

***Chesed*-חסד**

A Word for Today

Day 1

Foundation

We're beginning a study about one of my favorite words: *Chesed*-חֶסֶד. (Yes, I have favorite words.) It is chock-full of meaning. This week I'll share the definition I wrote out. Over the ensuing days we'll examine this word by considering some representative Scriptures from which the definition arose. I hope you take the time to study this. I believe it will be worthwhile.

So, without further ado, let's look at *Chesed*-חֶסֶד.

Chesed-חֶסֶד

Chesed-חֶסֶד is found about 250 times in the Tanach. Introduced in Genesis, its meaning is consistent throughout the Scriptures. When shown by God to humanity it demonstrates His willingness to show mercy and is a model for human interaction.

In order of its occurrence: Angels showed Lot *chesed*-חֶסֶד (Genesis 19:19). Sarah showed *chesed*-חֶסֶד when she called Abraham her brother (Genesis 20:13). Abimelech asked Abraham to show him *chesed*-חֶסֶד (Genesis 21:23). The LORD showed *chesed*-חֶסֶד to Abraham's servant who asked Laban and Bethuel to show *chesed*-חֶסֶד to Abraham by sending Rebekah with him (Genesis 24:12,14,27,49). Jacob attributed his prosperity to God's *chesed*-חֶסֶד (Genesis 32:10). ADONAI extended *chesed*-חֶסֶד to Joseph when he was in prison. Joseph asked the cupbearer for *chesed*-חֶסֶד . Jacob asked Joseph to show him *chesed*-חֶסֶד and bury him with his fathers (Genesis 39:21; 40:14, 47:29).

Examples like these can be multiplied.

From the context we find that *chesed*-חֶסֶד is something one willingly does for others who are in need. It expresses everything from kind actions to loving, life-saving, interventions. When English Bibles speak of *showing lovingkindness* they are translating, *doing chesed*-חֶסֶד . *Chesed*-חֶסֶד is something that is done.

chesed-חֶסֶד describes God's merciful acts towards all who rely upon Him. The LORD's willingness to help and His active *chesed*-חֶסֶד is a theme of His people's praise (Psalm 117:2; Lamentations 3:22). God's *chesed*-חֶסֶד, that He swore to Israel (Deuteronomy 7:12), was celebrated at the dedication of the temples (2 Chronicles 5:13; 7:3; Ezra 3:11). Judah's choir sang that ADONAI's *chesed*-חֶסֶד is everlasting and the nation was rescued (2

Chronicles 20:21). Rehearsing God's actions in creation, and His intervention on behalf of Israel, Psalm 136 reiterates the refrain that God's *chesed-חֶסֶד* is everlasting twenty-six times. It is the result of His everlasting love (Jeremiah 31:3).

The Scriptures were written within the context of a covenanted people. Therefore, we primarily find *chesed-חֶסֶד* experienced and expressed by those who are in covenant with ADONAI and one another.

It is a strongly relational term. *chesed-חֶסֶד* is not legislated in the Torah, but God seeks it (Micah 6:8; Zechariah 7:9). God's *chesed-חֶסֶד* is the model for human *chesed-חֶסֶד* (1 Samuel 20:14; 2 Samuel 9:3).

In the Septuagint *chesed-חֶסֶד* is translated *eleos* (mercy) over 200 times. It is a consequence of the command to love one's neighbor and illustrated in the story of the "Good Samaritan" wherein *chesed/eleos* is demonstrated (Luke 10:30-37). Yeshua quoted Hosea when confronting merciless religionists. He reinforced this: Father delights in *chesed/eleos* (Hosea 6:6; Matthew 9:13; 12:7).

The LORD requires us to love *chesed-חֶסֶד* (Micah 6:8). Since He delights in *chesed-חֶסֶד*, God will pardon Israel's iniquity, forgive their rebellion, trample their iniquities, and cast their sins into the sea. This is in fulfillment of the *chesed-חֶסֶד* He swore to the Patriarchs (Micah 7:18-20; Romans 11:28).

God overflows with transgenerational *chesed-חֶסֶד* (Exodus 34:6; Deuteronomy 7:9; Psalm 100:5). His *chesed-חֶסֶד* reveals His goodness and is a reason for gratitude (Psalm 106:1).

Day 2

Chesed in the Beginning

Let's start tracing how *Chesed*-חֶסֶד is used in Genesis. When we read these narratives we get the opportunity to discover its meaning.

The first time *Chesed*-חֶסֶד is found in the Tanach is in the story of Lot and his family's rescue.

Commanded to leave Sodom, Lot hesitated. Two angels grabbed his and his family's hands and brought them out of the city. (*May it be, should we hear a command from heaven and hesitate, that we would receive the same mercy.*) The angels instructed him to flee to the hills. Lot was now a city dweller with no affinity for the wilderness. He pleaded with them. He said,

Look, please, your servant has found favor in Your eyes and You have magnified Your merciful *chesed*-חֶסֶד, which You have shown me by letting me live. But I can't escape to the hill country—for the disaster will overtake me and I'll die! (Genesis 19:19)

Chesed-חֶסֶד was done to Lot when he and his family were rescued.

In the Septuagint, *Chesed*-חֶסֶד is generally translated “*eleos*” (mercy).

Next, we read of the sneaky way Abraham and Sarah sought to save Abraham's life, and how God acted to preserve the Messianic line.

When Abraham was in Gerar he feared that its ruler, Abimelech, might kill him and force Sarah into his harem. So, Abraham and Sarah connived to con this king.

Then, one night, God visited Abimelech and revealed the reality of the situation.

God came to Abimelech in a dream at night and said to him, “Behold, you are as good as dead, because of the woman whom you have taken—since she is a married woman.”

