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## SHABBAT HAGADOL AND ELIJAH THE PROPHET

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El Shaddai, the Lord of our peace, we come before you this Sabbath day to worship and give you praise and thanks for this day of rest and rejuvenation. Be with us and inspire us with your Holy Spirit. Fill us with the fruits of your spirit—love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Lead us with your light and protect us from evil and bring us safely through these days to the kingdom. Our lives are committed to you and we pray these things in the name of Yeshua, Jesus Christ. Amen.

We should all be on the same calendar date and there shouldn't be any controversy about the calendar date. But the Jews go by a fixed calendar that is mathematically calculated instead of by the observed new moons. The Hillel II calendar is outstanding, but God says we are to go by the visually observed new moon. Today is the Sabbath before the Passover and Unleavened Bread. Next Saturday, a week from today, Passover begins at sunset. The Sabbath (Shabbat) which precedes Passover (Pesach) the Jews call *Shabbat Hagadol* or *Shabbos Ha-Gadol*—the Great Sabbath. This is one of the four Sabbaths during the Jewish year which are set apart as being special, because it is right before Passover and is the Sabbath of “redemption”.

This is the Sabbath which points to the redemption of God's people that introduces the theme of redemption and deliverance, which is what the Passover is all about—*salvation* (being saved). This is an observance that we repeat and review each and every year, and firmly obey as commanded because it keeps the miracles God has performed on our behalf and his plan for us to become like him and to be part of his kingdom in our mind. The historical element of the Passover is about the salvation of the Jewish race and Israelite peoples' rescue from Pharaoh's oppression and slavery in Egypt. It also has an elemental spiritual dimension far more incredible and powerful which is redemption from sin and lawlessness of the world around us so that we are no longer under the hand of Satan – the Prince of the Power of the Air and the God of this world. Satan has deceived all nations with his treachery, lies, deceitfulness and distorted truth. We have been set free and set apart— chosen by God and his Holy Spirit (sanctified/set apart) to be people of light and truth. Passover depicts the process of God's plan of salvation which is a wonderful ongoing process.

When Christ was nailed to the stake or the cross, it was just the beginning of the plan of salvation. It was the incremental start. **Matthew 24:13** –“He who endures to the end shall be saved.” We have to endure to the end, not just begin with a good profession, but we must endure to the finish. **Philippines 2:12**—“Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, **work out your own salvation with fear and trembling**; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do His good pleasure. Do all things without complaining and disputing, that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in

the world; holding fast the word of life, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or labored in vain.” We are commanded to work out our own salvation! What happened at the cross was the beginning. We have to continue on and endure and work—overcome obstacles, setbacks, hindrances and everything that Satan, the devil will throw into our path to stop us from entering into God’s kingdom. We have to go through the trials and tests that confront us—climb over, crawl under or go around barriers and bulldoze through those things like that ram in the song “High Hopes” Frank Sinatra sang.

“Next time you're found with your chin on the ground there's a lot to be learned so look around. When troubles call and your back is to the wall – that wall could just fall. Once there was a silly old ram –thought he'd punch a hole in a dam. No one could make that ram, scam. He kept butting that dam ‘cause he had high hopes —high apple pie in the sky hopes. **Oops**, there goes a billion kilowatt dam!” We have to strive to overcome and keep on keeping on to the end.

**Hebrews 12:1-3**—“Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the **author and finisher of our faith**, who *for the joy that was set before Him* endured the cross, despising the shame, and **has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.**” All the witnesses that have been before us in Old Testament times like Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, Elijah, Elisha, Daniel, Ezekiel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and King David who have fought the battle of obeying God and serving Him are witnesses of what we are going through today. We are also on the same pathway and need to lay aside every weight and burden, every hindrance and sin [lawlessness] which so easily ensnares us and RUN the RACE set before us to God’s kingdom. “Consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls. You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin.”

We must study. **2 Timothy 2:15**—“Study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman that needs not to be ashamed rightly dividing the word of truth.” Some ministers do not have love in their soul for God and are teaching error and are totally ignoring the Passover, but celebrate Easter which has nothing to do with Passover. Others say that they observe the Passover, but observe the wrong day and in the wrong manner, not the way God says in the Bible and according to his calendar on his appointed times and days. The Passover is one of the appointed times. **Leviticus 23:1-3**—“the LORD spoke unto Moses, saying, Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them, ‘The feasts of the LORD, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, these are my feasts.’ ” ‘The first one is the weekly Sabbath day. “Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, a holy convocation. You shall do no work on it; it is the Sabbath of the LORD in all your dwellings. These are the feasts of the Lord, holy convocations which you shall proclaim at their *appointed* times.”

