

# PARASHAT KITAVO

(WHEN YOU COME)

DEUTERONOMY 26:1-29:8[9]

## ETZ CHAYEEM HOO (HE IS A TREE OF LIFE)

**Y**eshua is a tree of life to those who take hold of Him, and those who support Him are praiseworthy. His ways are ways of pleasantness and all of His paths are shalom. Bring us back YHVH to You, and we shall come, renew our days as of old.

As we begin to study the Torah let us never forget that YESHUA THE MESSIAH is the Living Torah, the Torah-Word of Elohim made flesh. He is the way, the truth and the life — the Living Manna sent from heaven. Without Him living in our lives through the indwelling Presence of his Set-Apart/Kadosh Spirit (Who leads us into all truth and revelation) the Written Torah can become the dead letter of the law!

### Haftorah Reading

Isaiah 60:1-22

### B'rit Chadashah

On giving tithes and offerings: **Luke 6:38; 21:1-4; 2 Corinthians 9:1-15; 1 Timothy 5:17-18**

On Torah-obedience: **Matthew 5:17-19; John 14:15; Romans 3:31; 7:12,14; 1 John 2:3-6; Revelation 12:17; 14:12; 22:14**

On being a peculiar people and a set-apart (holy) nation: **Matthew 5:16; John 17:11,14; Philippians 2:15; Titus 2:14; 1 Peter 2:9,12**

On blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience: **Romans 1:18; 2:6-11; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Revelation 20:11-15; 22:11-15**

### Outline of This Week's Parashah (Torah Portion):

- 26:1 First Fruits of the Harvest Belong to YHVH
- 26:12 Confession Over the Tithes
- 26:16 An Intimate Relationship Between YHVH and His People Based on Obedience
- 27:1 The New Generation of Israelites Commits to Serve YHVH
- 27:11 Blessings to Be Pronounced from Mount Gerizim and Curses from Mount Ebal
- 28:3 The Blessings for Fulfilling YHVH's Torah Commandments
- 28:15 The Curses for Disobeying YHVH's Torah Commandments
- 29:1 Moses' Final Charge to the People: Obey YHVH and Be Blessed in All That You Do

### Study Questions for This Week's Midrash (Torah Discussion):

**1** **26:11**, *You shall rejoice*. Bringing one's tithes and offerings to YHVH is to be a joyful event since it is a reflection of our gratitude to him for abundantly blessing us. (Compare this verse with 2 Corinthians 9:6-11.) Giving to YHVH is a form of worship since it allows us to put our treasure where our heart is (Luke 12:34). Please join me in praying this prayer:

Father, help us to give to you out of the abundance of our hearts joyfully and with gratitude for your blessings and bounty in our lives. Help me not to be a fair-weather giver only, but to give out of obedience, even sacrificially, that we may learn to have faith in your promises of provision and to obey you no matter the circumstances. Amen.

(For a brief study on tithing and giving, please see my teaching entitled, “Is Tithing for Us Today?” which is available on our ministry website at <http://www.hoshanarabbah.org/pdfs/tithing.pdf>.)

