

# War of the Two Trees

Ki Tisa – Exodus 30:11 – 34:35

## Ki Tisa

כִּי תִשָּׂא אֶת-רֹאשׁ בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל לִפְקֻדֵיהֶם וְנָתַנוּ אִישׁ כֹּפֶר  
נַפְשׁוֹ לַיהוָה בְּפִקֹּד אַתֶּם וְלֹא-יְהִי־הֶבֱהֶם נֶגֶף בְּפִקֹּד אַתֶּם:

- ▶ Ki tisa et-rosh benei Yisrael  
lifkudeihem venatnu ish kofer nafsho la  
YHVH bifkod otam veloyihye vahem negef bifkod otam

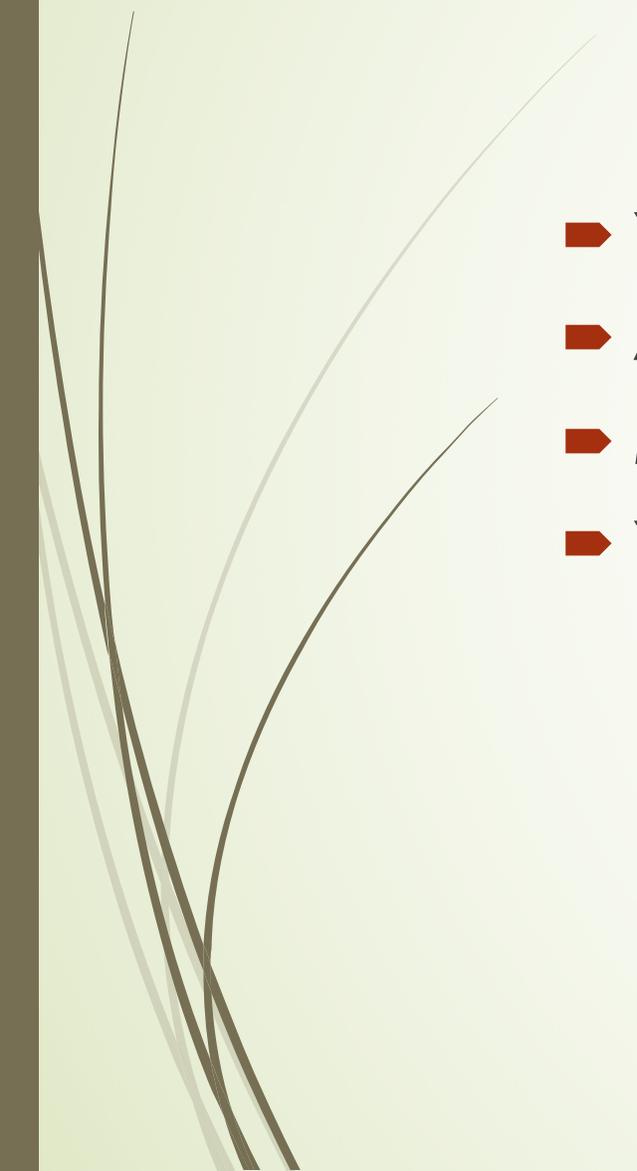
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YHVH bifkod otam veloyihye vahem negef bifkod otam
- When you take a census of the sons of Israel to number them, then each of them shall give a ransom for himself to YHVH, when you number them, so that there will be no plague among them when you number them.

