

Week #:	54	Text:	Numbers 13 & 14	Title:	Hebrew Roots: Tisha B'Av
Songs:	More Than Enough – Gary Oliver (5:18)				
	God Will Make A Way – Don Moen (4:20)				
	Baruch Haba B'Shem Adonai – Paul Wilbur (8:39)				

Hebrew Roots – Tisha B'Av (9th of Av)

What Is Tisha B'Av?

- Tisha B'Av, the 9th day of the month of Av (August 10-11, 2019), is the saddest day on the Jewish calendar. It is believed to be a day which is destined for tragedy.
- It is a day to fast, deprive oneself of certain comforts, and pray.
- The Torah reading is the book of Lamentations, which mourns the destruction of Jerusalem. Other sections read include the book of Job.
- It is the culmination of what is known as the Three Weeks, a period of time commemorating the destruction of the first and second Temples in Jerusalem.
- It commemorates a list of catastrophes so severe it's clearly a day set aside by God for suffering and mourning.
- Jews see this as another confirmation of the deeply held conviction that history isn't haphazard; events – even terrible ones – are part of a Divine plan and have spiritual significance. The message of time is that everything has a rational purpose, even though we don't understand it.

What Happened on 9 Av?

The Hebrew calendar is based on the phases of the sun and the moon, unlike our calendar that is based solely on the sun. This is why their calendar is fluid and ours is static.

The month of Av is the 5th month of the year. It hits during the summer time (July/August), usually the hottest and driest time of the year. The former rains (spring rains) have dried up, and the latter rains (fall rains) are not yet coming, so it is said that even the land mourns during Tisha B'Av.

History tells us of many events which have occurred for the Jews on the 9th of Av. In many cases these events could have occurred on other days, but circumstances hindered or accelerated them, making them fall on the Hebrew calendar day of the 9th of Av. It is clear there was a divine order to that happening.

- 2005
 - The Israeli disengagement from Gaza began in the Gaza Strip, expelling 8,000 Jews who lived in Gush Katif.
- 1994
 - The deadly bombing the building of the AMIA (the Jewish community center in Buenos Aires, Argentina) which killed 86 people and wounded some 300 others.
- 1989
 - Iraq walks out of talks with Kuwait. This action led to the start of the first Gulf War.

- 1942
 - Deportations from Warsaw Ghetto to the Treblinka concentration camp begin.
- 1941
 - SS commander Heinrich Himmler formally received approval from the Nazi Party for "The Final Solution." As a result, the Holocaust began during which almost one third of the world's Jewish population perished.
 - While the Holocaust spanned a number of years, most religious communities use Tisha B'Av to mourn its 6,000,000 Jewish victims, in addition to or instead of the secular Holocaust Memorial Days.
- 1914
 - Britain and Russia declare war on Germany and the First World War began.
 - First World War issues were left unresolved, ultimately causing Second World War and Holocaust. 75% of all Jews lived in war zones. Jews were in the armies of all sides with 120,000 Jewish casualties. Over 400 riots immediately followed the war in Hungary, Ukraine, Poland and Russia.
- 1492
 - The Golden Age of Spain came to a close with what is now known as the Spanish Inquisition when Queen Isabella and her husband Ferdinand ordered that the Jews be banished from the land. The edict of expulsion was signed on March 31, 1492, and the Jews were given exactly four months to put their affairs in order and leave the country. The Hebrew date on which no Jew was allowed any longer to remain in the land where he had enjoyed welcome and prosperity was the 9th of Av.
 - The Inquisition in Spain and Portugal culminates in the expulsion of the Jews from the Iberian Peninsula. Families were separated and many died by drowning. There was also a massive loss of property.
- 1306
 - Jews were expelled from France.
- 1290
 - Expulsion of Jews from England, accompanied by riots and confiscation of books and property.
- 1096
 - First Crusade declared by Pope Urban II. 10,000 Jews were killed in first month of Crusades.
 - Crusades bring death and destruction to thousands of Jews, totally obliterate many communities in Rhineland and France.
- 135 (Second Revolt - The Bar Kochba Revolt - from 132-136)
 - When the Jews rebelled against Roman rule, they believed that their leader, Simon bar Kochba, would fulfill their messianic longings. But their hopes were cruelly dashed in 133 CE as the Jewish rebels were brutally butchered in the final battle at Betar on the 9th of Av. Over 500,00 Jews were killed.
 - Turnus Rufus ploughed the site of Temple and built a temple to the god Jupiter. Romans build pagan city of Aelia Capitolina on site of Jerusalem.