Abimelech remonstrated.

Didn't he say to me, 'She's my sister'? And she herself even said, 'He's my brother.' I did this with integrity of my heart and guiltlessness of my hands."

God confirmed Abimelech's innocence in this matter. Then the king called Abraham on the carpet. Here's the record of their interaction.

Then Abimelech called to Abraham and said to him, "What have you done to us, and how have I sinned against you, that you brought great sin upon me and my kingdom? You've done to me things that should not be done!"

Abimelech also said to Abraham, "What motivated you to do this thing?"

Abraham said, "Because I thought, 'There is certainly no fear of God in this place, so they'll kill me, because of my wife.' ... So when God made me wander away from my father's house, I said to her, 'This is your *chesed*-חֶסֶד that you must show me: in every place we go, say of me, 'He is my brother.' " (Genesis 20:3,5,9-11,13)

Sarah showed (did) *chesed*-חֶסֶד when she shaded the truth to shield her husband. Abraham confessed to this half-truth and Abimelech responded:

Then Abimelech took sheep, cattle, male slaves and female slaves and gave them to Abraham, and returned his wife Sarah to him.

Then Abimelech said, "Look, my land is before you. Dwell wherever it pleases you." At the same time he said to Sarah, "Look, I've given a thousand shekels to your brother. Look, it is compensation for everything that happened—so to everyone with you, you are vindicated."

Then Abraham prayed to God and God healed Abimelech, his wife and his female slaves so that they could bear children. For ADONAI had completely locked up every womb in Abimelech's household because of Sarah, Abraham's wife. (Genesis 20:14-18)

What Abimelech did provides the context for the next use of *chesed*-חֶסֶד which is found in chapter 21. We'll look into it next week.

Day 3

Abraham

Let's look at the two remaining times *CHESED-רַחֲמִים* is mentioned in Abraham's story.

Here's some background: Abraham feared that Abimelech might kill him and take Sarah into his harem. Abraham and Sarah determined to deceive this king to protect Abraham. Sarah entered his harem. After a while, God visited Abimelech in a dream, threatened his life, and revealed the truth of the situation.

Abimelech gave his side of the story, and God confirmed Abimelech's innocence in the matter. Then the king called Abraham to give an account of his duplicity. Abraham came clean, and the following was Abimelech's surprising response:

Then Abimelech took sheep, cattle, male slaves and female slaves and gave them to Abraham, and returned his wife Sarah to him. Then Abimelech said, "Look, my land is before you. Dwell wherever it pleases you."

At the same time he said to Sarah, "Look, I've given a thousand shekels to your brother. Look, it is compensation for everything that happened—so to everyone with you, you are vindicated." (Genesis 20:14-18)

That is the context for the next use of *CHESED-רַחֲמִים*.

In the next chapter we find that Isaac was born, Hagar and Ishmael were banished, and Abraham prospered. As a result, Abimelech and his commander-in-chief sought out Abraham and said:

So now, make a pledge to me here, by God, that you will not violate your word with me or with my descendants or with my offspring. As I have shown *CHESED-רַחֲמִים* to you, show the same to me, and to the land in which you have lived as an outsider." (Genesis 21:23)

Look at these words, "**As I have shown *CHESED-רַחֲמִים* to you, show the same to me**". How was *CHESED-רַחֲמִים* done to Abraham by Abimelech? Look at the record. Not only were Abraham and Sarah's lives spared, but Sarah was vindicated, and the king loaded them down with wealth,

livestock, laborers, and the liberty to live free from fear within Abimelech's domain.

Abraham responded. He pledged to give (do) the same *CHESED-רַחֲמִים* to Abimelech's progeny. I want to stress this: Their covenant was the result of *CHESED-רַחֲמִים*. *CHESED-רַחֲמִים* was not the result of their covenant.

About forty years later Abraham sought to provide a wife for Isaac. It is within that context that we read of *CHESED-רַחֲמִים*.

Abraham sent a servant to his relatives to find a wife for his son. The servant prayed that God would show *CHESED-רַחֲמִים* to Abraham. Allow me to remind you that when we read "show lovingkindness/loyalty" it is translating "do *CHESED-רַחֲמִים*". *CHESED* is something that is *done*.

"ADONAI, the God of Abraham my master," he said, "please make something happen before me today, and show (do) *CHESED-רַחֲמִים* to Abraham my master. (Genesis 24:12)

Now let it be that the young woman to whom I say, 'Please tip your jar so that I may drink,' and she will say, 'Drink—and I'll also water your camels'—let her be the one You have appointed for your servant Isaac. So by this I'll know that You have shown (done) *CHESED-רַחֲמִים* to my master." (Genesis 24:14)

Amazingly, this happened. *CHESED-רַחֲמִים* was done/shown by God when he directed the servant to Rebekah, this was supernatural guidance. It was *CHESED-רַחֲמִים*. God's helpful intervention was a cause of praise.

and he said, "Blessed be ADONAI, the God of my master Abraham, who has not forsaken His *CHESED-רַחֲמִים* and His truth toward my master. As for me, ADONAI has guided me in the way to the house of my master's brothers." (Genesis 24:27)

Abraham's servant asked the family to make a decision. Would they release Rebekah to return with him, or not?

So now, if you're really going to show *CHESED-רַחֲמִים* and truth to my master, tell me. But if not, tell me and I'll turn to the right or to the left." (Genesis 24:49)

In Genesis 24 we find that *CHESED-רַחֲמִים* was done/shown by God to Abraham in guiding the servant to Abraham's relatives, and was

shown/done by Rebekah's relatives to Abraham when they allowed Rebekah to return to be with Isaac.