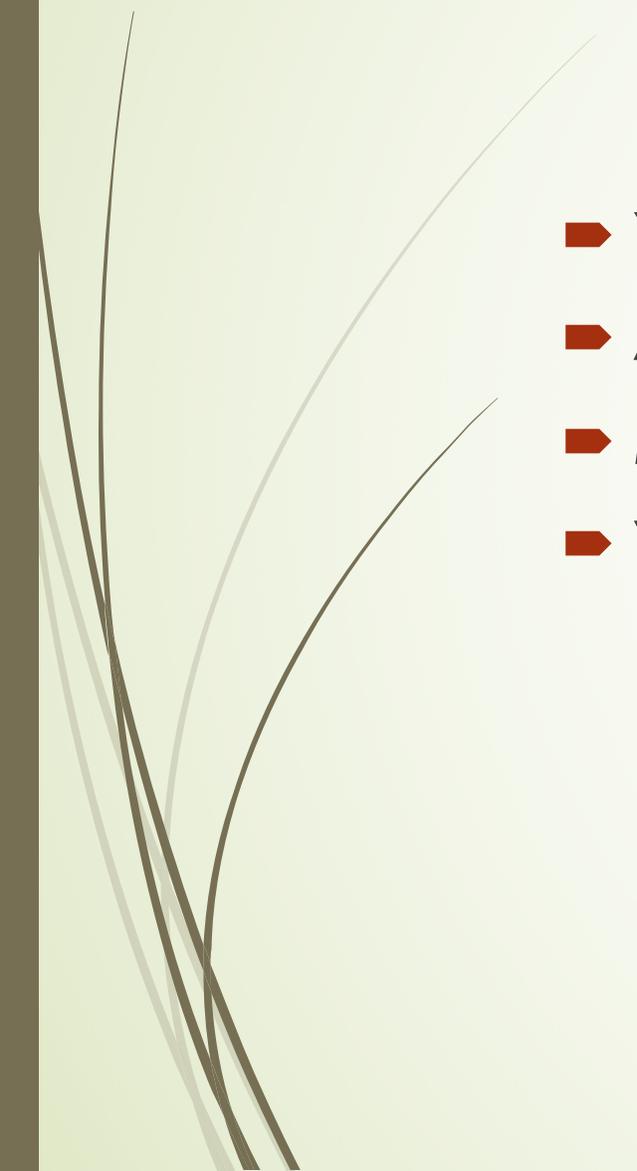


# Portion Overview

- YHVH finishes providing temple construction instructions
  - Aaron/Israel make and worship a golden calf
  - Moses intercedes
  - YHVH gives a renewed covenant
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# The Renewed Covenant Commands

## Exodus 34:12-15

- **(12)** Watch yourself that you make no covenant with the inhabitants of the land into which you are going, or it will become a snare in your midst.
- **(13)** But rather, you are to tear down their altars and smash their sacred pillars and cut down their Asherim
- **(14)** —for you shall not worship any other god, for YHVH, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God—
- **(15)** otherwise you might make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land and they would play the harlot with their gods and sacrifice to their gods, and someone might invite you to eat of his sacrifice,

# The Renewed Covenant Commands

## Exodus 34:16-19

- **(16)** and you might take some of his daughters for your sons, and his daughters might play the harlot with their gods and cause your sons also to play the harlot with their gods.
- **(17)** You shall make for yourself no molten gods.
- **(18)** “You shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread. For seven days you are to eat unleavened bread, as I commanded you, at the appointed time in the month of Abib, for in the month of Abib you came out of Egypt.
- **(19)** The first offspring from every womb belongs to Me, and all your male livestock, the first offspring from cattle and sheep.

# The Renewed Covenant Commands

## Exodus 34:20-23

- **(20)** You shall redeem with a lamb the first offspring from a donkey; and if you do not redeem it, then you shall break its neck. You shall redeem all the firstborn of your sons. None shall appear before Me empty-handed.
- **(21)** You shall work six days, but on the seventh day you shall rest; even during plowing time and harvest you shall rest.
- **(22)** You shall celebrate the Feast of Weeks, that is, the first fruits of the wheat harvest, and the Feast of Ingathering at the turn of the year.
- **(23)** Three times a year all your males are to appear before the Lord YHVH, the God of Israel.

# The Renewed Covenant Commands

## Exodus 34:24-26

- **(24)** For I will drive out nations before you and enlarge your borders, and no man shall covet your land when you go up three times a year to appear before YHVH your God.
- **(25)** You shall not offer the blood of My sacrifice with leavened bread, nor is the sacrifice of the Feast of the Passover to be left over until morning.
- **(26)** “You shall bring the very first of the first fruits of your soil into the house of YHVH your God. You shall not boil a young goat in its mother’s milk.

A photograph of a vast field of golden wheat in the foreground, stretching towards a horizon line. In the distance, several green trees are visible against a dark, overcast sky filled with heavy, grey clouds. The overall mood is somber and dramatic.

Why specifically reiterate THESE commands?

# Golden Calf (Bull) Worship

- ▶ A bull was related to sun worship, also related to the moon
- ▶ Egyptian depictions had rays of the sun depicted between the horns. Also found in Canaanite and Phoenician mythology
- ▶ Pharaoh considered the “Bull of Bulls”
- ▶ The sun was worshiped as it was seen as the “giver of life” and the “corn spirit”.
- ▶ Killed to promote fertility
- ▶ In several cultures’ mythology, fought a lion
- ▶ The lion was considered the enemy, with bull as the hero





## YHVH Like a Lion

- **Hosea 5:14** For I will be like a lion to Ephraim and like a young lion to the house of Judah.
- **Hosea 11:10** They will walk after YHVH, He will roar like a lion; Indeed He will roar and His sons will come trembling from the west.
- **Amos 3:8** A lion has roared! Who will not fear? The Lord YHVH has spoken! Who can but prophesy?
- **Jeremiah 50:44** Behold, one will come up like a lion from the thicket of the Jordan to a perennially watered pasture; for in an instant I will make them run away from it, and whoever is chosen I will appoint over it. For who is like Me, and who will summon Me into court? And who then is the shepherd who can stand before Me?