- 2 **26:12**, *You shall give to the Levite, to the proselyte, to the orphan, and to the widow.* Throughout the Hebrew Scriptures (Tanakh), YHVH has a special place in his heart for the “underdogs” of society, as did Yeshua in his ministry. There are those, who through no fault of their own, and some due to their own faults, need help and extra grace and mercy. What is your attitude toward those who fall into this camp? What are you doing to help them?
- 3 Read **26:13–15**, which is the prayer that the tithing-payer is to pray upon bringing his tithe to YHVH. Tithing is to lead to prosperity, but for whom? Just the individual? Notice in verse 15 the wording: “bless your people Israel ...” The tithing-payer is praying for blessings not just upon himself, but upon the entire nation. What can we draw from this? Is there room for selfish prayers here? What happens when the whole community is tithing and everyone is praying for everyone else’s well-being and blessing?
- 4 Read **26:17–19**. *You have distinguished YHVH ... YHVH has distinguished you.* What does this mean? What is YHVH’s attitude toward Israel? What does the word *avouched* or *distinguished* (some translations read: *proclaimed* or *agreeing*) mean here? What is transpiring here with the people *distinguishing* YHVH and YHVH returning the action in verse 18? The resulting action is in verse 19.
- 5 **27:1–10**, Immediately upon crossing the Jordan and upon entering the Promised Land, YHVH instructed the Israelites to set up a stone monument containing the Torah and to construct an altar for burnt sacrifices. What is the significance of these and why was it so important that this be Israel’s first order of business upon entering the Land of Promise? Matthew Henry states in his commentary that the Word of YHVH (the Torah) and prayer (the altar) must always accompany each other. Discuss this and relate it to Psalms 51:16–19 and Hosea 6:6 and the believer’s spiritual walk. Also, why did YHVH command the Israelites to construct the altar of uncut and whole stones? To whom does this prophetically point? (Read Dan 2:35, 45; Ps 118:22; Matt 21:42; Luke 20:17.) The stones of the altar were rough and uncut. To whom does this point who became our Living (spiritual) Altar and Sacrifice? (See Isa 53:2.)
- 6 **27:1–10**, *Commanded the people saying.* YHVH required the Israelites to recite a “pledge of allegiance” affirming their commitment to him before entering the Land. What can we learn from this? Is this something we should do from time to time in our own spiritual walk: recite pledges of commitment to YHVH and set up spiritual markers or reference points in our lives as tokens of our allegiance to him to which we can harken back when the going gets tough? These are acts of the will that when done can engage the heart and stir up feelings of love, devotion and remembrance.
- 7 **27:2,4,8**, *Set up great stones.* On Mount Ebal on whole, un-cut stones, the Israelites were to write the Torah-law and then coat these stones with lime plaster. There they were told to build an altar where burnt and peace offerings were to be made. Why was Torah written on stones on Mount Ebal—the mountain of the cursings? Why not on Mount Gerizim, the mountain of blessing? Certainly this cannot mean that the Torah is a curse, for Paul calls it *kadosh* (holy), just and good in Romans 7:12. What could the stones represent? *Who* is the Chief Cornerstone, the Stone the builders rejected (Ps 118:22; Matt 21:42; Acts 4:11; Eph 2:20), and the stone cut without hands (Dan 2:34)? What was the purpose of these offerings and to whom do the burnt and peace offerings point? Could lime plaster represent robes of righteousness? Who is clothed in robes of righteousness once sins have been atoned for? Who was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities, had laid on him the iniquities of us all, and was made an offering for sin (Isa 53:5,6,10)? Who was the Living Torah, the Word of Elohim made flesh (John 1:1,14)? Who redeemed us from the curse of the law (Gal 3:13), which came upon us as a result of our sinning (sin is the violation of YHVH’s law, 1 John 3:4), bringing a death penalty upon us (the wages of sin is death, Rom 6:23)? Does it now make sense why the Torah and the altar were placed on Mount Ebal? It was another one of the many prophetic shadow pictures in the Torah pointing to the redemptive work of Yeshua at the cross. Does this strengthen your faith that Yeshua is indeed the Messiah, the Lamb of Elohim slain from the foundation of the earth? Who else could have fulfilled these prophecies?

