

Course Title: Living Today Preparing (LTP) for the Return of the Lord

**Series Title: The Inestimable Importance of
Ongoing Personal Relationships with God**

**Class Title: “Shall” and “Will” in God’s
Rhemata Words, and in your *rhemata* words**

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Preparing Now for the Future We Know is Coming to the Earth

- This course is about living today preparing now for the return of Yeshua, and thus preparing for our eternal future—whether that begins at the moment of our graduation at our physical death, or at the moment of our being caught up while still alive at the coming of Jesus Christ (see Matt 24:29-31, 2 Cor 5:6-8, 1 Thes 4:13-18, 2 Thes 2:1-8).
- In simple terms, there are four things that we each need to do to prepare for our physical death, or the Lord's coming, whichever comes first: receive Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord; receive and walk in the power of the Holy Spirit on a daily basis; bear fruit according to God's calling and anointing on each of our lives; and endure to the end of our mortal lives on this Earth as Christ's faithful, born-again, servant-disciples.
- The purpose of this course, titled “Living Today Preparing (LTP) for the Return of the Lord”, is to exhort us all to make the most of every opportunity each day to prepare well for the second coming of Christ, and thus for our eternity to follow. This is very important, because we only have each day, i.e., today, to prepare for our eternity, and the joys of heaven await our preparing well.
- Today, in our twelfth class in this series of LTP classes on “The Inestimable Importance of Ongoing Personal Relationships with God”, we will focus on the words “shall” and “will”, which appear frequently in the *Rhemata* words of the Lord to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob that we have addressed thus far in this series. Does God use “shall” and “will” interchangeably in the Bible? If not, what does that mean in God's *Rhemata* words to us, and in our *rhemata* words to Him?

Background Facts about the Hebrew Bible and the English Bible

- The Hebrew Bible, also known as the *Tanakh*, consists of 24 books, which are written mostly in Hebrew, with some texts in the Aramaic language. The Hebrew Bible does not have a New Testament, as orthodox Jews are still looking for the first coming of the Messiah.
- The Protestant Old Testament consists of 39 books as are commonly available in the English language. The Protestant Old Testament follows a different order and includes additional books that are not cited in the Hebrew Bible, by expanding the content of the Hebrew Bible's books. The 39 books reflect the splitting of several texts (to include Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, Ezra–Nehemiah, and the Twelve Minor Prophets) into separate books in English Bibles. Although the basic content is essentially the same, the Hebrew Bible and the English OT differ in language, punctuation, and the order of the books.
- Translators used the Old Testament in Hebrew, which is the Hebrew Bible, as the source for the Septuagint translation of the Old Testament in Greek. Later, other translators used the Hebrew Masoretic Text as their primary source for the English Old Testament, with occasional reference to the Greek Septuagint as their secondary source.
- Historical evidence about the primary source for the translation of the New Testament into the English KJV of 1611 is conflicting, well beyond the scope of today's class to even begin to address. If you're interested, do some research on Theodore de Beza, and Erasmus.

Segue – The First *Rhema* Word of the LORD to Abram, and to Isaac

- In our previous LTP class, there was a question about the meaning of “shall” and “will” in biblical Hebrew, as in their appearance in the *Rhemata* words of the LORD. Therefore, let’s begin by highlighting the appearance of the words “shall” and “will” in each of the first *Rhemata* words that the LORD spoke to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob in the NKJV:
 - Gen 12:1-3 records the first *Rhema* word the LORD spoke to Abram: ¹ “...Get out of your country, from your family and from your father’s house, to a land that I will show you. ² I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”
 - Gen 26:2-5 records the first *Rhema* word the LORD spoke to Isaac: ² “Then the LORD appeared to him and said: ‘Do not go down to Egypt; live in the land of which I shall tell you. ³ Dwell in this land, and I will be with you and bless you; for to you and your descendants I give all these lands, and I will perform the oath which I swore to Abraham your father. ⁴ And I will make your descendants multiply as the stars of heaven; I will give to your descendants all these lands; and in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed; ⁵ because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws.’” (The KJV has more “wills” than the NKJV in Gen 26:2-5.)

