

12 – Yitro & Joshua 9 - Outline

Yitro Summary

Receiving the Torah in the Winter

1. God is building the faith of the people at Sinai
 - a. spectacular, tangible display
 - b. they don't have much personal knowledge of Him yet
 - c. such a display limits free will
2. How do we "receive" the Torah in the winter?
 - a. Diving deep into the inner Torah
 - i. How do we dive deep?
 1. we give TIME
 2. we respect Jewish study tradition
 - a. we accept much of what they have written
 - b. we learn their Torah study techniques
 3. we seek out good teachers
 4. we cultivate humility and a child-like faith
 5. we begin in gratitude, which leads to joy
 6. we pray for guidance from the Spirit
 - b. The testing of our commitment to Torah; choosing it again
 - i. cold is a test of apathy
 - ii. Purim is a test of staying in the covenant or not
 1. according to some Jewish tradition, Purim is when the Jews chose the covenant with the fullness of free will

Becoming a Master of Time

1. The key to understanding Jethro here: the marriage atmosphere
 - a. upper marriage: between God and Israel
 - b. lower marriage (reflection): between Israel and the nations
 - i. Jethro represents the bride of the nations
2. "Yitro:" "his excellence/overhanging/excess/extra left over"
 - a. "overhanging" is bridal language
 - i. a rock ledge surrounds those sheltering in it
 - ii. the wife "surrounds"
 1. the wife is the "home" that surrounds the family
 2. the woman receives the seed and is able to fashion the outside – the body for the spirit of a baby, the home
 - a. the nations receive the spiritual seed from Israel and build the physical world according to that truth
 - b. the sequence with Jethro and Moses:
 - i. Jethro brings Moses his wife
 - ii. Moses witnesses to Jethro

- iii. Jethro is fertile ground, receiving that witness of God and making a profession of faith
 - iv. Moses teaches Jethro how to worship
 - v. Jethro teaches Moses how to manage his time
 - c. the “Jethro sequence” is an example of the entire pattern
 - iii. the wife is more grounded in time and space (the physical realm)
 - 1. therefore, she can control time and space, and to greater degrees with maturation
 - 2. thus, Jethro helps Moses with TIME
 - a. woman’s connection to time is seen in her connection to the cycle of the moon
 - 3. the woman is generally more gifted at managing the family’s time, and the man is most gifted with keeping the family’s spiritual connection to God via prayer and Torah study
 - 4. the nations are more grounded in space and time
3. What does it mean to be a “master of time”?
 - a. an important verse in portion Bo, Exodus 12:1-2: “The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, ‘This month shall be for you the beginning of months. It shall be the first month of the year for you.’”
 - i. link to R’Trugman teaching:
 - (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ua6l7k9lNQI&list=PLYztuC2svll6_ZNFX4aJBGf9MFBa3wEEA&index=9)
 - ii. first commandment given to Israel as a newly formed nation
 - iii. the whole Jewish calendar grows out of this commandment
 - iv. this commandment is part of giving Israel mastery over time**
 - 1. it adjusts the Jewish perspective away from the more physically-oriented “civil” new year in the fall (Rosh Hashanah) and toward the more spiritually-oriented “spiritual” new year in the spring
 - 2. Nissan is about miracles
 - a. a characteristic of many modern-day superheros is that they can either manipulate time or space
 - 3. the transcendence of time is what spiritually mature people experience
 - a. time is not their master; they are a master of time
 - b. a slave lacks freedom over time
 - b. Being a Master of Time
 - i. With maturity comes freedom from enslavement to the flesh, and this comes with a degree of mastery of time
 - 1. example: addiction drains away time in many ways, including poor physical health
 - a. increased drug addiction is a characteristic of the end times as the dark gets darker while the light gets lighter
 - ii. With maturity comes long life
 - iii. With maturity comes wisdom for practically managing our time
 - iv. With maturity comes a balance of spiritual and material uses of time