- 136
 - The Temple Mount was plowed over one year later on the same date.
- 70 (First Revolt from 66-73)
 - Destruction of Second Temple (built by Ezra and Nehemiah) by the Romans, under Titus. Over 2,500,000 Jews die as a result of war, famine, and disease. Over 1,000,000 Jews exiled to all parts of the Roman Empire. Over 100,000 Jews sold as slaves by Romans. Jews were killed and tortured in gladiatorial "games" and pagan celebrations.
- 587 B.C.
 - The First Temple built by King Solomon was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, and the population of the Kingdom of Judah was sent into Babylonian exile.
 - About 100,000 Jews were killed during the invasion.
 - The First Temple's destruction began on the 7th of Av (2 Kings 25:8) and continued until the 10th (Jeremiah 52:12). According to the Talmud [Rabbinical text], the actual destruction of the Temple began on the Ninth of Av, and it continued to burn throughout the Tenth of Av.

These events lay out a pattern of destruction on this day. But the real question is – **WHY this day?** There was one prior event which led to this divine pattern, and it is told in Number 13 & 14:

Numbers 13 Complete Jewish Bible (CJB)

¹ Adonai said to Moshe [Moses], ² “Send men on your behalf to reconnoiter the land of Kena’an [Canaan], which I am giving to the people of Isra’el. From each ancestral tribe send someone who is a leader in his tribe.” ³ Moshe [Moses] dispatched them from the Pa’ran [Paran] Desert as Adonai had ordered; all of them were leading men among the people of Isra’el. ⁴ Here are their names:

from the tribe of Re’uven [Ruben], Shamua the son of Zakur;

⁵ from the tribe of Shim’on [Simeon], Shafat the son of Hori;

⁶ from the tribe of Y’hudah [Judah], Kalev [Caleb] the son of Y’funeh [Jephunneh];

⁷ from the tribe of Yissakhar [Issachar], Yig’al [Igal] the son of Yosef [Joseph];

⁸ from the tribe of Efrayim [Ephraim], Hoshea {Oshea} the son of Nun;

⁹ from the tribe of Binyamin [Benjamin], Palti the son of Rafu;

¹⁰ from the tribe of Z’vulun [Zebulun], Gadi’el the son of Sodi;

¹¹ from the tribe of Yosef [Joseph], that is, from the tribe of M’nasheh [Manasseh], Gadi the son of Susi;

¹² from the tribe of Dan, ‘Ammi’el the son of G’malli [Gemalli];

¹³ from the tribe of Asher, S’tur [Sethur] the son of Mikha’el [Michael];

¹⁴ from the tribe of Naftali [Naphtali], Nachbi [Nahbi] the son of Vofsi; and

¹⁵ from the tribe of Gad, Ge’u’el [Geuel] the son of Makhi.

¹⁶ These are the names of the men Moshe [Moses] sent out to reconnoiter [search] the land. Moshe [Moses] gave to Hoshea [Oshea] the son of Nun the name Y’hoshua [Joshua].

¹⁷ Moshe [Moses] sent them to reconnoiter [search] the land of Kena'an [Canaan], instructing them, "Go on up to the Negev and into the hills,¹⁸ and see what the land is like. Notice the people living there, whether they are strong or weak, few or many;¹⁹ and what kind of country they live in, whether it is good or bad; and what kind of cities they live in, open or fortified.²⁰ See whether the land is fertile or unproductive and whether there is wood in it or not. Finally, be bold enough to bring back some of the fruit of the land."

When they left it was the season for the first grapes to ripen.²¹ They went up and reconnoitered [searched] the land from the Tzin Desert to Rechov [Rehob] near the entrance to Hamat.²² They went up into the Negev and arrived at Hevron [Hebron]; Achiman, Sheshai and Talmai, the 'Anakim [Anaks], lived there. (Hevron [Hebron] was built seven years before Tzo'an [Zoan] in Egypt.)²³ They came to the Eshkol Valley; and there they cut off a branch bearing one cluster of grapes, which they carried on a pole between two of them; they also took pomegranates and figs.²⁴ That place was called the Valley of Eshkol [cluster], because of the cluster which the people of Isra'el cut down there.

