

THE BORN-AGAIN WORLD

Today I want to speak to you about the meaning and significance of the resurrection of our Master Yeshua, and I want to continue to talk about what it means to be “born again.” In the previous teaching, we were speaking about the concept of being “born again” and trying to understand a little bit of what that means, what it entails. I want to start today in 1 Peter because we have the Apostle Peter speaking about the idea here, in one long *berachah*.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Master Yeshua the Messiah [who] according to his great mercy, he has caused us to be *born again* to a living hope through the resurrection of Yeshua the Messiah from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. (1 Peter 1:3-9)

The Imperishable Inheritance

The Apostle Peter says that God has “caused us to be born again” through our hope in the resurrection of Yeshua the Messiah from the dead.

How does that work? What does it mean to have a “living hope through the resurrection of Yeshua the Messiah from the dead?” I mean, if you think about it, the proposition seems to be simply this: “Believe that Jesus rose from the dead and you will be born again and saved.” Is that the message?

Well, sort of, but there’s something more to it than that. Peter says that, because of the resurrection of Yeshua, we now have hope in attaining “*an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you.*”

Let’s do our homework and make sure we understand each of these terms. What is the inheritance? And what is the salvation to be revealed in the last time?

- It’s something imperishable. That means it doesn’t change or go bad. It’s like matzah bread. It does not spoil or decay.
- It’s something undefiled. That means it cannot be touched by ritual impurity, human mortality, or any type of uncleanness or ceremonial pollution. Like the angels.
- It’s something unfading. That means it doesn’t grow old, it doesn’t wear out, it doesn’t become stale or dull, tired or weak.
- It’s kept in heaven for you. That means God is the Trustee and the Executor of the inheritance.

“Kept in heaven for you” doesn’t mean “going to heaven when you die.” Instead, the words “it’s kept in heaven for you” are a circumlocution type of expression for future reward from God, like when the Master says, “store up your treasure in heaven,” or “your reward is in heaven.” Those sayings do not mean that your treasure is in a bank vault up in heaven, they mean that the merit you have accrued is with God and God is the one who will reward you. He is the Trustee of this inheritance, and he will be the Executor that pays it out. The inheritance is kept with God for now, “kept in heaven for you,” but it will be delivered to the born-again in the future to come. Until then, the born-again are “being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”

A Share in the World to Come

What are we are talking about and hoping in? What is this inheritance? In Jewish terminology, its called “הַחֵלֶק לְעוֹלַם הַבָּא” “a share in the world to come.” It’s the resurrection of the dead and the world to come.

Let me back up a moment. Yesterday, we were musing over the Master’s teaching that a person must be born again in order to see the kingdom. What does it mean to be “born again?” And we learned that every person is born the first time into this world, as a child of flesh and blood, in this world. But not everyone is born again, that is, spiritually reborn.

And here’s the meaning: To be born again means to be born of World to Come, the *Olam Haba*.

Olam HaZeh

In this world, nothing is permanent. At the end of our chapter, verse 24, Peter makes this point with a quotation from Isaiah 40:

All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls.

In other words, everything is temporary. You see a young girl or a young boy in the blossoming flower of youth, and it’s only a short matter of time until they are an old woman and an old man, faded and wilted, and a short period of time and they are dead and gone. Take a gander through the book of Ecclesiastes. Vanity, vanity; vapor, vapor. Life is but a fleeting shadow, a poor player that struts and frets on the stage of life.

You should come to Israel and stand some place like Megiddo, on an archaeological dig with dozens of occupation layers from thousands years of occupation. When I was sixteen years old, standing on the mount of Megiddo, my brother said, “Think about the human lives that come and gone here, been lived out, day after day, whole lifetimes, one generation after another, in this place, all forgotten, none of them remembered. No one remembers their names or their stories. You get a sense of how short life is, how insignificant it is.”

It’s like the feeling you get when looking up at the night time sky that stretches on forever, and you realize you are looking a stars that are thousands, millions, in some cases billions of years

ago, and billions of miles away, and for a moment you realize your own profound insignificance. And yet all that you see spread out before you is perishing too. Everyone one of those stars will burn out and die. They may have done so already, but the light of their death has not reached us yet.

All of life is a life of loss, and the more you cling to this world and try to hold on to the things of this world, the more you will lose, because nothing stays the same. Even love perishes and dies if it is human love. There is nothing in this life that is certain, nothing that is constant, nothing that is reliable, and certainly nothing that is permanent. The law of entropy is absolute, and all things are continually in motion and continually falling apart. Like my house.