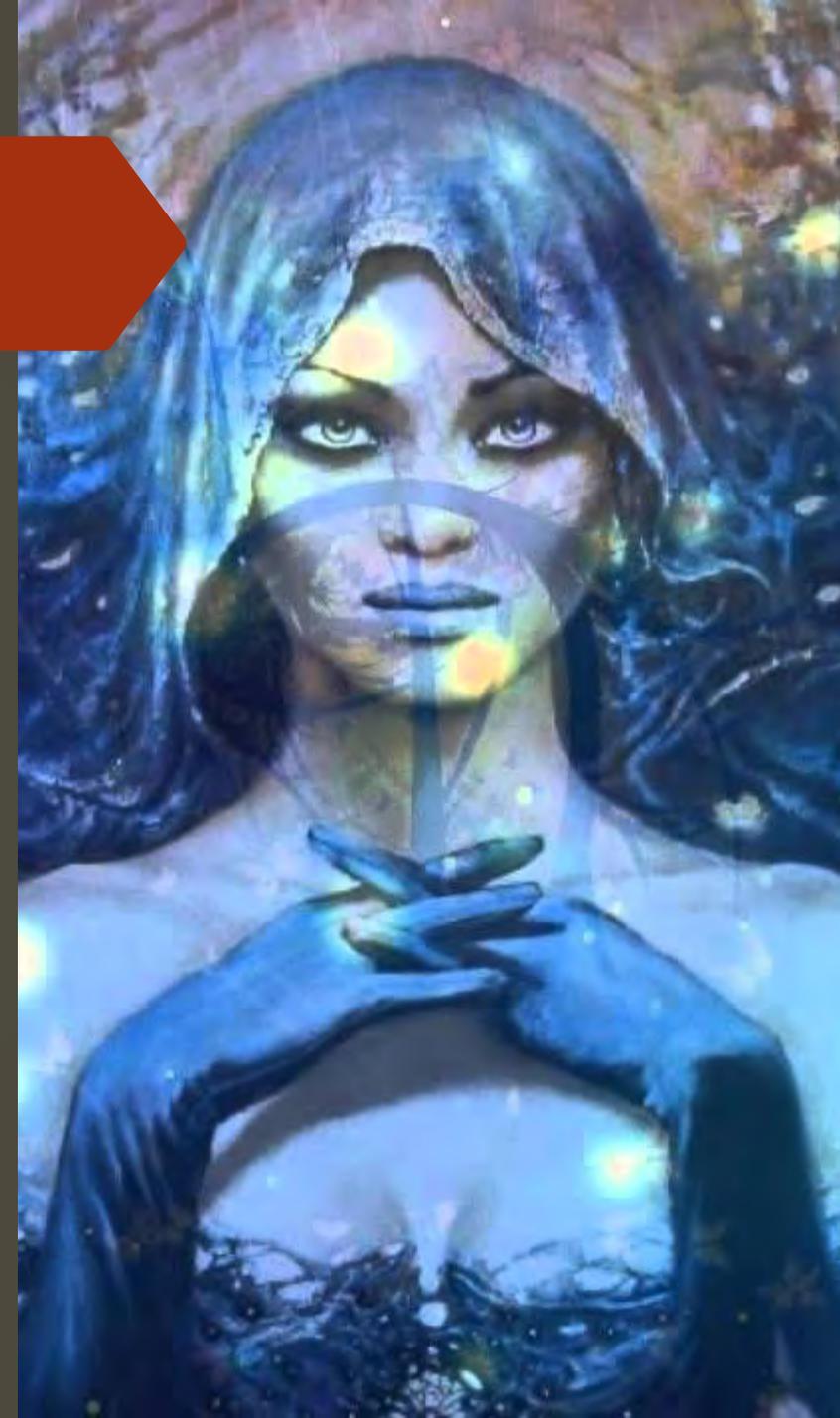
# Ba'al

- ▶ Depicted as a bull
- ▶ Murdered and resurrected
- ▶ Famous for defeating the dragon/serpent and ruling the sea
- ▶ Son of El/Dagan
- ▶ Took the place of El, husband of Asherah and married her
- ▶ Also known in other cultures as Zeus (Canaanite/Greek), Osiris (Egypt) – Most High, Mightiest, Most Powerful, Supreme
- ▶ “lord of heaven and earth”, controlled earth’s fertility
- ▶ Yahushua calls him Ba'al Zebub, Lord of the Flies
- ▶ HaSatan – Father of Lies