1. spiritual: prayer, study, worship, mo'edim observance
 - a. cornerstone of the mo'edim is Shabbat; on Shabbat, we declare God to be our Source, not ourselves
 - i. the number 7 is the completion of the physical world, but it already carries a flavor of "8," the transcendent
2. physical: building, shaping the world
3. particular challenge for working people and people with young children, but also challenging for everyone trying to live Torah in a culture that doesn't have a Torah heartbeat
- v. With maturity, time flies
 1. our consciousness affects both the quality and speed of time
 - a. a faith-filled, positive perspective makes time pass more quickly and in a life-giving way
 - b. R'Trugman example: 2 teens who experience summer camp very differently because of their positive or negative perspectives (fast or slow, for example)
 - i. (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ua6i7k9lNQI&list=PLYztuC2svll6_ZNFX4aJBGF9MFBa3wEEA&index=9 around 50m)
 2. this is a daily challenge, especially for
- vi. With knowledge of the spiritual seasons comes a degree of mastery of time
 1. When we understand the calendar, we can get in tune with God's plan for constant renewal
 2. The more we understand His plan, the more we understand Yeshua, because His plan of renewal is salvation (Yeshua)

Yeshua and Time

1. It's by the blood of the Lamb that we are set free from enslavements of all kinds, including the addictions that so drain our time.
2. Yeshua was never worried about what needed to get done
3. We see Yeshua balancing spiritual and more physical pursuits
 - a. 40 days in the wilderness praying, often withdrawing to pray, studying the Word as a youngster in Jerusalem, attending synagogue services
 - b. eating and drinking with those He was ministering to, healing, teaching
4. Yeshua calls Himself Lord of the Sabbath
5. He is our best example of mastery of time in every respect.

Joshua 9

1. the "Gibeonite Deception"
2. the Gibeonites deserve some respect – they survived and found themselves right at the center of the action in Israel, at the Tabernacle
3. in a way, the Gibeonites are in a feminine position in relation to Israel since they are Gentiles from the nations

4. Lessons we Gentiles can take from the Gibeonites:
 - a. we can recognize that God is with Israel in a special way, and that never changes
 - i. the Gibeonites recognize that they are not exactly fighting Israel, but the God Who stands behind Israel
 - b. we need to humbly accept that the role for the Gentiles is not the same as the role for the Jews
 - i. Gibeon was a great city composed of warriors; what they did here shows great humility
 - c. let's understand that we have a role to play to help the Jews
 - i. we bless Israel in especially tangible ways, but we also serve as a receptacle for the wisdom God has given them to pass along
 - ii. fascinatingly, both Temples were built mostly by Gentile hands – it is they who had the skills to do it according to the Jewish plan
 1. even when the Temple is renovated, it is done by Gentiles
 2. the nations are making the physical container, the home, the outside, like the bride does

Grant: <https://torahtodayministries.org/lesson/yitro/> (18 min): This portion starts off with Jethro bringing a bride to Moses, bringing Moses his bride. And then you see Moses shaping the people by following Jethro's advice. What he's doing is he's fashioning the people into a bride because they're about to have a wedding. And Jethro said the same words to Moses that God said about Adam: "It is not good (for him to be alone)." And so we see everything in this portion about fashioning the people into a bride.

Note that the word "to see/to look for," in 18:21 is an unusual inclusion of Aramaic in the text. It is Yitro talking, and he is telling Moses to find able men. The verb chet-tzayin-heh is Aramaic. (https://www.chabad.org/multimedia/video_cdo/aid/2455729/jewish/A-Father-In-Laws-Advice.htm 11:30)

12 – Yitro & Joshua 9 Transcript (not exact)

Welcome to Beth Tikkun and our ongoing study of the Torah portions through the lens of the spiritual seasons of the year. This week we are in portion Yitro. As a reminder, I have put a link to an outline of this teaching below the video.

Yitro Summary

Parsha Yitro is small but mighty. This is one of the few portions named for a Gentile. Yitro, or as we say in English "Jethro," is Moses' father-in-law, the father of his wife Zipporah. Jethro is also described as the priest of Midian. Apparently he was an important person among the Midianites.

In this portion, Jethro brings to Moses Zipporah and their two sons. Moses tells Jethro what God has done for the nation in bringing them out of Egypt. Jethro rejoices by saying, “Blessed be the LORD, who has delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians and out of the hand of Pharaoh and has delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians. Now I know that the LORD is greater than all gods, because in this affair they dealt arrogantly with the people.” (Exodus 18:10-11). Jethro brings a sacrifice, and Moses, Aaron, and the elders of Israel share that meal together in the presence of God.

The next day, Jethro watches Moses handling the issues of the nation from morning till evening, and he tells him, “What you are doing is not good!” He advises him to set up chiefs that can handle most of the issues, bringing only the most difficult to him; otherwise, he’ll wear himself out. Moses takes Jethro’s advice.