If I schedule an appointment to meet with my doctor, I have to be there at the time he said to be there. If I do not show up at the specific time and day as scheduled, I miss his help. If a person makes an appointment, then he is responsible for keeping it as

promised. Depending on a doctor's case load, it may be days or months before another appointment is even available. God has set appointments that are holy for his holy people and he expects his people to keep his specific weekly and yearly appointments as scheduled from generation to generation.

**Leviticus 23:4**—"These are the feasts of the Lord, holy convocations which you shall proclaim at their appointed times. On the fourteenth day of the first month\_ at twilight is the Lord's *Passover* (Pesach). On the fifteenth day of the same month is the *Feast of Unleavened Bread* to the Lord; seven days you must eat unleavened bread." These are holy days, set apart by God and given to us to observe in spirit and truth.

People are not anxious to change beliefs they already have decided upon and tend to think that they do not have to continually study or re-examine their beliefs. **2**

**Corinthians 13:5**—"Examine yourselves, whether you are in the faith; prove your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except you be reprobates." **1 Thessalonians 5:21**—"Test all things; hold fast what is good." What makes us think we can follow a man and think that he will lead you into the kingdom? How do you know that your minister is not a false teacher who will lead you right into hell and the lake of fire? Christ said it very plainly in **Matthew 4:4**. "It is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God." It is important and is repeated in **Luke 4:4**.

It is also written in the Old Testament in the 5<sup>th</sup> book of the Law, **Deuteronomy 8:2-4**—"You shall remember that the Lord your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, **to know what was in your heart**, whether you would keep His commandments or not." He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that he might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but **man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.**" We are going through a wilderness journey in this life now, and God is testing us day by day to humble us to see whether we will keep His commandments or not. Ask yourself, "Am I willing to put God and his will, first in my life? Am I willing to make incremental directional changes in my life day to day?" God is testing to see what we are going to do with what he gives us. What are we going to do with the knowledge and the truth He gives us—live by His words or the words of men?

*The International Jerusalem Post* (3-26, 2015), "The Necessity of Change," pg. 22 by Rabbi Shlomo Riskin. "Behold, I will send you Elijah the Prophet. He will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and the hearts of the children to the fathers" (**Malachi 3:23-24**.) This is taken from the half-Torah reading the Sabbath before Passover (Shabbat Hagadol). It is the Sabbath introducing the Passover season of repentance and deliverance. **Malachi 4:5-6**—"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the earth with a curse."

The science fiction movie, “Close Encounters of the Third Kind,” is a film based for the most part on the known facts of the UFO mystery and tells the story of an everyday blue collar worker in Indiana whose life changes after an encounter with an unidentified flying object. He later climbs Devil’s Tower in Wyoming to witness landing of the *mothership*. Each year we are to get ready to meet God at the Passover—a Divine encounter of which we are going to be a part of to proclaim the advent of the Messiah. “Elijah is the herald of Redemption, the Proclaimer of the advent of Messiah, Prince of Peace. *Why does he first turn the hearts of the fathers to the children?*” Fathers are adults who have lived to be older and usually wiser than their children. Fathers tend to wake up first and see the need to make changes in their lives and in that of their families’ lives. Parents must be the first to find a way to show a loving example and concern and implement moral instructions to their children.

We have more seniors in TPM ministry than we have young people today. The youth are not readily available to learn God’s word and are actively involved pursuing the pleasures of this life. They do not realize that they have been deceived by Satan the devil and it is the way of death. They still learning lessons about what is important in life and moral values. Every spring hordes of college-aged spring “break-ers” plunge into sunny Panama City Beach, Florida versus conservative beach towns. But given the legality of the alcohol and drug peddlers on the beach proper, the towns squirm at the revelry and debauchery of unleashed youth and society’s seeming acceptance of loose morals and alcohol over-indulgence. God willing, once the young people of today began to see the hearts of the father’s turning toward them and witness real parental love, concern and who teach the importance of moral instruction with a healthy unbroken family unit, perhaps they will repent of their sins and return to God and his ways of true joy, happiness and the abundant life. We are living in the age of Redemption right before the coming of the Messiah—the Elijah age — preparing for the coming of the Messiah and his judgment.