CHESED-חֶסֶד is pretty amazing.

Day 4

Joseph

Today let's look at the last uses of *CHESED-תּוֹן* in Genesis.

Let's begin.

The God of Bethel commanded Jacob to leave Laban and return to the land of his birth. In Genesis 32 we find our patriarch on his way back to Canaan, but his fratricidally inclined brother was on his way to him.

Jacob was understandably agitated. He looked to God for help and recounted God's *CHESED-תּוֹן*.

Then Jacob said, “O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, ADONAI, who said to me, ‘Return to your land and to your relatives and I will do good with you.’ I am unworthy of all the *CHESEDS-תּוֹן* and of all the dependability that you have shown to your servant. For with only my staff I crossed over this Jordan, and now I’ve become two camps. Deliver me, please, from my brother’s hand, from Esau’s hand ...” (Genesis 32:10–11a)

What form did God's *CHESED-תּוֹן* take? It was manifest in protection and blessing. God intervened in His life. That was *CHESED-תּוֹן*.

When Joseph was in jail God did *CHESED-תּוֹן* to him. How was *CHESED-תּוֹן* manifest in Genesis 39?

CHESED-תּוֹן was done by God to Joseph by giving him favor in the prison. God intervened and Joseph was successful

But ADONAI was with Joseph and extended *CHESED-תּוֹן* to him and gave him favor in the eyes of the commander of the prison. The commander of the prison entrusted into Joseph's hand all the prisoners who were in the prison, so that everything that was done there, he was responsible for it. The commander of the prison did not concern himself with anything at all under his care, because ADONAI was with him, and ADONAI made whatever he did successful. (Genesis 39:21–23)

In the following chapter we read of Joseph asking for *CHESED-תּוֹן*.

Joseph interpreted a fellow prisoner's dream and prophesied a return of the imprisoned official to his former status. He then asked:

But if you remember me, that I was with you, when it goes well with you, please show me *CHESED-ṭṭṭ* and mention me to Pharaoh and get me out of this house. (Genesis 40:14)

Joseph asked that the cupbearer would intervene in his circumstance. Eventually, he did.

Joseph received *CHESED-ṭṭṭ* from God and man.

In the closing chapters of Genesis we read of Joseph being asked to do *CHESED-ṭṭṭ* for his father.

As the time of Israel's death drew near, he called for his son Joseph and said to him, "If I have found favor in your eyes, please put your hand under my thigh and show me faithful *CHESED-ṭṭṭ*. Please do not bury me in Egypt. (Genesis 47:29)

Israel asked Joseph to do *CHESED-ṭṭṭ* and bury him in Canaan. Joseph did *CHESED-ṭṭṭ* when he kept his promise.

"My father made me take an oath saying, 'Behold, I am about to die. In my tomb—which I dug for myself in the land of Canaan—there you must bury me.' So now, please allow me to go up and bury my father, and then return." Pharaoh said, "Go up and bury your father just as he made you swear on oath." (Genesis 50:5-6)

From the context we find that *CHESED-ṭṭṭ* is something one willingly does for others who are in need. *CHESED-ṭṭṭ* is not obligatory, nor is it the result of covenant. It expresses everything from kind actions to loving, life-saving, interventions. When English Bibles speak of *showing lovingkindness* they are translating, *doing CHESED*.

CHESED-ṭṭṭ is something that is done.

Day 5

Israel, Praise Him for Chesed

God's *CHESED-חֶסֶד* refers to His merciful acts towards all who rely upon Him.

Let's explore this:

THE LORD'S WILLINGNESS TO HELP, AND HIS ACTIVE *CHESED-חֶסֶד*, IS A THEME OF HIS PEOPLE'S PRAISE (PSALM 117:2; LAMENTATIONS 3:22).

Today let's examine *CHESED-חֶסֶד* in the shortest psalm, Psalm 117.

**Praise the Lord, all nations; Laud Him, all peoples!
For His *chesed-חֶסֶד* is great toward us,
And the truth of the Lord is everlasting.
Praise the Lord! (Psalm 117)**

To whom is the psalmist referring when he writes "us"?

For His *chesed-חֶסֶד* is great toward us

My take on this psalm is that Israel is exhorting all nations to praise God. Why? Because of God's *CHESED-חֶסֶד* and faithfulness to Israel - the "us".

God shall be praised because of the blessing with which He blesses Israel. His enduring faithful *CHESED-חֶסֶד* will be experienced by those who bless Him because He blesses Israel. Those nations who bless shall be blessed. It is in line with the prophesied blessing in Genesis 12.

My heart's desire is to make you into a great nation, to bless you, to make your name great so that you may be a blessing. My desire is to bless those who bless you, but whoever curses you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth will be blessed. (Genesis 12:2-3)

Through God's intervening love (*CHESED-חֶסֶד*) all of Israel shall return to the Lord through Yeshua. This will release unimaginable blessings to the nations.

Now if their transgression leads to riches for the world, and their loss riches for the Gentiles, then how much more their fullness! ... For if their rejection leads to the

**reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be
but life from the dead? (Romans 11:12,15)**

No wonder all nations are exhorted to rejoice in this: His *CHESED-ṭṭḥ* is great towards Israel. After all, His *CHESED-ṭṭḥ* to Israel reveals God's goodness, and releases blessings, to them.

Do you recall that the Septuagint translates *CHESED-ṭṭḥ* as *eleos* (mercy) about 200 times? Consider reading the following verse with the thought that Paul may have been thinking of *CHESED-ṭṭḥ* when he wrote mercy/*eleos*. I think he was.

**For God has shut up all in disobedience, so that He
might show *CHESED-ṭṭḥ* to all. (Romans 11:32)**

We have a lot to look forward to. We anticipate the release of abundant *CHESED-ṭṭḥ* to Israel and the nations.

