

Chapter 1 of a New Beginning – The Torah Series

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MAIN VERSES

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Do you ever find yourself searching for something bigger than you? For a community to be a part of? A place founded on truth and love. A place to worship the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, and the Son of God. Welcome to Founded in Truth, where we're more than just a fellowship. We're a family, so welcome home.

A Year Cycling Through the Torah

This week begins a new cycle of the Torah portion. We've spent a year diving into the Torah, and each week reflecting, gaining wisdom from it. It's a journey—when we read through the Torah, we take a journey from the garden to the promise of an inheritance, to an exodus from slavery to a life in the wilderness, learning the ways of God, prefaced with the vocation of being a kingdom of priests, mediators of heaven and earth to the world. We journeyed through the struggles of flesh, rebellion, sin, and lust in the wilderness, and finally, at the end of the Torah portion, we arrived at the border of the land.

And at the end of Deuteronomy, Moses has this prophecy to Israel. He tells them: "Listen, you're going to fall. You're going to fail. You're going to rebel against God. You're going to place other things in front of God in your life. But there's always room for turning back. And if you repent, God will bring you back. He will bring you back home."

And then the Torah ends. Of course, we know what happens next—we go into Joshua and Judges, and we see everything that Moses prophesied come true. But now we turn back and we roll back, and we have a tradition at Sukkot where we roll back the Torah scroll and go all the

way back to the beginning of the story. And here we are again, finding ourselves standing in the garden with God.

And I love that because it's a reminder that our God is the God of new beginnings, always. The very flow of the Torah cycle reveals the character of God that is saturated and soaked with mercy and grace.

New Beginnings: Growth, Not Recovery

When we speak about new beginnings, it's usually from the standpoint of a sin or an addiction or something negative that we need to come back from. But we don't often speak about the next chapter in our lives—a new beginning, chapter one of growth. Maybe you are struggling with things in your lives. But maybe you're not. Maybe it's just time for you to grow bolder in your faith and grow bolder in the character that God has placed in your heart and grow bolder as a soldier of Christ. That's what I want to talk about today.

Colossians 1:9—Paul speaks of this. He says, "For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God for this." And Paul is speaking about growth of a believer. He does this quite a bit—growing in the knowledge of God. Now, I would go out on a limb and say that growing in the knowledge of God is not speaking about Bible memorization. When Paul writes this letter, he's not saying, okay, this means go out and learn your Bible verses. And I don't even think he's talking about learning some new Hebrew words or something. No, look how it's prefaced: "Bearing fruit in every good work. Growing in the knowledge of God."

It's a growth in a lifestyle and discipline. It's a growth in your commitment. It's a growth in your allegiance, your faith to the kingdom of God. In other words, we were not meant to remain stationary. We were not meant to be comfortable in our walk with God. It's usually a sign of something very bad when we come to a point where we're like, yeah, I can settle for this moment, this peace, this station in my relationship with God.

Moving Forward in Faith

Whenever we go through new chapters in life, there's always a point where we have to recognize where we're at and move forward. And that usually looks like looking in the mirror and being blunt with yourself about who you are, where you are, and where you need to be. Maybe a new chapter starts with you making the decision that you're going to be better in some area of your life. Maybe you're going to be a better parent. You're going to be a better spouse.

You're going to be the kind of friend that holds their peers to a higher standard, a higher level. Maybe a new chapter says that I'm stepping out in full faith and belief of what God is calling you into. That's the Abrahamic type of faith, by the way.

There's a biblical expectation of deep maturing that takes place in the life of a believer. And it's not going back to the beginning. It's an evolution. It's a progress in your life. There's an incident in [Numbers 9](#) that I felt was a perfect example. And I've read this section of Scripture many times, and it just popped out at me the other day.

God's Grace: A Second Passover

There's an incident in [Numbers 9](#) where we see God's grace in the area of Passover. God commands Moses to tell the people to keep the Passover in which month? The first month. So they're supposed to do this thing, and it's a complete memorialization of the salvation of God. They take a lamb, and through the blood of the lamb, they remember that they are no longer slaves, they are no longer oppressed—they are a free people in God. To believers, that has a huge impact on our theology today.

But we have a replay. And in [Numbers 9](#), something happens. There were certain men who were unclean through touching a dead body. So there's a couple of stipulations on keeping the Passover. One is you have to be a member of the covenant, circumcision, all that, all that, all that. And you couldn't be unclean. You had to stay away if you were unclean.

