



Nimrod: Mightiest Of Hunters

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With gratitude from David and Chani Klein; learning about villains like Nimrod is also Torah

1. Bereishit 10:6-12, Page 20-21 in the Artscroll Stone Tanach
2. Bereishit 17:1, Page 32-33 in the Artscroll Stone Tanach
3. Shoftim 6:12, Page 596-597 in the Artscroll Stone Tanach
4. Ibn Ezra to Bereishit 10:9

לפני י"י – שהיה בונה מזבחות ומעלה אותם החיות עולות לשם.

“Before Hashem” – that he would build altars and sacrifice those animals [that he trapped] as elevation-offerings to Hashem

5. Bereishit 6:11, Page 14-15 in the Artscroll Stone Tanach
6. Bereishit 25:27, Page 58-59 in the Artscroll Stone Tanach
7. Ramban to Bereishit 10:9

הוא היה גבור ציד לפני י"י – צד דעתן של בריות בפיו, ומטען למרוד במקום. על כן יאמר על כל אדם מרשיע בעזות פנים, ויודע רבונו ומתכוין למרוד בו, 'אמר: זה כנמרוד. לשון רש"י. וכן דעת רבותינו (בבלי עירובין נ"ג). ורבי אברהם פירש הפך הענין על דרך פשוטו, כי הוא החל להיות גבור על החיות לצוד אותן, ופירש לפני י"י – שהיה בונה מזבחות, ומעלה את החיות לעולה לפני השם. ואין דבריו נראין, והנה הוא מצדיק רשע, כי רבותינו ידעו רשעו בקבלה.

“He was a mighty hunter before Hashem” – He trapped the minds of people using his words, misleading them to rebel against Hashem. Therefore it shall be said about anyone who is wicked and brazen, and who knows his Master and purposely rebels against Him "This man is like Nimrod". These are the words of Rashi, and so say the Rabbis (Talmud Bavli Eirubin 53a). And Rabbi Avraham [Ibn Ezra] explained the opposite of this idea based on the simple meaning: “he began to be a mighty one” over the animals to trap them, and he explained “before Hashem” that he would build altars and sacrifice those animals [that he trapped] as elevation-offerings before Hashem. And his words do not seem acceptable, behold, he is making an evil person righteous, as our Rabbis knew his evil nature through tradition.

8. Bereishit Rabbah 38:13 (Sefaria Community Translation)

"And Haran died in the presence of his father Terah" (Gen. 11:28). Rabbi Hiyya the grandson of Rabbi Adda of Yaffo [said]: Terah was a worshipper of idols. One time he had to travel to a place, and he left Abraham in charge of his store. When a man would come in to buy [idols], Abraham would ask: How old are you? They would reply: fifty or sixty. Abraham would then respond: Woe to him who is sixty years old and worships something made today - the customer would be embarrassed, and would leave. A woman entered carrying a dish full of flour. She said to him: this is for you, offer it before them. Abraham took a club in his hands and broke all of the idols, and placed the club in the hands of the biggest idol. When his father returned, he asked: who did all of this? Abraham replied: I can't hide it from you - a woman came carrying a dish of flour and told me to offer it before them. I did, and one of them said 'I will eat it first,' and another said 'I will eat it first.' The biggest one