What will that look like? It will look like this:

The wolf will dwell with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the kid, the calf and the young lion and the yearling together, and a little child will lead them. The cow and the bear will graze, their young ones lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like an ox. A nursing child will play by a cobra's hole, and a weaned child will put his hand into a viper's den. They will not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of Adonai, as the waters cover the sea. (Isaiah 11:6-9)

Day 6

Chesed in Every Season

Psalm 117 serves as a *CHESED-תִּחַן* introduction to Psalm 118.

**Praise ADONAI, all you nations!
Glorify Him, all you peoples.
For great is His *CHESED-תִּחַן* toward us,
and ADONAI's truth endures forever.
Halleluyah! (Psalm 117)**

Please keep reading.

**Praise ADONAI, for He is good.
For His *CHESED-תִּחַן* is everlasting.
O let Israel say:
“His *CHESED-תִּחַן* is everlasting.”
O let the house of Aaron say:
“His *CHESED-תִּחַן* is everlasting.”
O let those who fear ADONAI say:
“His *CHESED-תִּחַן* is everlasting.” (Psalm 118:1-4)**

Herein we first find a general call to give thanks to ADONAI. That call is narrowed to Israel, and then to those who represent Israel in the sanctuary. Finally, this divine summons is issued to all who fear the LORD.

To whom does “those who fear the LORD” refer? I believe it refers to anyone, from any nation, from any century, who reveres ADONAI.

Please note the connection between God's manifest goodness and the reason His goodness is manifest: it's His *CHESED-תִּחַן*. The goodness humanity experiences is the freely offered *CHESED-תִּחַן* of a good God.

What about in bad times? When things aren't good. What about seasons, or epochs, of having to endure severe chastisement that comes from the Lord? Is *CHESED-תִּחַן* still celebrated?

Look at this attitude:

Because of the *CHESEDS-תִּחַן* of ADONAI we will not be consumed, for His compassions never fail. (Lamentations 3:22)

Jeremiah wrote this as he helplessly witnessed GOD's chastisement of Judah: the Babylonian dispersion, the decimation of His people, and the destruction of the Temple.

He wrote:

Remember my affliction my homelessness, bitterness and gall. Whenever I remember, my soul is downcast within me. This I recall to my heart— therefore I have hope:

Because of the CHESEDS-טֶן of ADONAI we will not be consumed, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning! Great is Your faithfulness.

He had hope? His CHESEDS-טֶן don't cease?

I can imagine someone in Jeremiah's circumstance remonstrating with God, "Where are Your CHESEDS-טֶן?" One could look around and hardly find any evidence of intervening love.

But Jeremiah had the Torah, the Writings, and the Prophets who preceded him. He had experienced the Voice of God. He believed the Word concerning God's intervening love more than the surrounding circumstances. He believed the Word about the righteousness of the Judgment and glorified God in the midst of his grief.

Read what follows...

"ADONAI is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in Him." ADONAI is good to those who wait for Him, to the soul that seeks Him. It is good to wait quietly for the salvation of ADONAI. It is good for a man to bear the yoke in his youth. Let him sit alone and be silent, since He has laid it upon him. Let him put his mouth in the dust— there may yet be hope.

Jeremiah was saying,

"More than my circumstances, I have the LORD!"

"ADONAI is my portion – therefore I have hope!"

He had hope for his and his people's future. What were the grounds of this expectation? This: ADONAI is unchanging. He is good to those who wait for, and seek, Him

Jeremiah knew that Judah's judgment was not permanent. That which proceeds from *CHESED-תְּחִינָה* was the anticipated final word.

Let him offer his cheek to the one who strikes him. Let him have his fill of disgrace. For the Lord will not reject forever. For though He has caused grief, yet He will have compassion according to His abundant *CHESED-תְּחִינָה*. (Lamentations 3:19–32)

The LORD will not reject forever. He will have compassion according to His abundant *CHESED-תְּחִינָה* on those who wait on Him, and rely upon that *CHESED-תְּחִינָה*.

CHESED-תְּחִינָה is the manifestation of intervening love. It is active mercy.

Day 7

Sworn Chesed.

ADONAI swore to do *CHESED-תִּוּוּ* to Israel. Let's visit Deuteronomy 7:12

“Then it will happen, as a result of your listening to these ordinances, when you keep and do them, that ADONAI your God will keep with you the covenant and the *CHESED-תִּוּוּ* that He swore to your fathers. (Deuteronomy 7:12 TLV)

He swore *CHESED-תִּוּוּ* to the Patriarchs. Not in so many words, but the promises and prophecies God gave illustrate *CHESED-תִּוּוּ*. The intervening mercy the Patriarchs experienced is also the expectation of their descendants. Moses said that GOD would guard (keep) the covenant and *CHESED-תִּוּוּ* He swore to Israel's forefathers.

Commenting on this verse Keil and Delitzsch's commentary states:

תִּוּוּ was the favour displayed in the promises given to the patriarchs on oath¹

Displayed favor. I like that.

Earlier in these meditations we went through each time *CHESED-תִּוּוּ* was mentioned in Genesis. Usually, it was done between people. However, ADONAI's acts were described as *CHESED-תִּוּוּ* by Abraham's servant when he went to get Isaac a wife. Jacob attributed his protection and prosperity to God's *CHESED-תִּוּוּ*. But we don't find God, Himself, taking an oath to show *CHESED-תִּוּוּ*. It was not in His words, it was in His actions we find *CHESED-תִּוּוּ* exemplified.

CHESED-תִּוּוּ would be the result of the promises of blessing, descendants, and land. The LORD would keep His word.