If you weren't clean, you could not partake of the Pesach, the holy set-apart Pesach offering. And we don't fully understand that concept. We keep Passover every single year, and it's a really big deal for us. We eat brisket because we do not eat the holy Passover offering. There's just no way to do that. There's no temple. Even people who eat lamb for Passover are not eating the Passover. It's a memorialization, and according to Jeremiah's prophecy, it's a memorialization of a greater exodus that has taken place through Christ.

The Grace of a Second Chance

But here we have some men in [Numbers 9](#). They were unclean through touching a dead body, so they could not keep the Passover on that day. So they came to Moses and Aaron on that day, and those men said to him: "We are unclean through touching a dead body. Why are we kept from bringing the Lord's offering at its appointed time among the people of Israel?" And Moses said to them: "Wait, that I may hear what the Lord will command concerning you."

I love that because Moses is like, "I don't know." And it continues: "And the Lord spoke to Moses saying, Speak to the people of Israel, saying, If any one of you or your descendants is unclean through the touching of a dead body and is on a long journey—there's some grace here. You went on vacation and didn't make it back on time—he shall still keep the Passover to the Lord. In the second month, on the fourteenth day at twilight, they shall keep it. They shall eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. They shall leave none of it until morning, nor break any of its bones, according to the statute for Passover. They shall keep it."

Now, I love that because these men were unclean on Passover and they could not partake of the holy offering. They couldn't bring it, partake of it, nothing. But they still wanted to do it. And Moses goes to God, and God is like, "That's no problem. A month after Passover, we're going to implement an entirely new festival event. We're going to duplicate it. It's not just going to be a side thing—we're going to do it again for everyone who wants to, for everyone who wasn't able to take part in the first one. A Pesach Shini, a second Passover, a second chance, if you will."

The Heart of Grace

Now, something to notice here that I've never noticed in this story: these men were not held by some obedient oath of obligation. There wasn't a commandment regarding their situation, right? Let me put it this way. In the middle of the wilderness, it's been two years since they left Egypt, and your neighbor dies in the tent next door. And you're his buddy, and you're like, "Dang it, Shlomo." So you've got to get him out of his tent. You've got to find a place to bury him. You have to go through the trauma of telling the family what happened. You have to dig a hole. And you have to bury him. This is a high-stress situation.

Anyone here ever been directly involved in a funeral? Not just attended one, but been involved? Have you ever been involved in an immediate funeral, an immediate family member's funeral? You may laugh because you see the dark comedy of how much is going on, even though it's such a sad situation. And for at least a week, if you're immediately involved, time stops. It just becomes fluid between your fingers. You lose a week of your life. Is that true for you? You have so many details. You have to organize everything. Oh, there's pamphlets that we got to hand out for the funeral. What do we write on those? Who's going to be allowed to speak?

Are we going to let that cousin, that second cousin grab the mic because we know his history with it? There's a lot of dynamics that go into a funeral and burying someone. It strips you of all energy. How many of you would have gone to Moses and been like, "Okay, what do I need to do? I'll get the lamb. I'll build the fire. I'll take it before. I will roast it." It's a big deal. This big

Passover event. I was unclean, so I can't do it. There has to be something I can do. There has to be. Is there another way I can do this? How many of you would have done that? Most of us probably didn't even go to church the week of the funeral we were involved in. I didn't. I wasn't here. My dad passed away. Nope. These men could have just faded into the crowd and no one would have thought anything bad about them. They would have understood. No one would have even judged them. But look, why are we kept from bringing the Lord's offering at its appointed time among the people of Israel? Why are we kept back from joining the legacy of our people in this event? Look at this boldness. Look at this boldness. Moses is flabbergasted. He's like, I don't know. I don't know. They saw obedience to the Lord as something bigger than a checklist. Oh, I have to do this. They didn't have to do it. They could have faded into the background very easily. No, they saw something bigger. There was a goal behind their intent. There was a pursuit. There was a bigger picture and a bigger mission that they wanted to be a part of. It seemed they held closely both a belief and a mission—they knew they were part of something bigger than themselves. They could have had an excuse. They could have. But they said, no excuses. We're doing this. They wanted and were determined to be a part of the legacy of their people. They didn't let excuses come before their faithfulness to God's mission.