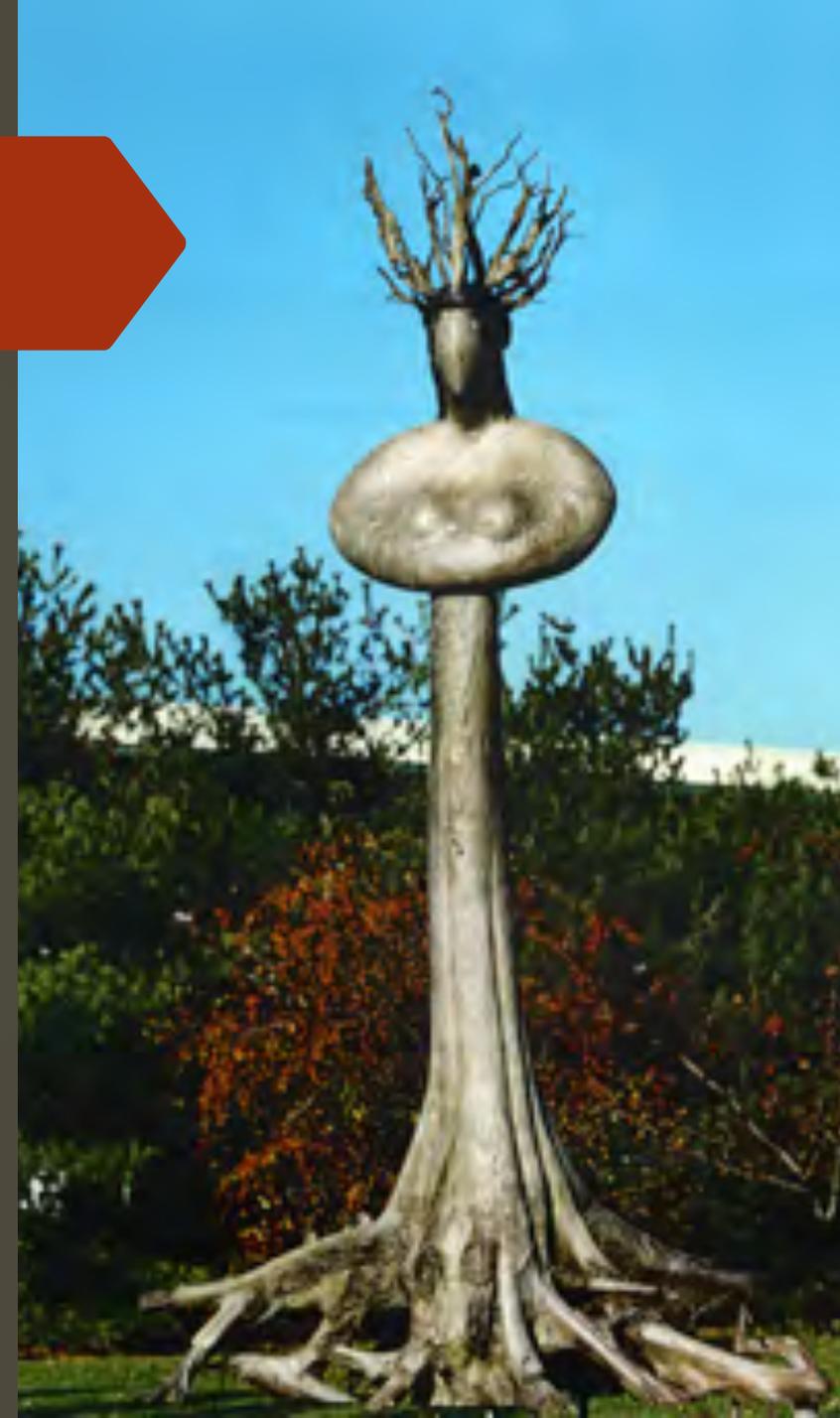
# Asherah

- ▶ “Lady of the Serpent”, “Queen of Heaven”
- ▶ Mother of Ba’al
- ▶ Also known as Astarte, Venus, Istar/Ishtar
- ▶ Egyptian – Lunar goddess, daughter of Ra
- ▶ Astarte – fertility, sexuality, and war
- ▶ “Mother of all Living”, “Mother Nature”
- ▶ Worship contained a ritual where a goat was boiled in his mother’s milk, then sprinkled on trees and fields at harvest time to promote a fruitful harvest the next year.