The following two chapters are two of the most momentous in the whole Torah. The people arrive at Mt. Sinai. Moses brings a kind of proposal to the people from God, that if they will keep His covenant, they will be His treasured people, and they agree. After the people ready themselves for the third day, God spectacularly speaks out the ten commandments. And the portion ends with a few other laws.

Receiving the Torah in the Winter

I would actually like to spend most of our time today on the events surrounding Jethro, Moses’ father-in-law, but we can’t let the 10 commandments and the beginning of the giving of the Torah slip by here. What a scene that must have been! It would seem that because the people are still spiritual newborns at this time, God wants to do a bit more revealing of Himself in addition to how He revealed Himself in Egypt and the short wilderness journey so far. He is fixing in their minds knowledge of His great power and the authority He has invested in Moses. So He appears in a mighty way to them at Mt. Sinai. He is building their faith in both Himself and Moses. The people have little direct knowledge of God to fall back on when the going gets tough. What they know of Him is mostly what was passed on from the patriarchs and their recent experience of Him. So God is gracious to provide other means to bolster their faith with this astounding, tangible experience of Him. As they mature in their walk with God in the coming years and centuries, such a revelation as Sinai is less necessary because they know Him better after walking Him longer. The more God has to reveal Himself tangibly like this, the less free will the people will have. Who is going to say no to the God Who is appearing like this at Mt. Sinai? You’d have to be an utter fool to deny Him at this point.

And it must have been quite a display. Before the giving of the 10 commandments, God says to Moses: “Behold, I am coming to you in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with you, and may also believe you forever” (Exodus 19:9). It proves to be more than a “thick cloud.” To start with, God descends on the mountain as fire. Imagine the northern lights from across the entire Arctic coalescing together and funneling down onto a single desert mountaintop, covering the top of the mountain in fiery light like the world’s biggest torch. The ground is shaking, the sound of a shofar keeps getting louder, lightning flashes periodically, and God speaks to Moses with a voice like thunder. Imagine that vast fire that has come down from

heaven and has settled on a mountaintop speaking to a tiny little man who is standing there in the midst of the fire on the mountaintop. That speck of a man is talking to the Creator of the Universe, with a nation gathered all around the mountain looking on. What an experience it must have been! And God explains why He does this when He tells Moses beforehand: “Behold, I am coming to you in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with you, and may also believe you forever” (Exodus 19:9).

As we have been emphasizing in these studies, we are drawing ever closer to the end of the cycle of months, so we are reaching a point of maturity in the year before we again undergo a kind of rebirth at a higher level at Passover. What is this scene at Mt. Sinai speaking to us now in this season of the 11th month? If we are reading about the giving of the Torah this week and in the coming weeks, this idea must be of central importance for us now, when we read it.

I want to make two quick points here regarding how we RECEIVE the Torah in the winter. The first is that we are still in a season of diving into deeper levels of the Torah. At Shavuot in the late spring, we celebrate the giving of the Torah, and on this side of the year, we are being enabled to go deep. This whole half of the year that is kicked off in the 7th month by a special work of Torah in our gut and heart is a time that lends itself especially well to digging deeply into the INNER Torah. At Sinai, we are seeing the people absorb the outer Torah, the surface level of the Torah. With maturity comes the ability to dip into the sparkling inner waters of the Torah. To flesh out this point, let me just list a few of the KEYS to digging deeper in the Torah:

1. **we must give TIME to Torah study:** you’re not going to plunge deep without an investment of time; that’s a foundational requirement
2. **we respect the Jewish study tradition,** and we learn how they have studied the Torah for centuries; this doesn’t mean we accept everything that has been written for three thousand years, but we accept much of it, and just as importantly, we learn THEIR techniques for Bible study to augment our own. We accept that God chose the Jews as His kingdom of priests and that the Bible is a Jewish book.
3. **we seek out good teachers:** we are looking for Jewish, Christian, and Messianic teachers who can both teach well and who have proven themselves in their walk with the Lord.
4. **we cultivate humility and a child-like faith:** an already full vessel cannot receive anything new. We approach the Father and His Word with the faith of a child that takes these amazing words at face value – and that’s huge – but we also bring the adult understanding that there are many, many layers of meaning here. We also carefully lift some guards that want to box us in – that thought that the Bible is limited and like a normal book I can hold in my hand. It’s not a normal book. It’s supernatural, and we will never get to the bottom of it. A child has a new adventure every day. We need to foster this spirit of daily adventure within us. Life is an adventure that we are meant to enjoy. And this sense of adventure leads to the final idea I’ll mention here for this topic:
5. **we begin in gratitude, which leads to joy:** this one is from R’Trugman, who quotes R’Ginsburgh (Tue, Feb 7, 2023 online teaching) as saying that when we seek to be inspired, we start by giving thanks to God for all of our abundant blessings. This

gratitude brings us to a place of joy, and joy is the state of being that most lends itself toward inspiration.

