

THE TESTAMENT OF YAHUDAH

CHAPTER 1

1. The copy of the words of Yahudah, what things he spoke to his sons before he died.
2. They gathered themselves together, therefore, and came to him, and he said to them:
3. Hear, my children, to Yahudah your father. I was the fourth son born to my father Yaaqob; and Laah my mother named me Yahudah, saying, I give thanks to אֱלֹהִים, because He has given me a fourth son also.
4. I was swift in my youth, and obedient to my father in everything.
5. And I honored my mother and my mother's sister.
6. And it came to pass, when I became a man, that my father barak me, saying, You will be a king, prospering in all things.

CHAPTER 2

1. And אֱלֹהִים showed me favor in all my works both in the field and in the house.
2. I know that I raced a hind, and caught it, and prepared the meat for my father, and he ate.
3. And the roes I used to master in the chase, and overtake all that was in the plains. A wild mare I overtook, and caught it and tamed it.
4. I slew a lion and plucked a kid out of its mouth. I took a bear by its paw and hurled it down the cliff, and it was crushed.
5. I outran the wild boar, and seizing it as I ran, I tore it apart.
6. A leopard in Hebron leaped upon my dog, and I caught it by the tail, and hurled it on the rocks, and it was broken in two.
7. I found a wild ox feeding in the fields, and seizing it by the horns, and whirling it round and stunning it, I cast it from me and slew it.

CHAPTER 3

1. And when the two kings of the Kanaani came, sheathed in armour, against our flocks, and much people with them, single-handed I rushed upon the king of Hazor, and struck him on the greaves and dragged him down, and so I slew him.
2. And the other, the king of Tappuah, as he sat upon his horse, I slew, and so I scattered all his people.

3. Achor, the king, a man of giant stature I found, hurling javelins before and behind as he sat on horseback, and I took up a stone of sixty pounds weight, and hurled it and struck his horse, and killed it.

4. And I fought with this other for two hours, and I split his shield in two, and I chopped off his feet, and killed him.

5. And as I was stripping off his breastplate, behold nine men, his companions, began to fight with me.

6. And I wound my garment on my hand, and I slung stones at them, and killed four of them, and the rest fled.

7. And Yaaqob my father slew Beelesath, king of all the kings, a giant in strength, twelve cubits high.

8. And fear fell upon them, and they ceased warring against us.

9. Therefore my father was free from anxiety in the wars when I was with my brethren.

10. For he saw in a vision concerning me that a malak of might followed me everywhere, that I would not be overcome.

CHAPTER 4

1. And in the south there came upon us a greater war than that in Shechem, and I joined in battle array with my brethren, and pursued a thousand men, and slew of them two hundred men and four kings.

2. And I went up upon the wall, and I slew four mighty men.

3. And so we captured Hazor, and took all the spoil.

CHAPTER 5

1. On the next day we departed to Aretan, a city strong and walled and inaccessible, threatening us with death.

2. But I and Gad approached on the east side of the city, and Reuban and Lewi on the west.

3. And they that were upon the wall, thinking that we were alone, were drawn down against us.

4. And so my brothers secretly climbed up the wall on both sides by stakes, and entered the city, while the men knew it not.

5. And we took it with the edge of the sword. And as for those who had taken refuge in the tower, we set fire to the tower and took both it and them.

6. And as we were departing the men of Tappuah seized our spoil, and seeing this we fought with them.

7. And we slew them all and recovered our spoil.

CHAPTER 6

1. And when I was at the waters of Kozeba, the men of Jobel came against us to battle.

2. And we fought with them and routed them, and their allies from Shiloh we slew, and we did not leave them power to come in against us.

3. And the men of Makir came upon us the fifth day, to seize our spoil, and we attacked them and overcame them in fierce battle, for there was a host of mighty men among them, and we slew them before they had gone up the ascent.