Back to Deuteronomy 7:12...

Here's a question: What was the content of these promises, this sworn *CHESED-תִּוּוּ*? What would be the result of this oath that ADONAI would faithfully keep?

¹ Keil, C. F., & Delitzsch, F. (1996). [*Commentary on the Old Testament*](#) (Vol. 1, p. 888). Hendrickson.

Here's the description:

He will love you, bless you and multiply you. He will also bless the fruit of your womb and the produce of your soil, your grain and your new wine and your oil, the increase of your herds and the young of your flock, in the land that He swore to your fathers to give you.

From all peoples, you will be blessed—there will not be male or female barren among you or your livestock. ADONAI will remove all sickness from you, and He will not inflict on you any of the terrible diseases of Egypt that you knew, but will inflict them on all who hate you. (Deuteronomy 7:13–15)

First of all, it is prophesied that ADONAI would love them. Every aspect of the covenant and *CHESED-ṭṭṭ* God guards proceeds from this promise.

What He loves, He will bless.

He will bless His people and multiply them. He will also bless their children and resources. He will do that in a specific location: the land He swore to give to the Patriarchs' descendants. Not only will He bless, but He will bless Israel in a way that sets them apart from the rest of the nations. All this has to do with multiplication, but blessing also looks like the removal of that which would weaken or destroy.

In these verses we see that there is often a close relationship between covenant and *CHESED-ṭṭṭ*. Practically every time we read of *CHESED-ṭṭṭ* it is within the framework of God's relationship to the nation of Israel or individuals who were Israelis.

That is why throughout the Scriptures we continually read of *CHESED-ṭṭṭ* within the context of covenant relationships. That is where the misunderstanding occurs. *CHESED-ṭṭṭ* is not the result of covenant. Covenant is generally initiated by love and *CHESED-ṭṭṭ*. However, a person can take an oath to show *CHESED-ṭṭṭ*.

CHESED-ṭṭṭ is generally expressed within the framework of a loving relationship. It is often an act which is merciful, intervening on behalf of someone who needs help. It may also be revealed in freely blessing the objects of love beyond the recipients' capacity to secure those blessings for themselves.

That is what we read in Deuteronomy 7:12-15.

Day 8

ADONAI's *CHESED-ṭṭḥ* Can be Celebrated

Your God's goodness finds its origin in His love. His favor is the result of His love. His *CHESED-ṭṭḥ* is done to favored people. ADONAI'S covenant with Israel was cut because of love. This holy love is the fountainhead of the river of His *CHESED-ṭṭḥ*.

Recognizing their relationship with this covenant keeping God, remembering all the good He had done, Israel celebrated His *CHESED-ṭṭḥ* at His House's dedication.

Then it came to pass that when the trumpeters and singers joined as one to extol and praise ADONAI, and when the sound of the trumpets, cymbals and musical instruments and the praise of ADONAI—"For He is good, for His *CHESED-ṭṭḥ* endures forever"—grew louder, the Temple, the House of ADONAI, was filled with a cloud.

The kohanim could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of ADONAI filled the House of God. (2 Chronicles 5:13-14 TLV)

What was going on?

The Temple's construction was completed. It was being dedicated. As ADONAI'S faithful *CHESED-ṭṭḥ* was celebrated, God drew near. How near? His House was filled with a cloud that manifested His habitation.

Not only was the House prepared for Him, His people were prepared for Him, too. What prepared them?

An important part of their preparation was their Scripturally guided perspective of God. What was the capstone of their theology? We find it in what they declared: "ADONAI is good; His *CHESED-ṭṭḥ* can always be relied upon." They were celebrating their relationship with the Creator.

We need this attitude. Do you agree? This praise is a wonderful picture of what draws God. It seems that, in the Bible, He goes where He's appreciated.

In this story we see that Israel had a plan. They were prepared to exalt the Lord. They couldn't come up with anything higher than this: they

celebrated God's *CHESED-תּוֹנֵה*. Amazingly, God responded, and what a response came from heaven! It was overwhelming.

Let's continue and read about the celebration of God's, *CHESED-תּוֹנֵה*.

When all Bnei-Yisrael saw the fire come down and the glory of ADONAI above the House, they bowed down on the pavement with their faces to the ground, prostrating themselves and praising ADONAI, "For He is good and His *CHESED-תּוֹנֵה* endures forever." (2 Chronicles 7:3 TLV)

Very dramatic. I wish I was there.

The context of this is that there had been high praise of God's goodness and *CHESED-תּוֹנֵה*. ADONAI responded and a cloud filled the house. Next, Solomon prayed while the cloud was still there! It's a deep, reverent, lovely prayer. I encourage you to read it.

This is what happened when the king finished his dedicatory prayer:

Now when Solomon finished praying the fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of ADONAI filled the House. The kohanim could not even enter into the House of ADONAI because the glory of ADONAI filled the House of ADONAI.

When all Bnei-Yisrael saw the fire come down and the glory of ADONAI above the House, they bowed down on the pavement with their faces to the ground, prostrating themselves and praising ADONAI, "For He is good and His *CHESED-תּוֹנֵה* endures forever." (2 Chronicles 7:1-3)

The glory of God filled the house. It was connected to the fire that came down. This helps define the word "awesome."

We'll continue to look into the praise of His *CHESED-תּוֹנֵה* in our next meditation. Meanwhile, may ADONAI give us enabling favor to perceive Him as all Israel did at God's House's dedication.

He is good and His *CHESED-תּוֹנֵה* can always be relied upon.

Really? Yes, just look at Yeshua.