Rabbi Riskin shares a riveting experience that happened to him about 35 years ago before his immigration to Israel which explained to him “the real meaning of the initial stages of Redemption which is happening before our eyes. Our still-American family was spending each summer on Kibbutz Ein Tzurim, where I was a rabbi-scholar in residence. There was a kibbutz member who prayed in the same row as my learned friend Yehuda Noiman and me in the kibbutz synagogue. His father, who had lived in Kfar Hassidim near Haifa, died and I joined a delegation from the kibbutz to attend the funeral. The funeral cortege was to proceed from the yeshva in Kfar Hassidim to the cemetery and the kibbutzniks arrived while the *tahara*, the purification of the body, was taking place inside the yeshiva. Two distinct groups were now waiting for the body to be brought out and for the eulogies to begin; the kibbutzniks dressed in shorts, in colored short-sleeved shirts and sandals, and the yeshiva students garbed in black pants and white shirts. It was as if the two groups had an invisible mehitza (barrier) between them.”

“The rosh yeshva came out and viewed the assembly from the higher yeshiva portico and seemed to have noticed my friend Yehuda. He addressed him in Yiddish, ‘*Yudke? Yudke iluy?*’ (Yudke is a Yiddish affectionate diminutive for Yehuda; *iluy* is Hebrew for prodigy.) Yehuda, whom I knew as a rather shy and humble individual, turned red, blushed deeply and responded in Hebrew, ‘Yes, Reb Ella, that’s what they called me in the yeshiva of Rav Schach in Petah Tikva,

where we studied together.’ The rosh yeshiva’s eyes narrowed. He asked in Yiddish, ‘but what happened to you? I know you left the yeshiva, but how did Rav Shach allow you to leave? You, too, could have been a rosh yeshiva.’ Yehuda answered in Hebrew, and by this time everyone from both groups was listening to the conversation intently. ‘Rav Shach sent me many letters urging me to stay.’

“Reb Ellya, the rosh yeshiva seemed to rise to his full height, literally looking down at my friend, and said strongly (but not harshly) in Yiddish, perhaps more to his students than to my friend: ‘And those letters of our rebbe will serve as a prosecuting attorney when you stand before the throne of God.’

“I felt very sorry for Yehuda. I didn’t think my laid-back, self-effacing friend would give any answer at all. But he responded immediately, decisively and in Hebrew, ‘and the kibbutz that I helped build, and the guns that I used in the wars that I fought, and the souls of many Israeli Jews whose lives I protected – they will be my defense attorneys. And they will win the day and exonerate me before God.’ The rosh yeshiva took a step backward. He realized that he had lost that first round and apparently decided not to continue the debate. Again he said in Yiddish, but this time with a smile on his face and in his voice, ‘*Bist nuch di zelbe Yudke di zelbe iluy* [You remained the same Yudke, the same prodigy].’

“My friend didn’t let it rest. He responded in Hebrew, ‘No Reb Elya, I did not remain the same Yudke that I was in the yeshiva. I changed. I saw the changes in history. I saw what our generation demanded. I think I even saw what God expected of me. I looked around at the ravages of the Holocaust. I understood that our era demanded that the kibbutz, and the battle-grounds of war, had to serve as the infrastructure for the establishment of the Jewish state, the first Jewish state in close to 2,000 years. I didn’t remain the same because Jewish history didn’t remain the same. You remained the same. You didn’t change.’ ” **Deuteronomy 32:7-9**—

“Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations. Ask you father, and he will show you; your elders, and they will tell you.” We have to learn from generation to generation to contemplate the lessons of old and apply the lessons to the current time.

The moon is a history lesson in itself. As we see it progress from a thin crescent sliver nightly until it is a full moon. Then it decreases until there is no light—changing repetitively. We must be willing to change, grow, to be diminished and to learn. “God is the God of history and renewal. He said, ‘I will be what I will be,’ *Ya Ho Va*. He will bring about change. *The old must be renewed and the new must be sanctified—set apart to serve God.*”

This week I have been studying about the name of God – Yod Hay Vav Hay (Hebrew) which is known as the *Tetragramaton*. There has been a newly heightened interest in the Holy Name and articles on this subject, both pro and con. The Jews stopped speaking the holy name in public over two thousand years ago, lest it be taken in vain and lest that person be condemned to death. Then God’s name was only spoken by the High Priest on the *Day of Atonement* in sanctifying the day and the sacrifices of the day. There is a controversy raging in the world by Holy Names Sects and every one of them has a different pronunciation. When the four Hebrew consonants were written down in the original ancient manuscript that we have today (and their copies), The *Aleppo Codex* and the *Petrograd* (former name of Leningrad) the scribes left off the vowel

points on the Hebrew name of YHVH but inserted the vowel points for the name Adonai which means Lord. So whenever the Jews come to that passage in the scriptures, they read the vowel points as Adonai (or Lord).