ונימת הָרָן עַל פְּנֵי תֵרַח אָבִיו (בראשית י"א, כח), רַבִּי חֵיָא בַר בְּרִיָה דְרַב אֲדָא דִּיפּוֹ, תֵרַח עוֹבֵד צִלְמִים הָיָה, חַד זְמַן נָפִיק לְאַתְרָא, הוֹשִׁיב לְאַבְרָהָם מוֹכֵר תַּחְתָּיו. הָיָה אֲתֵי בַר אִינֶשׁ בְּעֵי דִינְבוֹ, וְהָיָה אָמַר לֵיה בַר כַּמָּה שְׁנֵין אַתָּה, וְהָיָה אָמַר לֵיה בַר תַּמְשִׁין אוֹ שְׁתֵּין, וְהָיָה אָמַר לֵיה וַי לֵיה לַהֲוֵא גְבָרָא דִּיהָיָה בַר שְׁתֵּין וּבְעֵי לְמַסְגָּד לְבַר יוֹמֵי, וְהָיָה מִתְבַּשֵּׁל וְהוֹלֵךְ לוֹ. חַד זְמַן אָתָּא חַד אֲתָתָא טְעִינָא בִידָהּ חֲדָא פִּינְדָא דְסֻלַּת, אָמְרָה לֵיה הָא לָךְ קָרִיב קְדָמִיהוֹן, קָם נְסִיב בּוּקְלָסָא בִידָהּ, וְתַבְרִיגוֹן לְכֻלְהוֹן פְּסִילָא, וַיִּהֵב בּוּקְלָסָא בִידָהּ דְרַבָּה דִּיהָיָה בִינְיָהוֹן. פִּינְו דְאַתָּא אָבוּהָ אָמַר לֵיה מֵאָה עָבִיד לְהוֹן כְּדִין, אָמַר לֵיה מַה נְכַפּוֹר מִינְךָ אֲתָתָא חֲדָא אֲתָתָא טְעִינָא לֵיה חֲדָא פִּינְדָא דְסֻלַּת, וְאַמְרַת לֵי הָא לָךְ קָרִיב קְדָמִיהוֹן, קָרִיבָתָא

rose, took a club, and smashed the rest of them. Terah said: what, do you think you can trick me? They don't have cognition! Abraham said: Do your ears hear what your mouth is saying? Terah took Abraham and passed him off to [King] Nimrod. They said [to the king]: let us worship the fire. Abraham said to them: [rather] let us worship water, for it extinguishes fire. Nimrod agreed: let us worship water. Abraham continued: if so, let us worship the clouds, which provide water. Nimrod agreed: let us worship the clouds. Abraham continued: if so, let us worship the winds that scatter the clouds. Nimrod agreed: let us worship the winds. Abraham continued: if so, let us worship humans who are filled with wind [air]. Nimrod replied: You're just speaking words - I only worship fire. I will throw you into it, and the G-d you worship can save you from it. Haran was hidden and was of two minds, saying [to himself]: if Abraham is victorious, I will say I am with Abraham, and if Nimrod is victorious, I will say I am with Nimrod. When Abraham was through into the fiery furnace and saved, they asked him [Haran]: who are you with? He replied: I am with Abraham. They took him and threw him into the fire, and his insides burned up and he died before his father Terah, as it says: "And Haran died in the [lit.] on the face of his father Terah" (Gen. 11:28).