No Excuses, Just Faithfulness

Another instance is Numbers chapter 27, which I love. And you may be familiar with this story. It's the story of the daughters of Zelophehad. So go ahead and say that name. If you say it in Hebrew, it sounds really weird—Zelphahed. Who is it? Daughters of Zelphahed. Right? Cut three people. That's good. Then drew near the daughters of Zelophehad, the son of Hephor, the son of Gilead, the son of Mekor, the son of Manasseh from the clans of Manasseh, the sons of Joseph. The names of his daughters were Malah, Noah, Haglah, Milcah, and Terzah. Now, he died in his own sin. He wasn't a rebel. And he had no sons. Why should the name of a father be taken away from his clan because he had no son? Give to us a possession among our father's brothers. Moses brought their case before the Lord, and the Lord said to Moses, You know what? The daughters of Zelophehad are right. You shall give them possession of an inheritance among their father's brothers and transfer the inheritance of their father to them. And you shall speak to the people of Israel, saying, If a man dies and has no son, then you shall transfer his inheritance to his daughter. And if he has no daughter, then you shall give an inheritance to his brothers. And if he has no brothers, then you shall give an inheritance to his father's brothers. And if his father has no brothers, then you shall give his inheritance to the nearest kinsman of the tribe, and he shall possess it. And it shall be for the people of Israel a statute, a rule, as the Lord commanded Moses. So, a review. A bunch of ladies in the Bronze Age, Iron Age era, they

could have just ignored this situation. They could have gotten married, not ruffled any feathers... Land goes to sons, to men, not women. Their father died, not in rebellion. He had no sons. Now his inheritance is going to go to his brothers. And the thing is—his name will be lost. There will be no—his name will not be remembered in the clan of the tribe he was a part of. Nah, give it to us. Give it to us, his daughters. Give the land to us. So his name can be part of his people. So he can be remembered as being a part of the bigger picture. Jeez. That's incredible. So what happens? This is not how things work in this part of the world during this time period. You guys realize this, okay? Especially in this culture who gave these... This culture allowed these women to stand up before the people at the entrance of the tent of meeting—the boldness of these women. They went to the tent of meeting, stood up before God, demanded the attention of God, demanded the attention of the chiefs of all of the tribes. They demanded the attention of Moses. And they said, we want the inheritance. So here we go again. Moses is like, this is above my pay grade. He goes to God. And here is recorded: In a world where women were constantly neglected, abused, exploited, and viewed by most cultures as nothing more than esteemed property, here, when there are people ready to boldly step forward to advance toward a bigger picture, God meets them. Now, what's so amazing about this story is that this story is not about land inheritance. It's not about taking care of the women in the community. No, I don't think that's the emphasis. No. This was about five daughters boldly stepping forward so that the name of their father would be remembered among their people, the kingdom of priests. It's like a snapshot out of Ruth chapter 4, that his name would be remembered from the generation that left Egypt, that contributed to the overall mission that God had for them.

The Daughters' Legacy

And look, verse 1. Verse 1. Here we go. Then drew near the daughters of Zelophehad, the son of Hivor, the son of Gilead, the son of Mekor, the son of Manasseh, from the clans of Manasseh, the son of Joseph. The names of his daughters were Malah, Noah, Haglah, Bilkah, and Zertah. The daughters of who? Right here in the Torah of God to remain forever. The name of their father is remembered. They did it. And not only is their father's name remembered as a result of their boldness to grow beyond where the world told them they should stay, but their names too are remembered forever in the Torah itself. God is present when we are ready to grow past where the world says we should stay. From that day forward, these women were writing a new chapter in their story because of their bold approach and willingness to put themselves out there and say, you know what, it's time to grow.

