

THE TESTAMENT OF NAPHTALI

CHAPTER 1

1 The copy of the testament of Naphtali, which he ordained at the time of his death in the hundred and thirtieth year of his life.

2 When his sons were gathered together in the seventh month, on the first day of the month, while still in good health, he made them a feast of food and wine.

3 And after he was awake in the morning, he said to them, I am dying; and they believed him not.

4 And as he esteemed אֱלֹהִים, he grew strong and said that after yesterday's feast he would die.

5 And he began then to say: Hear, my children, sons of Naphtali, hear the words of your father.

6 I was born from Bilhah; and because Rachel dealt craftily, and gave Bilhah in place of herself to Ya'aqob, and she conceived and bore me upon Rachel's knees, therefore she called my name Naphtali.

7 For Rachel loved me very much because I was born upon her lap; and when I was still young she was wont to kiss me, and say: May I have a brother of yours from my own womb, like unto you.

8 Whence also Yabusaph was like unto me in all things, according to the petitions of Rachel.

9 Now my mother was Bilhah, daughter of Rotheus the brother of Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, who was born on the same day with Rachel.

10 And Rotheus was of the family of Abraham, a Chaldean, fearing אֱלֹהִים, free-born, and noble.

11 And he was taken captive and was bought by Laban; and he gave him Euna his handmaid to wife, and she bore a daughter, and called her name Zilpah, after the name of the village in which he had been taken captive.

12 And next she bore Bilhah, saying: My daughter hastens after what is new, for immediately that she was born she seized the breast and hastened to suck it.

CHAPTER 2

1 And I was swift on my feet like the deer, and my father Ya'aqob appointed me for all messages, and as a deer did he give me his barak.

2 For as the potter knows the vessel, how much it is to contain, and brings clay accordingly, so also does אֱלֹהִים make the body after the likeness of the soul, and according to the capacity of the body does He implant the soul.

3 And the one does not fall short of the other by a third part of a hair; for by weight, and measure, and rule was all the creation made.

4 And as the potter knows the use of each vessel, what it is fit for, so also does אֱלֹהִים know the body, how far it will persist in goodness, and when it begins in evil.

5 For there is no inclination or thought which אֱלֹהִים knows not, for He created every man after His own image.

6 For as a man's strength, so also is his work; as his eye, so also is his sleep; as his soul, so also is his word either in the Torah of אֱלֹהִים or in the Torah of Beliar (Baal).

7 And as there is a division between light and darkness, between seeing and hearing, so also is

there a division between man and man, and between woman and woman; and it is not to be said that the one is like the other either in face or in mind.

8 For אֱלֹהִים made all things good in their order, the five senses in the head, and He joined on the neck to the head, adding to it the hair also for comeliness and esteem, then the heart for understanding, the belly for excrement, and the stomach for grinding, the windpipe for taking in the breath, the liver for wrath, the gall for bitterness, the spleen for laughter, the reins for prudence, the muscles of the loins for power, the lungs for drawing in, the loins for strength, and so forth.

9 So then, my children, let all your works be done in order with good intent in the fear of אֱלֹהִים, and do nothing disorderly in scorn or out of its due season.

10 For if you bid the eye to hear, it cannot; so neither while you are in darkness can you do the works of light.

CHAPTER 3

1 Be not eager to corrupt your doings through covetousness or with vain words to beguile your souls; because if you keep silence in purity of heart, you will understand how to hold fast the will of אֱלֹהִים, and to cast away the will of Beliar (Baal).

2 Sun and moon and stars change not their order; so do you also change not the Torah of אֱלֹהִים in the disorderliness of your doings.

3 The nations went astray, and forsook אֱלֹהִים, and changed their order, and obeyed stocks and stones, ruachim of deceit.

4 But you will not be so, my children, recognising in the firmament, in the earth, and in the sea, and in all created things, אֱלֹהִים who made all things, that you become not as Sodom, which changed the order of nature.

5 In like manner the Watchers also changed the order of their nature, whom אֱלֹהִים cursed at the flood, on whose account He made the earth without inhabitant and fruitless.

CHAPTER 4

1 These things I say unto you, my children, for I have read in the writing of Chanok that you yourselves also will depart from אֱלֹהִים, walking according to all the lawlessness of the nations, and you will do according to all the wickedness of Sodom.

2 And אֱלֹהִים will bring captivity upon you, and there you will serve your enemies, and you will be bowed down with every affliction and tribulation, until אֱלֹהִים has consumed you all.

3 And after you have become diminished and made few, you will return and acknowledge אֱלֹהִים your AL; and He will bring you back into your own land, according to His abundant mercy.

