

Bellows Family

## MATAN AL HAPEREK

The Six-Year Online Weekly | Tanakh Learning Program

DEDICATED IN MEMORY OF ZAHAVA BAT YEHUDA by her daughter Nilly Gabbay

### Perek 13

Perakim 13 and 14 continue the succession of prophecies about the End of Days. Perek 13 includes two short prophecies about the End of Days: the vision of eradicating the pagan gods and prophets (2-6), and the vision of the purification and refining of the nation, which climaxes in the renewal of the covenant between God and His nation (7-9).

#### 1.

*"And also the prophets and the spirit of impurity I will remove from the earth."* (2)

The crux of the first prophecy is devoted to a description of the removal of the prophets from the land. Which prophets are discussed here, and what is the spiritual significance of their removal from the land in the End of Days? Note the parallel to the first half of pasuk 2, and see the **Radak**:

*And the prophets also* – The false prophets who were there during the First Temple... but if there should be one sinner who will prophesy by a lying spirit, and lie, and say that he prophesies by the Spirit of God, Israel shall at that time possess such knowledge and understanding, that they will recognize the words of that prophet whether they be lies or truth... The sense of the whole passage refers to the future, for God has appointed as to the future, and has said, *"It shall come to pass afterwards, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy."* (Yoel) But those persons who cannot prophesy will envy the others who can prophesy, and will make themselves prophets like the others, but their fathers who hear their prophecy will know that this is a lie, and will say to them, Thou shalt not live, for thou hast spoken lies in the name of the Lord.

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## 2.

There were those who explained this prophecy about the eradication of prophets and prophecy in a more general manner.

**a.** In the prophecy we find allusions to the descriptions of Eliyahu and Elisha, two prophets from the time of the First Temple. For example, the “hairy mantle” is a characteristic associated with Eliyahu (Melachim II 1:8). The most prominent parallel is the story of the first encounter between Eliyahu and Elisha in Melachim I 19:19-20. Read that story and pay attention to the process which Elisha goes through, and compare this to the words of the prophet in our prophecy and to his attitude to his parents (3-5).

**b.** Explain the meaning of the eradication of the prophets in the End of Days, according to this understanding. Pay attention to the contrast between the spirit of impurity in our pasuk to the spirit mentioned earlier in 12:10. Consider Zechariah’s time period - in the Second Temple, close to the end of prophecy.

## 3.

*“O sword, awaken against My shepherd...” (7)*

The second prophecy has four stages. Follow the process – what is the role of each stage? Examine the reversal which takes place between the first stage (7) and the last (the end of pasuk 9).

## Perek 14

The succession of End of Days prophecies in our book ends with a long and lofty prophecy which describes in detail the war of the End of Days. This prophecy is similar to the prophecy in perek 12. However, while the prophecy in perek 12 dealt with the fate of Jerusalem and Judah, our prophecy expands the perspective to the whole world. The prophecy opens with a description of the gathering for the war and the conquest of Jerusalem (1-2), followed by the appearance of God to go to war with the enemy (3-5). In the end, the transition from dark to light symbolizes the hope which will come after the war (6-9). Unlike Jerusalem which will be secure, the nations will be plagued (12-15). In the second half of the prophecy the prophet describes the kingdom of God over the land which will come after the war (16-21).

## 4.

Central to each stage in the description of the war in the prophecy is the motif of coming forth and splitting:

Follow the three appearances (2, 3-4, and 8) and examine the process of redemption which is reflected in the three stages of coming forth and splitting. Pay attention to the complex

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relationship between them: the contrast between the first and second “coming forth”, and the consequential relationship between the second and third splitting (see also the geographical directions of each). Note the difference between them in terms of their purpose.

## 5.

(16-19) The prophecy ends with a reversal which will take place in the attitude of the nations to Israel. Compare the image of the nations who *will go up from year to year* (16) at the end of the prophecy to the way they are portrayed at the beginning of the prophecy (2). Why was the holiday of Sukkot chosen to express this reversal? Note the unique nature attributed to Sukkot in our prophecy, and see the Gemara as well – **Sukkah 55b**:


Rabbi Eliezer said: “Why are 70 bullocks brought on Sukkot? For the (merit of the) 70 nations of the world.”

**Rashi:** *Seventy bullocks* – There are seventy bullocks given on the holiday, not including the eighth day, to bring forgiveness for the 70 nations which comprise the world, so that rain shall fall all over the earth, for on Sukkot we are judged about the water.

## APPENDIX – The Universal Quality of the Holiday of Sukkot

In the Torah we find two calendars. On the one hand, there is clear reference to the fact that the calendar starts in Nissan: “*This month shall be to you the head of the months; to you it shall be the first of the months of the year.*” (Shmot 12:2). On the other hand, there is also another calendar where the picture is more complex: the Torah says that the Jubilee year starts in the seventh month on the tenth of the month, and the blowing of the shofar on that day expresses the holiness of the year ... It seems that these two calendars in the Torah represent two different views. The calendar which starts in Tishrei is an agricultural calendar that begins with the beginning of the agricultural season and ends when the season ends. This season begins and ends naturally in the month of Tishrei. The agricultural year expresses the universal calendar, while the historical calendar expresses the unique calendar of the nation of Israel, which is connected to the most significant date in the history of the nation of Israel, the date of the exodus from Egypt. The holiday of Sukkot, which is central to the holidays of Tishrei, expresses the universal aspect from its very essence of being the harvest holiday. This is a holiday with a general meaning, which is not connected specifically to the nation of Israel. Sukkot does have an historical aspect which is unique to the nation of Israel, which is mentioned once in the Torah, however, this aspect is not central to the nature of the holiday. The holiday of Sukkot has meaning not only as a summary and thanksgiving for

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the year which has passed, but also as a prayer for the coming year. As it says in the Mishna in Rosh Hashana – *On the holiday (Sukkot) we are judged for water*. This idea has its source in the Tanakh, in an interesting reference to the universal aspect of the holiday found in the prophecy of Zechariah: from these pesukim we see that in the future the nations will participate in celebrating Sukkot, because of the close connection between Sukkot and the rainfall of the coming year. The rainfall is relevant to all the nations, and therefore we expect that they will all participate in the holiday. The connection between Sukkot and the nations is emphasized by the Sages as well: Rabbi Eliezer said: “Why are 70 bullocks brought on Sukkot? For the (merit of the) 70 nations of the world.” (Sukkah 55b). This universal aspect of the holiday is given a special meaning in another midrash: “Just as the dove makes atonement (for the pilgrims), so Israel makes atonement for the other nations, since the seventy bullocks that they offer on Sukkot correspond to the seventy nations, and are brought in order that the earth may not be left desolate of them.”

This significant difference between the month of Tishrei and the month of Nissan has another aspect which is expressed by the two important buildings which were dedicated in these months. The Tabernacle was dedicated on the first of Nissan. The Tabernacle was built by the nation of Israel alone, and its main purpose was to bring down the Spirit of God (Shekhina) and create a connection between God and Israel. In contrast, the dedication of the Temple was in the month of Tishrei. The Temple had an additional function, to be a place of prayer. In Shlomo’s prayer he emphasizes that the Temple should serve as a place of prayer not only for the nation of Israel, but for the nations as well. The Temple, therefore, has a universal role as a place of prayer for gentiles as well, for the express purpose of making all the nations recognize God and fear Him.

(Rabbi A. Bazak, Pesach veSukkot, Mishkan uMikdash, in UBechag HaSukkot, pp. 117-123)

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