

## Selected Language Related Teachings of Professor Arthur (Skip) Moen

[These selected excerpts from the massive Messianic teaching library of Professor Skip Moen are being provided to shed some insights with respects to the importance of the Hebrew Language as it pertains to G\_D's Word ... and Its meaning for us.

These excerpts attempt to provide some insights into the various nuances related to the Hebrew Language and how these nuances should affect our understanding of G\_D's Word.

As an FYI ... Professor Moen has been at this for decades and is in my personal estimation used brilliantly by our LORD. Skip Moen opens up a whole new (old) world of thought provocation and pondering of G\_D's Word. One could benefit significantly from his teachings.] ... P. R. Otokletos]

### Manifested in the Flesh

and man **became** a living being Genesis 2:7

**Became** – The Bible is without doubt the most fascinating book in the world. Why? Because it is simply beyond reasonable inference to imagine that all of the intricacies woven into its fabric could have been concocted by human beings. From beginning to end, the language of the Bible is filled with surprises, deep insights and tasty linguistic treats. **None are more fascinating than the implications provided by the use of the verb hayah (to be, to become).** Yesterday we discovered that there is a marvelous connection between the idea of God's word becoming in Micah and the rest of the prophets. At the very least, this implies that God's verbal instruction to His people manifested itself in the prophet. How that occurs is a mystery, but no more mysterious than another use of hayah, found here in the story of the creation of Man.

Man became nephesh (the Hebrew word that encompasses will, emotions, mind, body and spirit – a total person). The same creative manifestation demonstrated in God's word showing up (somehow) in the prophets is at the bottom of what it means to be alive. God's breath manifested itself in the dust-formed creature and ha.a.dam le.ne.fesh ha.yah (literally, "the earth-made a person was manifested"). It's almost as though the text says, "Personal life happened in this lump of formed dirt." How life came to be in Man is not essentially different than how God's word came to be in Micah. Think about that for the next 100 years!

We also learned that God's personal name, YHWH (Yahweh) is also, at its core, the verb hayah. When God manifests His word in Micah, and when He manifests His life in Man, He merely makes tangible what He is. Take that thought and read John 1: 14 from a Hebrew perspective. "The Word hayah flesh." The very essence of God, the I AM (Hayah) is manifested as basar (tangible body). This is not only saying that Jesus was born as a man. This is saying that the great "TO BE," now happened in bodily form. The I AM now existed as the same kind of living being as all animal and human bodies. God's mysterious hayah is demonstrated in yet another, unparalleled way.

Think about what this means for human life – for you and me. No, it does not mean that each of us has a spark of divinity. That is pure Greek philosophy. The New Age is nothing new. What this means is that you and I are in some respect vehicles by which God is manifested in His creation. We are fully equipped to reveal His glorious hayah. Whatever it means to be created in His image, it at least means that God plans to use my nephesh hayah as a demonstration of His glory.

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## Even Deeper

And Adam called his wife's name Eve because she was the mother of all living.  
Genesis 3:20

Eve – God doesn't make mistakes. So, when God chose to use the Hebrew language to reveal Himself, it wasn't an accident. The Hebrew language is the perfect vehicle to communicate what God wants to share about Himself and His creation. What does this mean to us? It means that what God says in Hebrew is usually much deeper than we initially observe. Frank Seekins says, "Hebrew fulfills a role that no other language can" because it can be understood as both a picture language and a phonetic language. Our contemporary translations are based on the phonetic aspect of Hebrew, not the pictographs. Sometimes we need to look to the pictures to see what the language communicates. That leads us to ask a question about some crucial words for "woman." What we find will truly amaze you.

First, there is God's chosen word for "woman." It's found in Genesis 2:18 ("I will make him a help-mate – an 'ezer). This is God's word, not Adam's. The word consists of the consonants A-Z-R which display a picture of "first cut from a person", "strength cut from the highest" or even "the first weapon (of defense) of the person." Does this sound like the role of the 'ezer? Remember that 'ezer is the same word God applies to Himself in relation to Israel. The woman is certainly the first cut from the man. In fact, she is taken directly from him. And the role of the 'ezer is to protect, help, provide and nourish. Certainly this is the biblical view of strength and defense. What God had in mind is not subservience or patriarchal hierarchy. His choice of 'ezer indicates that the woman is a man's first line of defense, an equal partner in the journey of life. The 'ezer is God's gift to the husband. She is built that way.