Segue – The First *Rhema* Word of the LORD to Jacob

- Gen 28:13-15 records the first *Rhema* word the LORD spoke to Jacob: ¹³ “And behold, the LORD stood above [the ladder] and said: ‘I *am* the LORD God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants. ¹⁴ Also your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread abroad to the west and the east, to the north and the south; and in you and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed. ¹⁵ Behold, I *am* with you and (I) will keep/protect you wherever you go, and (I) will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you.”
- To emphasize the importance of biblical promises and covenants using “shall” and “will”, note these facts about the LORD’s first *Rhema* word to Abram, then to Isaac, and then to Jacob:
 - In each of the above three *Rhema* word texts, the LORD used the word “will” to refer to things He promises to do, i.e., things He obligated Himself to do in the future.
 - With one exception in the above three texts, the LORD used the word “shall” to refer to things that Abram or Jacob shall do in the future, or that shall occur for all the nations or families of the Earth. The one exception is in Gen 26:2, where the LORD says to Isaac, “Do not go down to Egypt; live in the land of which I shall tell you”.

Facts about the LORD's First *Rhemata* Words to Abram, Isaac, and Jacob

- In all of the appearances in these three texts, “will” and “shall” refer to future events in the lives of Abram, Isaac, and Jacob, or in the nations or families of the Earth.
- In His first *Rhema* word to Abram in Gen 12:1-3, the LORD used the words “I will” five times to make five commitments to Abram, the words “you shall” one time to state that Abram would “be a blessing”, and the words “(they) shall” one time re all the families.
- In His first *Rhema* word to Isaac in Gen 26:2-5, the LORD used “I will” four times to make four commitments to Isaac, “I shall” one time in “I shall tell you”, and “(they) shall” once.
- In His first *Rhema* word to Jacob in Gen 28:13-15, the LORD used or implied “I will” four times to make four commitments to Jacob, “you shall” one time, and “shall” two times (regarding Jacob’s descendants, and all the families of the Earth).
- Here’s a significant point: When the LORD says “I will” in any *Rhema* word to us, He is making a definitive commitment to us personally that He will indeed do exactly what He has said He will do—and that *Rhema* word warrants our complete trust, Faith, and obedience in doing whatever He has said we are to do. When we obey His *Rhema*, we comply with Isa 55:11 – “So shall My word [*Rhema* in the LXX] be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void (empty, without fruit), but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper *in the thing* for which I sent it.” See 1 Sam 15:22 re obeying.

Linguistic Nuances in the Biblical Hebrew and the English Languages

- Research into the similarities or differences between the Hebrew words which are the source for the English words “shall” and “will” quickly becomes very academic, far too detailed and interwoven with linguistic nuances in Hebrew for many people to endure well for long. Yet, to provide just a glimpse of some of that detail, here are some brief examples:
 - Verbs in the Hebrew imperfect tense with “shall” and “will” should be taken as incomplete actions, i.e., actions typically pertaining to the future. English verb tenses do not parallel Hebrew verb tenses, which forces translators to decide which English word(s) is (are) the best rendering of the Hebrew tense, such as the Hebrew imperfect tense. The Hebrew imperfect tense is much more than just the future tense in English. The second person imperfect is the strongest form of command in Biblical Hebrew, and is the form of choice for the Ten Commandments (as on screen 9 shortly), as well as many other biblical laws.
 - Will and shall are modal auxiliary verbs that primarily express the future, prophecies, and promises, to include possibility, intent, ability, or necessity. Modal auxiliary verbs (like “shall” and “will” in the context of today’s class) express a required or desired action in relation to the main verb.
 - The Biblical Hebrew imperative also expresses a variety of volitive nuances (related to making a choice), which are covered by several English auxiliary verbs, such as “should” and “must”, as well as by the English imperative mood, which is for commands.

