

TORAH PORTION

"NOACH", OCTOBER 30-NOVEMBER 5, 2005

"MANKIND, SHACHAT AND (GOD'S) KOFER"¹

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The second portion in the Torah is directly connected to the first one. The first one dealt with the creation of all things (including us: human beings) and the fall of Adam and Eve from their glorious position with God.

This week's portion deals with the very tragic consequences of this fall and its effects going down through the generations all the way to Noah's time. Adam's sin led to more sin and even worse sins (e.g. Cain killing his brother; Gen. 4:8 and Lamech killing the man who hurt him, verses 23-24). Actually, God was eventually so grieved to the point that he decided to do away with man and all creatures on the face of the earth (Gen. 6:5-7)!

In this commentary, I would like to deal with two key Hebrew words that I think have a great message for us, here and now. The first one is found in chapter 6, verse 11: "*vatishachet*", translated in English as: "*(The earth was) corrupt.*"

"*Vatishachet*" comes from "*Shachat*" (7843), which is a primitive root; *to decay, ruin (literally or figuratively), cast off, corrupt, destroy (-er, -uction), lose, mar, perish, spill, spoiler, waste (-er)*. It is used (in its different variations) more than once in our portion (see Gen. 6:11, 12, 13, 17, 9:15).

From its different uses throughout the Bible, we can see its main connotations are *Corruption* and *Destruction!*

Another very interesting use of the same root is in Psalm 16:10, "For You will not leave my soul in *Sheol*, nor will You allow *Your Holy One* to see *corruption* (Hebrew: *Shachat*)". In the New Testament, both Peter and Paul cited this very same verse (Psalm 16:10), as proof of Yeshua's resurrection from the dead (Acts 2:22-31, see verse 27 and then in Acts 13:26-38, see verse 35)! Moreover, according to Simeon (Peter), our baptism into Yeshua, and our position in Yeshua, saves us, exactly like Noah's Ark saved the eight who were in it (1 Pet. 3:21).

But, what was the actual 'thing' that separated the eight in Noah's Ark, from the waters of destruction? Or in other words, what was it that kept and prevented the eight in Noah's Ark from going down to *Sheol* (or *Shachat*)? The answer is very simple. It was the "*Kofer*" that did the job of separation for them! What kept the waters of God's judgment from entering the Ark and killing them (bringing them down to *Shachat/Sheol*), was the material "*Kofer*" (in Hebrew) which Noah was instructed to use as the "*Cover*" for the Ark (Gen. 6:14).

What the English translates as "*cover it*" is, reads in Hebrew, "*Vekafartah Otah*". It comes from the Hebrew root "*K.F.R*" ("*Kafar*" or "*Kofer*" – 3722 and 3724), which is yet another primitive root; *to cover (specifically with bitumen); figuratively, to expiate or condone, to placate or cancel, appease, make (an*

atonement, cleanse, disannul, forgive, be merciful, pacify, pardon, purge (away), put off, reconcile(-liation).

So, we can see that the root *K.F.R* has a connotation of covering, forgiveness, cleansing and— ATONEMENT (Hebrew, “*Kaparah*”; see “*Yom Kippur*”: The Day of Atonement)! The Hebrew word “*Kofer*” speaks also of “*Ransom*” (e.g., Ex. 21:30, 30:12, Num. 35:31).

I’m sure you can see the beautiful picture in this week’s Torah portion! Here we have Noah and his Ark, as a picture/foreshadow of Yeshua and “His Ark” (Body), which covers us from within and from without (when we are *in Him*) by His “Bitumen”, by His ransom; *by His atoning blood!* All these who are outside “Yeshua’s Ark” (Body), all these who are not “*in Him*” are destined to “see corruption” (Death, *Sheol, Shachat!*)! All who are walking and living “*in Him*” are separated from God’s “waters” (actually next time it will be God’s *fire*) of judgment!

Living in Israel these days, one cannot ignore the similarities that exist between Noah’s time and the times we live in today. *Corruption* is seen and felt everywhere! Low morals (actually, complete immorality) are becoming more and more the fashion in our time. No wonder God’s judgment is at the door!

Reading this week’s Torah portion, every one of us should ask the inevitable question: where am I situated in this world? Am I outside or inside Yeshua’s “Ark”?

May He, our Father in heaven, have mercy on us in these evil days which we are living in. May we not lose heart and stay in the protection of His only begotten Son.

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