4. And when we came to their city their women rolled upon us stones from the brow of the hill on which the city stood.

5. And I and Shimeon hid ourselves behind the town, and seized upon the heights and destroyed this city also.

CHAPTER 7

1. And the next day it was told us that the king of the city of Gaash with a mighty host was coming against us.

2. I, therefore, and Dan made ourselves to appear as Amorites, and as allies went into their city.

3. And in the depth of night our brethren came and we opened to them the gates, and we destroyed all the men and their substance, and we took for a prey all that was theirs and their three walls we cast down.

4. And we drew near to Thamna, where was all the substance of the hostile kings.

5. Then being insulted by them, I was therefore angry, and rushed against them to the summit, and they kept slinging against me stones and darts.

6. And had not Dan my brother aided me, they would have slain me.

7. We came upon them, therefore, with anger, and they all fled, and passing by another way, they sought my father, and he made shalum with them.

8. And we did to them no hurt, and they became tributary to us, and we restored to them their spoil.

9. And I built Thamna, and my father built Rabael.

10. I was twenty years old when this war befell.

11. And the Kanaani feared me and my brethren.

CHAPTER 8

1. And I had much cattle, and I had for chief herdsman Iram the Adullamite.

2. And when I went to him I saw Barsaba, king of Adullam, and he spoke to us, and he made us a feast, and when I was heated he gave me his daughter Bathshua to wife.

3. She bore me Er, and Onan, and Shelah, and two of them אַיָּאָן struck, for Shelah lived, and his children are you.

CHAPTER 9

1. And eighteen years my father lived at shalum with his brother Esau, and his sons with us, after that we came from Mesopotamia, from Laban.

2. And when eighteen years were fulfilled, in the fortieth year of my life, Esau, the brother of my father, came upon us with a mighty and strong people.

3. And Yaaqob struck Esau with an arrow, and he was taken up wounded on Mount Seir, and as he went he died at Anoniram.

4. And we pursued after the sons of Esau. Now they had a city with walls of iron and gates of brass, and we could not enter into it, and we encamped around, and besieged it.

5. And when they opened not to us in twenty days, I set up a ladder in the sight of all, and with my shield upon my head I went up, sustaining the assaults of stones, upwards of three talents weight, and I slew four of their mighty men.

6. And Reuban and Gad slew six others.

7. Then they asked from us terms of shalum, and having taken counsel with our father, we received them as tributaries.

8. And they gave us five hundred cors of wheat, five hundred baths of oil, five hundred measures of wine, until the famine, when we went down into Egypt.

CHAPTER 10

1. And after these things my son Er took to wife Tamar, from Mesopotamia, a daughter of Aram.

2. Now Er was wicked, and he was in need concerning Tamar, because she was not of the land of Kanaan. And on the third night a malak of אַיָּאָן struck him.

3. And he had not known her according to the evil craftiness of his mother, for he did not wish to have children by her.

4. In the days of the wedding-feast I gave Onan to her in marriage, and he also in wickedness knew her not, though he spent with her a year.

5. And when I threatened him he went in to her, but he spilled the seed on the ground, according to the command of his mother, and he also died through wickedness.

6. And I wished to give Shelah also to her, but his mother did not permit it, for she worked evil against Tamar, because she was not of the daughters of Kanaan, as she also herself was.

CHAPTER 11

1. And I knew that the race of the Kanaani was wicked, but the impulse of youth blinded my mind.

2. And when I saw her pouring out wine, owing to the intoxication of wine I was deceived, and took her although my father had not counseled it.

3. And while I was away she went and took for Shelah a wife from Kanaan.

4. And when I knew what she had done, I cursed her in the anguish of my soul.

5. And she also died through her wickedness together with her sons.

CHAPTER 12

1. And after these things, while Tamar was a widow, she heard after two years that I was going up to shear my sheep, and adorned herself in bridal array, and sat in the city Enaim by the gate.

2. For it was a Torah of the Amorites, that she who was about to marry would sit in fornication seven days by the gate.

3. Therefore being drunk with wine, I did not recognize her, and her beauty deceived me, through the fashion of her adorning.