Day 9

The Praise of God's *CHESED* and Two Displays of Glory

At Solomon's Temple's dedication, Israel's celebration of *CHESED-טֶדֶן* was a precursor to two displays of glory. In the first, God's response to the initial praise of His *CHESED-טֶדֶן* is described like this:

The kohanim could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of ADONAI filled the House of God. (2 Chronicles 5:14 TLV)

A weighty cloud of God's presence filled the House. This was unexpected. Nobody could prepare for this. Human sacred activity came to a sudden halt.

Then, Solomon prayed. In response fire came down from heaven, consumed the sacrifices, and, perhaps, a different degree of God's glory filled the Temple. Before, the priests could not minister. Now, apparently recovered from the first manifestation of glory, the priests could not enter the House.

Now when Solomon finished praying the fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of ADONAI filled the House. The kohanim could not even enter into the House of ADONAI because the glory of ADONAI filled the House of ADONAI.

Then, this happened.

When all Bnei-Yisrael saw the fire come down and the glory of ADONAI above the House, they bowed down on the pavement with their faces to the ground, prostrating themselves and praising ADONAI, "For He is good and His *CHESED-טֶדֶן* endures forever." (2 Chronicles 7:1-3 TLV)

Apparently, something shifted. What happened? All Israel took over the priestly chant. In the first stage of divine visitation, God responded to His people's praise. In the second, the glory of God came down in response to their king's petition and the people's praise was the response to God's presence.

The praise of the priests prepared the people. Fire consumed sacrifices. Glory overshadowed the House which was already filled with a cloud.

Note, the glory of ADONAI was ABOVE the House. This was visible glory covering an inner manifestation of glory.

The manifest presence of God was a guarantee that Solomon's petition would be answered. God signified that his prayers were accepted. ADONAI's presence announced His approval of the king's petitions.

No wonder they continued to praise God's enduring, faithful, *CHESED-ṭṭṭ*.

The people could not rely upon priestly representatives. The *kohanim*, who were in closer proximity to the glory, couldn't function. In this instance of praise no musical instruments were played, no choral arrangements were present. The covenant people were prostrated in His presence and they praised Him according to the priestly pattern.

“For He is good and His *CHESED-ṭṭṭ* endures forever.” (2 Chronicles 7:3b TLV)

From this we can learn that the magnifying of God's *CHESED-ṭṭṭ* is appropriate in an initial outpouring of enthusiastic praise bolstered by musicians and trained singers. It is also suitable in less boisterous, quietly reverential, worship. The meditation and mentioning of His everlasting goodness and *CHESED-ṭṭṭ* is relevant in every expression of adoration.

This worship was maintained. It was a mainstay throughout Israel's history. In the time of the first restoration, at the dedication of the rebuilt house of God, it is recorded that this chant was sung to God.

With praise and thanksgiving they sang to ADONAI,

“For He is good; For His *CHESED-ṭṭṭ* upon Israel endures forever.”

Then all the people gave a great shout of praise to ADONAI because the foundation of the House of ADONAI had been laid. (Ezra 3:11 TLV)

This worship (**He is good and His *CHESED-ṭṭṭ* upon Israel endures forever**) was the preamble to a shout of praise. The LORD's house's foundation was completed and the nation interpreted that accomplishment as a manifestation of His *CHESED-ṭṭṭ* towards them.

Speaking of foundations, having a righteous evaluation of God's *CHESED-ṭṭṭ* is foundational to our approach to God.

Day 10

His *CHESED-ṭṭḥ* Endures Forever

Before Solomon's temple was dedicated Adonai's *CHESED-ṭṭḥ* was celebrated. It was an integral part of Israel's worship. We have a record of His intervening love being brought to the corporate soul of Israel in David's psalms.

Here are two examples of David's revelation of God's *CHESED-ṭṭḥ*.

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You have anointed my head with oil, my cup overflows. Surely goodness and *CHESED-ṭṭḥ* will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the House of ADONAI forever. (Psalm 23:5–6)

No king is saved by his great army, no warrior is delivered by great strength. A horse is a false hope for victory, nor can its great strength save. Behold, the eyes of ADONAI are on those who fear Him, waiting for His love, to deliver their souls from death, and to keep them alive in famine. Our soul waits for ADONAI— He is our help and our shield. Our heart rejoices in Him, because we trusted in His holy Name. Let Your *CHESED-ṭṭḥ*, ADONAI, be upon us, as we have waited for You. (Psalm 33:16–22)

Through the devotional life of the nation, founded upon the revelatory nature of the Psalms, God's people hoped in His *CHESED-ṭṭḥ*. The soil of Israel's soul had been planted with a rich appreciation of God's intervening love. It was the foundation of the nation's origin. God's *CHESED-ṭṭḥ* was seen in their everyday life and was startlingly revealed in amazing sacred stories of heroism and deliverance.

The revelation of the everlasting nature of God's *CHESED-ṭṭḥ* was memorialized during one of the worst crises in Judah's history.

Here's the background: Judah was about to get wiped out. Their neighbors had united with the intent to war against Jehoshaphat.

Now it happened after this that the Moabites and the Ammonites together with other Ammonites came to make war against Jehoshaphat. Some came and reported to Jehoshaphat saying, "A great multitude is coming

against you from beyond the sea, from Aram, and are already in Hazazon-Tamar” (that is En-Gedi).

Jehoshaphat was afraid so he resolved to seek ADONAI, and he proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. Judah assembled to seek help from ADONAI; indeed, they came from all the cities of Judah to seek ADONAI. (2 Chronicles 20:1–4)

Fear motivated them to fervently seek God. He was found by them and they received a prophetic word that God would fight for them.