'ezer isn't the only word for woman. There is Adam's choice, ish-sha. Once before we noted that the doubled consonant paints a picture of the woman as consumer and destroyer, a very powerful combination. But there is another picture here. This

pictograph also means “what comes out of the strong consumer.” Woman comes out of man. The second picture makes visible what the text confirms: “She shall be called woman because she was taken out of man.” Adam recognizes her essential equality and unique similarity is his choice of word. He also acknowledges the dangerous bliss resident in this perfectly suited partner.

So far, so good. God has a word picture that paints the divinely ordered role of woman. Man has a word picture that displays her vital connection to him. But there is still one more word. It occurs in Genesis 3:20 when Adam finally gives his wife a proper name. That name, as we now know, is Havah, not Eve. This reveals an even more interesting picture. This picture is “what comes from the place of work.” What does this mean? It means that woman is the vehicle through which all “living” comes – all those who work. Thus, her name literally means “the mother (source) of all living.” Once again the picture paints what the words say. This is her legacy. **Since Hebrew views work and worship as one and the same**, the name Havah also means the woman brings to life all those who worship. There is hardly a more important role in human existence.

Now don't get concerned. This is not some kind of worship of Woman. It's not pagan Mother Earth and it's not the idolization of Mary. It is simply the biblical recognition that God chose women to be the way that every living human being becomes a member of the working-worshipping community. It's not idolatry. It's the recognition of vital importance. Mothers matter.

What does the Scripture tell us about a woman? She is God's chosen protector, provider and strength for a man. Secondly, she is from Man, equally a partner under the Lord and perfectly matched for re-union as one. Finally, she is the physical transporter of life for all Mankind. These three roles are all wrapped up in one person. They must be recognized as separate but united. When we confuse them, when we put all the emphasis on one of the pictures and ignore the other two, we end up with terrible distortions like pagan Mother Earth worship or the contemporary

idea of woman as servants of men. The Scriptures reveal all three, intertwined. And a cord of three strands cannot easily be broken.

If you are a woman, exult in how God made you. If you are a man, be gloriously grateful to God. He knew exactly what He was doing.

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## The Genesis Code

And He is the image of the invisible God, the **firstborn** of all creation. Colossians 1:15

**Firstborn** – It helps to be Jewish. You can't read the New Testament without a thorough understanding of the Old Testament. If you read this verse without its Old Testament context, you are likely to be confused. You see, Paul is not speaking of Christ as if He were created first (born). **He is referring to the title that determines the rank and privileges of being in the position of inheritance.** There is no doubt whatsoever that The New Testament recognizes the pre-existence of the Christ (also a title) before He became the man, Yeshua. Here the emphasis is on the fact that holding the position of primary inheritance entitles Yeshua to all of the Father's possessions – namely, all creation. Of course, we are soon to discover that the pre-incarnate Yeshua is actually the author of all creation (verse 16), so He holds claim to everything by title and by creative authority.

Why does this matter to us? Isn't it just theological jargon, too difficult for most believers to understand? Why should I care? I have to deal with traffic, children and bosses. How does this affect my life today?

Behind the words of this verse (eikon – “image” and prototokos – “firstborn”) lies a great truth about us. When Paul chooses this language, he recalls Genesis 1:26, a statement about the essential nature of every human being. God’s image resides in us. Yes, it has been defiled. Yes, it has been clouded. But, it is not erased. We are human because we somehow retain the image of the Creator. What the New Testament claims is that Yeshua demonstrates the full and unsullied original image impressed on human being. He is what we were intended to be.