Through Mistakes, He Grew

The moment after God said, Yeah, yeah, you want to truly show your dedication and loyalty to me? Do the feast again. Can you imagine what that did to those men? Yes, I can step forward. I can increase dedication. That's bold. The story of Abraham called away from his home, his family, his job to go to a new land and follow the voice of the Lord. You're familiar with this story. Does Abraham struggle in his journey? No. Of course he does. There's that incident where he joins his wife in taking full advantage of their slave girl, making her a sex slave. We have the whole thing that happened in Egypt that we won't talk about because that was messed up. Abraham messed up quite a bit along the way of his journey. But remember, who made the promise to Abraham that he would have an heir? God did. Who, despite the journey that Abraham made through struggles, through rebellion, never abandoned the bigger plan for Abraham? It's God. Who was faithful to be there, ready and waiting, when Abraham chose to see and take hold of the tree of life, putting his belief, his trust, and obedience in God when God said to sacrifice his son? Who was there? God. But Abraham did. He followed through. And then it's written about Abraham that he did what? And it was counted to him as righteousness. He believed. Abraham came to a place in his life where it was time to grow. It was time to be bold. It was time to do something scary. It was time to lean into the bigger picture of his calling, the bigger mission set forth in his life, the bigger calling on his existence, on his life. He believed. [Genesis 15](#), 4, and behold, Abraham's asking about his heir, this promise that God gave to him. Is it going to be a liaison? Is it going to be my friend over here, a little servant? No. No. The word of the Lord came to him, this man will not be your heir. Your very own son shall be your heir. And he brought him outside and said, look towards the heavens and the number of stars, and if you're able to number them. Then he said to him, so shall your offspring be. Verse 6, and he believed the Lord, and it was counted to him as righteousness, faith. Abram believed. He took upon himself the allegiance of this bigger picture, this bigger promise, the bigger mission. And his works sometimes messed up over the next few chapters, but through his mistakes, he grew. Through his mistakes, he grew. Until finally, in [Genesis 26](#), God is reiterating this promise that he handed down through Abram, and he's given it to his offspring. And he's reiterating this promise to Isaac, right? Right? And what's he say here? [Genesis 26](#), 4. This is an amazing verse. Because it insinuates that Abraham kept the commandments and the Torah later given to Israel at Mount Sinai. And the thing about that is there's nowhere in the Bible before this verse where it insinuates that God gave him these same commandments. Nowhere in the story. It's just a very interesting picture.

And of course this verse has many debated views around it, but let's just take it for what it says. God is attributing him righteousness for keeping the Torah, even though he wasn't born under the Torah. Abraham was said to be loyal to God's commandments. But what fueled that? I would say it was his belief in a bigger picture, the need to grow, the need to be better, the need to be stronger, to be more disciplined in his dedication to God. He kept the Torah. So the text lays this out, this paradox Paul actually commentates on in [Romans 4](#) and Galatians. And then you have a man by the name of Moses. Moses was raised under the law. He was given the law. This man who left Pharaoh's grasp goes to meet God in the wilderness, is given a mission, and then he goes back to Egypt and leads Israel out of Pharaoh's grasp until they go into the wilderness and they're given a mission. And he leads them through the wilderness. Did he ever get stressed out? It was a tough job to lead Israel through the wilderness. Always complaining about something. Can you imagine that stress? Can you imagine building up day by day? Oh no. Here we go. Yaakov is outside complaining about the same thing again. He keeps pushing. Moses does a great job enduring the constant failures and reconstitutions of the covenant and the extra stipulations that God gives after the failure. And then another failure comes. And then the covenant is reconstituted to them. And then more stipulations are given to help protect them from breaking the covenant. And they fail again. And Moses is right there at the front lines.

The Test at the Rock

And then an incident happens that many of us probably think isn't quite fair. It's Numbers chapter 20. Then Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly together before the rock, and he said to them, Here now, you rebels, shall we bring water for you out of this rock? And Moses lifted up his hand and struck the rock with his staff twice. And the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank and their livestock. And the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, Because you did not believe in me, to uphold me as holy in the eyes of the people of Israel. Therefore, you shall not bring this assembly into the land that I've given you. So you know the setup. God tells Moses, hey, speak to the rock. It'll give water. The people complain. Anyone ever gotten irritated with someone? Moses got highly irritated. And so he starts assaulting this rock. And this whole time, he's been through the desert. The whole time, he's been given the Torah. The whole time, the glowing face. I mean, all of it, face to face. The glory of God consumed him. And he's right there leading the people. And the Torah says he didn't believe in God. He didn't have the faith. Man, that's bold of the biblical authors to say this, like here in the story. Anyone else? Like if you read it like a narrative, Moses can't go into the land now. Why? Because he did not believe. A lot of views and opinions exist for the technicalities of this passage. They're all fascinating.

But bluntly, we see the biblical authors telling us something as part of the bigger story that's going to unfold later in the scriptures. Abraham is portrayed as being one who obeys the Torah even though he does not have a checklist in front of him. And Moses is portrayed as one who does not believe despite having all of it in front of him to look at every single day. Going through the motions without belief will never advance you into the land. I think that's a blunt message that the biblical authors are portraying here. Going through the motions without belief will never advance you into the land.