²⁵ Forty days later, they returned from reconnoitering [searching] the land²⁶ and went to Moshe [Moses], Aharon [Aaron] and the entire community of the people of Isra'el at Kadesh in the Pa'ran Desert, where they brought back word to them and to the entire community and showed them the fruit of the land.²⁷ What they told him was this: "We entered the land where you sent us, and indeed it does flow with milk and honey — here is its fruit!²⁸ However the people living in the land are fierce, and the cities are fortified and very large. Moreover, we saw the 'Anakim [Anaks] there.²⁹ 'Amalek [Amalikes] lives in the area of the Negev; the Hitti [Hittites], the Y'vusi [Jebusites] and the Emori [Amorites] live in the hills; and the Kena'ani [Canaanites] live by the sea and alongside the Yarden [Jordan]."

³⁰ Kaleb [Caleb] silenced the people around Moshe [Moses] and said, "We ought to go up immediately and take possession of it; there is no question that we can conquer it."³¹ But the men who had gone with him said, "We can't attack those people, because they are stronger than we are";³² and they spread a negative report about the land they had reconnoitered [searched] for the people of Isra'el by saying, "The land we passed through in order to spy it out is a land that devours its inhabitants. All the people we saw there were giant!³³ We saw the N'filim, the descendants of 'Anak, who was from the N'filim; to ourselves we looked like grasshoppers by comparison, and we looked that way to them too!"

Numbers 14 Complete Jewish Bible (CJB)

¹ At this all the people of Isra'el cried out in dismay and wept all night long.² Moreover, all the people of Isra'el began grumbling against Moshe [Moses] and Aharon [Aaron]; the whole community told them, "We wish we had died in the land of Egypt! or that we had died here in the desert!³ Why is Adonai bringing us to this land, where we will die by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will be taken as booty! Wouldn't it be better for us to return to Egypt?"⁴ And they said to each other, "Let's appoint a leader and return to Egypt!"

⁵ Moshe [Moses] and Aharon [Aaron] fell on their faces before the entire assembled community of the people of Isra'el. ⁶ Y'hoshua [Joshua] the son of Nun and Kalev [Caleb] the son of Y'funeh [Jephunneh], from the detachment that had reconnoitered [searched] the land, tore their clothes ⁷ and said to the whole community of Isra'el, "The land we passed through in order to spy it out is an outstandingly good land! ⁸ If Adonai is pleased with us, then he will bring us into this land and give it to us — a land flowing with milk and honey. ⁹ Just don't rebel against Adonai. And don't be afraid of the people living in the land — we'll eat them up! Their defense has been taken away from them, and Adonai is with us! Don't be afraid of them!"

¹⁰ But just as the whole community were saying they should be stoned to death, the glory of Adonai appeared in the tent of meeting to all the people of Isra'el. ¹¹ Adonai said to Moshe [Moses], "**How much longer is this people going to treat me with contempt? How much longer will they not trust me, especially considering all the signs I have performed among them?**" ¹² I am going to strike them with sickness, destroy them and make from you a nation greater and stronger than they are!"

¹³ However, Moshe [Moses] replied to Adonai, "When the Egyptians hear about this — [and they will,] because it was from among them that you, by your strength, brought this people up — ¹⁴ they will tell the people living in this land. They have heard that you, Adonai, are with this people; that you, Adonai, are seen face to face; that your cloud stands over them; that you go ahead of them in a column of cloud by day and a column of fire by night. ¹⁵ If you kill off this people at a single stroke, then the nations that have heard of your reputation will say ¹⁶ that the reason Adonai slaughtered this people in the desert is that he wasn't able to bring them into the land which he swore to give them. ¹⁷ So now, please, let Adonai's power be as great as when you said, ¹⁸ 'Adonai is slow to anger, rich in grace, forgiving offenses and crimes; yet not exonerating the guilty, but causing the negative effects of the parents' offenses to be experienced by their children and even by the third and fourth generations.' ¹⁹ Please! Forgive the offense of this people according to the greatness of your grace, just as you have borne with this people from Egypt until now."

²⁰ Adonai answered, "I have forgiven, as you have asked. ²¹ But as sure as I live, and that the whole earth is filled with the glory of Adonai, ²² none of the people who saw my glory and the signs I did in Egypt and in the desert, **yet tested me these ten times** and did not listen to my voice, ²³ will see the land I swore to their ancestors! None of those who treated me with contempt will see it. ²⁴ But my servant Kalev [Caleb], because he had a different Spirit with him and has fully followed me — him I will bring into the land he entered, and it will belong to his descendants.

²⁵ "Now, since the 'Amaleki [Amalikites] and the Kena'ani [Canaanites] are living in the valley, tomorrow turn around and get yourselves into the desert along the way to the Sea of Suf."