Then in the midst of the congregation, the Ruach ADONAI came upon Jahaziel son of Zechariah, son of Benaiah, son of Jeiel, son of Mattaniah the Levite, of the sons of Asaph, and he said: “Listen all Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem and King Jehoshaphat. Thus ADONAI says to you, ‘Do not be afraid or be dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours, but God’s. Tomorrow go down against them as they come up the ascent of Ziz. You will find them at the end of the valley in front of the wilderness of Jeruel. You will not fight in this battle. Take your positions, stand and see the salvation of ADONAI with you, O Judah and Jerusalem. Do not be afraid or be dismayed. Tomorrow go out to face them, for ADONAI is with you.’ ” (2 Chronicles 20:14–17)

This is what Jehoshaphat did:

After consulting with the people, he appointed singers to ADONAI praising the splendor of His holiness, as they went out before the army saying, “Praise ADONAI, for His *CHESED-ṭṭḥ* endures forever.” (2 Chronicles 20:21 TLV)

This was a Red Sea moment. Would God deliver them? Would their trust be rewarded? They’d soon find out.

Refusing to rely upon themselves, Judah’s choir represented the nation and demonstrated the nation’s trust. They chanted that ADONAI’s *CHESED-ṭṭḥ* is everlasting. Through this faith-filled response to God’s word, the nation was rescued (2 Chronicles 20:21). The enemy self-destructed.

That was one time that Judah really needed to rely upon His *CHESED-ṭṭḥ*. It was not presumptuous. These were a consecrated people who had sought God and obtained His promise and direction.

Today I'm going to concentrate on this reality: In times when there seems to be no hope, His *CHESED*- רַחֲמֵי can always be relied on.

Day 11

Thoughts about Psalm 136

Today I want to focus on Psalm 136. I'm including it at the bottom of these meditations. In Jewish tradition this psalm is called The Great Praise (Hallel ha-Gadol). It is repeated every Sabbath, during each major feast, and is part of the Passover seder.

Its point is this: God's *chesed*-חֶסֶד is effective forever. It can always be relied upon. The effects of His *chesed*-חֶסֶד endure in accordance with ADONAI's everlasting nature. How long does His *chesed*-חֶסֶד last? Forever, just like God.

Apparently, the genesis of this psalm can be traced to a specific occasion in Israel's history. After the Ark of God was placed in the tent on Zion this line began the final three verses.

Give thanks to ADONAI for He is good, for His *chesed*-חֶסֶד endures forever. (1 Chronicles 16:34 TLV)

That verse became the foundation of Psalm 136. The celebration of God's *chesed*-חֶסֶד is a foundational aspect of Israel's praise throughout the millennia.

Rehearsing God's actions in creation, and His intervention on behalf of Israel, Psalm 136 reiterates the refrain that God's *CHESED*-חֶסֶד is *everlasting* twenty-six times.

Praise (Give thanks to) ADONAI, for He is good, for His *CHESED*-חֶסֶד endures forever. (Psalm 136:1 TLV)

Let's concentrate on the first few verses of this psalm.

In verse 1, the psalmist exhorted the congregation to be grateful, for ADONAI is good.

What aspect of goodness did he highlight? His *chesed*-חֶסֶד. God's everlasting *chesed*-חֶסֶד is the demonstration of His goodness. It is the foundational expression of who He is. All that follows in Psalm 136 illustrates His intervening love.

Next, ADONAI is proclaimed to be the God of gods and Lord of lords. His existence is seen as an intervening mercy against both gods and lords which are the enemies of Israel and all humanity. These gods/lords were

known to be over the nations who were adverse to God's people because these gods are our God's adversaries. Herein, ADONAI steps into the cosmos to intervene on behalf of His people. Because He is God of gods and Lord of lords, He is triumphant and does *chesed-רחם* to His people.

The psalmist begins to brag:

Who alone did great wonders, for His *chesed-רחם* endures forever. (Psalm 136:4)

Seriously, who is like Him?

Then the psalm proceeds to speak about the ordering of Creation. He does great wonders. He made the heavens, established the land, and created the sun, moon and stars.

This may be seen as a victorious display of *chesed-רחם*. How? It is an intervening love against chaos and darkness. It is preparatory *chesed-רחם* done to benefit the goal of creation: humanity. From the psalmist's point of view, it is intervening mercy on behalf of Israel. The Psalmist saw the sun that rules the day and the moon by night as God's *chesed-רחם* on behalf of those He would create.

I'd like to elaborate.

He did all this as an act of war against the chaos. When we behold creation, we are seeing God's intervening active love against spiritual forces which would empower and maintain disorder and nothingness. Creation is seen by the psalmist as the result of *chesed-רחם*.

Ultimately, this *chesed-רחם* will be overwhelmingly triumphant at the time of the Resurrection. How triumphant? As victorious as the sun, moon, and stars light up the darkness. Nature will be released from its groaning into the liberty of God's glorified children. The Resurrection of the Righteous is not only His loving intervention against decay on behalf of His children. It also serves as God's *chesed-רחם* towards animate and inanimate creation.

Along the same lines, God judged Egypt, liberated Israel and led them out. Then He split the sea and caused Israel to pass through it while the same waters that manifested His *chesed-רחם* swallowed up those who would thwart God's mercy.

Israel experienced *chesed-רחם* in the wilderness wars against devilishly inspired Canaanite kings and parceled out their land to Israel. Seeing Israel's need for intervening mercy, He remembered them and delivered them from those who would slaughter them.

All this is the *chesed*-חֶסֶד celebrated in this Psalm. Yet, it does not stop there. It does not end with His *chesed*-חֶסֶד to Israel. He sustains all creation.

All this is recalled to mind with the constant refrain:

for His *chesed*-חֶסֶד endures forever.