לְקַדְמֵיהוֹן הָיָה דִין אָמַר אֲנִי אֵיכוֹל קִדְמָאִי, וְדִין אָמַר אֲנִי אֵיכוֹל קִדְמָאִי, קָם הָדִין רַבָּה דְהֵנָּה בִּינֵיהוֹן נִסְבַּ בּוּקְלָסָא וְתַבְרִינּוּן. אָמַר לִיָּה מָה אַתָּה מַפְלָה בִּי, וְיִדְעִין אֵינּוּן. אָמַר לִיָּה וְלֹא יִשְׁמְעוּ אֲזַנֵּיהּ מַה שֶּׁפִּיָּה אֹמֵר. נִסְבִּיָּהּ וּמִסְרִיָּהּ לְנִמְרוֹד. אָמַר לִיָּה נִסְגוּד לְנוֹרָא, אָמַר לִיָּה אַבְרָהָם וְנִסְגוּד לְמִיָּא דְמִטְפִּין נוֹרָא. אָמַר לִיָּה נִמְרוֹד נִסְגוּד לְמִיָּא, אָמַר לִיָּה אִם כֵּן נִסְגוּד לְעֵנְנָא דְטַעֲמִין מִיָּא. אָמַר לִיָּה נִסְגוּד לְעֵנְנָא. אָמַר לִיָּה אִם כֵּן נִסְגוּד לְרוּחָא דְמִבְדַּר עֵנְנָא. אָמַר לִיָּה נִסְגוּד לְרוּחָא. אָמַר לִיָּה וְנִסְגוּד לְבַר אִינְשָׂא דְסָבִיל רוּחָא. אָמַר לִיָּה מְלִין אַתָּ מִשְׁתַּעֲי, אֲנִי אֵינִי מִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה אֶלָּא לְאוּר, הָרִי אֲנִי מִשְׁלִיכָךָ בְּתוֹכוֹ, וְיָבוֹא אֶלֹ-שְׂאֵתָה מִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה לוֹ וְיִצְלָךָ הַיְמָנוּ. הָיָה תַמָּן הָרִן קָאִים פְּלוּג, אָמַר מַה נִּפְשָׁךָ אִם נִצַּח אַבְרָהָם אֲנִי אָמַר מִן דְאַבְרָהָם אֲנִי וְאִם נִצַּח נִמְרוֹד אֲנִי אָמַר דְנִמְרוֹד אֲנִי. בִּינּוֹן שִׁירְד אַבְרָהָם לְכַבְשֵׁן הָאֵשׁ וְנִצַּל, אָמַרִין לִיָּה דְמֵאן אַתָּ. אָמַר לְהוֹן מִן אַבְרָהָם אֲנִי, נְטִלוּהוּ וְהַשְׁלִיכוּהוּ לְאוּר וְנִחְמְרוּ בְנֵי מַעִין, וְנִצַּח וּמַת עַל פְּנֵי תַרְחָ אָבִיו, הִדָּא הוּא דְכַתִּיב: וְיָמַת הָרִן עַל פְּנֵי תַרְחָ וְגו'.

9. Bereishit 14:1, Page 28-29 in the Artscroll Stone Tanach

10. Rashi to Bereishit 14:1

אמרפל – הוא נמרוד, שאמר לאברהם: פול לכבשן האש.

Amraphel – He is Nimrod who said to Avraham, "Plunge into the fiery furnace".

11. Sefer Hayashar/Book Of Jasher, 7:23-46, 27:1-10, 15-16 (Parry and Company translation)

23 And Cush the son of Ham, the son of Noah, took a wife in those days in his old age, and she bare a son, and they called his name Nimrod, saying, At that time the sons of men again began to rebel and transgress against God, and the child grew up, and his father loved him exceedingly, for he was the son of his old age. 24 And the garments of skin which God made for Adam and his wife, when they went out of the garden, were given to Cush. 25 For after the death of Adam and his wife, the garments were given to Enoch, the son of Jared, and when Enoch was taken up to God, he gave them to Methuselah, his son. 26 And at the death of Methuselah, Noah took them and brought them to the ark, and they were with him until he went out of the ark. 27 And in their going out, Ham stole those garments from Noah his father, and he took them and hid them from his brothers. 28 And when Ham begat his first born Cush, he gave him the garments in secret, and they were with Cush many days. 29 And Cush also concealed them from his sons and brothers, and when Cush had begotten Nimrod, he gave him those garments through his love for him, and Nimrod grew up, and when he was twenty years old he put on those garments. 30 And Nimrod became strong when he put on the garments, and God gave him might and strength, and he was a mighty hunter in the earth, yea, he was a mighty hunter in the field, and he hunted the animals and he built altars, and he offered upon them the animals before the Lord. 31 And Nimrod strengthened himself, and he rose up from amongst his brethren, and he fought the battles of his brethren against all their enemies round about. 32 And the Lord delivered all the enemies of his brethren in his hands, and God prospered him from time to time in his battles, and he reigned upon earth. 33 Therefore it became current in those days, when a man ushered forth those that he had trained up for battle, he would say to them, Like God did to Nimrod, who was a mighty hunter in the earth, and who succeeded in the battles that prevailed against his brethren, that he delivered them from the hands of their enemies, so may God strengthen