Is that how you think of Yeshua? Do you realize that God created you to be just like Him? Don’t tell me that Yeshua is perfect and you can never be perfect. Stop excusing your failures with “I’m only human.” Yeshua is human, the only one of us since Adam who carries the fully revealed image of the Father. He is not just your role model; He is the first example of what we are destined to become. Yeshua is you, without sin. He is the perfect image bearer.

Of course, you won’t become god. But you will become human. And Yeshua is the living example of what it means to be the fully human image of God. Furthermore, Yeshua is in the position of primary inheritance. All things belong to Him. That includes you and me. He has the divine right of ownership over you and me. And here’s the great news – He is willing to share His ownership with us.

Did you need encouragement this morning? How about this: Someday you will be fully human. God guarantees it. As long as you participate in a relationship with His Son, you will be conformed (actually, restored) to the original image. If that isn’t enough, you are also guaranteed a place in the inheritance. The Son has determined to share all of His ownership with you. Someday, not only will you be fully human, you will also have a place in the royal household. That’s a lot to look forward to, isn’t it?

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## A Sign Of Blessing

and tongues as of fire, being distributed, appeared to them, and it sat on each of them.

Acts 2:3

Tongues As Of Fire – The Holy Spirit was poured out on the day of Pentecost. We all know that. But have you ever asked why this is described as tongues of fire? After all, when the Spirit is revealed at Yeshua's baptism, the imagery is a dove, not a flame. Why does the Spirit come as fire? **When you see the reason, you will be even more amazed at the intricacy of God's Word.**

On the day of Pentecost, the disciples gathered to celebrate the memorial when God gave the Law at Sinai. Something happened that no one expected. **The Holy Spirit appeared in the form of tongues of fire (Greek - glossai oseí puros),** causing a stir that touched thousands of men and women. There's more here than we think. **In order to see just how the tongues of fire are evidence of a blessing, we need to look at the first form of the Hebrew alphabet, the pictographs.**

The Hebrew word for bless is ashre. It consists of the consonants A S R. In pictographic representation, this word is made up of the image of a man's head (R) and the idea of fire (the combination of A (strong) and S (devourer)). Therefore, in pictographic imagery, a blessing is the picture of fire on the head. When the Spirit arrives as tongues of fire, the image itself announces that the Spirit has come to bless. Fire on the head is the physical manifestation of the meaning of the word "blessing".

Notice that the verse does not use the plural in the description of the distribution ("it sat", not "they sat"). There were many tongues of fire but only one Spirit. The blessings were distributed, but there was only one giver. **Correct must follow the grammar of the original, even if it doesn't follow the rules of grammar in the translation.**

What do we learn from this peek into the past? First, we see that God's choice of Hebrew is not accidental. There are elements of Hebrew that reveal things about God that cannot be captured in any other language. We only see these when we dig deep into the Hebrew language itself.

Secondly, we discover that phrases and thoughts that we could not understand in translated languages begin to make sense. For example, when Paul says that treating your enemy with kindness heaped coals of fire on his head, we see this same idea of blessing buried in Paul's language. By being kind to my enemy, I bless him. And blessing is the picture of fire on the head. Now you know that Paul used the imagery of the ancient pictographs to communicate his message. Now it makes perfect sense.

The Bible is rich in images, much richer than we have ever imagined. If you want to know this God that you serve, dig into His chosen language. You will discover so much more about Him. It is the quest of a lifetime. Hopefully, this tiny glimpse will encourage you to get out your mental trowel and begin a spiritual excavation of your own.

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## Fifty Ways To Leave

But Jonah rose up to flee to Tarshish from the presence of YHWH Jonah 1:3

From ~ Rabbi Abraham ibn Ezer notices that there is a difference between flight from the Lord due to fear (mi-penei) and flight due to breaking the relationship (mi-lifnei). In some cases, the Bible describes running from the face of YHWH because YHWH strikes terror in the hearts of men. But that is not the case with Jonah. Jonah flees mi-lifnei, "from before the face." You can see a similar use in Genesis 4:16. Jonah doesn't run because he's afraid. He runs because He doesn't want to obey. In Hebrew, not all prepositions are the same even if they are translated with the same word. The Hebrew language notices the difference. So should we.