The Story and Flow of Torah

And the authors here tell us this story, and they lay it out throughout the Torah. And the thing about the Torah is it has a flow. We've discussed this over the past few weeks. It's a story. It flows. It has high points, low points. We've seen where the narrative shifts happen in [Genesis 1](#) through 11, 11 through 50, and so on and so forth. And different parts of the story isolate different things to continue the flow and motivate the flow. And it's not random. The Torah is not just a bunch of random commandments that are shotgunned onto paper. And I used to view the Bible like that many years ago, and maybe you do as well. And I want to let you know that the commandments in Torah are given at specific times because it's part of the story and how it's unfolding. And it changes the bigger picture, and it's amazing. But the commandments are not simply random. Oh, now God just decides to give all of these commandments at this point in the story. No. There has to be one time I'd wheel off an exit ramp and dive into some really neat stuff in the Bible.

The Pattern of Commandments

So this is a graph out of Dr. John Salheimer's book, Introduction to Old Testament Theology. And this graph only covers from the Ten Commandments given to the end of Leviticus. But this flow happens throughout the entire Torah. And I want to show you something here. I want to show you that there's a pattern to when the commandments were given. And if you're a student of the Bible, you've studied it, you'll recognize some of the different sections where the bulk packs of commandments are given. And they're known as different codes, commandment codes. So you have the covenant established, [Exodus 19](#). Israel will be a kingdom of... Fantastic. And then we go on to [Exodus 20](#), where the Ten Commandments are now given, right? Yes, this is great. And they're upholding this. And then right after the Ten Commandments, going through 21 through 25, is what's called the Covenant Code. It has a lot of commandments about social justice and treating your neighbor with justice and righteousness and so on and so forth. This is

the code of the covenant. This is supposed to help guide you to where you need to be. And then there's the tabernacle illustrations. Remember, Moses is called up in the mountain, and he's being given all these things, and now he's being told how to create a physical abode that represents a meeting place of heaven and earth where God can meet with his people. So Moses is like, stupendous. I have the tablets. This is great. He walks down the mountain, and in [Exodus 32](#), what is happening? There's a golden calf incident. Like right after Israel has said, yes, we're going to be a kingdom of priests. Yes, we're going to keep these commandments. Oh, there's a covenant code. We can do all of this. Don't have any gods before you? No problemo. We got this. Oh, Moses is gone. Let's worship a golden calf.

The Golden Calf and Covenant Renewal

Now, there was already kind of like a pseudo-priesthood in play here, which was great. And I'm glad we had the priesthood here because the priesthood is supposed to guard the codes of God, the covenant of God, right? They're going to be the main mediators, the main mediators of heaven and earth here. And so it's a good thing that we had Aaron there to prevent this from happening. So it wasn't just the people that messed up. It was the leaders put in place. It was the priests as well. They messed up really big. Here's the calf. Priesthood did this. So Moses very gently sets down the tablets and he addresses the situation. That's not what happened. A very gruesome scene happens. A lot of people die. Yeah, it tends to be a pretty... Anyway, after the golden calf incident, [Exodus 33](#) through 34, what happens? We have the covenant renewal. We're going back up. Moses, come on back up here. We're going to give you another set. We can redo this. People mess up. It's fine. So he goes back up, and it's actually a different list than [Exodus 20](#), but that's beside the point. We're moving forward. And then the—I hate to say a zip file—the code of commandments or the block of commandments that's given right after this, guess who that's for? The priests. Why would it be for the priests? Because they're the ones who messed up in [Exodus 32](#). They led the people astray. Okay, priestly commandments. Here we go. This is hopefully going to keep you guys in line. This is how the sacrifices work. Everything's good. You guys good? We're moving through the Torah now because people can't just not mess up. And then the beginning of [Leviticus 17](#) says we have the mention of people not worshiping goats or not worshiping calves, but they're outside the walls, away from the tabernacle, offering sacrifices to goats now. So the priesthood's pretty good now. Now the people are going away. And that's when a block of—a very famous block of commandments are given called the Holiness Code in Leviticus. And it's holiness. It's how to be set apart. People, be set apart. More is expected of you. You should already know this. All the commandments. And then we have the covenant renewal of [Leviticus 26](#), which is God reemphasizing, listen, if you

will obey and chase after me with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might, I will give you the overwhelming blessings of the land, and there will be fruit trees, and there will be rain, and it will be like Eden again. I will give you the garden, and I will be there. And there's a flow, which is beautiful, but that's how the flow goes throughout the entire Torah.