²⁶ Adonai said to Moshe [Moses], Aharon [Aaron], ²⁷ "How long am I to put up with this evil community who keep grumbling about me? I have heard the complaints of the people of Isra'el,

which they continue to raise against me.²⁸ Tell them this: ‘As surely as I live, Adonai swears, as surely as you have spoken in my ears, I will do this to you:²⁹ your carcasses will fall in this desert! Every single one of you who were included in the census over the age of twenty, you who have complained against me,³⁰ will certainly not enter the land about which I raised my hand to swear that I would have you live in it — except for Kalev [Caleb] the son of Y’funeh [Jephunneh] and Y’hoshua [Joshua] the son of Nun.³¹ But your little ones, who you said would be taken as booty — them I will bring in. They will know the land you have rejected.³² But you, your carcasses will fall in this desert;³³ and your children will wander about in the desert for forty years bearing the consequences of your prostitutions until the desert eats up your carcasses.³⁴ It will be a year for every day you spent reconnoitering [searching] the land that you will bear the consequences of your offenses — forty days, forty years. Then you will know what it means to oppose me!³⁵ I, Adonai, have spoken.’ I will certainly do this to this whole evil community who have assembled together against me — they will be destroyed in this desert and die there.”

³⁶ The men whom Moshe [Moses] had sent to reconnoiter the land and who, when they returned, made the entire community complain against him by giving an unfavorable report about the land — ³⁷ those men who gave the unfavorable report about the land died by the plague in the presence of Adonai.³⁸ Of the men who went to reconnoiter the land, only Y’hoshua [Joshua] the son of Nun and Kalev [Caleb] the son of Y’funeh [Jephunneh] remained alive.

³⁹ When Moshe [Moses] told these things to all the people of Isra’el, the people felt great remorse.⁴⁰ They arose early the next morning, came up to the top of the mountain and said, “Here we are, and we did sin, but now we’ll go up to the place Adonai promised.”⁴¹ Moshe [Moses] answered, “Why are you opposing what Adonai said? You won’t succeed!⁴² Don’t go up there, because Adonai isn’t with you. If you do, your enemies will defeat you.⁴³ The ‘Amalekim [Amalikes] and the Kena’anim [Canaanites] are there ahead of you, and you will be struck down by the sword. The reason will be that you have turned away from following Adonai, so that Adonai won’t be with you.”

⁴⁴ But they were presumptuous and went on up toward the high parts of the hill-country, even though the ark for the covenant of Adonai — and Moshe [Moses] — stayed in the camp.⁴⁵ So the ‘Amalekim [Amalikes] and the Kena’anim [Canaanites] living in that hill-country descended, struck them down and beat them back all the way to Hormah.

In Numbers 13-14, Israel came to a place where a decision had to be made. The 12 spies — one from each tribe — are sent into Israel to explore the land. Their mission seems rather innocuous at first: Determine how to battle the Canaanites and then settle 3 million men, women and children in the new land. The spies are sent to survey practical matters like fortification of the cities, geography of the land, opportunities for farming and commerce, the best access routes, etc.

In the Promised Land, God shows them encouraging signs that the land is indeed plentiful and rich:

- They find a cluster of grapes so enormous that eight men are needed to carry it (Numbers 13:23).

- God also makes sure the spies encounter heavily fortified Canaanite cities — which in fact is a sign of Canaanite weakness, since anyone who is truly powerful does not have to hide behind big walls.

Yet somehow, things do go wrong. After 40 days, the spies come back and 10 of them recommend against entering the land. They report:

- “We can’t succeed because everything is huge!” — a reference to the gigantic fruits.
- “We can’t succeed because the land devours its inhabitants!” — a reference to the funeral.
- “And we can’t succeed because it’s too strong!” — a reference to the heavily fortified walls.

The Israelite community accepts the report, and gives up their dream of going into the land.

The consequence? “If you don’t want to enter the land,” says God, “then you won’t enter the land. All Israelites will die out over the next 40 years in the desert, and only their children will enter the land.”