6. In closing this section, let's also **recognize that Believers have been given the Holy Spirit**, the Spirit of Truth that guides us into all truth. The Spirit leads us supernaturally in our study of the Torah, and that's critical. We need to pray for the Spirit's guidance in the Word, inviting His voice into our study. The Spirit is at work in the world today lifting a veil on the Christian world and enabling Believers to go deep in the Word. This deeper dive into Torah among Christians everywhere today is another sign of the end times.

Ok, so that's the idea of going deep in the Torah in the winter, which is a form of receiving the Torah in the winter. The second idea I'd like to connect to our receiving of the Torah in the winter is the reminder that our commitment to Torah is being tested now in this cold time, so we are having to re-commit to the Torah in this season. Again, cold is equated with a kind of lack of passion, apathy. And when we lack passion, we are weak and prone to slipping away. Let me say again that we are nearing Purim, and the real test at Purim is this question: "Will you stay in the covenant the Jewish people have with God and suffer the consequences of the evil decree against all the Jews in Persia, or will you walk away from the covenant and the Jewish people and save your life?" This was a great test, indeed, because the Jews were separated from their Land and their Temple, surrounded by different cultures. Those who were apathetic toward God and the Torah would have really struggled with what to do in this situation. As we read now in this portion about the giving of the Torah, we should expect our own commitment to the Torah to be tested in this season.

I mentioned earlier that God showed Himself so boldly at Mt. Sinai that you'd have to be a fool to not agree to the covenant at that time. The truth is that they had little free will to choose God at Sinai. According to some Jewish teaching, the people REALLY chose God with the FULLNESS of free will during Purim, when God was hiding Himself. God's name doesn't even appear in the book of Esther. God wants us to choose Him and His Torah without the light show on Mt. Sinai, and making that choice for God and Torah while God is hidden is central to this season of the year.

Becoming a "Master of Time"

I want to back up a bit now to spend some time with this somewhat mysterious figure of Jethro and his relationship to Moses. This supremely important Torah portion containing the wonder at Sinai is named for this Gentile priest of Midian. This certainly brings up some questions.

I believe the key to understanding what Jethro is doing here is the marriage atmosphere that is connected to this moment for Israel. Many commentators note how the events at Mt. Sinai are very evocative of a marriage, or at least one step in the ancient Jewish marriage process. I would like to suggest that running parallel to the marriage between God and Israel is a marriage between the Jewish people and the nations, and Jethro is representing the bride of the nations here. The "upper marriage" between God and Israel has a lower reflection, the marriage between Israel and the nations. We're seeing a picture of that marriage here between the high priest of Israel, Moses, and the high priest of the nearby nation of Midian, Jethro.

Before we go deeper, let's look at Jethro's name. "Yitro" is thought to mean "his excellence," but the root idea seems to be that of "overhanging" or "excess" or "extra left over." I like the root idea of "overhanging" here because, to me, this concept of "overhanging" is marriage language. Some of you watching may have been to Mary Campbell cave at the Gorge in Cuyahoga Falls, that large rock overhang where native Americans sometimes lived next to the river. A ledge like that SURROUNDS those who are sheltering under it. In the Jewish mind, there is a sense that the bride surrounds. THE BRIDE IS THE HOME, and the home encompasses the family.

In a deeper sense, the bride is able to receive the seed and fashion a physical body for it, a BODY that surrounds. She crafts the physical home for the spirit of the child. The woman's special gift is being able to create the outside, the body and also the home, to turn a house into a home that perfectly reflects the family. Without the outside, the spirit has no way to interact with the world. Once again, "Yitro" means "overhang," and we can see in this idea of a physical covering a reference to what the bride is specially capable of creating.

In the marriage relationship between Israel and the nations, the nations receive the spiritual seed from Israel and produce fruit in the physical world according to that truth, building and shaping the world according to the plan and instruction provided by the Jews. Once again, Jethro represents the Gentile bride.