Linguistic Nuances in the Biblical Hebrew and the English Languages

- The important thing to remember is that the Hebrew volitive forms express the intent of the speaker, as in a commitment of the speaker, and particularly God Himself, regarding the future, or a command for the hearer regarding the future. Determining the Hebrew nuance is dependent on the literary context, the use of adverbs, word order, and the like.
- Even so, there is a further complication. Modern Hebrew basically follows Yiddish syntax (a dialect of German), whereas biblical Hebrew has an entirely different syntax (language and grammar rules). Modern Hebrew is very helpful for mastering the morphology (e.g., inflection, derivation) of biblical Hebrew, but the definition of modern Hebrew words can be different from the definition of similar biblical Hebrew words. Likewise, our imposing current definitions of English words on the intent of the Holy Spirit in His inspiration of biblical Hebrew words can result in inaccurate translations and interpretations in English.
- The fact is, there is no biblical Hebrew word that is the basis for the English word “shalt” (KJV) or “shall” (NKJV), nor is there a biblical Hebrew word that is the basis for the English word “will” as an auxiliary verb in English Bibles. There are Hebrew words which are the basis for the associated English main verbs (e.g., “bless” in the LORD’s saying, “I will bless you...”), but the modal “shall” and “will” are the result of the interpretation of the associated Hebrew verbs to express the meaning of their Hebrew tense.

“Shall” and “Will” in the *Rhemata* Words of the LORD in the Ten Commandments

- Exodus 20:1-17 – ¹ “And God spoke all these words, saying: ² ‘I *am* the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. ³ You **shall** have no other gods before Me. ⁴ You **shall** not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of *anything* that *is* in heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the water under the earth; ⁵ you **shall** not bow down to them nor serve/worship them. For I, the LORD your God, *am* a jealous God, visiting/punishing the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth *generations* of those who hate Me, ⁶ but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments. ⁷ You **shall** not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD **will** not hold *him* guiltless who takes His name in vain. ⁸ Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. ⁹ Six days you **shall** labor and do all your work, ¹⁰ but the seventh day *is* the Sabbath of the LORD your God. *In it* you **shall** do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who *is* within your gates. ¹¹ For *in* six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that *is* in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it. ¹² Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you. ¹³ You **shall** not murder. ¹⁴ You **shall** not commit adultery. ¹⁵ You **shall** not steal. ¹⁶ You **shall** not bear false witness against your neighbor. ¹⁷ You **shall** not covet your neighbor’s house; you **shall** not covet...

“Shall” in the *Rhemata* Words of God in the Ten Commandments

- **“...your neighbor’s wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that *is* your neighbor’s.’ ”**
 - **Although the KJV uses “shalt” and the NKJV uses “shall” in the Ten Commandments, “shalt” and “shall” have exactly the same meaning. As was the case in the previous *Rhemata* words of the LORD to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, there is no Hebrew word in Exodus 20 that is the basis for the English words “shalt” (KJV) or “shall” (NKJV). The modal “shall” is typically the result of the interpretation of the associated main Hebrew verbs to express the meaning of the imperfect tense (incompleted action) of the main verbs.**
 - **Each “shall” in the Ten Commandments is prescriptive, that is, “shall” denotes the actions that God commands the Israelites to obey—by doing three commands (e.g., “Six days you shall labor and do all your work.”) and by not doing seven commands (e.g., “You shall not murder”). Even so, God in His prescriptive Ten Commandments does not force anyone to obey them, either in the days of Exodus, nor at any time since. Whether or not anyone obeys any of God’s prescriptive Ten Commandments is a matter of personal choice.**
 - **In the Bible, “will” typically indicates a commitment to do something, either which God obligates Himself to do (e.g., “I will bless you...” in Gen 12:2), or which someone obligates himself/herself to do (e.g., Jacob’s “I will surely give a tenth to You.” in Gen 28:22).**