If you read Exodus 14 through Numbers 14 (excluding Leviticus – it’s not history, just the law) with an eye toward Israel’s response to the various difficulties encountered during their journey, it is interesting to note that there are ten occurrences where they grumble and complain rather than believe in the Lord:

1. Exodus 14:10-12 - At the Red Sea where it seemed that Pharaoh’s army would destroy them
2. Exodus 15:22-24 - At Marah where they found bitter water
3. Exodus 16:1-3 - In the Desert of Sin as they hungered
4. Exodus 16:19-20 - In the Desert of Sin as they paid no attention to Moses concerning the storing of the manna until the morning
5. Exodus 16:27-30 - In the Desert of Sin as they disregarded Moses concerning the gathering of the manna on the seventh day
6. Exodus 17:1-4 - At Rephidim as they complained for water
7. Exodus 32:1-35 - At Mount Sinai as Aaron led the people in making the golden calf
8. Numbers 11:1-3 - At Taberah where the people raged against the Lord
9. Numbers 11:4-34 - At Kibroth Hattaavah in the grumbling provoked by the rabble for quail
10. Numbers 14:1-3 - At Kadesh in the Desert of Paran when the people refused to receive the good report of Joshua and Caleb but rather wished themselves dead

So finally in Numbers 14:11, the Lord cries out **“how long?”** Repeatedly the Lord had demonstrated His faithfulness in each situation of difficulty. However, as soon as Israel encountered another difficult situation, they evidence unbelief through their grumbling and complaining. Their complaining cried out loudly, “Is the Lord among us or not?” As a result, the Lord concludes, “and yet have put me to the test these ten times and have not obeyed my voice.”

God is now to the point that He has to pronounce judgment on them – a judgment that will be forever remembered by the generations to come. A judgment that will forever alter their future as a nation in the land God has promised to them. God’s promise will always be fulfilled, but the route taken will now be a harsh one.

Numbers 14:1 tells us the people’s reaction to this news: “The people wept that night.” That night was Tisha B’Av, the ninth day of the Jewish month of Av. God declared: **“You cried before me pointlessly, I**

will fix for you [this day as a day of] crying for the generations," alluding to the future misfortunes which occurred on the same date.

Hundreds of years later, the destruction of the First Temple was to occur on Tisha B'Av. And 500 years after that, the Second Temple was destroyed on Tisha B'Av as well... and the numerous other destructive occurrences for the Jewish nation on that day throughout history.

What Went Wrong?

The spies lost their purpose. They got so wrapped up in the logical aspects of conquering the land that they took God out of the equation — and never put Him back in!

The original question they'd been assigned to answer — "How to conquer the land" — suddenly became a question of "should we or shouldn't we."

The nation was confronted with the decision: "God made a promise; shall we go in and take it? Or will fear keep us back, and will we wander away?" This became the threshold moment of their history. Their walking turned to wandering. Their marching became meandering. Their witness became wailing.

What caused this twist to occur?

God's presence was palpable in the desert:

- A rock provided a steady supply of water,
- Clouds of Glory kept enemies at bay
- A daily supply of manna fell from heaven.

Yet these "open miracles" were to cease upon entry into Israel. Thus, the spies reasoned that God's guidance and protection would cease as well.

From this skewed perspective, all the positive signs that God had shown them — the fruits, the funeral, and the city walls — were turned into negatives. From a purely realistic perspective, their conclusion was — not surprisingly — "This is not possible!"

Moses, being the great leader that he was, knew that the spies were susceptible to losing their anchor. So before they departed on their mission, he changed the name of one of the spies from "Hoshea" to "Yehoshua" (Joshua). *Hoshea* means "**to save**" — *Joshua* means "**YHWH saves**". Notice Joshua's name begins with two of the letters of God's Name YHWH (Yud Hey Vav Hey)—Yud and Heh. This was Moses' attempt to keep the spies focused on that crucial divine connection.

To some extent, Moses was successful; Joshua was one of two spies who protested the negative report — and was rewarded with entry into the land.

Descriptions of the land:

- Kadesh Barnea was the port of entry into the new land. It was a beautiful oasis with many opportunities for this new nation.
- Hebron was one of the oldest landmarks of Israel: where Abraham, Sarah, and the patriarchs were buried (Genesis 23), but the people forgot their family history in this land. When they did

eventually take the land, Caleb asked to live here, even though the giants still lived there. He still, at 85 years of age, saw what God saw, not what man saw.

- Zoan is more famously known as Tanis. It was a secret resort for the pharaohs; only the pharaohs and their families knew about it. It had to have been a pretty lush place for them to travel from Egypt to vacation there!
- "Milk and honey" (Num. 13:27) is a term for abundance. It means there is land for the shepherds (it's good for an agrarian lifestyle (milk), and there is land suitable for farmers (honey = syrup/extract from dates). So it had a place for everyone to not just live, but to thrive!