Notice how the interaction between Jethro and Moses unfolds in our portion. Jethro brings Moses' wife to him, which is an interesting beginning to the story. Moses then tells Jethro about what God has done for Israel in delivering the nation from Egypt. In other words, Moses witnesses to Jethro about God. Jethro receives that testimony, and he proves to be fertile soil for that seed. Jethro expresses faith in God. Moses then leads Jethro to offer a sacrifice, teaching him how to properly worship God. Finally, it's Jethro's turn to contribute to Moses as Jethro helps Moses with the practicalities of his life as the leader of Israel. Jethro first absorbs truth, then helps to create a workable vessel for Moses to do what God has given him to do. It's interesting that God didn't instruct Moses in how to do his job in this regard. God left it to Jethro to help him. And Moses was humble enough to receive that from Jethro.

The whole series of events is an important example of the pattern we've been talking about in the year, in the calendar. In this parsha, the Jews give the spiritual seed to the Gentiles, who internalize it. If it finds fertile soil there, then the Gentiles in their turn bless the Jews in a particularly physical way. This is what is happening on many levels over the course of a year as we grow in the Lord. Keep in mind that we're talking in generalities here because we're talking about a pattern. Never forget, though, that God enjoys bending His own patterns.

The bride is more grounded in the physical realm, so it is her special gift to be able to manipulate and control space and time, which are the two fundamental building blocks of the physical realm. And as the cycle of salvation progresses, we gain more and more mastery over space and time, mastery of the physical realm.

We have noted that in this portion, Jethro is particularly helping Moses with the practicalities of TIME rather than space. The woman's special connection to time can be seen in her relationship to the moon, which is the basis of the entire calendar. The woman's cycle is in rhythm with the cycles of the moon. It is the bride who is usually the one who is most gifted to handle the family's use of time. The man, on the other hand, is most gifted with keeping the family's spiritual connection to God via prayer and Torah study.

Since the nations are like the physical side of the marriage to Israel, the nations are more naturally grounded in time and space and more skilled at building and manipulating the stuff of earth. And this is why we see a Gentile helping Moses to organize his time. Jethro helps Moses to become a master of time so that time is not a master of Moses.

I want to drill down on the idea of being a "master of time," now, specifically because, as I said, with maturity comes mastery of the physical realm, including time.

Back in portion Bo, we mostly skipped over a couple of important verses that are particularly important to this whole Spiritual Seasons study. I want to go back and pick them up now. Let me mention here that some of the following ideas are coming from a teaching of R'Avraham Trugman. You can find a link to R'Trugman's teaching in the outline below the video. The important verses I'm talking about is Exodus 12:1-2. The 10th plague hasn't happened yet, and God is about to give Passover as an annual appointed time. But before God gets to the nuts and bolts of how to keep Passover, we read this: "The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, 'This month shall be for you the beginning of months. It shall be the first month of the year for you.'"

Many Jewish commentaries note that this commandment to regard the month of Passover as the first of the months is THE FIRST COMMANDMENT GIVEN TO THE NEWLY FORMED NATION OF ISRAEL. We see a few other commandments earlier, but Israel only forms as a nation within Egypt, and this commandment regarding the months is the first given to that newly formed people even before they leave Egypt. The whole Jewish calendar grows out of this commandment because it is understood that Passover must happen in the spring. In order for Passover to not drift through the calendar, the lunar calendar has to be tweaked regularly. If the calendar weren't tweaked, Passover would get earlier and earlier every year because the lunar year is a bit shorter than the solar year. This verse is the origin of the unique Jewish calendar, which is a lunar-solar calendar, a lunar calendar that is adjusted to stay with the solar calendar.

In a sense, this first commandment to the Jewish nation adjusts their perspective away from the physical law and toward the spiritual law, toward transcendence. There is a whole new relationship to time being given here, and it's a relationship that will lead the people into being masters of time rather than being mastered by time. This is because the Tishrei side of the calendar, the fall side, is the more physical beginning in the year. Rosh Hashanah, the first day of the 7th month, is called the CIVIL new year. Nissan, on the other hand, is the month of the

SPIRITUAL new year. Nissan is about miracles that transcend nature. If the Jews were previously keeping Tishrei as the first of the months – and that’s what many ancient Near Eastern cultures did – then they were emphasizing the physical beginning. God says, “Now that I’m bringing salvation, now that I’m setting you free from the kingdom of darkness, I want you to shift your perspective of time to emphasize the miraculous; the spiritual pole of the year shall be your beginning and ending point. You will begin and end in miracle. You are now a people who will emphasize the spiritual law over the physical law, and this starts at this very moment that you are set free from Egypt. You are now a supernatural people, as all people are meant to be and will be one day.”