But the resurrection of Yeshua offers a glimpse of a different kind of reality. One that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading. *Chelek le'olam haba, le'olam va'ed*. A portion of the world to come.

The Perfect

A few months ago, we learned about the World of Souls. When we are born, we are born into this world from the world of souls, and this world becomes our absolute reality. It's like the soul puts on a virtual reality headset. Inside the headset, we do not see the spiritual world. Instead, we enter the virtual reality of *Olam Hazeah*, this current universe, and from inside here, it appears that this is all that there is and all that there ever will be.

But the resurrection of Yeshua of Nazareth shatters that illusion because his resurrected body is a token of a different kind of reality, a world outside this world. He betokens a different kind of physicality, a world of permanence, a state that the apostles refer to as "The Perfect."

Paul says, "When the Perfect comes, the partial will pass away" (1 Corinthians 13:10), and he says he desires to know the power of Messiah's resurrection "in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by the Messiah Yeshua" (Philippians 3:10-12). In the Book of Hebrews, we are told that Messiah suffered in order to be made *Perfect* (Hebrews 2:10), and "having been made *perfect*, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation" (Hebrews 5:9). Whereas the Torah made nothing *perfect*, because it appoints mortal men weak in their mortality, the New Covenant appoints the Son who was "made *Perfect* forever" (Hebrew 7:19), and likewise, the sacrifices can never "make *perfect* those who draw near" (Hebrews 10:1), but through Yeshua, we have a "better hope, through which we draw near to God" (Hebrews 7:19), in which "the spirits of the righteous [are] made *perfect*" (Hebrews 11:39), and even those great men of faith from previous generations had not attained this *perfection*, but only glimpsed it from a far, in order that "Apart from us they would not be made *perfect*" (Hebrews 11:40).

To enter the Perfect is to enter the resurrected state and the world to come. At the end of the book of Revelation, we read these remarkable words, "I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy

city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.” (Revelation 21:1-2).

Olam HaZeh, the Kingdom, and Olam Haba

Rabbi Chaim Luzato begins his book, *Path of the Just*, with the premise that man was created for the purpose of reveling in the presence of God, of enjoying God and delighting in him, but the place where this can really happen is not this world, nor is it the World of Souls, but ultimately, the World to Come.

The World to Come is beyond human ability to grasp or understand. It’s a fusion of the spiritual world and the physical world in a way we have never experienced. Like this world, the World to Come contains both the spiritual and the physical, but unlike this world, it’s an imperishable world, in which there is no decay or corruption, no flaw or impermanence, and because of that, it’s impossible for us to comprehend it. It’s completely outside of our experience. It’s like trying to imagine a color you have never seen. The World to Come is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you.

The Messianic Era, we can picture, because that takes place within this present world. It is part of Olam Hazeh, but the World to Come, Olam Haba, that’s absolutely unfathomable to us. This opinion is based on the passage in Isaiah which describes the future reward of the righteous as something that has neither been seen nor imagined in this world:

For since the beginning of the world it has not been heard, nor given ear, neither has an eye seen, O God, beside you, what he has prepared for the one that waits on him.
(Isaiah 64:4)

All the prophets prophesied only in regard to the Messianic Era, but regarding the World to Come, “No eye has seen, O God, beside you, what he has prepared for the one that waits on him.” (b.*Sanhedrin* 99a)

All the prophetic promises about a coming utopian era of peace and prosperity and the revelation of God pertain only to the Messianic Era. During the Messianic Era, life will continue here on earth under King Messiah’s rule. Men and women will be born, live out their days, and die. The prophecies describe what life will be like in those days.

The kingdom brings the Messiah and the redemption of Israel. It’s the end of the exile, and the culmination of God’s promises to Israel. But the kingdom is not the conclusion. Instead, it’s a transition from this world to the next. At the conclusion of that era, a new world will be born out of the old one. This world will perish, and be reborn, resurrected, born again, into a new world—a renewal of the old, not a completely different world, but a recreation of the creation, just as our Master’s body was not a completely new body, but a recreation of the old.

The Apostle Peter says, “The heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells” (2 Peter 3:12-13).