What has God done for you? It's *chesed*-חֶסֶד.

Day 12

Chesed's Relationship to Love

I would like us to focus on *CHESED*'s origin.

What motivates God's *CHESED-תּוֹנֶה*? Where does it come from? Let's consider Jeremiah 31:3. When we do, we see that *CHESED-תּוֹנֶה* is the result of His everlasting love.

“From afar ADONAI appeared to me.” “Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love. Therefore I have drawn you with lovingkindness (*CHESED-תּוֹנֶה*). (Jeremiah 31:2 TLV)

He wanted Israel to be in a marital relationship with Him. He drew Israel with *CHESED-תּוֹנֶה*. He wooed His people. Israel was courted with *CHESED-תּוֹנֶה*. Apparently, at that time, Israel responded. God and His people were Husband and wife.

“I was a husband to them.” (Jeremiah 31:31b)

Drawn with *CHESED-תּוֹנֶה*? That reminds me of Paul's challenge.

God's kindness leads you to repentance? (Romans 2:4b TLV)

How are people led to repent?

I see this verse as referring to consistent displays of His kindness towards undeserving individuals. I believe God draws people to Himself in the same way He brought Israel to His side: His kindness, manifest in liberating, intervening, mercies.

Think of the Exodus. Couple that initial liberation with His gracious provision and protection in the wilderness. All this flowed from the wellspring of His *agape/ahavah* for the Patriarchs' descendants. Like the Exodus, the Good News of Yeshua is a manifestation of God's love revealed in intervening mercy: *CHESED-תּוֹנֶה*. It is The Ultimate Kindness that leads us to repentance.

Again, let's read Jeremiah 31:2.

“From afar ADONAI appeared to me.” “Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love. Therefore I have drawn you with lovingkindness (*CHESED-תּוֹנֶה*). (Jeremiah 31:2 TLV)

CHESED-חֶסֶד comes from love. That oracle reminds me of the divine order mentioned in Ephesians 2.

Read it. Savor it.

But God was rich in mercy (*eleos/CHESED-חֶסֶד*), because of His great love with which He loved us.

Even when we were dead in our trespasses, He made us alive together with Messiah. (By grace you have been saved!) And He raised us up with Him and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Messiah Yeshua—to show in the *olam ha-ba* the measureless richness of His grace in kindness toward us in Messiah Yeshua.

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not from yourselves—it is the gift of God. It is not based on deeds, so that no one may boast. (Ephesians 2:4–9 TLV)

In the beginning of these meditations, I mentioned that, in the Septuagint, *CHESED-חֶסֶד* is translated *eleos* (mercy) over 200 times. Paul wrote in Ephesians 2:4 that God is rich in *eleos/CHESED-חֶסֶד*. To what did the apostolic sage attribute this mercy? Love. Mercy (*eleos/CHESED-חֶסֶד*) was birthed through the great love with which He loved us. He did not love us because of mercy. He was merciful because of His love for us.

This follows the same pattern as was revealed by the Word of ADONAI to Israel in Jeremiah 31:2.

In Jeremiah, it is revealed that *CHESED-חֶסֶד* proceeds from everlasting love. In Ephesians 2 it is the same thing. God's mercy/*CHESED-חֶסֶד*/*eleos* proceeds from His *love/ahavah/agape*. The result is saving favor leading to an awesome destiny.

We've been drawn to God as a result of active love. It's *CHESED-חֶסֶד*.

We have reason to rejoice. This mercy, this *CHESED-חֶסֶד*, is everlasting.

Praise ADONAI, for He is good, for His *CHESED-חֶסֶד* endures forever. (Psalm 136:1)

Day 13

Psalm 136

Praise ADONAI, for He is good,

for His *CHESED-TOV* endures forever.

Praise the God of gods,

for His *CHESED-TOV* endures forever.

Praise the Lord of lords,

for His *CHESED-TOV* endures forever.

who alone did great wonders,

for His *CHESED-TOV* endures forever,

who made the heavens by wisdom,

for His *CHESED-TOV* endures forever,

who spread the earth on the waters,

for His *CHESED-TOV* endures forever,

who made great lights, —

for His *CHESED-TOV* endures forever,

the sun to rule by day,

for His *CHESED-TOV* endures forever,

the moon and stars to rule by night,

for His *CHESED-TOV* endures forever,

who struck Egypt in their firstborn,

for His *CHESED-TOV* endures forever,

and led out Israel from among them,

for His *CHESED-TOV* endures forever,

with a strong hand and outstretched arm,

for His *CHESED-TOV* endures forever,

who cut the Sea of Reeds into parts,

for His *CHESED-TOV* endures forever,

and made Israel pass through the midst of it,

for His *CHESED-TOV* endures forever,

but hurled Pharaoh and his army into the Sea of Reeds,

**for His *CHESED-TOV* endures forever,
who led His people through the desert,**

**for His *CHESED-TOV* endures forever,
who struck down great kings,**

**for His *CHESED-TOV* endures forever,
and slew mighty kings,**

**for His *CHESED-TOV* endures forever.
Sihon, king of the Amorites,**

**for His *CHESED-TOV* endures forever,
and Og, king of Bashan,**

**for His *CHESED-TOV* endures forever,
and gave their land for an inheritance,**

**for His *CHESED-TOV* endures forever,
an inheritance for Israel His servant,**

**for His *CHESED-TOV* endures forever,
He remembered us in our lowly estate,**

**for His *CHESED-TOV* endures forever,
and separated between us and He delivered us from our adversaries,**

**for His *CHESED-TOV* endures forever,
who gives food to all flesh,**

**for His *CHESED-TOV* endures forever,
raise the God of heaven,**

for His *CHESED-TOV* endures forever!