4. And I turned aside to her, and said: Let me go in to you. And she said: What will you give me? And I gave her my staff, and my girdle, and the diadem of my kingdom in pledge. And I went in to her, and she conceived.

5. And not knowing what I had done, wished to slay her, but she privately sent my pledges, and put me to shame.

6. And when I called her, I heard also the secret words which I spoke when lying with her in my drunkenness, and I could not slay her, because it was from אִשָּׁרָא.

7. For I said, Lest she did it in subtlety, having received the pledge from another woman.

8. But I came not again near her while I lived, because I had done this abomination in all Yasharal.

9. Moreover, they who were in the city said that there was no harlot in the gate, because she came from another place, and sat for a while in the gate.

10. And I thought that no one knew that I had gone in to her.

11. And after this we came into Egypt to Yahusaph, because of the famine.

12. And I was forty and six years old, and seventy and three years lived I in Egypt.

CHAPTER 13

1. And now I command you, my children, hear to Yahudah your father, and keep my sayings to perform all the ordinances of the Torah of אלהים, and to obey the commands of אלהים.

2. And walk not after your lusts, nor in the imaginations of your thoughts in haughtiness of heart, and esteem not in the deeds and strength of your youth, for this also is evil in the eyes of אלהים.

3. Since I also gloried that in wars no comely woman's face ever enticed me, and reprov'd Reuban my brother concerning Bilhah, the wife of my father, the ruach of jealousy and of fornication arrayed themselves against me, until I lay with Bathshua the Kanaani, and Tamar, who was promised to my sons.

4. For I said to my father-in-law: I will take counsel with my father, and so will I take your daughter. And he was unwilling, but he showed me a boundless store of gold in his daughter's behalf, for he was a king.

5. And he adorned her with gold and pearls, and caused her to pour out wine for us at the feast with the beauty of women.

6. And the wine turned aside my eyes, and pleasure blinded my heart.

7. And I became enamoured of and I lay with her, and transgressed the commandment of אלהים and the commandment of my fathers, and I took her to wife.

8. And אלהים rewarded me according to the imagination of my heart, inasmuch as I had no joy in her children.

CHAPTER 14

1. And now, my children, I say to you, be not drunk with wine, for wine turns the mind away from the amat, and inspires the passion of lust, and leads the eyes into error.

2. For the ruach of fornication has wine as a minister to give pleasure to the mind, for these two also take away the mind of man.

3. For if a man drink wine to drunkenness, it disturbs the mind with filthy thoughts leading to fornication, and heats the body to carnal union, and if the occasion of the lust be present, he works the sin, and is not ashamed.

4. Such is the inebriated man, my children, for he who is drunken reverences no man.

5. For, look, it made me also to err, so that I was not ashamed of the multitude in the city, in that before the eyes of all I turned aside to Tamar, and I worked a great sin, and I uncovered the covering of my sons' shame.

6. After I had drunk wine I revered not the commandment of אלהים, and I took a woman of Kanaan to wife.

7. For much discretion is needed by the man who drinks wine, my children, and herein is discretion in drinking wine, a man may drink so long as he preserves modesty.

8. But if he go beyond this limit the ruach of deceit attacks his mind, and it makes the drunkard to talk filthily, and to transgress and not to be ashamed, but even to esteem in his shame, and account himself honorable.

CHAPTER 15

1. He that commits fornication is not aware when he suffers loss, and is not ashamed when put to dishonor.

2. For even though a man be a king and commit fornication, he is stripped of his kingship by becoming the slave of fornication, as I myself also suffered.

3. For I gave my staff, that is, the stay of my tribe, and my girdle, that is, my power, and my diadem, that is, the esteem of my kingdom.

4. And indeed I repented of these things, wine and flesh I eat not until my old age, nor did I behold any joy.

5. And a malak of אלהים showed me that for ever do women bear rule over king and beggar alike.

6. And from the king they take away his esteem, and from the valiant man his might, and from the beggar even that little which is the stay of his poverty.

CHAPTER 16

1. Observe, therefore, my children, the right limit in wine, for there are in it four evil ruach of lust, of hot desire, of profligacy, of filthy lucre.

