

RaYBaSH's Torah Treasures
Parashah #2, Noach: "Noah"
B'reshit/Genesis: 6:9-11:32
Haftarah: Yesha'yahu/Isaiah 54:1-55:5
Brit Chadasha: Bet Kefa/ II Peter 3:5-14
By: Yehudah ben Shomeyr

Gen. 6:11-13 The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth.

We were originally created to have the "Midas touch."

Gen. 1:26; 2:15 And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth... And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.

Yet, due to the Fall we ended up having the touch of the Grim Reaper.

Our text says that the earth was corrupt and it was no fault of the earths. The earth left to itself, even in a fallen state will retake and repair whatever damage had been done, whether by man or natural disaster. Nature, even fallen nature knows how to Tikkun Olam (Fix/Repair the World), which in Judaism is said to be God's commission to ma. Sort of like if you break a window you need to do what you can to fix it; likewise with the fallen world we are called to work in conjunction and harmony with nature to do our best to repair the damage we caused because of the fall. No doubt we will never take the world back to a pre-fallen Eden, but this doesn't excuse us from not trying.

Perkei Avot 2:21a (Rabbi Tarfon) He would also say: **It is not incumbent upon you to finish the task, but neither are you free to absolve yourself from it.**

Heb. 11:13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

John 8:56 Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad.

Luke 9:62 And Jesus (YESHUA) said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

Much of what we do in life we will never see the end result, for it is really for the ones who come after us. Like the oak tree you planted a few years back; you may never see it as the mighty oak it will be 50 years, but your children and grandchildren will. Much of what we do here and now paves the way for the coming generations. It's the whole "Olympic passing the torch" thing; run like you are the one who will/must finish it.

You may want to view it as damage control until Messiah comes to set everything aright. Just because we are not firefighters it doesn't excuse us from using a garden hose or a fire extinguisher to do what we can until the firefighters come.

We must be persistent as a blade of grass.

I once stood amazed looking at a blade of grass that had raised and split the asphalt to bask in the sun. A paper thin, flexible, piece of grass which I could easily tear with very little effort had gently, patiently over time burst open a section of asphalt that would break my fist if I attempted to crack it. Sort of like Aesop's fable of the "Tortoise and the Hare," and how slow and steady wins the race.

The grass seen the asphalt as an intruder of sorts and once the asphalt had been laid and left to itself, nature recovered and began to take over.

Gen. 6:11 The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence.

So why and how was the earth corrupt? The word corrupt in this passage means to mar, decay, destroy, ruin and or devastate. We see the earth was considered corrupt through violence which we can rightly assume entails murder.

Gen. 4:10-12 And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground. And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand; When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth.

This corruption of the earth through bloodshed began with the corruption of mankind itself.

Gen. 6:5-6 And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.

The corruption of man led to the corruption of the animals.

Gen. 6:7 And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them.

This was accomplished by mankind exploiting the violent potential within the animals; training them to kill as well as commit acts of bestiality with them.

Jasher 4:16-19 And all the sons of men departed from the ways of the Lord in those days as they multiplied upon the face of the earth with sons and daughters, and they taught one another their evil practices and they continued sinning against the Lord. And every man made unto himself a G-d, and they robbed and plundered every man his neighbor as well as his relative, and they corrupted the earth, and the earth was filled with violence. And their judges and rulers went to the daughters of men and took their wives by force from their husbands according to their choice, and the sons of men in those days took from the cattle of the earth, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air, and taught the mixture of animals of one species with the other, in order therewith to provoke the Lord; and G-d saw the whole earth and it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted its ways upon earth, all men

and all animals. And the Lord said, I will blot out man that I created from the face of the earth, yea from man to the birds of the air, together with cattle and beasts that are in the field for I repent that I made them.

In mercy God allowed the righteous to die and Noah remained to be the savior of mankind.

Jasher 4:20-21 And all men who walked in the ways of the Lord, died in those days, before the Lord brought the evil upon man which he had declared, for this was from the Lord, that they should not see the evil which the Lord spoke of concerning the sons of men. And Noah found grace in the sight of the Lord, and the Lord chose him and his children to raise up seed from them upon the face of the whole earth.

Gen 6:12 And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth.

It's as if man mentally went from human to mammal to virus, corrupting, mutating and perverting everything he touched!

Gen. 6:13 And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth.

Romans 8:22 For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.

We must be humbly and powerfully submissive and like the plant kingdom, know our place and do our part to take back and repair the world, physically and spiritually.

Sometimes a building has a solid foundation, yet structurally is unsound, condemned and torn down and then a solid and sound structure can be rebuilt upon that foundation. Sometimes you just get to wipe the slate clean and this is what was done via the deluge; mankind, though Noah had to rebuild. We see this bet in nature itself. Some of the Aztec and Mayan ruins are nearly impossible to find because of the forest which grew right over top of old long abandoned ziggurats. Go back to a mountain a year later after it blew it's top in a volcanic eruption or a

forest fire and see the eye popping new life that causes one to forget that a disaster ever took place.

Isa. 54:3 For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited.

This Haftarah portion passage reminds me of that blade of grass which overtook the asphalt.

Gen. 9:11-17 And I will establish my covenant with you, neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth. And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations: I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth. And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud: And I will remember my covenant, which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh. And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth. And God said unto Noah, This is the token of the covenant, which I have established between me and all flesh that is upon the earth.

Isa. 54:7-10 For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the LORD thy Redeemer. For this is as the waters of Noah unto me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the LORD that hath mercy on thee.

We may have botched things up royally and God had to condemn and demolish our building complex, yet despite our inexcusable faux pa, God's hands the world back over into our hands to partner with Him and creation to repair and occupy (Luke 19:13) till Messiah comes again.

Like punks busted for vandalism is put to work by the owner to beautify what they wrecked, so we too are responsible to do our best to beautify the world physically and spiritually.

In parts of Africa, slash and burn agriculture is practiced where a swath of land is purposely set on fire and the ash produced from that fire nourishes the soil and the land becomes more fertile.

God “baptized” the world the first go around with water and so we keep corruption at bay as best we can by our efforts of Tikkun Olam until Messiah returns and the world is baptized with fire.

II Peter 5:5-14 For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.

So how do we occupy till He comes to make our efforts of Tikkun Olam complete?

Just as the corruption of the earth began in the soul of man until it manifested outwardly toward man, beast and the earth, so too must be the order of repair. We must repent of our evils ways, return to the path of Torah that Messiah walked as an example before us and let that restorative walk manifest outwardly to others, animals and the earth.

I don't mean to come off as a tree hugging Rabbi, but upkeep of our environment is what we were naturally created to do; our work assignment from God and thus repair and upkeep of the environment is a holy act.

Gen 2:15 And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.

Shabbat Shalom and Shavuah Tov!
-- Yehudah ben Shomeyr