us and deliver us this day. 34 And when Nimrod was forty years old, at that time there was a war between his brethren and the children of Japheth, so that they were in the power of their enemies. 35 And Nimrod went forth at that time, and he assembled all the sons of Cush and their families, about four hundred and sixty men, and he hired also from some of his friends and acquaintances about eighty men, and he gave them their hire, and he went with them to battle, and when he was on the road, Nimrod strengthened the hearts of the people that went with him. 36 And he said to them, Do not fear, neither be alarmed, for all our enemies will be delivered into our hands, and you may do with them as you please. 37 And all the men that went were about five hundred, and they fought against their enemies, and they destroyed them, and subdued them, and Nimrod placed standing officers over them in their respective places. 38 And he took some of their children as security, and they were all servants to Nimrod and to his brethren, and Nimrod and all the people that were with him turned homeward. 39 And when Nimrod had joyfully returned from battle, after having conquered his enemies, all his brethren, together with those who knew him before, assembled to make him king over them, and they placed the regal crown upon his head. 40 And he set over his subjects and people, princes, judges, and rulers, as is the custom amongst kings. 41 And he placed Terah the son of Nahor the prince of his host, and he dignified him and elevated him above all his princes. 42 And whilst he was reigning according to his heart's desire, after having conquered all his enemies around, he advised with his counselors to build a city for his palace, and they did so. 43 And they found a large valley opposite to the east, and they built him a large and extensive city, and Nimrod called the name of the city that he built Shinar, for the Lord had vehemently shaken his enemies and destroyed them. 44 And Nimrod dwelt in Shinar, and he reigned securely, and he fought with his enemies and he subdued them, and he prospered in all his battles, and his kingdom became very great. 45 And all nations and tongues heard of his fame, and they gathered themselves to him, and they bowed down to the earth, and they brought him offerings, and he became their lord and king, and they all dwelt with him in the city at Shinar, and Nimrod reigned in the earth over all the sons of Noah, and they were all under his power and counsel. 46 And all the earth was of one tongue and words of union, but Nimrod did not go in the ways of the Lord, and he was more wicked than all the men that were before him, from the days of the flood until those days.

1 And Esau at that time, after the death of Abraham, frequently went in the field to hunt. 2 And Nimrod king of Babel, the same was Amraphel, also frequently went with his mighty men to hunt in the field, and to walk about with his men in the cool of the day. 3 And Nimrod was observing Esau all the days, for a jealousy was formed in the heart of Nimrod against Esau all the days. 4 And on a certain day Esau went in the field to hunt, and he found Nimrod walking in the wilderness with his two men. 5 And all his mighty men and his people were with him in the wilderness, but they removed at a distance from him, and they went from him in different directions to hunt, and Esau concealed himself for Nimrod, and he lurked for him in the wilderness. 6 And Nimrod and his men that were with him did not know him, and Nimrod and his men frequently walked about in the field at the cool of the day, and to know where his men were hunting in the field. 7 And Nimrod and two of his men that were with him came to the place where they were, when Esau started suddenly from his lurking place, and drew his sword, and hastened and ran to Nimrod and cut off his head. 8 And Esau fought a desperate fight with the two men that were with Nimrod, and when they called out to him, Esau turned to them and smote them to death with his sword. 9 And all the mighty men of Nimrod, who had left him to go to the wilderness, heard the cry at a distance, and they knew the voices of those two men, and they ran to know the cause of it, when they found their king and the two men that were with him lying dead in the wilderness. 10 And when Esau saw the mighty men of Nimrod coming at a distance, he fled, and thereby escaped; and Esau took the valuable garments of Nimrod, which Nimrod's father had bequeathed to Nimrod, and with which Nimrod prevailed over the whole land, and he ran and concealed them in his house... 15 And when Nimrod the son of Cush died, his men lifted him up and brought him in consternation, and buried him in his city, and all the days that Nimrod lived were two hundred and fifteen years and he died. 16 And the days that Nimrod reigned upon the people of the land were one hundred and eighty-five years; and Nimrod died by the sword of Esau in shame and contempt, and the seed of Abraham caused his death as he had seen in his dream.