Belief Must Follow the Law

We have a people who are willing to try to go through the motions of the commandments, but keep falling and tripping. And then more commandments are giving. And people are like, yes, we'll keep these commandments too. And they fall and they trip and they hit the ground. And yes, we'll keep these commandments too. And finally, at the end of Deuteronomy, Moses is like, this isn't even a problem with the commandments. This is a problem with your heart because your heart is in the wrong place. And you don't have a heart that will fully embrace what God is calling you to do and be.

You don't have belief. Moses should know. [Leviticus 8](#) through 9 is when Aaron's sons are ordained for the priesthood. [Leviticus 10](#), they mess up and die in the holy place. This is his flow. This is the flow of the story. And it's supposed to carry you through this specific pattern. This is one of the many workflows put together to show one of those patterns, and I love it. We got off the exit. Matt, what does all of this mean? Well, this is what Paul speaks about in Romans chapter four when he talks about the importance of faith and allegiance and trust, how these are the things that create a canvas that the Torah should be painted on. And without that canvas, your paint's gonna peel off. Without that canvas, the picture's not gonna be right. Without that canvas... It's not going to last.

Faith As The Foundation

And the biblical authors are setting up a story for a people to enter into the land that have the Torah but don't have the heart to believe. There are people that can go through the motions but refuse to grow in the areas that they need to most in order to be the people that God has called them to be. And that's exactly what the prophet Jeremiah writes about in Jeremiah chapter 30, 31, the new covenant, right? Jeremiah prophesies about this new covenant, not like the one that God gave when he brought them out of Egypt and they broke. No, he has a new covenant, a new promise that will be solely rooted in God's mercy and grace and forgiveness, where God will cultivate a heart in those who follow him that will have the Torah engraved on it. They will have hearts so committed to the mission of God that every single beat will radiate the essence of what it means to follow Torah and lead their lives as being an actual kingdom of priests in the

world, an actual people that represent heaven emerging on earth, an actual people that represent the kingdom of God, just like Abraham. There has to be a level of belief and commitment and trust and faith. There has to be a level of stern allegiance to the king. There has to be a willingness to give up from the valleys that you find yourself in and look up and say, I need to climb this mountain. There has to be a willingness to say, you know what? Maybe I am a sinner, but through God's grace, I can overcome. I can start a new chapter in my life. There has to be a willingness to take the vocation of being a soldier of Christ seriously. We're called soldiers of Christ because we follow orders and we follow our commanding officer. And yeah, but as a soldier, we have to take that role seriously to not be content on staying in the lowest rank in the military of God's kingdom. What kind of life, what kind of soldier are you if you never push for what God's calling you to be? No, be bold. Face your fears, cultivate and accept God's wisdom in your life. Why? Because there's a bigger picture. Your story is part of a bigger story. And what is that story?

The Story of God and Mankind

What is the story of the Bible that it sets us up for as believers we fully embrace? Well, it starts in [Genesis 1](#) and 2. God creates the world where he can dwell with mankind. That's why he creates the world—to dwell with mankind. He creates a world where he can dwell with you. And then he plants a garden. The climax of intimacy between God and man, between heaven and earth, centers around this location, the Garden Mountain, which later becomes memorialized in the tabernacle or in the temple, the place where heaven and earth were seen as meeting. This is how the story starts. How does the story of the Bible end? Well, in [Revelation 21](#), it doesn't end with a garden. It doesn't end with everybody going back to a garden. It ends with a city, this huge garden city, a new Jerusalem. A new city endowed with the presence of God. Here we go, [Revelation 21](#), 3 speaks about this. And I heard a loud voice in the throne saying, Look, God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the older order of things has passed away. I love this because this was the vision. These were the lenses that Yeshua wore when he walked out of his ministry. Do you guys know that? This is the lenses. You know what? Here's someone crying. Let's show them what the kingdom of God looks and feels like. Oh, there's someone who can't dance because their leg's messed up. Let's show them what the kingdom of God feels like, just like Isaiah says. Someone can't speak to praise God. Let's show them what the prophecies of a new creation look like and feel like. This was what Yeshua did. This was what Yeshua's mission evolved around, was introducing people

to the new heaven, the new creation that births on earth. This is what it looks like when heaven is made manifest on earth. This is what it looks like when God's reign fully engulfs creation, the kingdom of God. It's Eden reborn. And it's not necessarily... with this climactic event that takes place in space. No, with Yeshua, it was reborn in the small moments when you showed someone kindness, when you forgave someone, when you showed a radical mercy in your life, when you made radical sacrifices. That's not how this world works, yeah, but it's how the kingdom works that I'm a part of, and that's not of this world.