Nehemiah Gordon, who is a scholar of Hebrew pointed out that actually these vowel markings in the ancient Hebrew text are not just for Adonai, but are actually the markings for Yahovah. That is why a lot of Christian authors changed the Y sound to J and called it Jehovah. There was no “J” sound, so it would have been Yahovah. I read Gordon’s article, yesterday and listened to his hour long presentation about it on the Internet, and looked at the *Aleppo Codex* he referred to. Gordon pointed out that in most cases there is no vowel pointing in those original manuscripts. But there are a few places (a couple dozen places) where there is vowel pointing. If the vowels YHVH are gone by, the pronunciation of *YHVH* is YAH HO VAH. There is a definite “o” mark over the *hay*.

Nehemiah said that he has been praying for years and years that the name of God would be revealed to him. There has been great controversy over the name of God because it is no longer spoken by the Jews or read. The Greek fathers said YAHVEY. I accepted that and have written that. I still accept it as one pronunciation. The Bible also says, it is YAH and he is called YAH in the Psalms. Now, I’ve learned from the Hebrew vowel pointing found the *Aleppo Codex*. It is the most perfect original copy of the original text of the Old Testament Bible and has about two dozen (24) places where the vowel sounds are given – “YA HO VAH.” For this finding, I am delighted to learn this, and see this in the *Aleppo Codex* and recognize it, and to have read Nehemiah’s article on it. Judging by the *Aleppo Codex* and *Petrograd* sources, it appears that Nehemiah Gordon has found the acceptable pronunciation of the NAME. It does not mean that YAHVEH is wrong; I think that it is also acceptable as well as YAH.

In the Old Testament ,YHVH occurs 6,519 times. This name is used more than any other name of God. YHVH (Lord, Jehovah) is first used in **Genesis 2:4**. It is interesting that Rabbi Shlomo Riskin who is an Orthodox Rabbi in Israel actually says that God is the God of history, who says that “I will be what I will be YA HO VA.” **Exodus 3:11-12; 14-15** —“Moses said unto God, ‘Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?’ God said to Moses, ‘Certainly I will be with thee; and this shall be a token unto thee that I have sent thee: When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain (Sinai).’ Moses said to God, ‘When I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, “The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, ‘What is his name?’ What shall I say unto them?” God said to Moses, ‘I AM THAT I AM’: and he said, ‘Thus shall thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.’ And God said moreover unto Moses, ‘Thus shall thou say unto the children of Israel, the LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: **this is my name for ever**, and this is **my memorial unto all generations**.’ ” Yehovah means the everlasting one. God tells us his name is YA HO VAH (Hebrew).

The problem that I see with Ya veh is that it does not pronounce the second *hey*. In Hebrew there needs to be a vowel associated with the first *hey*. In the *Aleppo Codex* the “o” sound is shown. We are in a season of growing in grace, knowledge and understanding. This information is a major area of growth and understanding.

**Revelation 3:7-8**—“to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth and no man openeth; I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and **have not denied my name.**” YAH stands for the whole name which sounds out as YA HO VA.

**Revelation 3:9-13**—“Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. Because you have kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. Him that overcomes will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name. He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says unto the churches.”

**1 Timothy 6:12**—“Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.”

The following is quoted from **Malachi 3:1** from the Jewish *Tanakh*. In the KJV Bible, it is chapter 4. “Behold I send my angel, and he will clear away before me. And suddenly, the Lord Whom you seek will come to His Temple. And behold! The angel of the covenant, whom you desire, is coming, says the Lord of Hosts. Now who can abide the day of his coming, and who will stand when he appears, for it is like fire that refines and like fullers' soap? And he shall sit refining and purifying silver, and he shall purify the children of Levi. And he shall purge them as gold and as silver, and they shall be offering up an offering to the Lord with righteousness. And **then the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem shall be pleasant to the Lord**, as in the days of old and former years.” This is talking about the new Levitical priesthood being trained and prepared in Jerusalem, Israel.