- 8 27:11–16**, Christian author Matthew Henry in his commentary on this verse points out something very interesting that none of the Jewish Torah commentaries I have read mention: The six tribes appointed to read the blessings from Mount Gerizim were all children of free women (Leah and Rachel) while those, with the exception of Reuben (who had lost the right of primogenitor or firstborn status because of his affair with his father's handmaid, 1 Chron 5:1), appointed to read the curses from Mount Ebal were children of bondwomen (Bilhah and Zilpah). What are the spiritual implications of this? (Compare this with Paul's discussion of the free and bondwoman pertaining to Isaac and Ishmael in Galatians 4:21–31.) To which children do the promises of YHVH's material and spiritual blessing (namely, eternal life through Yeshua the Messiah) belong: those who are in bondage to or under the curses of the Torah-law because they walk in sin (which is the transgression of the law, see 1 John 3:4), or to those who walk in obedience to the Torah (i.e., in sinlessness or who walk in YHVH's instructions and teachings in righteousness)? This brings up yet another issue. Is the purpose of the Torah to simply condemn people, as is taught in some Christian circles, and to bring people into spiritual bondage, and beyond that, the Torah's only purpose is to point people to the cross after which it is to be discarded like an old rag? (For the answer, see the attached article at the end of this outline.)
- 9 27:11–28**, In these verses we find listed some of the blessings and cures for Torah obedience. Do you believe the Torah principles (spiritual truths) of blessing for obedience and curses for disobedience to YHVH's Word are for us today? If not why not? Does YHVH's character, truth or Word change? If these blessings are not being manifested in your life why might that be? Could it relate possibly to your level of Torah obedience and faith/trust level vis-à-vis YHVH and his Word? What changes could you make in your life that might place you in a more favorable position to receive his blessings rather than the curses?
- 10 27:15–18**, To the casual reader, the admonitions contained in these verses may seem to be arranged in a random order, but this is not the case. Consider the following: the prohibition against idolatry (verse 15) is juxtaposed with that of degrading one's parents (i.e., not honoring one's parents, or as Rabbi Hirsch puts it in his commentary, "who outwardly is respectful to his parents but inwardly considers himself vastly superior to them") along with trespassing against one's neighbor's property by removing his neighbor's boundary markers or landmarks. Now consider this: one who does not honor and fear YHVH but turns to idolatry (the first and second commandments) will not honor one's parents (the fifth commandment) (and vice versa) will likewise not honor the property of one's neighbor (including his neighbor's wife). Juxtaposed next to these commands is the prohibition against misleading a blind person (verse 18). This means that we should not take advantage of his blindness by advising him in a way beneficial to us and to his disadvantage. Juxtaposed to that is one who steals justice from another by perverting judgment against one who is weaker socially or financially or who is less informed at law than another thereby giving the advantage to the stronger (*ArtScroll Davis Edition Baal HaTurim Chumash/Devarim*, pp. 2126–2127). Can you see how each command is interrelated with all the others? Does this give one insight into the curious statement found in James 2:10? Now relate James 2:10 back to verse eight where the entire Torah-law can be summarized as the "royal law of love." As you review YHVH's list of prohibitions in Deuteronomy 27 can you see any other relationships between these juxtaposed concepts? Learning to exegete (draw truth out of) Scripture in this manner will yield a whole new level of spiritual revelation to the reader.
- 11 28:4 and 5–12**, *The fruit of your womb*: Please note that the blessings of children are mentioned before material blessings. What does this teach us about how YHVH views children and families? Is such a view reflected in the mores of our current society? Are those with large families more respected than those who have large homes, drive expensive cars and have high social positions?
- 12 28:15**, *To the voice of YHVH*. What is the voice of YHVH? Is his voice the voice that uttered the Torah at Mount Sinai? Is it the voice of his Spirit inside of you? Is it the voice of Yeshua as largely recorded in the red letters of the Apostolic Scriptures (NT), or is it the entire Word of Elohim called the Scriptures? If his voice is all of the above, then should any parts of it contradict with another? If we have a theology where one aspect of YHVH's voice contradicts with another what does that imply about the mind and nature of YHVH? There is a psychological term for this: schizophrenia. Now we would never dare label YHVH with this term, for to do so would be blasphemy, yet many of our religious beliefs almost seem to make YHVH into some-

thing that he is not, and we risk become an unwitting party to this if we subscribe to these false theologies. One thing is certain: YHVH is not a liar, nor does he ever contradict himself. If there seems to be a problem with inconsistency in YHVH's Word the problem is with our *mis*understanding or *mis*interpretation of it, and NOT with the actual Word or voice of YHVH!