Not even the prophets have seen into that new state of existence. They are unable to describe what the World to Come will be like because they have not heard or seen “what he has prepared for the one that waits on him.” Yeshua paraphrases the same text from Isaiah as He promises to deliver the concealed reward of the World to Come to His disciples:

I will give you what no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, what no hand has touched, what has not arisen in the human heart. (*Thomas 17*)

In 1 Corinthians 2, the Apostle Paul invokes the same text from Isaiah and the same idea about the concealed reward of the righteous, but he insists that the concealed reward of that future world is revealed “through the Spirit”:

As it is written, “What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him”—these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. (1 Corinthians 2:9–10)

A Spiritual-Physical World

The world to come is not the world of souls. The world of souls is not the final destination. It's not the Perfect. The world of souls is just a waiting area. It's completely incorporeal and non-physical, but the World to Come has physicality and material existence, albeit unlike our own. It's incorruptible, like matzah bread, it does not go bad. The world to come is the physical form of the world of souls made perfect, the form of physicality which will be indwelt then by the spirituality of the world of souls. Just as your spirit will be returned to your body, and your resurrected body will then be inhabited by your spirit, so too, the physical World to Come will be inhabited by the world of souls. It will not be a merely incorporeal and spiritual world, nor will it be a purely physical material world, it will be a spiritual-physical world.

It's the Perfect. But its beyond our ability to even conceptualize. Because we are the imperfect and still part of the imperfect, and the imperfect cannot understand the perfect. Yet we have this hope, thanks to the resurrection of Yeshua. We have seen a token of the World to Come in the resurrected body of Yeshua.

All Creation Waits to be Born Again

In Romans 8, Paul speaks about how the whole world, this entire universe, is waiting impatiently to be reborn as the World to Come. In fact, we could call the World to Come “the Born-Again World.” Just as Yeshua was resurrected into a renewed and recreated body, the whole universe is going to be resurrected into a new creation.

¹⁸ For I consider that the sufferings of this present time (Olam HaZeh) are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us (in Olam Haba).

¹⁹ For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. (*Those who have been born again—the resurrected.*)

²⁰ For the creation was subjected to futility (*impermanence and corruption*), not willingly, but because of him (*God*) who subjected it, in hope

²¹ that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. (*The freedom of the born again—the resurrected.*)

²² For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now.

²³ And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies (*the resurrection, to be born again*).

²⁴ For in this hope we were saved.
(Romans 8:18-24)

What Does it mean to be Born Again?

We have now cracked the riddle. What does it mean to be “born again”? It means to be born twice. Once into this world, when your mother gave birth to you. Once into the World to Come when you rise from the dead. To be “born again” means to be resurrected for the World to Come. Those who are born into this world are born as the son or daughter of so-and-so, but those who are “born again” are born into the world to come as the son or daughter of Hashem: sons of God, daughters of God. And as sons and daughters, you will receive an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, a share in the World to Come—the Born-Again World.

Problem is that, to be born again, you have to die first, and then be resurrected. That’s the catch. Yeshua calls us to get started on that job right away, in a spiritual sense. To be spiritually born again, you have to spiritually die to yourself, and be raised with the Messiah. (This kind of language is all over the New Testament. It’s on almost every page.) To be “born again” means living in anticipation of dying and being resurrected for the World to Come along with Messiah:

I have been crucified with the Messiah. It is no longer I who live, but the Messiah who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. (Galatians 2:20)

The apostles taught that when a person became a Yeshua-follower, he had to renounce this world and this life in order to identify with the death of Yeshua, and he had to take on a new life of godliness, inhabited by the Spirit of Messiah (“*who lives in me*”) in order to identify with the resurrection. So the life of a disciple is supposed to be a proleptic rehearsal of his future death and resurrection. And one who lays hold of that hope can be said to already be born again, already dead and resurrected, now only waiting for the physical side of it.

Now if we have died with the Messiah, we believe that we will also live with him. We know that the Messiah, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. (Romans 6:8-9)

Therefore, the person who is “born again” has “a living hope through the resurrection of Yeshua the Messiah from the dead.” What is the hope? The hope is to be “born again” into the born-again world—the World to Come. One who sincerely has this hope relinquishes this world—dies to it, so to speak—and lives for the next. This is what the Master says, “He who loses his soul will find it.” And regarding his disciples, he says, “They are not of this world, even as I am not of this world” (John 17:16). No. They are of the World to Come. They are of the Perfect. The whole world is waiting for the Perfect World to Come when the creation itself will be “set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.” *An inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading.*

Regarding that world, no eye has seen or ear has heard what God has prepared for the children of God. We have not seen the Perfect, but we have seen Messiah made Perfect. “We are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be (*when we are physically born again, i.e. resurrected*). But we know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure” (1 John 3:2-3).

This is the implication of the resurrection of our Master Yeshua that so changed the lives of his disciples and all the world.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Master Yeshua the Messiah [who] according to his great mercy, he has caused us to be *born again* to a living hope through the resurrection of Yeshua the Messiah from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. (1 Peter 1:3-9)