Have you fled from the face of the Lord because you were afraid of His majesty, power and mystery? Abraham Heschel calls this “awe.” Unless you have had this experience, you really haven’t been close to His presence. This is down on your face, shuttering and trembling worship. Few of us set aside our preoccupations with life long enough to draw into this circle. When we do, we are bathed in the “dread of Isaac” and the fire and smoke of Mt. Sinai. This is where we come face to face with our finitude and our un-holiness. This is truly terrifying. Peter, James and John knew this when they finally understood the incident at the Transfiguration. Isaiah knew this when he saw the Lord in His temple. But most of us crowd our lives with our own agendas – and we do all we can to avoid the unraveling trepidation that comes from His unbearable light. We flee. It’s quite alright that we flee. To stay is to die.

Of course, Yeshua has opened a way for us to stay in the presence of El Shaddai. We are welcomed. We are encouraged. We will not die. Even so, it takes a strong spiritual awareness to resist running.

As a result, most of us flee for the same reason Jonah fled. We run in order to avoid obedience. We might not get on the ship but we have plenty of other ways to leave the Lover of our souls. We have a litany of excuses. We have “theological” arguments. We have denominational differences. We have other things to do. Behind all these perfectly rational marathon events is our unwillingness to offer ourselves as His servants. We would rather be masters of our own destiny. So, we board a fast plane to the other side of the world. We take a vacation from God. All that pressure to be obedient requires a little R&R, we say. “I have to think this over.”

The Hebrew word for immediate obedience is *hineni*. “Here I am,” says that man or woman who knows what it means to run because of *mi-penei*. “Here I am” says, “Yes, Lord, I really am scared to death, but I trust You. I will stay. What do You want me to do?” The difference between *mi-lifnei* and *mi-penei* is the difference between three days and nights in the tomb of the ocean’s depths and the tomb with the stone rolled away. Death surrounds both, but only one knows resurrection.

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## Rolling Right Along

Commit your way to YHWH, trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass. Psalm 37:5 (Hebrew text)

Commit – The Hebrew language is wonderfully tactile. It's a language formed from the land, full of nice, clean dirt under the fingernails, streams of water, sun on your back and wind in your hair. So, we don't expect to find esoteric conceptualizations and cognitive abstractions here. When we encounter a word like "commit," we expect to get some very earthy pictures. Galal fits the bill.

Galal is tied to some very concrete experiences. In Genesis 29:8, Joshua 10:18 and Proverbs 26:27, it describes rolling away stones. It is used metaphorically in Genesis 43:18 (throw against) and literally in Isaiah 9:5 (robes rolled in blood). The principal imagery of galal is "to roll." So, how can this word be about commitment? For the answer, we must look at another context – the Song of Solomon.

Put me like a seal over your heart, like a seal on your arm. For love is as strong as death, jealousy is as severe as Sheol; its flashes are flashes of fire, the very flame of the LORD. Song of Solomon 8:6

Song of Songs places sexual intensity, passion, desire and fulfillment under the authority of the "seal." At the conclusion of this great love poem, the woman instructs the man to "put me like a seal" over his heart and on his arm. The word translated "seal" is hotham. It describes a cylindrical piece of stone with an external carved inscription. When this cylinder is rolled over a soft material, it leaves a raised impression that establishes legal ownership over the object. Like a signet ring, the seal permanently establishes an unbreakable legal and moral bond. In the ancient near-Eastern cultures, ownership was established by rolling the cylinder over the

possession. To commit is to be “rolled over,” to submit to ownership, an unbreakable covenant bond.

When the psalmist instructs us to commit our way to YHWH, he is telling us to allow God’s seal of ownership to make its permanent impression on our lives. He is telling us that God must take complete control of our very existence. From this point on, God owns us.