**13** **28:15–68**, Read the punishment for Torah disobedience listed in chapter 28. Are these curses coming upon America as its political leaders enact legislation and its judicial leaders make legal rulings that help to turn us away from our historic Judaic-Christian heritage, while at the same time America's religious leaders say little or nothing against this trend? You and I do not have a large voice in this nation, though we have a small voice. What can we do to help turn the spiritual tide? What are you doing to be the salt and light in this society that Yeshua has called you to be with regard to keeping YHVH's Torah commands?

**14** **28:47**, YHVH states that ungratefulness for the blessings he has given us and failure to obey him out of a joyful and glad heart will bring curses on us. Reflect on this. How much time each day do you spend thanking him for his blessings in your life? When you get up in the morning? Every time you eat? At noonday do you stop to praise him, as David did? Before you go to sleep? Not only is doing so a form of worship, but such a heart attitude and orientation helps us to keep our focus continually upon him so that we will forget not all his benefits (Ps 103:2) and fall into a state of hardened heart and forgetfulness (Deut 29:2–4). Israel forgot what YHVH had done for them, which led to their disobedience, faithlessness and explains why the older generation was not allowed to enter the Promised Land. Will we learn from their examples (1 Cor 10:11)?

## WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE TORAH?

(Excerpted from a larger work by Ya'acov Natan Lawrence entitled, *YHVH's Instructions In Righteousness—A Messianic Believer's Introduction to the Torah* available online at <http://www.hoshanarabbah.org/pdfs/torahprimer.pdf>)

The purpose of the Torah is to show man how to walk in right relationship (or righteousness) with his Creator. To do this, we must love YHVH with all our heart, soul, mind and strength (Deut 6:5; Mark 12:30) and love our neighbor as ourself (Lev 19:18; Mark 12:30). Once one is saved by grace through faith (See my teaching article entitled: *The Abrahamic Covenant: The Covenant of Salvation*, available at <http://www.hoshanarabbah.org/pdfs/abracov.pdf>), Torah helps show man how to walk in the straight and narrow path that leads to blessings and life and avoids the curses of the law (Deut 30:15; 32:47). The Torah shows man how to avoid sin (which is the violation of YHVH's Torah-commandments, 1 John 3:4), which is walking contrary to YHVH's instructions in righteousness that are for our blessing and benefit.

The Torah *does not* set an impossible standard by which to live. We must ask ourselves, would a righteous and just Creator and a loving Heavenly Father give to his chosen people and children a set of standards that were humanly impossible to perform, and then curse them for their inability to meet these standards? Of course not! Rather, the Torah (including both the Abrahamic and Mosaic Covenants) sets a standard of faith, trusting in Elohim, and of following its system of repentance and sacrifice for obtaining forgiveness from Elohim and restoring a condition of being considered righteous in his sight. After all, Moses, the human instrument through whom YHVH revealed the Torah to the Children of Israel, states in Deuteronomy 30:11–14:

For this [Torah] commandment which I command you this day, it is not hidden from you, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that you should say, "Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it?" Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, "Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it?" But the word is very near unto you, in your mouth, and in your heart, that you may do it.

Paul quotes this very passage in Romans 10:6–8 where he relates the written Torah to Yeshua, the Living Torah or Word of Elohim incarnate (in the flesh, see John 1:1,14). He shows that they are one in the same and that Messiah Yeshua came to live and reveal to us the righteousness of the Torah-law (verse 4) that is available to us if we will but have a heartfelt faith in him (verses 4, 9–10) and allow him to live out his righteousness in us through the empowering work of the Spirit of Elohim. In verses 11 through 21, Paul goes on to relate this very truth to being

the central message of the gospel that Isaiah prophesied (Isa 52:7) would be preached to redeem both houses of Israel to Yeshua their Messiah.