The transcendence of time is what spiritually mature people experience. Time is not to master us. We are to master time. A slave lacks freedom in many areas of life, and one of the most consequential is time. A slave is largely NOT a master of the time allotted to him or her. And this is a great loss of freedom, indeed. A child, too, doesn’t have mastery of time. An infant or a child doesn’t have such a good grasp of time. They can get lost in play for hours on end. It is not until we get older that we learn how to manage our time profitably.

So, what exactly does it mean to be a master of time, to be a master of God’s gift of continual renewal and reflection of His Light? I have a few ideas I’m going to list regarding what it means to be a master of time. I’m sure working together we could add many more.

1) With Maturity Comes Freedom from Enslavement to the Flesh, and This Comes with a Degree of Mastery of Time: We have been speaking recently of Egypt as a picture of the physical world in general and of enslavement to the physical side of our own being, the beast side, the flesh. One who is enslaved to the flesh LOSES mastery of time. Picture an addict caught in the enslavement of substance abuse – let’s say drug addiction. A drug addict is not master of his or her time. They are enslaved by their flesh, and their master demands that they put all of their time and efforts into procuring more and more of the drug. On the one hand, the drug addict is literally spaced out a lot, probably not accomplishing much when high, or at least not working efficiently. On the other hand, they lose time because their bodies are less healthy. We all know how difficult it is to do anything when we’re sick or visiting the hospital for this and that issue that keeps cropping up. And too, their money gets drained, wasted, and that means that time invested in getting the money comes to nothing. All of the drug addict’s life gets poured into this dead end.

Our hearts have to go out to those who are trapped in this condition. And to some degree, we all are still enslaved to the flesh, and God is bringing us through cycle after cycle of freedom.

On the other hand, one who is master of their flesh also gains mastery of time. They are not tied down by all of these time-consuming side effects of enslavement. They simply have more time available to invest in good works and growth. When a person is set free from that dark kingdom of physicality, they are moved from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light, and LIGHT MOVES FAST. In a way, Albert Einstein taught us that LIGHT TRANSCENDS TIME. If we can move at the speed of light, says Einstein, time stops. That’s a topic that is far beyond me.

But what we can say now is that if we can move according to the laws of the spiritual realm, the realm of light rather than the realm of darkness, then we can also master time and even transcend time.

A related point here:

2) With Maturity Comes Long Life: Living to a ripe old age is a kind of mastery of time. We read this promise constantly in the Word. Even in this week's Torah portion we read, "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you" (Exodus 20:12). Long life is something we should desire. This doesn't necessarily mean, however, that if the Lord chooses to take you out of this life at an early age that you were off track. Only God understands His complex calculations for running the world. We can't jump to conclusions like that because we simply lack the ability to see all that God sees.

We should desire long life, but there's a caution here, too: when it becomes clear that God is ending this journey for us, we need to be able to release it without trying to cling to it. Clinging to life and clinging to youth is what the world does. We accept the judgment God has given with thanksgiving and grace. But it is goo to desire a long life filled with service and growth and an ever-deepening relationship with God.

3) With Maturity Comes Wisdom for Practically Managing Our Time: Knowing how to practically manage the time given to us is a kind of wisdom that comes with spiritual maturity. As we mature, we develop an increased ability to apply our minds to our use of time.

When you're a teenager, you might think it's natural and fun to stay up until 2am babbling with your friends, usually about nothing terribly profound. And maybe that's ok for a teen to indulge like that occasionally when they are taking a break from school, maybe. We create some lasting bonds in life doing silly things like that, and that's important. But AS A WAY OF LIFE IN GENERAL, it's not a great use of time. It makes a person less capable of doing good in the world.

The master of time knows when to go to bed and when to wake up and how long to work and how long to spend time with family and how fancy the yard can be and what is the appropriate balance between the taste of our meals and how long they take to prepare, and how much time is useful for relaxation so we can be recharged and so many other practical aspects of managing time. This comes with maturity.