Did you notice that the psalmist separates “commit” from “trust”? We tend to think of these two abstract concepts as though they are merely synonyms. But once we see that “commit” is a mark of ownership, a deliberate, concrete act of allowing God to “roll over” me, then we see that “trust” is independent of this concrete act. I can be owned by another and still not trust him. The psalmist must have been familiar with slaves who were owned by a master but who never trusted the master. Not so with God. We must be rolled over and govern our behavior according to His reliability. There is more here, but that will have to wait.

There are signs of ownership rolled on to God’s people. Do you see His mark on you?

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## Looking Up

In the morning, O LORD, you hear my voice; in the morning I lay my requests before you and wait in expectation. Psalm 5:3

Wait in Expectation – Translating an idiomatic expression always entails difficulties. The translator wants to be true to the original language but, at the same time, knows that a literal translation often will not convey the meaning of the phrase. That’s the problem with this verse. The poetry is concise. The metaphors are clipped. Every

Hebrew in David's court knew the meaning, but it is probably lost on us. So, we get a different combination of words in hopes of giving us the sense of the verse.

The Hebrew is *va atsape*, from *tsaphah*, a verb that conveys the idea of being fully aware of circumstances in order to gain some advantage. Quite literally, this phrase reads, "and look up." Readers of the original knew that "looking up" was the equivalent of expecting a response. If you were asking for something in front of the king, you would bow low, face to the floor. If he said to you, "Look at me," the act of raising your eyes would indicate anticipation of his answer. **That is the metaphor David uses in this psalm.** He had plenty of experience of people coming before him, bowing low, then raising their eyes. Now he uses the same imagery before God. When I look up, I expect that God's answer is on the way.

What can we learn from this ancient metaphor? Perhaps the most important thing is this: no one would dare look up at the king unless the king first granted permission to do so. When the king says, "Look," he has already granted us favor. Raising my eyes to his face can only happen *after* he has invited me to do so.

David tells us that in prayer he makes his requests to the Lord. He bows his face low before the Most High. But then he is able to look up. God *invites* David to see a smile of comfort. The answer has been given. **The important part of this verse is not the fact that I can come to God with my morning prayers for help.** That is the act of face-down pleading. The important part of this verse is something that isn't even written. I can't look up until the Most High asks me to, and when He asks me to look up, I know that His favor toward me is complete.

How many prayers have you uttered face-down? How many times have you finished those prayers with the confidence to *look up* at the King of glory, knowing that His answer is on the way? Or did you pray and walk away with your head still hung low? If you are going to wait in expectation, you must first hear the King say, "Look up." That's when you stop praying and raise your eyes to the One Who has heard you.

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## Fundamentals

“You shall be **holy**, for I the LORD your God am holy.” Leviticus 19:2

**Holy** – The bottom line of God’s requirements for men is this single word: **qadosh** – holy.

Yeshua thought it was so important that he quoted this verse (Matthew 5:48) when He summarized His discussion of the law. If your translation says, “be perfect,” it reflects the Greek word, not the Hebrew word. So, if the Father and the Son both agree that holiness is the absolute fundamental, what does this mean in action?

Qadosh describes something (a person, place or thing) that is inherently sacred or that has been designated sacred by a ceremonial act. It is exactly the opposite of profane; something that is used commonly, without special attribute of quality. For example, profanity is using language that should have a holy, sacred quality in a common, base way. Profanity strips language of its divinity. Likewise, whenever we act in ways that strip divinity from its rightful place in our lives, we become profane.

Step back a bit and reflect on this. Life, all life, is sacred. God brought life into being and life reflects Him. God designated Life sacred, blessed it and put His stamp on it. If you go back to the Genesis account, you will discover that every step of the creative process is saturated with God’s holiness. God is holy and all that He does reflects that holiness. Therefore, in obedience to Him and in recognition of the true character of Life, we are asked to deliberately reflect the same holy attribute. That means that every act, every thought, every word of our lives is judged by the fundamental structure of the universe – holiness!

Hold the mirror of holiness up to your life. Is the reflection clear and bright? Is every part of your life a testimony to the holiness inherent in God’s creation? Do you live and move and exist in the fabric of the sacred quality of Life? Or are there some

things that you allow to be profaned? Are there some things where your actions, thoughts and attitudes are just like the fallen world, filled with reducing the sacred to the common?