It might be said that in a sense that the Torah itself is neutral; neither positive nor negative, for it is like a mirror simply reflecting the image portrayed in it. Torah reacts according to human action. Those who obey it are blessed and those who disobey it are cursed. David Stern in his *Jewish New Testament Commentary* lists both some of the “negative” and some of the positive functions of the Torah. On the “negative” side:

- 1) The Torah has the capacity to stir up sin in an individual. This capacity of the Torah to make us sin is not a fault in the Torah but a fault in ourselves. A healthy person thrives in an environment deadly to someone who is ill; likewise, the Torah, beneficial to a believer living by faith, is an instrument of death to these controlled by their sinful nature (p. 375).
- 2) The Torah can still produce guilt feelings in a believer—as it rightly should whenever he contemplates how his behavior falls short of the standard Elohim sets in the Torah. But these feelings are not irremediable. The remedy is once-and-for-all trust in Yeshua the Messiah’s final atonement for sin (Rom 3:21–26), followed by ongoing confession of and repentance from sins (1John 1:9) (Ibid.).
- 3) The Torah also provides a framework of justice by which Elohim, the Just Judge of the universe, will judge the actions of men to determine both their level of punishment for its violation and their level of reward for obedience to it.
- 4) Because of the righteous standards the Torah sets out, for the sinner it points out the fact that they have sinned and how far they have fallen short of the glory of YHVH (Rom 3:23) and hence their need for a Savior or Redeemer. The Torah actually points the way to Yeshua as Paul points out in the book of Galatians (3:25).

On the positive side:

- 1) The Torah provides a framework of grace in which one can live. As Stern points out, YHVH’s people are to live “within the framework of” Torah, but they are not to be “in subjection to” [or *under*] the Torah in a legalistic fashion. YHVH’s giving of the Torah was in itself an act of grace that the Renewed Covenant (NT) compares with his sending Yeshua (John 1:17) (Ibid., p. 374). Ariel Berkowitz, in his book, *Torah Rediscovered*, states it this way, “[Torah] function[s] as a protective border for the people of [Elohim].” He goes on to show that there are two opposing spiritual realities in the universe: the kingdom of light (YHVH’s kingdom) and the kingdom of darkness (Satan’s kingdom). Torah acts as a protective border to keep those wanting to abide in the kingdom of light/life/blessing/relationship with YHVH safe and secure. The Torah tells us what is truth as opposed to error, light as opposed to darkness, clean as opposed to unclean, holy (*kadosh* or set-apart) as opposed to profane or polluted, life as opposed to death (pp. 26–27).
- 2) The Torah, as understood and applied through the Spirit, thereby gives life in union with Messiah (Stern, p. 381).
- 3) Obeying the Torah brings us eternal rewards (not eternal life, which is by grace through faith alone, see Eph 2:8) in the world to come (Matt 5:19).
- 4) Obeying the Torah helps deepen a loving and intimate relationship with YHVH-Yeshua and helps us to abide in Yeshua (John 14:15; 1John 2:3–6).
- 5) Obeying the Torah helps us to stay spiritually pure (1John 3:3–6).
- 6) Obeying the Torah protects us from the influence of the devil (1John 3:8).
- 7) Obeying the Torah-Word of YHVH helps to perfect YHVH-Yeshua’s love in us (1John 3:6).

## HAFTORAH READING — ISAIAH 60:1-22

### The Millennium and Heaven on Earth

Read Isaiah 60. How many of the prophecies contained in this chapter have been fulfilled? Can you think of any time in Israel's troubled history when the blessed promises of Isaiah 60 had been fulfilled in any kind of a meaningful way? The answer to all of these questions is obviously, no! If YHVH's Word is true, then a time is yet to come when these prophecies will become a reality. These prophecies will be fulfilled during the Millennium and in the New Heaven and the New Earth when the New Jerusalem comes down from heaven (or "heaven on earth," see Rev 21 and 22).