4) With Maturity Comes a Balance of Spiritual and Material Uses of Time: Not only will a mature person know how to manage time in practical ways, but they'll also know how to distribute their time between the more spiritual use of time and the more action-oriented uses of time. We're talking about on the one hand the mostly spiritual pursuits of prayer and study and worship and on the other hand the active pursuits of working and shaping and building in this world. And that is the usual pattern— the spiritual pursuits are given priority first in the day when our mind is less cluttered, and the building of the world comes second. This is a daily challenge for working people and people with young children, especially. And another part of that challenge comes from the fact that nearly all of us are not living in a Torah-centered

culture, a place like Israel where the culture has a Torah heartbeat. So the culture, itself, is not set up to make it easy to prioritize prayer and Shabbat and the other mo'edim. So we have to be creative. But we simply must find a way to give priority to our connection to God in prayer and study of the Torah and God's special days.

Of those special days, the cornerstone of all the mo'edim and the first to be described in the list of mo'edim in Leviticus 23 is the Shabbat. The keeping of the weekly Sabbath on God's appointed day for it is an absolute cornerstone of being a master of time. On Shabbat, we say that God rules all and is our Provider and Sustainer, and with this knowledge, we are able to rest in Him. We don't have to be a slave to time. We can stop and receive the gift of rest that He gives. Again, we rule time, and time does not rule us. We enter into that sweet freedom of the Shabbat.

One thing I have found in my life is that when I put God first and maybe sacrifice a bit of money to do that, He makes everything run smoother and last longer. My car breaks down less, my house has fewer issues to deal with, and I'm generally healthy. It's like God says, "Ok, in order to follow Me whole-heartedly, you didn't work on Shabbat," or "you gave up a job that you liked," or "you spent time on a good deed and set your work aside," and I'M NOT GOING LET YOU FALL BECAUSE OF THAT. I'm going to make sure that your money is enough for what you need." And how much time do we spend on car and home repairs and on going to the doctor? Imagine if you could just have the time back you spend on house and car and doctor visits! I can truly say today that I have found God to be faithful in this, and it not only has kept my finances healthy, but it has literally given me more time. Now if He would just touch my grass and stop it from growing...

5) With the Maturity Time Flies: This idea is a bit deep; I'll say it this way: one who has a positive mindset, a doggedly faith-based perspective on life, experiences time much differently than someone who is constantly fearful and who sees life as one big disappointment after the next until you die. By developing a faith-based, positive perspective, time seems to pass quickly and much more enjoyably and is much more life-giving. In other words, our consciousness effects our experience of time. R' Trugman gives the example of two teenagers who go off to summer camp, and they get to the last day of camp, and one teenager says, "What? Already over? We just got here!" and the other says, "Finally! This has been the longest week of my life! Get me out of here!" The two teens' differing mindsets effected how they related to time; their mindsets affected both their experience of the quality of what happened and their experience of the speed of time. For the one with the positive mindset, life is going by at the speed of light; it's quick, and this speed is a quality of the spiritual realm where light comes from. For the one with the negative mindset, time passes slowly, and this groundedness in time is a quality of the physical realm. We all know what it's like to feel like time is absolutely stretching out unendingly.

It's a daily challenge for us to maintain a divine perspective. The mature person will be able to keep their mind in that place of faith and positivity and even excitement for what the day has to

offer, and time will pass quickly and enjoyably for that person. They will look at a new day as a new adventure rather than one more endless grind of the wheel.

God's personal Name, the 4-letter Tetragrammaton, is composed of the letters that spell out "to be" in the past, present, and future. For God, these are happening at the same time. He transcends time. And when we maintain a godly perspective on life, we too can transcend time to some degree. We are made in His image, and He wants us to transcend time like He does.

6) With Knowledge of the Spiritual Seasons Comes a Degree of Mastery of Time:

Understanding the calendar God has given us is an aspect of being a master of time. The great Torah scholars within Israel were said to come especially from the tribe of Issachar, and their focus was apparently understanding the calendar. God is renewing us and renewing us over and over again through His various spiritual seasons and mo'edim. We are walking along the path called "Salvation," and it is a path of constant renewal. This repeated renewal is one of the main characteristics of the moon which, again, is the basis of the calendar. The moon is always changing, either waxing and waning, sometimes disappearing entirely only to be reborn again as a tiny sliver. And so by God's design, at the root of time for us, at the root of time FOR THE REDEEMED, is this idea of constant renewal. The more we understand how God has designed His calendar, the more we understand how He renews us and the more we can get in tune with that renewal process. It is a growth process that we are totally immersed in. It's the air we breathe. And another name for this growth process, this renewal process, is "salvation," which in Hebrew is "Yeshua." So, the more we can learn about this process via the calendar, the more we get to know Yeshua.