Points for Emphasis, Reflection, and Application

- **Some** biblical uses of the word “shall” are more **prophetic** than they are prescriptive, such as the LORD’s word to Abram in Gen 12:2-3 – ²“...you shall be a blessing. ³ ...and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” For Abram to be a blessing through whom all of the families of the earth “shall be blessed”, Abram would have to obey the Lord (“...walk before Me and be blameless.”, Gen 17:1). Gen 12:1-3 and Gen 17:1 are more directive and prophetic than they are prescriptive. That is, as the LORD did not force Abram to “get out” and “walk before Me and be blameless”, so the LORD does not force us to obey any of his words. We each must choose whether or not to obey the LORD’s words, of whichever kind they are.
- Thus, when the LORD said to Abram in Gen 12:2, “...you shall be a blessing”, and when the LORD said to Jacob in Gen 28:14, “...you shall spread abroad to the west and the east, to the north and the south; and in you and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed”, consider that He was conveying a **prophetic word** that Abram would be a blessing, and a prophetic word that Jacob’s seed would spread abroad in all directions so that all the families of the earth “shall be blessed”—that is, to the extent that they thereafter walked before the LORD and were blameless (Gen 17:1). Abram’s believing the LORD and the LORD’s accounting it to him for righteousness (Gen 15:6), was thus a key to Abram’s being a blessing to Isaac. Similarly, Isaac’s obedience to the LORD was a key to the LORD’s extending the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant to Jacob. This is the process the LORD has...

Points for Emphasis, Reflection, and Application

- ...ordained for each generation to inherit and then to pass on the blessings that the LORD pronounced to Abram, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as Deut 7:9 clearly confirms: “Therefore know that the LORD your God, *He is God*, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments...”
- **Other** biblical uses of the word “shall” are more **prescriptive** than they are prophetic, such as God’s command in Ex 20:16 – “You **shall not** bear false witness against your neighbor.” That is, although God commands us not to bear false witness against our neighbor, He knows that some people will obey His commands, and other people will disobey His commands. Exodus 20:16 is not a prophecy that all people will obey His command not to bear false witness.
- As we shall see shortly, “shall” in the secular world refers more to a legal obligation, while “will” refers more to a personal choice. Perhaps some English speakers do not make that distinction in their daily speech, but in legal terms today the distinction is usually upheld by the court. That is, in court, “he shall do it” is typically taken to mean that he is obligated to do it, whereas “he will do it” can mean that he is expected to choose to do it. Even so, the whims of any particular court may choose to honor, or reverse, or negate such distinctions in any specific case. Similarly, as history confirms, any person may or may not choose to honor his/her obligation or expectation, despite “shall” or “will” in legal contracts.

Linguistic Nuances in the Biblical Hebrew and the English Languages

- So, let's put the above into a “so-what” response to our inquiry about the nuances of “shall” vs. “will” in English translations of the biblical Hebrew texts with “shall” and “will”:
 - **“Shall”, regarding the first-person singular (I) and first-person plural (we):** When used in the first person, “shall” primarily foretells an action that is yet to occur. It is typically supplied in English as a prophetic word about some future action that God shall take (“I shall...”, Gen 22:2, 26:2), or that someone else plans to do (“we shall...”, Gen 26:22).
 - **“Shall”, regarding the second (you) person):** In these cases, “shall” can express a command, a threat, or a promise. “Shall” in such texts typically indicates a prescriptive statement, as employed about future events that God commands to occur (e.g., Exodus 20:9, “you shall labor...”, but He does not force us to obey), or future events that God commands not to occur (e.g., Exodus 20:5, “you shall not bow down...”, but He does not force us to not to do so). Otherwise, God would violate the free will He gave to us.
 - **“Will”, when referring to an action of God, indicates certainty, expressing God’s commitment/promise/covenant that He is absolutely going to do what He says. When referring to an action of man, “I will” emphasizes a person’s commitment to do exactly what he says.**
 - **Thus, “shall” can pertain to prophecies, or to prescriptions, depending on the context, and “will” typically pertains to commitments about actions that are to be done in the future.**