# Asheroth

- ▶ Asheroth considered conduits for communicating and experiencing the divine
- ▶ Charged with the divine force (“serpent power”)
- ▶ Tree of Knowledge – Desirable to learn of good and evil (judgement) like Elohim
- ▶ Creating rules and morality as one sees fit
- ▶ Rejection of YHVH’s authority and Torah





# Tree of Life

- Torah
- YHVH's Instruction
- Life-giving
- Promises of prosperity
- Following means humbling ourselves before YHVH, recognizing Him as our Elohim



# Ba'al/Asherah Worship

- Allure of worshiping Ba'al and Asherah is that it promises (falsely) godhood
  - Denies YHVH's power
  - Tree of Knowledge vs Tree of Life – Our torah vs. YHVH's Torah
  - Does this still happen today?
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# Modern Day Ba'al/Asherah Worship

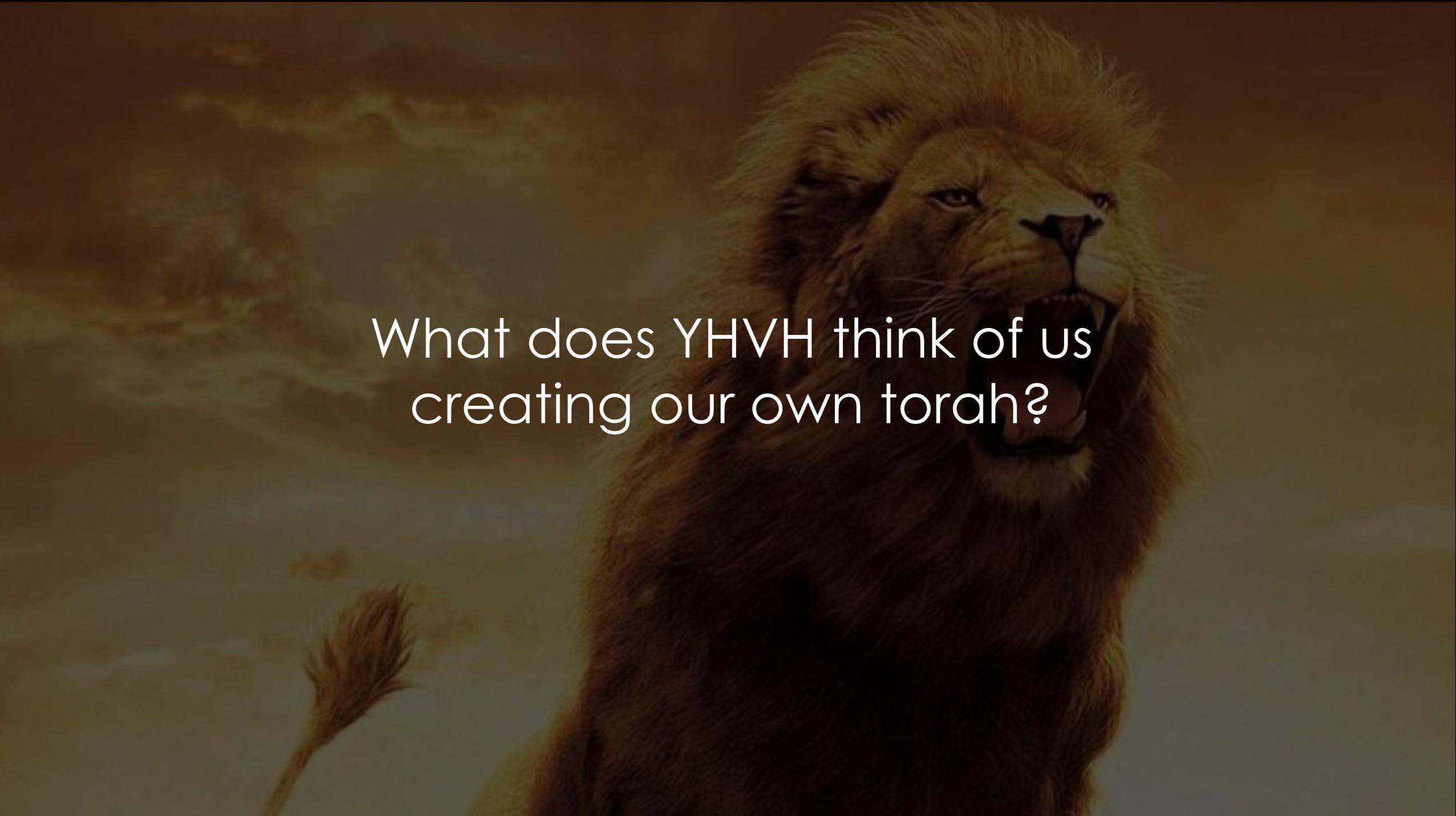
- ▶ Jesus died, was resurrected, and now worshiped as God, in place of YHVH
- ▶ Jesus abolished the “Old Testament”
- ▶ Worship now happens on Sunday, ignoring the Sabbath
- ▶ The birth of Jesus is celebrated with a tree
- ▶ Easter (another name for Asherah) is celebrated with bunnies and eggs, another fertility rite