Yeshua

Speaking of Yeshua, let's say a few words now about Yeshua and time. First, it is by the blood of the Lamb that we are set free from enslavement to the flesh which so saps us of time. Yeshua is the key to freedom from enslavements like intellectual pride, emotional instability, and physical addiction. Through Yeshua's blood, these are conquered.

As for practically managing time, Yeshua just never seemed worried about what needed to get done. He put the kingdom of God first, and what needed to get done got done. We see Yeshua spending time in both the realms of the more spiritual and physical pursuits. He spent 40 days in the wilderness before choosing His disciples, and we often see Him withdrawing to pray. We see Him as a youth drawn to the teachers and Torah study, asking questions. We see Him attending synagogue services. And on the other hand, we also see Him eating and drinking with those He was ministering to, and we see Him spending much time healing and teaching. Yeshua calls Himself Lord of the Sabbath, and He brings correction to the somewhat skewed perspective of Shabbat the culture of the time had. Yeshua taught much about time through the use of parables, like those related to farming. Truly, in Yeshua is every aspect of the mastery of time. He is our ultimate example for this.

Joshua 9

Lastly, let's turn now to Joshua 9, the Gibeonite Deception. The Gibeonites live near Jerusalem. They see the writing on the wall, that their days are numbered. So they craftily convince Joshua and the elders that they are from a distant land, and they express the desire to enter into a covenant relationship with Israel, which Israel does. When their deception is discovered, they cannot be killed because of the covenant. In fact, that covenant requires that if Gibeon is being attacked, Israel will come to their rescue, and vice versa. And we will see Israel do this in the next chapter, swooping in to save the Gibeonites when they are attacked. So the leaders of Israel decide to spare the Gibeonites, but they make them servants for the Tabernacle – cutters of wood and drawers of water for the house of God.

The Gibeonites deserve some respect here. Not only did they survive, but they were given positions at the Tabernacle. They were lowly positions, but they served right there at the heart of Israel. And they lived when so many others died.

In a way, the Gibeonites are in a feminine position in relation to Israel since they are Gentiles, from the nations. Those of us who are Gentiles can take a few important lessons from them.

First, we can recognize that God is with Israel in a special way, and that never changes. The Gibeonites see that they are not fighting for their lives against Israel but against the God Who stands behind Israel. Gibeon could have tried to band together with other Canaanite cities to attack Israel. But they were wise enough to recognize that they weren't going to be fighting the people really. They were going to be fighting the God Who took Israel out of Egypt and parted the waters for them twice, the God Who caused the walls of mighty Jericho to fall.

A second lesson for the nations here is that we need to humbly accept that the role for the Gentiles is not the same as the role for the Jews. The humility of the Gibeonites is remarkable and praiseworthy here. In the next chapter of Joshua, Gibeon is described as a great city, like one of the royal cities, and all its men were warriors. There is a greatness here when a city of warriors is able to recognize that all their skills will come to nothing against God's people. When their deception is found out and Joshua tells them what the leaders of Israel had decided regarding making them servants in the Tabernacle, they answer, "...behold, we are in your hand. Whatever seems good and right in your sight to do to us, do it" (Joshua 9:25). These are WARRIORS saying this, agreeing to becoming servants. It is only when we accept the position and identity God has given us that we will be fully on the path of life. It might be a role that comes with lesser glory, but it is the role for which we are designed – nothing else will fit us quite right.

Lastly, let's understand that we do have a role to play to help the Jews. This role is not without dignity. The Jews are in an intercessory role, a nation of priests, and the Gentiles build the world and make it run smoothly. The nations support Israel financially. We are receivers of the wisdom Israel is given to pass along. One of the most fascinating examples of the Gentile role in relation to the Jews is the fact that both Temples were mostly built WITH GENTILE HANDS according to the Jewish plan. It was the Gentiles who had the skills to build the Temples. Even when the Temple is renovated, it is again Gentiles who do the work. So we see that the nations

make the physical container, the outside, like the bride does. This is the special skill that only the woman can do.

We'll leave it there today. Thanks for listening. May God make us people who dig deep into His Torah, people who are masters of time and rise above the boundaries of time, and people who support the Jewish leadership, the Jewish groom, in whatever ways we can. And may He make us into the people He wants us to be. Shalom.