



Blessings in Yeshua!

All About Gates

As we listened to the new CD by Messianic recording artists Barry & Batya Segal called "Go Through the Gates," the Lord impressed upon us the need to study about gates, *sharim* (pronounced shah-REEM) in the Holy Scriptures. This month we will be sharing what we have learned. We pray that you will be edified in your faith, and encouraged to go forth and advance the Kingdom of God.

Most cities in the ancient world were surrounded by walls. The only way in or out of a city was through its gates. The large doors in the gates were locked at night and at times of war to protect the inhabitants of the city. Gates often had towers on either side with watchmen on duty both day and night.

The city gate was a very busy place. News was exchanged and discussed there, markets thrived at the gates, and prophets and priests made pronouncements at the city gate. It was also the center for the administration of justice. Courts were held at the gates; disputes were settled there. Princes and judges sat at the gate performing their official duties. For this reason, the word "gate" came to be synonymous with "power" or "authority." "To be within the gates," a term found in the Holy Scriptures (see Deuteronomy 15:7), meant that a person was under the authority of the elders of the city who presided in the gates. There are many Biblical examples of elders sitting at the gates. Lot sat at the gate of Sodom where he greeted the two strangers (Genesis 19:1), while Boaz sat at the gate when he negotiated the redemption of Elimelech's property (Ruth 4:1). Deuteronomy 22:15 and Joshua 20:4 also mention elders who judged at the gates of cities in ancient Israel.

God desired righteous judgement at the gates, but unfortunately that was often not the case (see Amos 5). When Psalm 24:7 says: "*Lift up your heads, O you gates! And be lifted up, you everlasting doors! And the King of Glory shall come in,*" the psalmist is referring to the necessity for righteous judgment in the gates. Zechariah 8:16 echoes the same thought: "*These are the things you shall do: Speak each man the truth to his neighbor; Give judgment in your gates for truth, justice and peace...*" We read in Proverbs that wisdom "*cries out at the gates of the city*" (8:3), and that a virtuous woman's husband is "*known in the gates*" (31:23).

It was an honor to sit at the gate, especially the "King's Gate." We read in Esther 2:19 that Mordecai, Esther's uncle and guardian sat at the King's gate. It was there that he learned of the plot to kill King Ahasuerus, and later of the evil scheme of Haman to kill all the Jews, Esther's people. In chapter 5:9 and 13 we find out that Haman **hates** to see Mordecai, a Jew, seated at

the King's Gate. Daniel also sat in the gate of the King (Daniel 2:49), a Jewish man in a foreign land, given honor and authority.

Go Through the Gates

"Go Through the Gates" (*Ivru Basharim*), the title song of the Segal's new CD, is based directly on Isaiah 62:10-12:

"Go through, go through the gates! Prepare the way for the people; build up, build up the highway! Take out the stones, lift up a banner for the peoples! Say to the daughter of Zion, surely your salvation is coming; behold, His reward is with Him, And His work before Him..."

This is the Lord's message to His children: GO THROUGH, PREPARE, BUILD UP, TAKE OUT, LIFT UP, SAY [all action verbs!]. You, the righteousness of God through the Messiah, have a strong city which God has appointed with salvation for walls and bulwarks (Isaiah 26:1). Your gates are to be called Praise (Isaiah 60:18). You have already gone through the gates of righteousness and entered the city through Yeshua (who is the gate). Now you must agree with God that His people Israel will cry out: *"Open to me the gates of righteousness, I will go through them, and I will praise the Lord. This is the gate of the Lord, through which the righteous shall enter."* (Psalm 118:19-20)

Our assignment is to prepare the way (*Ha derech*) for the people. Yeshua said: *"I am **the way**, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."* (John 14:6) Our mission, at this time in history, is to help prepare for Israel's salvation, following in the footsteps of John the Baptizer (Immerser) who helped prepare the way for Messiah's first coming. For whom do we prepare the way? *Ha Am* (the people) which always refers to the Jewish people in the Old Testament. The highway that we are to build up is a way for the Jewish people to return to their God. Could it be the Highway of Holiness spoken of by the prophet Isaiah in chapter 35? This highway is a safe place. The redeemed walk there, returning to Zion with singing and everlasting joy on their heads. The highway has to be cleared of all stones before our Jewish people can walk on it into the city of salvation. What are the stones? – All the impediments (hindrances) to Israel's salvation. To name a few: Christian anti-semitism, ignorance of the Word of God, fear of rejection, teachings of the rabbis, a religious spirit, absence of the Jewish root in Christianity, ignorance of Israel's prophetic role in history, reluctance to share the Good News with the Jewish people, and too little prayer for the peace of Jerusalem and the salvation of the Jews.

While we know that Yeshua Himself is *"the Stone which the builders rejected who has now become the Chief Corner Stone"* (Psalm 118: 22, and Matthew 21:42), Isaiah 62 is referring to stones with a small "s" that prevent God's people from being able to seriously consider **The Chief Cornerstone**.