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- ▶ **But that's not what it means to me!**



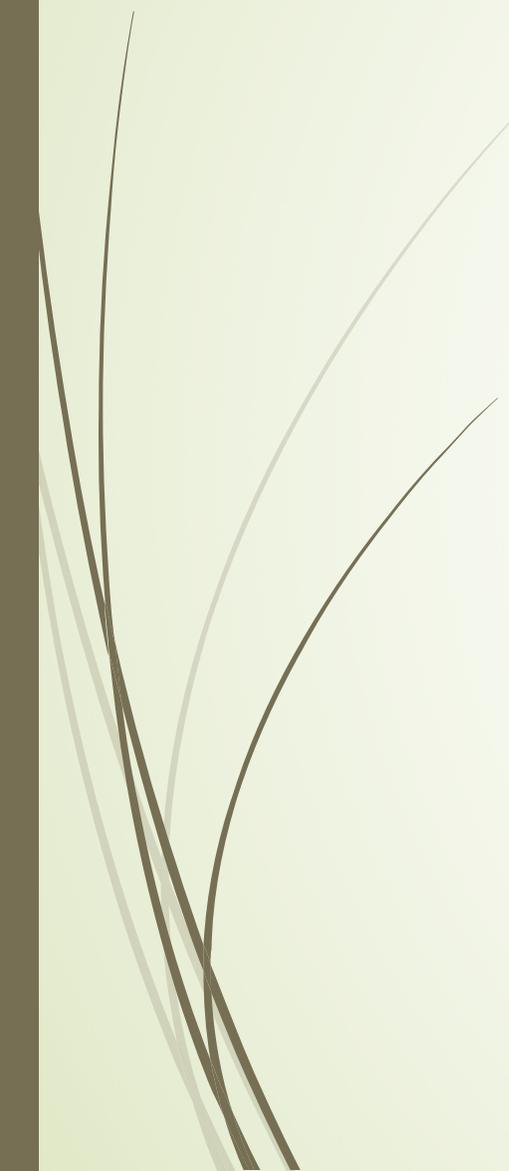
A close-up photograph of a lion roaring, with its mouth wide open, showing its teeth and tongue. The lion is set against a blurred background of a savanna landscape with a large tree on the left. The entire image has a dark, semi-transparent overlay.

What does YHVH think of us  
creating our own torah?



## Isaiah 1:14

I hate your new moon and your appointed feasts, they have become a burden to Me. New moon and sabbath, the calling of assemblies – I cannot endure iniquity and the solemn assembly.



## Hosea 2

- **(5)** For their mother has played the harlot; she who conceived them has acted shamefully. For she said, 'I will go after my lovers, who give my bread and my water, my wool and my flax, my oil and my drink.'
- **(8)** For she does not know that **it was I who gave her the grain, the new wine and the oil**, and lavished on her silver and gold, which they used for Ba'al.
- **(11)** I will also put an end to all her gaiety, her feasts, her new moons, her sabbaths, and all her festal assemblies.
- **(13)** I will punish her for the days of Baals when she used to offer sacrifices to them and adorn herself with her earrings and jewelry, and follow her lovers, so that she forgot Me," declares YHVH.