2. If you drink wine in gladness, be modest with the fear of אלהים. For if in gladness the fear of אלהים departs, then drunkenness arises and shamelessness steals in.

3. But if you would live soberly do not touch wine at all, lest you sin in words of outrage, and in fightings and slanders, and transgressions of the commandments of אלהים, and you perish before your time.

4. Moreover, wine reveals the mysteries of אלהים and men, even as I also revealed the commandments of אלהים and the mysteries of Yaaqob my father to the Kanaani woman Bathshua, which אלהים commanded me not to reveal.

5. And wine is a cause both of war and confusion.

CHAPTER 17

1. And now I command you, my children, not to love money, nor to gaze upon the beauty of women, because for the sake of money and beauty I was led astray to Bathshua the Kanaani.

2. For I know that because of these two things will my race fall into wickedness.

3. For even wise men among my sons will they mar, and will cause the kingdom of Yahudah to be diminished, which אלהים gave me because of my obedience to my father.

4. For I never caused grief to Yaaqob, my father, for all things whatsoever he commanded I did.

5. And Yatschaq, the father of my father, barak me to be king in Yasharal, and Yaaqob further barak me in like manner.

6. And I know that from me will the kingdom be established.

CHAPTER 18

1. And I know what evils you will do in the last days.

2. Beware, therefore, my children, of fornication and the love of money, and hear to Yahudah your father.

3. For these things withdraw you from the Torah of אלהים, and blind the inclination of the soul, and teach arrogance, and suffer not a man to have compassion upon his neighbour.

4. They rob his soul of all goodness, and oppress him with toils and troubles, and drive away sleep from him, and devour his flesh.

5. And he hinders the sacrifices of אלהים, and he remembers not the barak of אלהים, he hears not to a prophet when he speaks, and resents the words of godliness.

6. For he is a slave to two contrary passions, and cannot obey אלהים, because they have blinded his soul, and he walks in the day as in the night.

CHAPTER 19

1. My children, the love of money leads to idolatry, because, when led astray through money, men name as mighty ones those who are not mighty ones, and it causes him who has it to fall into madness.

2. For the sake of money I lost my children, and had not my repentance, and my humiliation, and the petitions of my father been accepted, I would have died childless.

3. But אֱלֹהִים of my fathers had mercy on me, because I did it in ignorance.

4. And the prince of deceit blinded me, and I was ignorant as a man and as flesh, being corrupted through sins, and I learnt my own weakness while thinking myself invincible.

CHAPTER 20

1. Know, therefore, my children, that two ruach wait upon man, the ruach of amat and the ruach of deceit.

2. And in the midst is the ruach of the understanding of the mind, to which it belongs to turn wherever it will.

3. And the works of amat and the works of deceit are written upon the hearts of men, and each one of them אֱלֹהִים knows.

4. And there is no time at which the works of men can be hidden, for on the heart itself have they been written down before אֱלֹהִים.

5. And the ruach of amat testifies all things, and accuses all, and the sinner is burnt up by his own heart, and cannot raise his face to the judge.

CHAPTER 21

1. And now, my children, I command you, love Lewi, that you may abide, and exalt not yourselves against him, lest you be utterly destroyed.

2. For to me אֱלֹהִים gave the kingdom, and to him the priesthood, and He set the kingdom beneath the priesthood.

3. To me He gave the things upon the earth, to him the things in the heavens.

4. As the heaven is higher than the earth, so is the priesthood of אֱלֹהִים higher than the earthly kingdom, unless it falls away through sin from אֱלֹהִים and is dominated by the earthly kingdom.

5. For the malak of אֱלֹהִים said to me: אֱלֹהִים chose him rather than you, to draw near to Him, and to eat of His table and to offer Him the first-fruits of the choice things of the sons of Yasharal, but you will be king of Yaaqob.

6. And you will be among them as the sea. For as, on the sea, just and unjust are tossed about, some taken into captivity while some are enriched, so also will every race of men be in you, some will be impoverished, being taken captive, and others grow rich by plundering the possessions of others.