If you are going to be a believer, you must remove the profane from your life. You have been designated holy by the Son's ceremonial act on the cross. Now you need to live up to the high calling.

God wants holiness. We want forgiveness. There's a big difference. We need forgiveness in order to pursue holiness, but we often want forgiveness in order to pursue our own agendas. It's time to return to the fundamentals. Profane nothing God has given. Be holy because He is holy.

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## Subpoenaed

"You are my **witnesses**," declares the Lord, "and My servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and believe Me and understand that I am He. Before Me there was no God formed, and there will be none after Me." Isaiah 43:10

**Witnesses** – When Yeshua gave us the Great Commission, He did not offer a new directive. God developed the strategy hundreds of years before Yeshua arrived. Once we see the Great Commission of the Old Testament, we will understand more about the Great Commission of the New Testament.

God elaborates His commission through the prophet Isaiah. **It begins with the purpose of election. The first declaration is that you and I and all of God's people are witnesses. The Hebrew is edai.** Although the word comes from legal language, our role as witnesses is more than just faithfully recounting the facts. In this case, we are witnesses only because we have been chosen by the court. This court does not

ask for volunteers. It issues a subpoena. You are required to comply. You have been called to testify. Implied in that divine subpoena is the fact that your testimony has been accepted as true. What you say and do really matters, not only to the court, but to all the world observing this grand legal proceeding.

**Notice that you cannot be a witness unless you are chosen.** God does not use just anyone. He uses only those whom He chooses, those to whom He has revealed certain, special things. Now that you are included on His witness list, you will have your turn on the stand and He will accept your testimony as true. **All of those who claim to speak for God, but are not chosen by Him have neither a true testimony nor are their claims accepted.** In this courtroom, the Judge determines who will speak and who will be heard.

Finally, the Hebrew verse shows us that the word witnesses is plural servant is singular. It does not say, "You will be my witnesses and my servants." Did Isaiah make a grammatical mistake? Not at all! **We are witnesses but our role is characterized as one servant.** Isaiah's passage looks forward to the time when a single Servant will fulfill completely the role of the witnesses. Our testimony is never divorced from the function of the Servant. We are a community of one voice, fulfilling a destiny that is summarized in one man, standing before the Judge as one person acceptable to Him. **Without the Son, there is no point in being a witness.** God's plan for the rescue of men comes in only one way. **We are witnesses because there is one Servant.**

The contemporary Christian church puts a lot of emphasis on witnessing. Of course, glad-handing people in the name of Jesus is not what God has in mind when it comes to giving testimony in His court. Perhaps we would all be refreshed and renewed if we realized that our calling to be witnesses is not our choice. It is God's. He has equipped each of us to deliver acceptable testimony because we have a direct

relationship with the Servant. Speaking up for God is really declaring the truth of His handiwork in my life.

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## WYSIWYG

Who is the King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty. The LORD mighty in battle. Psalm 24:8

King of Glory – What is the most important shift in worldview between our Greek-based culture and the culture of ancient Israel? WYSIWYG. “What You See Is What You Get.” Hebrew is a language that expresses the world as it appears to the subject. Greek, on the other hand, is a language that expresses underlying reality. Greek is about the hidden structure behind everyday experiences. Hebrew is about the experience itself.

Once you appreciate this shift, you will find the Old Testament a rich source of spiritual experience. You can stop asking, “But how did that happen?” or “Why did God do that?” and just enjoy the metaphors and Technicolor elaborations of Man’s experience with God. Where Greek seeks to tease out the fine distinctions of the implied structure below the surface, Hebrew paints pictures on the canvas of human emotion and action. It’s such a relief to know that God can be understood in WYSIWYG expressions.