### What Scripture Says About the Messianic Era or Millennium

- ☞ The Millennium or Messianic Era lasts for a 1000 years. (Rev 20:2-7)
- ☞ The regathering back into the land of Israel (the Promised Land) of Israelites who have been scattered throughout the earth in fulfillment of YHVH's promises to Abraham is to occur. (Jer 32:36-38; Isa 14:1-2; Isa 60: 4, 9)
- ☞ Ancient Israel entering the Promised Land is a type of believers entering into the Millennium. (Heb 3-4)
- ☞ During the Millennium the following is to occur:
  - Elohim will live with his people. (Ezek 37:26-28)
  - David will rule as King over Israel. (Ezek 37:24-25)
  - YHVH's annual feasts will be kept by all people. (Ezek 46:3-6; cf Col 2,16-17)
  - YHVH's government will be established on Mount Zion in Jerusalem. Torah will go forth from Mount Zion and the nations will go up to Mount Zion to worship YHVH in the house (temple) of YHVH. (Mic 4:1-2)
  - A highway of YHVH, or a highway of holiness will lead to Zion. (Isa 35:8-10)
  - Whether literal or spiritual, living waters will flow from Jerusalem and Yeshua's throne. In Ezekiel's vision, water was flowing from under the threshold of the temple toward the east. (Ezek 47:1; also Zech 14:8)
  - On the banks of this river, there were very many trees on each side. (Ezek. 47:6-9)
  - People will live to a very old age. (Isa 65:20)
  - Crowds of people will flock to Jerusalem. (Zech 2:1-4; Isa 49:14)
  - The temple in Jerusalem will be rebuilt. (Zech 6:15; 14:20-21; Hag 2:6-9)
  - The Messiah will be king over the whole world. (Zech 6:9-13; Isa 11:1-5; Rev 20:6; 5:9-10)
  - The nations that do not want to serve and obey YHVH will be destroyed. (Isa 60:12; Zech 14:16-19; Isa 9:5-7)

The Millennium is the fulfillment of all prophecies/promises for the people of Israel (including the "church"). Many Christians see the Millennium as the place where the righteous Israelites (i.e. Jews) will reign with Messiah while the believers will be reigning spiritually in heaven. In other words, the Jews have a physical inheritance or kingdom on this earth, while the believers (the Christians) have a spiritual inheritance and kingdom in heaven. For those who believe this way, the Millennium is a symbolic metaphor for heaven.

For those who believe that the Millennium is merely a symbolic metaphor, the 70 or so Scriptures in the Tanakh dealing with the Messianic Age are assigned to the "church." To interpret Scripture in this manner is a form of spiritualization of the *peshat* or plain meaning of these prophecies and a form of replacement theology where the church as replaced the Jewish people. Much of this confusion stems from not knowing who Israel is as opposed to the Jews (descended primarily from the tribe of Judah, which is only one of the twelve tribes of Israel).

In this work, we take literally the words of Yeshua when he said that the meek would inherit *the earth* (Matt 5:5), *not* heaven. For us, this means that YHVH's people, the saints, made up of both the Jews and those of the nations who combine in Yeshua to become the one new man and nation of Israel (Eph 2:11-19) and part

of the olive tree of Israel (Rom 11:17ff), and are the seed of Abraham (Rom 4:16; 9:8–11; Gal 3:7, 8, 14, 28–29). These people will rule with Yeshua as kings and priests in his kingdom on earth for a thousand years (Rev 1:6; 5:10).

*(You will find the rest of this teaching article on the Millennium and the kingdom of Elohim at <http://www.hoshanarabbah.org/pdfs/millennium.pdf>.)*