Linguistic Nuances of “Shall” and “Will” in Legal Contracts in English

- Even so, the nuances of biblical Hebrew can make our understanding the Bible accurately somewhat difficult. For the sake of comparison, legal contracts today often use language that can be confusing to those who are not well-versed in legal terminology, such as the use of the words “shall” and “will”. While the nuances between “shall” and “will” have ongoing temporal significance in secular legal documents today, these legal nuances, which we have clearer insight into, may either help us gain clearer insight into the OT biblical use of “shall” and “will”, or serve as a point of contrast. Here are several points for consideration:
 - In legal contracts, the term “shall” creates a duty or obligation for the party(-ies) involved, a mandatory obligation or requirement or action that must be fulfilled. “Shall” is best understood as “having the duty to do something”, without inherently speaking to the timing of that duty’s fulfillment. **“Shall” is typically more binding than “will” in court.**
 - In legal contracts, the term “will” indicates a future promise that the party(-ies) is (are) to fulfill. While it conveys a sense of commitment, “will” may not carry the same level of obligation as the term “shall.” That is, “will” in a contract typically reflects the expected response of the party(-ies) to perform the stated action(s) in the future.
 - The choice between “shall” and “will” in legal contracts can have significant legal implications. The use of “shall” typically imposes a strict obligation, while “will” may indicate...

Biblical First- and Second-Person Applications of “Will” and Shall”

- ...a lesser degree of certainty or commitment. To minimize such confusion, the terms “must” and “must not” are clearer words of obligation in legal contracts than “shall”, which can be interpreted (or misinterpreted) to mean “may”, as opposed to “must”.
- On the other hand, when used biblically in the first person (“I” or “We”), “will” typically conveys an obligation, a commitment to do something, whereas “shall” conveys more of a future intention to do something, rather than an obligation to do something.
 - When the LORD said to Abram in Gen 12:2, “I will make you a great nation...”, He stated an obligation that He committed Himself to perform.
 - When the LORD said to Jacob in Gen 26:2, “...live in the land of which I shall tell you”, consider that He was conveying more of His intention than His obligation to do so. Even so, the difference between God’s “will” and “shall” may be rather a moot point, as God honors His word to perform it (Ezek 12:25), whether that word is “shall” or “will”.
- Conversely, when used in the second person (“you”), “shall” biblically typically conveys a prescriptive command to do something or not to do something, as in Ex 20:1-17.
 - In the LORD’s first *Rhema* word to Abram, and then to Isaac, and then to Jacob, He did not use the phrase “you will” even once to indicate His command for Abram or Isaac or Jacob to do something. Gen 12:2 uses the prophetic phrase “you shall be a blessing”.

Linguistic Nuances of “Shall” and “Will” and their Significance to Us

- “Shall” is likely the most misused word in all of secular legal language today. To correctly use “shall” today, we do well to confine it to the meaning “has a duty to” (or better yet, to use that phrase), and to use it to impose a duty on someone capable of performing that duty—particularly when used in the second or third person (“you” or “they”).
- “Will” can also be used to indicate an obligation in secular legal language today, as in a purchase contract or a community covenant. However, “will” can be interpreted to indicate an intention, more than an obligation. “Shall” is typically more binding than “will” in court. **This can be the reverse of the usual biblical use of “shall” and “will”.**
- Beyond that, even though “shall” and “will” have great significance legally in the secular world, they only have temporal ramifications. In contrast, “shall” and “will” in the spiritual world have much greater significance, for they have both temporal and eternal ramifications. For example, the wicked renounce God and say in their heart, “(God) will not require an account.” (Psalm 10:13). But the sober truth is, at God’s appointed time, each person, that is, every person, everyone, will personally stand alone before Yeshua to give Him an account for his/her life—either before the bema judgment seat of Christ (Rom 14:9-11; 2 Cor 5:9-10), or the great white throne judgment seat (Rev 20:11-15). Today is the only day we have to prepare well for that unavoidable and very significant appointment with eternal ramifications—so we do well to prepare well each day we have to prepare!