Who is the King of glory? Who is the melek ha’kavod? Notice David’s answer. It is far from the Greek mind. God as king is described in terms of what David experiences as king – and kings win battles. So, the King of glory is the most victorious of them all; the One Who is mighty in battle. This is hardly the way we would describe the glory of God. We probably wouldn’t even use the term melek (king). We don’t think of God as a warrior carrying a sword and shield. And the

reason we don't think like this is not simply because we no longer live in a world where battles are fought with swords. We aren't likely to update the image by saying that God now carries an M-16 and tactical nukes. We don't think of God in terms of warfare. Why? Because our God has been civilized by centuries of Greek culture. He is no longer described in terms of tangible reality. Now we think of God in esoteric, theological concepts. God is omnipotent, not a mighty warrior king slaying His enemies. He is omniscient, not a woman at the city gate crying out for all those who seek wisdom. You get the idea. The more Greek we become, the further God is removed from our real experience of life as it is. Is it any wonder that we are slowly erasing God from our Greek-influenced culture? He is no longer the warrior king, the Rock, the strong right arm, the cleft, the fortress or the holy fire. We don't take our shoes off in His temple because we have replaced holy ground with plush carpet.

I want a God Who is my king! I want a God Who is a mighty warrior, Who will fight battles for me. I want to smell the battlefield and know that He is victorious. I want to see the enemies of God stacked like cordwood. I want to walk the scorched earth where He passed. Why? Because I need the rest of the "tangible God" metaphors - a God Who is like a mother with her new-born child, a God Who doesn't hide His purposes from me, Who tells me like it is so that I know what pleases Him. My life isn't long enough, and I am not smart enough, to discern the ways of a God buried in a hidden reality. Fortunately, God chose Hebrew to reveal Himself. Aren't you glad that He did?

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## Making It My Own

Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. Amen and Amen. Psalm 41:13

Amen – Did you know that “Amen” is a Hebrew word that has moved into our language untranslated? Every time you say, “Amen,” you are speaking Hebrew. You are saying something in the language of the Scriptures that has an enormous meaning. But the chances are that you don’t know what you are really saying. It’s time to find out.

Amen is a form of the Hebrew root ‘mn, which is also the root for ‘emet (true, that is, reliable, trustworthy, permanent and secure), and he‘emin (lasting, to prove faithful, to be constant), and ‘emeth (stability, reliability, faithfulness and truth). You can see right away that the context of all these thoughts center around the permanence and stability of the character of God. All of them are about personal actions that come from trustworthy character. Now you know what Yeshua meant when He said, “I am the truth,” not “I know the truth” or “I have the truth.” Truth is not facts. It is personal engagement.

Amen is related to all of these thoughts. It is literally the personal endorsement of God’s actions. It is like saying, “What God says, I accept and submit myself to.” It is making God’s will my will, like a shorthand way of saying, “Thy kingdom come on earth (in me) as it is in heaven.”

Amen is a part of prayer, not because it is some magical formula or because it is a nice closing, but because it proclaims that I commit myself to God’s will declared in the prayer. You cannot say, Amen, and simply walk away. Amen is your spiritual signature on the holy contract. It is your word that what you have prayed is what God

wants – and what you must do to see it happen. Amen is saying, “This is the absolutely reliable truth for me! I stake my life on it!”

Amazingly, amen is not used very often in Old Testament Scripture; only 24 times. Twelve of those occur in Deuteronomy. That makes perfect sense when you know that the book of the Law requires consent and submission. Amen to that! What is a bit more startling is the way that Yeshua uses amen. You see, amen is normally found after a declaration of God’s will, but Yeshua says amen before He gives His teaching (see John 1:51, 5:19 and 6:26 for examples). Now what does that tell you? Who can possibly give an endorsement to God’s will before God’s will is revealed? Only God, of course, because only God knows what His will is before it is spoken to men. So, Yeshua is not being just a good orthodox Jew. He is declaring His divinity whenever He begins a statement with amen amen. What a shame that our English translations often change these words to “truly, truly” or “verily, verily” or “I tell you truly.” Such translations lose the real impact of Yeshua’s use of amen by converting it from the Hebrew endorsement of God’s uncontested will to some kind of emphasis on what is true.

So, now you know. Now you can use amen correctly. Say amen and sign on the dotted line.