God wanted to bless them. At its peak under David and Solomon, Israel only occupied one-tenth of all that God promised them they would inherit

Of all the promises God gives to us, how much are we claiming, walking in, and enjoying the fullness of the Spirit in our lives?

Charles Spurgeon said:

"Most Christians, concerning the river of experience, are only up to the ankles; some others have waded until the stream is up to the knees; a few find it chest deep; and only a few—oh! how few!—find it to be a river to swim in, the bottom of which they cannot touch"

Joshua and Caleb were the only two in all those millions of people who trusted God. They were the only two allowed to live long enough to go into the Promised Land 40 years later. Their focus was fixed not on what the world would say, but on what God would do. Not just what He could do, but what they knew He WOULD do. Their faith was so deep that they knew the character of God.

As for the other ten spies, the bad report had gone into their hearts. They did not know God's character – and their tales of woe made everyone else follow along after them. Fear is contagious, and there were more people spreading fear than faith. Their rebellious hearts led others to rebellion – this was the biggest problem God had with them. This is why He allowed the destructions yet to come down through history to take place on this particular day – the 9th of Av. On this day their heart showed how rebellious they truly were. It was forever to be a day of mourning because on this day God mourned their lack of faith in Him.

An estimated 1,200,000 Israelites had to die off because of their rebellion. That's an average of 85 funerals every day – 7 funerals every hour for the next 40 years. This was a constant reminder that the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23). They lived with this reality up front and in their lives daily for the next 40 years.

God didn't want their rebellion. God wanted their faith and trust that His ways are higher than ours, that He cares for us more than we know, and that He can handle anything the world wants to throw at us. He is salvation – He is the good Shepherd. A flock that refuses to follow its shepherd leaves itself vulnerable to the things set out to destroy it. Over and over again the Jewish people have refused to see what God is trying to say. They saw God's hand in their flight from Egypt, but they quickly forgot the miracles of that and the desert, where God provided life's necessities every single day. And just like this, they also in the future refused to see God's ultimate salvation when Jesus came. This is why the 9th of Av has been so destructive a day for them throughout history.

However, even through the tragedy, God still shows His mercy and grace. Isaiah 46:3-4 tells this promise:

³ “Listen to me, house of Ya’akov [Jacob], all who remain of the house of Isra’el: I have borne you from birth, carried you since the womb. ⁴ Till your old age I will be the same — I will carry you until your hair is white. I have made you, and I will bear you; yes, I will carry and save you.

Even in the tragedy and destruction that has to come as a result of their sin, God still has a plan that will lighten their burdens. God must allow the judgment of sin, but He is faithful to also show mercy. Even in the misery that has happened on the 9th of Av, God still has a plan of salvation.

One example of this is in the Jew’s expulsion from Spain known as the Spanish Inquisition. The Jews were required to be out of Spain by the date of the 9th of Av (August 2, 1492). However, because of this tragedy, it opened the door for a man named Christopher Columbus to get the permission and money he needed to sail across the ocean. He specifically says this in his journal (twice!) – tying the two events together. The permission and money he needed was given on the heels of the tragedy that befell the Jews getting kicked out of Spain. In the same harbor where the Jews fled on the 9th of Av, Christopher Columbus sailed with three ships on the 10th of Av (August 3, 1492). The Jewish people are expelled and the very next day Columbus sets sail. Same country, same year, same month, same harbor, same act from the government – the next day God’s next salvation plan was set into motion. What was meant for evil, God could turn around for good. Columbus’ expedition, funded and brought about because of the Spanish Inquisition, would eventually bring about the nation of America, which would turn into the greatest refuge for the nation of Israel in 2,000 years. America would be their ally when all other nations would turn against them.

Now Israel is being restored –God’s blessings on the nation and on the land are coming back. We have seen it just in our lifetime. I would even say in my children’s lifetime it has been seen. Israel is now able to be a forerunner in the world in so many fields – technology, medicine, industry, finance, etc. The land that sat in ruin for thousands of years is now flourishing and becoming green again.

This is a picture of God’s loving mercy and grace. Even though He has to let the judgment from our sin take place, He always finds a way to bless when and where He can. He always provides a salvation from the tragedy that has to take place.

Take-aways:

- The commands of God are serious. If you break them there are consequences. If you follow it, surrender to His way, then there will be blessings in your life. Both of these will follow through the future generations. They don’t just affect you.
- God is a God who ultimately longs for mercy. He must judge sin, but His heart is always for mercy. He can take the calamity that had to come because of judgment and turn it into the refuge of blessings. He works all things together for good for those who love him!