4 And it will be, that after you come into the land of your fathers, you will again forget אֱלֹהִים and become unrighteous.

5 And אֱלֹהִים will scatter you upon the face of all the earth, until the compassion of אֱלֹהִים will come, a man working righteousness and working mercy unto all them that are afar off, and to them that are near.

CHAPTER 5

1 For in the fortieth year of my life, I saw a vision on the Mount of Olives, on the east of Yarushalayim, that the sun and the moon were standing still.
2 And behold Yatschaq, the father of my father, said to us: Run and lay hold of them, each one according to his strength; and to him that seizes them will the sun and moon belong.
3 And we all of us ran together, and Lewi laid hold of the sun, and Yahudah outstripped the others and seized the moon, and they were both of them lifted up with them.
4 And when Lewi became as a sun, lo, a certain young man gave to him twelve branches of palm; and Yahudah was bright as the moon, and under their feet were twelve rays.
5 And the two, Lewi and Yahudah, ran, and laid hold of them.
6 And lo, a bull upon the earth, with two great horns, and an eagle's wings upon his back; and we wished to seize him, but could not.
7 But Yahusaph came, and seized him, and ascended up with him on high.
8 And I saw, for I was there, and behold a consecrated writing appeared to us, saying: Assyrians, Medes, Persians, Chaldeans, Syrians, will possess in captivity the twelve tribes of Yashar'al.

CHAPTER 6

1 And again, after seven days, I saw our father Ya'aqob standing by the sea of Jamnia, and we were with him.
2 And behold, there came a ship sailing by, without sailors or pilot; and there was written upon the ship, The ship of Ya'aqob.
3 And our father said to us: Come let us embark on our ship.
4 And when we had gone on board, there arose a vehement storm, and a mighty tempest of wind; and our father, who was holding the helm, departed from us.
5 And we, being tossed with the tempest, were borne along over the sea; and the ship was filled with water, and was pounded by mighty waves, until it was broken up.
6 And Yahusaph fled away upon a little boat, and we all were divided upon nine planks, and Lewi and Yahudah were together.
7 And we were all scattered unto the ends of the earth.
8 Then Lewi, girt about with sackcloth, prayed for us all unto אֱלֹהִים.
9 And when the storm ceased, the ship reached the land, as it were in shalum.
10 And lo, our father came, and we all rejoiced with one accord.

CHAPTER 7

1 These two dreams I told to my father; and he said to me: These things must be fulfilled in their season, after that Yashar'al has endured many things.
2 Then my father said unto me: I believe AL that Yahusaph lives, for I see always that אֱלֹהִים numbers him with you.
3 And he said, weeping: Ah me, my son, Yahusaph, you live, though I behold you not, and you see not Ya'aqob that begat you.
4 He caused me also, therefore, to weep by these words, and I burned in my heart to declare that Yahusaph had been sold, but I feared my brethren.

CHAPTER 8

1 And lo, my children, I have shown unto you the last times, how everything will come to pass in Yashar'al.

2 Do you also, therefore, charge your children that they be united to Lewi and to Yahudah; for through them will deliverance arise unto Yashar'al, and in them will Ya'aqob be barak.

3 For through their tribes will אֱלֹהִים appear dwelling among men on earth, to save the race of Yashar'al, and to gather together the righteous from amongst the nations.

4 If you work that which is good, my children, both men and malakim will bless you; and אֱלֹהִים will be esteemed among the nations through you, and Beliar (Baal) will flee from you, and the wild beasts will fear you, and אֱלֹהִים will love you, and the malakim will cleave to you.

5 As a man who has trained a child well is kept in kindly remembrance; so also for a good work there is a good remembrance before אֱלֹהִים

6 But him who does not that which is good, both malakim and men will curse, and אֱלֹהִים will be dishonoured among the nations through him, and Beliar (Baal) will make him as his own peculiar instrument, and every wild beast will master him, and אֱלֹהִים will hate him.

7 For the commandments of the Torah are twofold, and through prudence must they be fulfilled.

8 For there is a season for a man to embrace his wife, and a season to abstain therefrom for his petition.

9 So, then, there are two commandments; and, unless they be done in due order, they bring very great sin upon men. So also is it with the other commandments.

10 Be therefore wise in אֱלֹהִים, my children, and prudent, understanding the order of His commandments, and the laws of every word, that אֱלֹהִים may love you.

CHAPTER 9

1 And when he had charged them with many such words, he exhorted them that they should remove his bones to Hebron, and that they should bury him with his fathers.

2 And when he had eaten and drunk with a merry heart, he covered his face and died.

3 And his sons did according to all that Naphtali their father had commanded them.