7. For the kings will be as sea-monsters. They will swallow men like fishes. The sons and daughters of freemen will they enslave. Houses, lands, flocks, money will they plunder.

8. And with the flesh of many will they wrongfully feed the ravens and the cranes. And they will advance in evil, in covetousness uplifted.

9. And there will be false prophets like tempests, and they will persecute all righteous men.

CHAPTER 22

1. And אֲרָאֵם will bring upon them divisions one against another. And there will be continually wars in Yasharal.

2. And among men of another race will my kingdom be brought to an end, until the salvation of Yasharal will come, until the appearing of אֲרָאֵם, that Yaaqob and all the Gentiles may rest in shalum.

3. And He will guard the might of my kingdom for ever, for אֲרָאֵם swore to me with an oath that He would not destroy the kingdom from my seed for ever.

CHAPTER 23

1. Now I have much grief, my children, because of your lewdness and witchcrafts, and idolatries which you will practise against the kingdom, following them that have familiar ruach, diviners, and demons of error.

2. You will make your daughters singing girls and harlots, and you will mingle in the abominations of the Gentiles.

3. For which things' sake אֲרָאֵם will bring upon you famine and pestilence, death and the sword, besieging by enemies, and revilings of friends, the slaughter of children, the rape of wives, the plundering of possessions, the burning of the temple of אֲרָאֵם, the laying waste of the land, the enslavement of yourselves among the Gentiles.

4. And they will make some of you eunuchs for their wives.

5. Until אֲרָאֵם visits you, when with perfect heart you repent and walk in all His commandments, and He bring you up from captivity among the Gentiles.

CHAPTER 24

1. And after these things will a star arise to you from Yaaqob in shalum, and a man will arise from my seed, like the sun of righteousness, walking with the sons of men in meekness and righteousness, and no sin will be found in him.
2. And the heavens will be opened to him, to pour out Ruach haQodash, even the barak of אֱלֹהִים.
3. And He will pour out the ruach of grace upon you, and you will be to Him sons in amat, and you will walk in His commandments first and last.
4. This Branch of אֱלֹהִים, and this Fountain giving life to all.
5. Then will the sceptre of my kingdom shine forth, and from your root will arise a stem.
6. And from it will grow a rod of righteousness to the Gentiles, to judge and to save all that call upon אֱלֹהִים.

CHAPTER 25

1. And after these things will Abraham and Yatschaq and Yaaqob arise to life, and I and my brethren will be chiefs of the tribes of Yasharal: Lewi first, I the second, Yahusaph third, Binyamin fourth, Shimeon fifth, Yissachar sixth, and so all in order.
2. And אֱלֹהִים barak Lewi, and the Malak of the Presence, me, the powers of esteem, Shimeon, the heaven, Reuban, the earth, Yissachar, the sea, Zabulun, the mountains, Yahusaph, the tabernacle, Binyamin, the luminaries, Dan, Eden, Naphtali, the sun, Gad, the moon, Asher.
3. And you will be the people of אֱלֹהִים, and have one tongue, and there will be there no ruach of deceit of Beliar (Baal), for he will be cast into the fire for ever.
4. And they who have died in grief will arise in joy, and they who were poor for the sake of אֱלֹהִים will be made rich, and they who are put to death for the sake of אֱלֹהִים will awake to life.
5. And the hearts of Yaaqob will run in joyfulness, and the eagles of Yasharal will fly in gladness, and all the peoples will esteem אֱלֹהִים for ever.

CHAPTER 26

1. Observe, therefore, my children, all the Torah of אֱלֹהִים, for there is hope for all them who hold fast to His ways.
2. And he said to them: Behold, I die before your eyes this day, a hundred and nineteen years old.
3. Let no one bury me in costly apparel, nor tear open my bowels, for this will they who are kings do, and carry me up to Hebron with you.

4. And Yahudah, when he had said these things, fell asleep, and his sons did according to all whatsoever he commanded them, and they buried him in Hebron with his fathers.