Points for Reflection and Application

- Any one of us may think/say, however, “Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are the patriarchs of the Christian Faith, so of course the LORD blessed them with such strong *Rhema* commitments of what He would do in His “I will” promises to them. But I’m no patriarch, and I’m not aware that the LORD has made such strong *Rhema* commitments to me of what He will do by His speaking “I will” promises to me. So where does that leave me?” If that’s you, consider:
 - Neither Abram, nor Isaac, nor Jacob began their lives as patriarchs, nor did we. Rather, they began life just as we have—desperately in need of a personal relationship with God.
 - It is very likely that our first awareness of the word of the LORD came by our hearing the *graphé* read aloud as *logos*. Our first awareness of the LORD’s speaking a *Rhema* word to us very likely came later, as when Yeshua said to us, “**Follow Me**” (Luke 5:27) as our personal Lord and Savior. So what do we do after we’ve heard and obeyed His first *Rhema* word to us?
 - All of the LORD’s *graphé* words in the Bible are candidates for the LORD to speak to us personally as *Rhemata* words. One such *graphé* word is in Isaiah 55:6 – “Seek the LORD while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near.” When we need a *Rhema* word to know what to do, the Holy Spirit exhorts us to ask for wisdom (James 1:5), for asking the LORD/Lord is the essential step we must take to receive His *Rhema* answer:

Points for Reflection and Application

- Yeshua Himself says in Matt 7:7-8 – ⁷ “**Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ⁸ For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.” Note well that in Yeshua’s words in Matt 7:7-8, He makes three “it will” commitments to us.**
- We know from James 4:2 that there are times when we do not have, as a *Rhema*, because we do not ask. To ask fruitfully is to submit our will to God’s will.
- We know from James 4:3 that there are times when we do not have, as a *Rhema*, although we do ask, but we ask amiss, that we may spend the answer on our pleasures.
- When we rightly receive and understand the Lord’s *graphé* words or the hearing of His *graphé* words as *logos* words, we find many precious promises He has made that we can speak back to him in the spirit of Isaiah 55:11, such as these “I will” commitments in the *graphé* (which serve as the basis for essentially asking the Lord to speak them as *Rhema*):
 - Heb 13:5-7 – ⁵ “*Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you.’* ⁶ So we may boldly say: ‘The LORD *is* my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?’” So we may say, “Lord, even when I feel that you have forsaken me, I know that Your word in Heb 13:5 is true, and is not dependent on how You feel, but on what You know is best.”

Points for Reflection and Application

- Matt 8:7 – “Jesus said to (the centurion), ‘**I will** come and heal him.’ ”
- Matt 10:32-33 – ³² “Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him **I will** also confess before My Father who is in heaven. ³³ But whoever denies Me before men, him **I will** also deny before My Father who is in heaven.”
- Matt 11:28 – “Come to Me, all *you* who labor and are heavy laden, and **I will** give you rest.”
- Matt 25:20-21 – ²⁰ “So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, ‘Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.’ ²¹ His lord said to him, ‘Well *done*, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, **I will** make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’ ”
- Mark 1:17 – “Then Jesus said to them, ‘Follow Me, and **I will** make you become fishers of men.’ ”
- Luke 21:14-15 – ¹⁴ “Therefore settle *it* in your hearts not to meditate beforehand on what you will answer/say in defense; ¹⁵ for **I will** give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist/withstand.”
- John 2:19 - “...Destroy this temple, and in three days **I will** raise it up.”

Emphasis Points for Reflection and Application

- There is no biblical Hebrew word for the English word “shalt” (KJV) or “shall” (NKJV), nor is there a biblical Hebrew word that is the basis for the English word “will” as auxiliary verbs in English Bibles, as in the LORD’s first *Rhemata* words to Abram, Isaac, and Jacob. There are Hebrew words which are the basis for the associated English main verbs (e.g., “bless” in the LORD’s saying, “I will bless you...”), but the modal verbs “shall” and “will” are the result of the interpretation of the tense of the associated main Hebrew verbs to express the contextual meaning of their imperfect tense.
- “Shall” and “will” have significant differences legally in the secular world, but they only have temporal ramifications. There is no definitive parallel based on biblical Hebrew verbs that confirm that today’s legal distinctions between “shall” and “will” apply to the modal auxiliary verbs “shall” and “will” supplied in English translations of biblical Hebrew.
- The Hebrew volitive verb forms express the intent of the speaker, as in a commitment of the speaker—and particularly by God Himself (e.g., “I will...”, as in Gen 12:2) regarding the future, or a prophetic command from God Himself for the hearer regarding the future (“you shall...”, as in Gen 28:14). Both “shall” and “will” in the spiritual world have great significance for us today, as they both have temporal and eternal ramifications for each of us.
Here’s why:

Emphasis Points for Reflection and Application

- When God makes an “I will...” statement to you in a *Rhema* word, He is making a choice of His will (yes, God has a will, and chooses what to do and not to do, as in Exodus 32:1-14) to make a definitive commitment to do exactly what He has said to you that He will do—and it is impossible for God to lie (Heb 6:18)!
- The difference between God’s “will” and “shall” may be rather a moot point, as God honors His word to perform it (Ezek 12:25), whether that word is “shall” or “will”.
- When God makes a “You shall...” statement to you in a *Rhema* word, consider that He is making a prophetic statement about His intention that you “shall” choose to do exactly what He has said to you, as a free-will choice of your will. If God were to say, on the other hand, “You will...” in His *Rhema* word to you, and force you to obey, that would violate His having chosen to give you a free will, i.e., the ability and responsibility to choose either to obey what He says, or to disobey what He says to you. See Ex 35:29 and similar passages regarding a “freewill offering”.
- The fact remains that we will give an account in eternity not only for our temporal decisions, but also for our idle words we speak (Matt 12:36)—which makes our choices in this life, e.g., how we use our free will, and how we use our tongue, very important for each of us personally because of their eternal consequences, for better or for worse!

Emphasis Points for Reflection and Application

- When any member of the Godhead speaks a *Rhema* word to you, such as “I will...”, He is making a commitment to you that is more trustworthy than any word any person on Earth can or ever will speak to you—just as God is more trustworthy than any person on Earth can or ever will be. You can entrust your life and your eternity to God, for in your obeying whatever He says, you will please God, and all concerned will reap immeasurable benefits.
- When you speak an “I will...” *rhema* word to any member of the Godhead, you are making a commitment to Him that warrants your being more trustworthy to honor your word to Him than you ever could make any commitment to any person on Earth.
- Jacob waited some 20 years between the LORD’s first recorded *Rhema* word to him (Gen 28:13-15) and the LORD’s second recorded *Rhema* word to him (Gen 31:11-13). Despite Jacob’s challenges and difficulties in dealing with his father-in-law during those 20 years, the LORD did not leave nor forsake Jacob—as Jacob himself testified in retrospect (Gen 31:4-10, 36-42). As Jacob’s experience was, so shall ours be: as we are obedient to obey the first and any subsequent *Rhemata* words the LORD has spoken to us, no matter how long the delay until His next *Rhema* word to us, we will continue to experience His presence and His blessings in our ongoing personal relationship with Him.
- As God says what He means, and means what He says to us, so let us say what we mean, and mean what we say to Him!

**Course Title: Living Today Preparing (LTP)
for the Return of the Lord**

**Series Title: The Inestimable Importance of
Ongoing Personal Relationships with God**

**Class Title: “Shall” and “Will” in God’s
Rhemata Words, and in your *rhemata* words**

Our next LTP class will be on 30 June 2024

Discussion and Application

Class Web Site and YouTube Videos as Resources of Interest



Our course web site is available at the URL <http://rhemaOats.org/> if you would like to download and read or print notes from previous classes in this course, continue class discussion, ask for prayer or document a praise, and/or otherwise use this resource to the advancement of the kingdom of God. For more information, contact Stephen Currence, Matthew Currence, or Woody Glass.

YouTube videos for recent LTP classes, to include the class discussions, are available at <https://tinyurl.com/LTP-Class-Videos>.

To protect the privacy of participants, please do not post or broadcast any of these videos on any social media platforms. For more information, contact Corey or Sandy Jones.