Your Mission In God's Kingdom

Oh, look, verse 10. And he carried me away in the spirit to a mountain great and high and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. Where does the holy Jerusalem come from? It's not a trick question. It's heaven. Notice the direction. Notice the direction. Where is it coming down? It's coming down from heaven to where? The plan, the mission, the bigger picture is that God will not abandon his plan, and he invites you to be a part of it. That heaven's destination has always been here on earth. That is what the kingdom of God that Yeshua speaks about is all about. Your will be done on earth as it is in You know what that prayer is about? It's a prayer for you to ask God to equip you that his will may be done on earth as it is in. That's the bigger picture. You are an ambassador of that taking place. This is why Paul calls you an ambassador of the Messiah. Hands and feet. A stone that participates in the building, the habitation where God's spirit dwells. There's a bigger picture that you're a part of. And it's not just your life, it's the bigger plan that God has for all of us as his kingdom. As the emerging kingdom that's overtaking the earth. And here's the thing. God's expectations of you have not changed. He still has a plan. He still has a mission. There's still a bigger picture. Through Yeshua, we're shown how to walk this out. Through Yeshua, we are brought near to the strength and the redeeming power of God. Through Yeshua, we're enabled with an understanding of a power of God working through us to impact the world around us. And the biblical authors want you to know something. You need to have a heart that is cultivated by God to actually walk that out. Going through the motions will not do it. It won't work. It will fail you. Your belief, your loyalty, your faith, your allegiance to King Yeshua and the kingdom of God is the foundation of all obedience. Are you willing to accept that? Are you willing to step out and grow, to be bold, to be audacious like the unclean men who demanded an opportunity to handle the sacrifices, another opportunity to go before the Lord? An entirely new feast day based on their zeal for God's kingdom. The daughters of Zelophehad, standing firm so that their father would be remembered as the first generation Israelite, whose family was a contributor to the mass migration into the land. Reading [Genesis 1](#) reminds us that there are times to grow.

There are cycles of life. And if we are growing in God, we're growing in our mission to be better, to be stronger, to be bolder examples of Yeshua wherever we go. And I don't know what that looks like for you. It could be honing discipline in prayer time. It could be knowing you need to mature in areas of your life and actually make a commitment to do so and follow through with it. It may be taking a peek into the hard areas of your life, the places we don't like to reveal in order to let loose something called forgiveness. Maybe it's time to let go of childhood sins that have taken up a residence in your life far too long. It can look like so many things, the need to grow, but having the faith of Abraham is knowing when to grow, knowing that God is already there waiting and trusting his will be done.

Growing Into Your Calling

Guys, there are too many times where we come to a point in our faith where it's just...the same thing every day... ..and we like it like that... ..and it's comfortable like that... ..and we don't like things that are uncomfortable... ..we don't like to grow in areas of ministry... ..where we actually have to go out into the world... ..and do something... ..because that makes us uncomfortable... ..or maybe we have to spend a little bit more time every day... ..in honing our devotion with God... ..or our discipline in devoting our life with God... ..by devoting our time first and foremost... Or maybe it's a, I don't know, maybe it's an uncomfortable thing to give of yourself, to give your time, because your time is so valuable. I don't know, it makes me uncomfortable to give a little bit more every week, the energy, skill set. Yeah, I mean, this is what I'd do as a career, but I don't want to do that for the kingdom. I mean, that's what I'd do 40 hours a week.

I don't want to, it makes me uncomfortable. It's like I'm working. Maybe it's money. Jeez, money. It's so funny the way that money takes hold of us because money is our due for giving of our time and our energy. Does it make us uncomfortable to put our money somewhere where it's actually doing something for the kingdom? You guys realize that if you don't do uncomfortable things, you'll never grow stronger?

I'm trying to run a little bit. Get myself, get my life. Doctor said I had high cholesterol, whatever. And I was talking to Rory over at Wooden Button, you know them, at Sukkot? Rory was like, yeah, I'm running a lot too. And he looked at me and he said, Matt, anyone can run a 5K. You can run one tomorrow morning, first thing. Now, I looked at him like you're looking at me. You really think so? He's like, dude, anyone can run a 5K. Like, it's not even a thing. And I'm like, I've only been able to run like two, two and a half miles at a time. And my lung feels like it's down here falling apart. He's like, no, dude, I mean—anyone can run a 5K.

