then the Lord covered the land with lice and the magicians told Pharaoh it was the "finger of God." Again, Pharaoh would not listen so God sent swarms of insects only on the Egyptians. Pharaoh then said they could go, but when God took away the swarms, Pharaoh changed his mind again. Next God slew all the cattle of Egypt only, but Pharaoh would not let them go. Then Moshe and Aharon threw dust in the air before Pharaoh and sores appeared on men and animals, but Pharaoh still would not listen. Then God brought hail which destroyed their crops, but when Moshe stopped the hail, Pharaoh still would not let Israel go. There are three more plagues to occur in the next portion: locusts, darkness, and the death of the first born.

We learn both in the Torah portion and the Haftarah that it is God's intention to give the land of Canaan to Israel. In the Tanakh it says that it will eventually be given in perpetuity. In the Haftarah for today, Ezekiel who lived around 600 BC tells us that Israel's presence in the land

² We mean rabbi to be a leader or teacher, not a great one as it was used at the time of Yeshua. Priest is a wrong way to refer to a leader because only the descendants of Aaron were priests. Father is a word used for God so it is also wrong to use. Any title meaning to equate the person with God is wrong. So even a person who considers themselves as a great one is wrong. That designation is reserved for God. The king of Tyre thought he was a great one (Isaiah 14).

is a witness to the nations that He is God. All that God is doing to bring Israel out of Egypt was and is a witness to the world that God will accomplish His will. That Israel exists is a witness to us that God exists. God will accomplish His will; that's a good thing for those of us who believe in God. We can trust that God will do what He says He will do.

The gift of the Holy Spirit is given to believers in the Messiah Yeshua and is a witness to those who listen to God and keep His commandments and who listen to the Holy Spirit. The Pharaoh should have believed after he saw the power of God, but didn't. The Holy Spirit which is given to believers testifies to who God is. God expects those who receive the Holy Spirit to respond to Him in faith. It says in Hebrews 10:29 NKJV, "Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?" Let us not be like Pharaoh who wouldn't listen to God and didn't respect God.

The Haftaráh for Va'era is Ezekiel 28:25-29:2. Previous to this portion, Ezekiel prophesies against the King of Tyre (a far southern Lebanon port city) for his pride and thinking he is like God. He compares him to the fallen cherub that we know as Satan. Then he prophesies against Sidon (a port city about 40 miles north of Tyre in Lebanon).

God says there will come a time when the people around Israel will not bother them. Verse 25 begins with God saying Israel will be allowed to return home from around the nations including Babylon and live safely. God will execute judgment on the nations around them that hate them. This is proof that God is who He says he is.

Then he gives a grievous prophecy against Egypt and says God will make the land desolate. God will bring back the Egyptians after 40 years, but Egypt will be a lowly nation. Then Ezekiel reports that Tyre has fallen to Babylon and he says Egypt is next.

God returned Israel to their land of promise as predicted by Ezekiel. We should take the land promises to Israel seriously. The Bible says that God has given them the land and it is a testimony to the nations that He is God. No matter what happens, Israel will eventually have the land in perpetuity (forever).

Moshe came back to Egypt ready to go to work for God, but Pharaoh resisted him and the people became discouraged because Pharaoh persecuted them even more. God told Moshe to keep at it and Moshe persisted. It is unimaginable what the indignant Pharaoh did to His people because he resisted God. That is the ways of the world though; thoughtless, uncaring, and unbelieving. God is just the opposite. The Bible says that God is love.