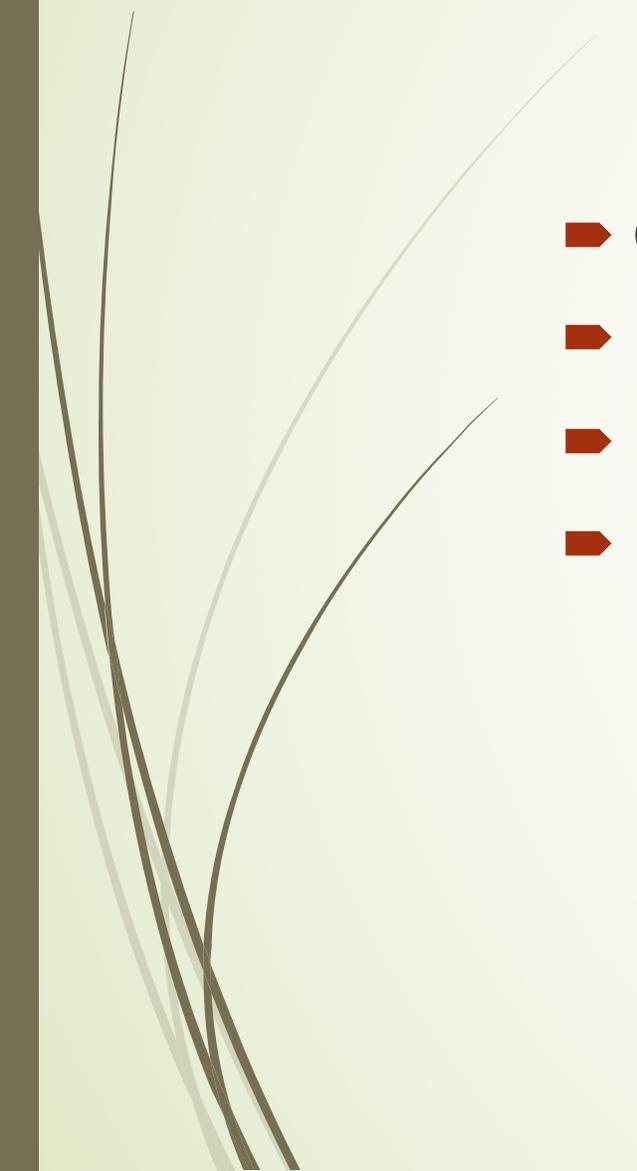


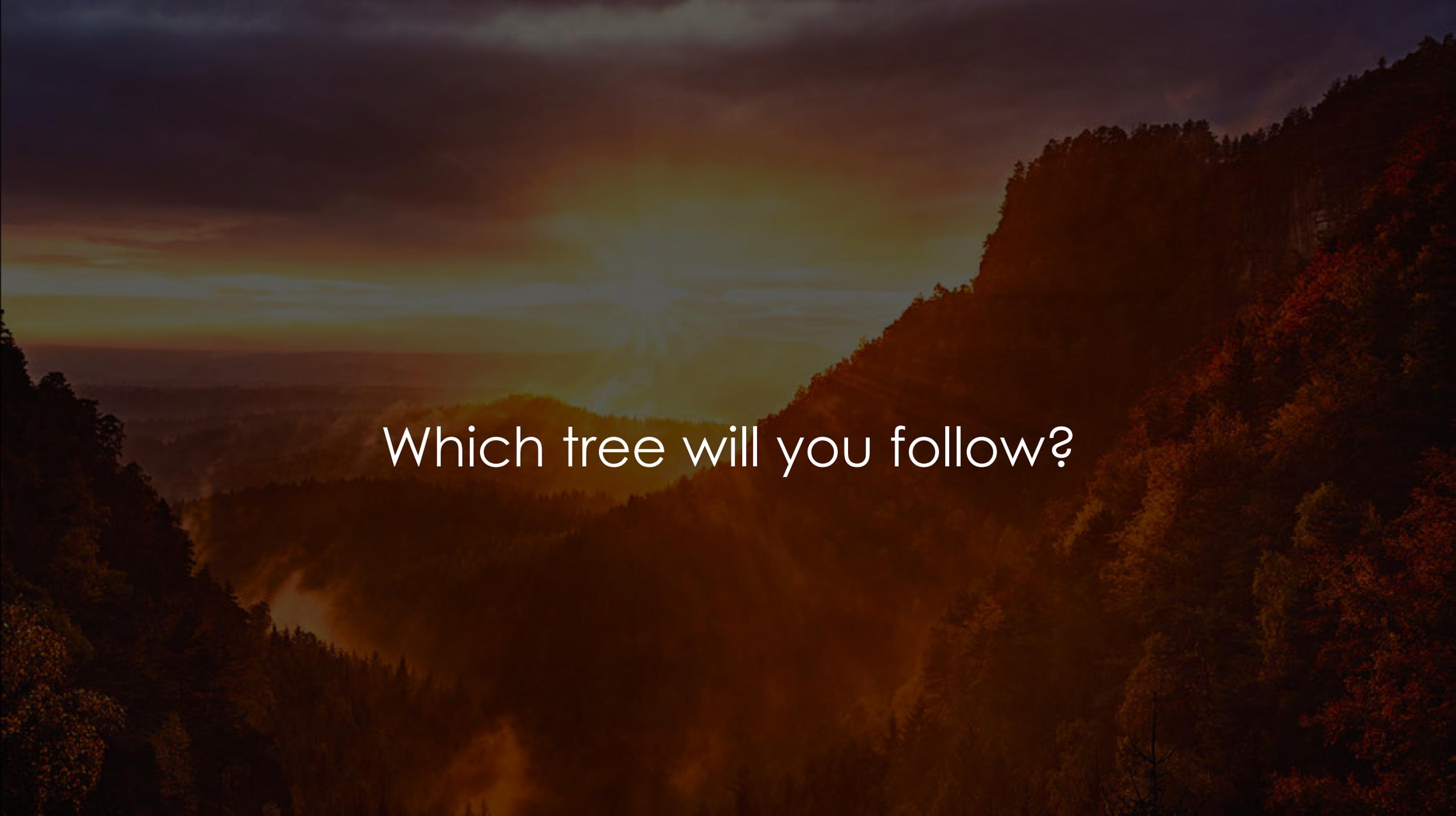
# Amos 5

- **(8)** He who made the Pleiades and Orion and changes deep darkness into morning, Who also darkens day into night, Who calls for the waters of the sea and pours them out on the surface of the earth, YHVH is His Name.
- **(19)** As when a man flees from a lion and a bear meets him, or goes home, leans his hand against the wall and a snake bites him.
- **(20)** Will not the day of YHVH be darkness instead of light, even gloom with no brightness in it?
- **(21)** I hate, I reject your festivals, nor do I delight in your solemn assemblies.