Two weeks, no running. Woke up yesterday, walked outside, ran a 5K, nine minute miles, 3.2 miles. And I don't say that for applause. I say that because it was uncomfortable. It's not enjoyable to run. We don't have dinosaurs chasing us anymore. There's no need for it. But if I want to get stronger, I need to face the things that are uncomfortable. I need to tell myself that every single time something is uncomfortable, every single time something hurts, every single time it feels like I'm being oppressed or I'm suffering or I'm giving too much, I need to remind myself that I'm also gaining strength and I'm also growing. And it's times like this that define me or the future me and who I'm going to be.

Restarting the Torah Portion

And so, maybe running for God would not be the most edifying growth that you have in your life. But guys, we're restarting the Torah portion. What an appropriate time to look at our lives. Look inside. Where are you in your devotion, in your allegiance? I love replacing the word. Scott McKnight is a scholar. He wrote a book basically saying that pledging or asserting that you can replace the word faith with allegiance. Where is your allegiance in Yeshua the Messiah? Where is your allegiance to God's kingdom? And where does it need to grow? What's the next step? Where do you need to grow stronger in? What an appropriate time to make that self-examination.

I use the example of the men who wanted to do Passover again because I wouldn't have been there. I just had to bury a family member or whoever, and life's stressful, and I'll just do Passover again next year. No, we need to—no, no, no, no, no. I'm not letting go of my foothold here, where I am in my devotion to God. But wait, I'm unclean. I can't do it. Moses, why are we kept? What can we do? What can be done? Just that. Gosh. To just maintain the foothold that they had.

Zelophehad's Daughters

The daughters of Zelophehad, man, did not need to be that bold. No, our dad means a lot to us, and there's a bigger picture and a bigger mission, and someday people are going to look back. Someday people are going to look back, and they're going to see our story. They're going to see the ups and the downs, but one day that seed from the woman is going to come. There's going to be a prophet like another Moses. Someday they're going to read about the generation that came out of Egypt who contributed to the overall story, and we want our dad's name remembered. There's a bigger picture they wanted to be a part of, and they were willing to defy everybody to go before and demand the attention of the divine and the mortal and say, this is

what we need to do. And now their names are written forever in the Torah. And their dad with his clan are right there.

Where Will You Grow?

Where are you willing to go? Where are you willing to grow? What are the areas that you don't want to grow in because they're hurt? Do it. Sacrifice. Break so that things can be rebuilt. Endurance. You have to face the uncomfortable things in order to grow stronger. You have to internalize and feel the uncomfortable things in order to grow stronger. And so when you look in the mirror, what level of allegiance do you see? And that's such a damning conviction, but it's required if we're serious about our faith and we're serious about our walk and we're serious about our growth in God.

So I don't know where you're at today. That could look like so many things for you. And maybe there's something already, you already know that uncomfortable thing. Guys, face it and tell yourself it's time to face it and it's time to grow. That is where chapter one of your new beginning starts. That's where chapter one—not you going back to the beginning, not you hitting restart. No, no, no, no, no, no. You stepping forward into the next chapter. That's where that line starts is when you're ready to take that step.

God Wants Us All to Grow

So please stand. Worship team, you guys can come up. God wants us all to grow. And sometimes that's a little bit. Sometimes that's a lot. Alvina Mocano, our Father, our King, Father, we thank you for this time together. We thank you, Father, for not only second chances, but Father, we thank you for the allowance to evolve into a mightier soldier and a mightier steadfast ambassador of the kingdom. That you would give us the opportunity to say, no, I can grow and I want to grow and I want to be stronger because you're calling me to be a part of something bigger. Use me. Father, I ask that if that's someone here today, Father, I ask that for me, that you would give me the strength and the courage but the discipline and the devotion to put that energy and make the sacrifices to make that happen. We thank you Father for your continued love, your spirit of mercy, grace, forgiveness. Father, your spirit of love that you have infused in our hearts through Yeshua. That when we walk out, the world can feel his hands and feet. The world can see your kingdom. The world can get a glimpse of what the new Jerusalem just might look and feel like through our actions and our words and our devotion to your kingdom. We thank you, Father. In the name of Yeshua, we pray. Amen. Shalom.

I'm Matthew Vanderels, and I hope you enjoyed this message.

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