Jewish Jewels has as one of its major goals to remove the stones that our people stumble over. At the same time, we lift up a banner for the peoples. Note the plural of peoples, *ha amim*. Since there is only one "Jewish people," this most probably refers to the people of God, the righteous of all nations, believers who are also part of Israel. The Hebrew word for banner here is *nes* which can also mean "miracle." As we teach the Church about her Jewish roots, the miracles of God form the backdrop. The rebirth of Israel as a modern-day miracle, the restoration of Hebrew as a living language, the return of the Jewish people from the four corners of the earth, and the worldwide Messianic movement are all part of the banner that we lift up. Believers from all over the world are falling in love with Israel, the Jewish people and the Jewish roots of their faith in

Jesus. This is a real miracle (*nes*).

God's will is for all of us to tell the daughter of Zion, the Jewish people, that their salvation (literally, their Yeshuah) is coming. Isaiah 62:11 looks ahead to both Zechariah 9:9 and Rev. 22:12. Yeshua is coming to His Jewish people today by a revelation of the Ruach Ha Kodesh (Holy Spirit). He will also come again soon in the flesh, bringing His reward with Him. Many thanks to all of you for keeping us on the air so that thousands of Jewish people can hear that their salvation is coming. We are preparing the way TOGETHER!

Matthew 7 and Gates

Yeshua speaks about both gates and judging (Matthew chapter 7). Understood in a Jewish context, this chapter has to do with judging righteously, according to God's requirements for judges at the gates of a city. Believers as elders in the city, who have the authority bestowed on us by our Messiah, are called to judge righteously. Matthew 7 begins with: *"Judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged..."* This verse is referring to condemning others and hypocritical judging (having a plank in one's own eye while judging another). The chapter continues with: *"Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it."* (Matthew 7:13) Following this we read: *"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits."* (vs. 15-16) In other words, guard your gates. Protect your city. Protect your home and family. Judge fruit. *"Be wise as a serpent and harmless as a dove."* (Matthew 10:16)

What about the narrow gate? That is Yeshua, the Gate of the Lord through which the righteous enter. He is the *"gate of heaven"* that Jacob saw at Bethel (Genesis 28:17). At His baptism, Yeshua said: *"You shall see heaven opening and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."* (John 1:51) He had become the true Gate of Heaven as He identified Himself as THE MEDIATOR between God and man, the only way to have access to the Father. Narrow, yes, but true.

Gates of the New Jerusalem

In the New Jerusalem, the gates of the city and the gates of heaven become one. According to Revelation 21:12, the heavenly Jerusalem has a great, high wall with 12 gates, and 12 angels at the gates. The gates bear the names of the 12 tribes of the children of Israel. (Why would God do this if He were through with the Jewish people???)

Unlike the gates of ancient Jerusalem which had to be closed each night, the gates of the New Jerusalem are always open because no evil enters in (Revelation 21:25). Peace and justice reign.

There is safety, even now, inside the gate (Yeshua). Millions of travelers out in the world are in danger of not reaching the Gate before sunset (when Yeshua returns). If they don't reach the Gate, they will be forever compelled to spend the night outside, in the storms, in the dark, with the robbers and much worse. We must show them the way while it is yet day!

Meditate on these words of Yeshua, found in the last chapter of the Bible: *"And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last. Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the*

gates into the city."

Gates of the Old Jerusalem

There are eight gates surrounding the city of Jerusalem. The DAMASCUS GATE, perhaps the most beautiful of the gates, is flanked by two towers and crowned by a decorative motif. The old road that led north to Damascus began at this gate. HEROD'S GATE (also known as the FLOWERS GATE) is the ancient Roman entrance to the city. On July 15, 1099 Crusaders breached the wall at this gate and took the city of Jerusalem, proclaiming the Latin Kingdom. The LION'S GATE also called St. STEPHEN'S GATE (as Stephen may have been stoned to death here), has a beautiful relief carving of two pairs of lions. This gate opens towards the Mt. of Olives. The DUNG GATE, named for its location near a rubbish dump just outside the city walls, leads directly to the area of the Western Wall today. The ZION GATE, built by Suleman the Magnificent in 1541 is pockmarked with bullet holes from 1948 and the battle for the Jewish Quarter. JAFFA GATE is the origin of the old road leading west to Jaffa. It retains the ancient L-shaped interior, a defensive method of slowing the advance of armies through the gate. The NEW GATE, opened in 1889 linked the properties near the wall in the northeast of the city with the Old City. The GOLDEN GATE (also known as the EASTERN GATE, GATE OF MERCY and THE BEAUTIFUL GATE) is the oldest and most famous gate of the city. This is the gate that Yeshua passed through on His way to the Temple. It was sealed by the Muslims in 1541 in order to prevent the Messiah's entrance (Jewish tradition teaches that the Messiah will come through the Golden Gate). He did, and He will again! Concrete and stone cannot stop Him!

Unity in the Gates

The Bible tells us that pilgrims passing through the gates of Jerusalem experienced a sense of unity and peace (Psalm 122). We have experienced this **unity** and **peace** in a ministry decision to combine our ministry catalogue with the catalog of two other messianic ministries. This will offer our partners a greater selection of Messianic materials and enable us to focus our energies on the television ministry to which Yeshua has called us.

Neil and Jamie