**Verses 5-12**—“And I will approach you for judgment, and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers and against the adulterers and against those who swear falsely; and also against those who withhold the wages of the day laborers, of the widow and fatherless, and those who pervert [the rights of] the stranger, [and those who] fear Me not, says the Lord of Hosts. For I, the Lord, have not changed; and you, the sons of Jacob, have not reached the end. From the days of your fathers you have departed from my laws and have not kept [them]. ‘Return to me, and I will return to you,’ said the Lord of Hosts, but you said, ‘With what have we to return?’ Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me, and you say, ‘With what have we robbed you?’ With tithes and offerings. You are cursed with a curse, but you rob me, the whole nation! Bring the whole of the tithes into the treasury so that there may be nourishment in My House, and test Me now

therewith, says the Lord of Hosts, [to see] if I will not open for you the sluices of heaven and pour down for you blessing until there be no room to suffice for it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sake, and he will not destroy the fruits of your land; neither shall your vine cast its fruit before its time in the field, says the Lord of Hosts. And then all the nations shall praise you, for you shall be a desirable land, says the Lord of Hosts.”

**Verses 13-18**—“Still harder did your words strike me, says the Lord, but you say, ‘What have we spoken against you?’ You have said, ‘It is futile to serve God, and what profit do we get for keeping His charge and for going about in anxious worry because of the Lord of Hosts?’ And now we praise the bold transgressors. Yea, those who work wickedness are built up. Yea, they tempt God, and they have, nevertheless, escaped. Then the God-fearing men spoke to one another, and the Lord hearkened and heard it. And a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who feared the Lord and for those who valued His name highly. And they shall be mine, says the Lord of Hosts, for that day when I make a treasure. And I will have compassion on them as a man has compassion on his son who serves him. And you shall return and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him who serves God and him who has not served Him.”

**Verses 19-24** —“Lo, the sun comes glowing like a furnace, and all the audacious sinners and all the perpetrators of wickedness will be stubble. And the sun that comes shall burn them up so that it will leave them neither root nor branch, says the Lord of Hosts. And the sun of mercy shall rise with healing in its wings for you who fear My Name. Then will you go forth and be fat as fatted calves. And you shall crush the wicked, for they will be as ash under the soles of your feet on the day that I will prepare, says the Lord of Hosts. Keep in remembrance the teaching of Moses, My servant—the laws and ordinances which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel. **I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord, that he may turn the heart of the fathers back through the children, and the heart of the children back through their fathers—lest I come and smite the earth with utter destruction.**”

*The Essence of the Holy Days* by Avraham Yaakov Finkel, page 151—“The *Shabbat Hagadol*, the Great Shabbat. Traditionally, on this Shabbat, the rabbi delivers a major sermon consisting of a Talmudic lecture and a homiletic discourse on a Passover theme. Included in it is a discussion of the laws of Passover, gifts to the poor, the laws of tithes before the final judgment given on Pesach regarding the crops when there is Divine judgment for the world’s crops (Malachi 3:10).. Why is this *Shabbat* called “the Great Shabbat”? A variety of answers are given. According to *Seder Olam*, the Exodus took place on the tenth of that month, which fell on the previous *Shabbat*, the people of Israel were to take a Lamb for each family (Exodus 12:3). Each Israelite took a lamb and were to tie it to their bedpost. When the Egyptians asked, “Why are you doing this?” the Israelites replied, “We will offer this lamb as a sacrifice to God as we were told to do.” Horrorstricken, the Egyptians were rendered powerless to lift a finger against the Israelites, who were about to sacrifice the object of Egyptian worship. Because of this miracle, which occurred on this Shabbat, the Shabbat before Passover is known as *Shabbat Hagadol*.” This is one reason.

*The Book of Our Heritage, Vol. 2*, by Eliyahu Kitov, page 497 gives several reasons. “This was the very first Shabbos that Israel celebrated on the tenth of Nisan—five days before their redemption. Many miracles were performed for the children of Israel on this first *Shabbos ha-*



*Gadol*. When the lambs were tied to the bedpost and the Egyptian neighbors saw this and asked ‘What is the lamb for?’ the children of Israel answered: ‘It is to be slaughtered as a Pesach (Passover) sacrifice as God has commanded us.’ The Egyptians gnashed their teeth in anger but they could not utter a sound in protest. God spared the first born in Israel when they sacrificed the lamb, and the first born of Egyptians were killed. Every week as soon as Shabbos was over, Israel would immediately return to their wearisome toil, on this Sabbath, they did not return to their slavery. Thus from the moment that Israel became a free people, the miracle is closely connected to Shabbos and their future redemption. This Shabbos, the beginning of Israel’s redemption is therefore, referred to as Shabbos ha-Gadol. The haftarah read on this Shabbos selected from the book of Malachi, the last of the Prophets of Israel, ends with a verse about the future redemption: *Behold I will send you Elijah before the coming of the great and awesome day of God* (Malachi 3:23).”

Brethren, therefore, I urge you, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times and in every way. The Lord be with all of you.