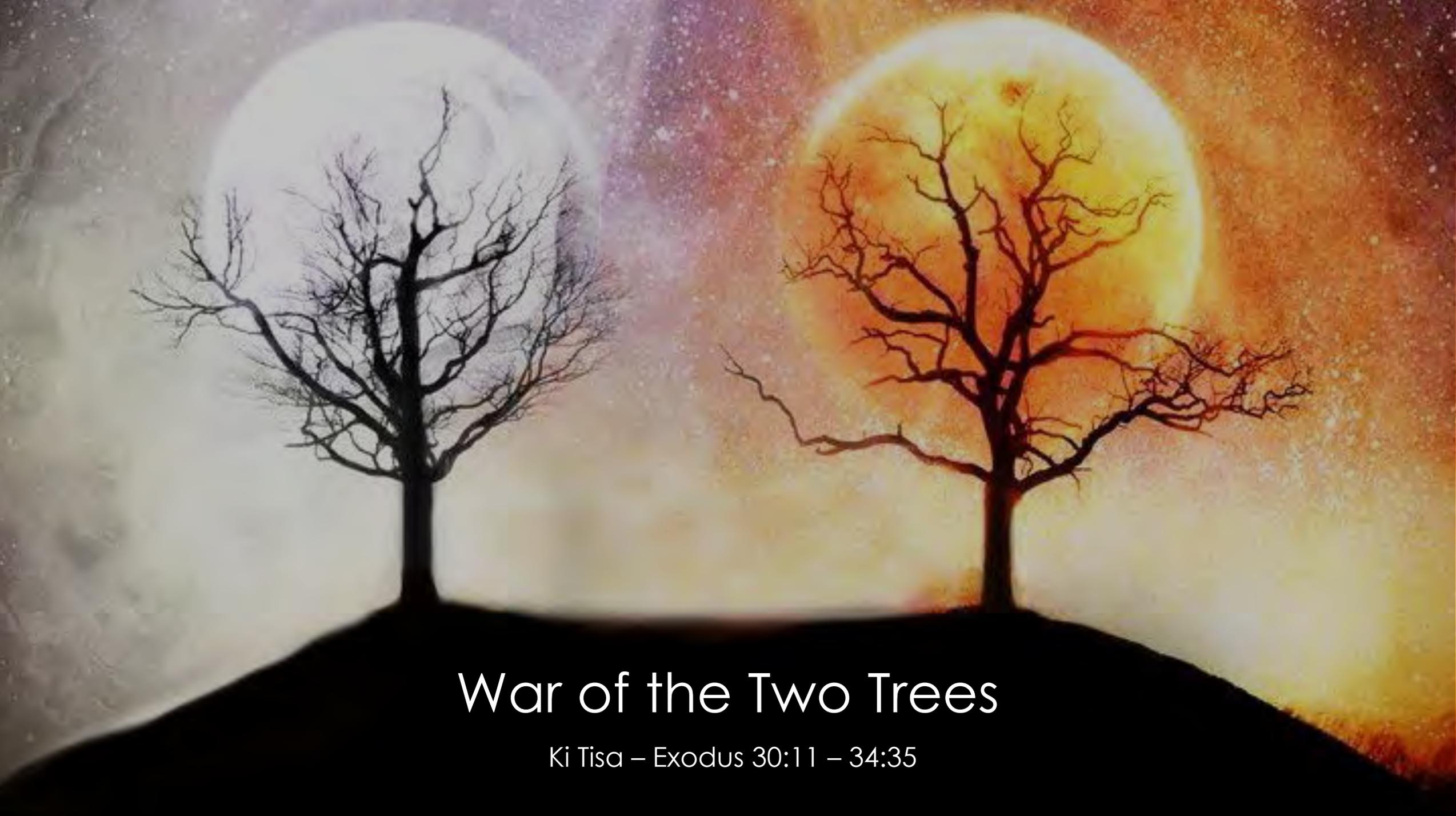


# What are we supposed to do?

- Cut down the Asherim
  - Break down the graven images
  - Humble ourselves
  - Don't seek godhood by creating our own torah
- 



Which tree will you follow?



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