

# PARASHAT NITZVAIM

(STANDING)

DEUTERONOMY 29:9(10)-30:20

## 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 61:10-63:9

### B'rit Chadashah

On the curses written in this book: **Revelation 22:18-20**

On blotting out one's name: **Revelation 3:5**

On forsaking YHVH's covenants: **Hebrews 8:7-12**

On serving other gods: **Romans 1:18-25**

On circumcision of the heart: **Romans 2:28-29; Colossians 2:11**

Torah not too difficult to do: **Romans 10:6-8**

On hearing YHVH's voice: **John 10:1-5**

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

—**29:9(10)** Moses Has the Israelites Renew the Covenant Just Prior to His Death

—**29:15(16)** Moses Prophesies Israel's Eventual Fall into Idolatry

—**30:1** Moses Prophesies Israel's Eventual Repentance and Redemption

—**30:11** The Torah Is Not Beyond Man's Ability to Obey

—**30:15** Choose Torah ... Choose Life!

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

**1** **29:15**, *Not here with us today*. The Jewish rabbis teach that YHVH made his covenant with not only the Israelites present there that day but with all those who would live in the future. What are the implications of this with regard to your life? How does it impact what you do, how you act, your attitude and relationship with your Maker to know that covenants were made 3500 years ago that have a bearing on our lives today as Messianic Israelites?

Some might question whether covenants made with one's forefathers are applicable to us today. If this is your case, then let us pose the following question: Did the founding fathers of America make laws more than 200 years ago (i.e., The Constitution) that are binding upon us today? If so, how much more applicable are covenants made by our forefathers 3500 years ago with YHVH upon us? Just because our

forefathers broke their covenant with YHVH does that free us to violate YHVH's laws?

But I am not an Israelite, so the covenants YHVH made with Israel are not binding upon me, one might aver. Well, who did Paul say that believers are? (Read Rom 4:16; 9:8; Gal 3:7,9,14,28–29.) And who are the ex-Gentiles that Paul talks about who were aliens to the covenants (plural, referring to the Abrahamic Covenant revealing the path to salvation, the Mosaic Covenant revealing the path of righteousness and the Renewed Covenant, which is the previous two covenants written on our spiritually circumcised hearts) of Israel, but have now been brought into the commonwealth of Israel through the work of Yeshua? (See Eph 2:11–19.)

- 2** **29:16–19**, As we pass through the spiritual wilderness of the world around us (verse 16) on our way to the Promised Land, how easy is it to justify our personal rebellion, our sinful habits, our lustful and materialistic thoughts on the basis of such rationalizations as, “Everyone around me is doing it,” or, “It feels like it’s okay to do,” or, “If it feels good, do it,” or “YHVH’s laws don’t apply to me ... that was for the people back then, not for us today,” or, “That’s not what the church I belong to teaches,” or, “Surely YHVH doesn’t expect us to keep his commandments ... they’re too hard to do ... we can’t really do all that stuff today,” or, “We’re under grace today ... that stuff has been done away ... Jesus fulfilled it ... nailed it to the cross,” etc. Do these statements square with YHVH’s words of truth? Do what you believe and practice square with his Word? Is YHVH looking for our excuses or our obedience? What did Yeshua say would be an identifying mark of those who would love him? (Read John 14:15.)
- 3** **29:20–28**, *Rooted them out of their land*. What was YHVH’s response to those who refused to obey him? Are some of the curses (i.e., the bad things happening to you now) in your life related to disobedience of his commandments (or YHVH’s instructions in righteousness) in the past or perhaps even now?
- 4** **29:28**, “This verse also alludes to the fate of [those Israelites] who had become so assimilated among other peoples that their [i.e., the Israelite’s] origins had become forgotten. When the final redemption comes, these hidden ones known only to [Elohim] will be reunited with the rest of the nation and be restored to the status of their forefathers” (*ArtScroll Stone Edition Chumash*, p. 1090). To whom is the author referring here? Who became assimilated among the peoples and forgot their origins? Who is it that Elohim will bring out of hiding from among the nations and reunite with the Jews (the tribe of Judah) in the end times during, what the Jews call, “the final redemption”? In Jewish thought, what is the “final redemption”? (For the answer, read Ezek 34:13; 36:24; Isa 56:8; Matt 24:29–44; Acts 1:6; 1 Cor 15:51–53; Rev 11:15–18.)
- 5** **29:28**, *Another land*. See comments below on the meaning of this phrase.
- 6** **30:1–5; 31:16**, Israel’s departure from her covenantal agreements with YHVH was assured. Moses prophesied it. But repentance (verse 2) was always an option—an open door of return back to right relationship with YHVH. Have you repented of straying from his Torah-commands whether out of ignorance or purposely?
- 7** **30:2**, *You will return unto YHVH*. The word *return* is *shuv*/שׁוּב, which means “to come back, turn back.” Bear in mind that one cannot turn back to what one never had in the first place. This prophecy says that those who YHVH has scattered because of their disobedience to his Torah-covenants will return to him. To whom is this referring? In Hosea 3:4–5, we find similar language:

For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an *ephod*, and without teraphim: afterward **shall the children of Israel return**, and seek YHVH their Elohim, and David their king; and shall fear YHVH and his goodness in the latter days. (emphasis added)

Relate this to Revelation 18:4 and Malachi 4:4–6 along with Jeremiah 16:19 (read verses 15–21 for context).

Let us not forget that, “Ideal repentance is motivated by the desire to return to [Elohim], not because one seeks to rid oneself of suffering, and benefit from Divine blessings” (*ArtScroll Stone Edition Chumash* p. 1091).

**8 30:3**, *From all the nations to which YHVH ... has scattered you.* Scripture records that the House of Israel (Ephraim) would be scattered over the face of the whole earth (Ezek 34:6,12; 36:19; 37:21; John 11:52). Deuteronomy 32:26 says, “I said, I would scatter them into the corners ...” The *ArtScroll Stone Edition Chumash* comments, “This refers to the exile of the Ten Tribes, who were scattered to an unknown place where they have never been heard from again.

On the phrase of the same verse, “I would make the remembrance of them to cease from among men. ...” the same *Chumash* states, “This is a reference to the exile of Judah and Benjamin, the Davidic kingdom from which today’s known Jews are descended.” It goes on to say that though nations would seek to destroy Israel entirely, YHVH would never allow Israel to become extinct or disappear. Israel’s perpetual existence is a constant reminder of YHVH’s plan and eventually Israel will thrive and fulfill YHVH’s intention for it (pp. 1105–1106).

Rabbi Hirsch in his commentary on the same verse translates the phrase, “I would scatter them into the corners ...” as, “I would relegate them into a corner ...,” and then says that the Hebrew here refers to the “extreme end of a surface, the side or corner ....” He, too, relates this fate to the Ten Tribes who would be scattered “to some distant corner of the world, where, left entirely to themselves, they could mature towards serious reflection and ultimate return to Me ...” (p. 650).

Some in the Messianic Movement deny that these Scripture passages pertain to the ten tribes of the Northern Kingdom of Israel and instead insist that they are speaking about Judah (the Jews) *only*. They insist that the return of the Jews to the land of Israel starting in 1948 is the fulfillment of these prophecies and the ten tribes of Israel are lost forever. Is this a correct understanding in light of the Scriptures and the Jewish rabbis interpretations of those Scriptures that states again and again that the ten tribes will return at the end of the age to be reunited with the Jews under the reign of Messiah Son of David (Ezek 37:15–28)?

**9 30:6**, *Circumcise your heart.* Obedience to YHVH is all about the heart, all about love and relationship between him and us. Are his commandments too difficult to keep? (See verses 11–14.) Ultimately obedience is about our making choices. What are those choices and what are both the long-term and short-term results of those choices? (Compare verses 29:27–28; 30:9,20 with 30:15–16, and relate this to what Yeshua told the rich, young ruler in Matthew 19:16–19.)

**10 30:11–14**, Does YHVH’s Torah set an impossible standard by which to live? If so, 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, then curse them for their inability to meet these standards? If this is not the case, then what is the Torah’s purpose in our lives? We believe that the Torah sets a standard of faith, trusting in Elohim, and that if followed it provides a system of repentance and sacrifice for obtaining forgiveness from Elohim and restoring a condition of being considered righteous in his sight.

Paul quotes this same Deuteronomy 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). (Compare with John 1:1,14.) He shows that they are one in the same and that Messiah Yeshua, through his life, came to reveal to man the righteousness of the Torah-law (Rom 10:4) that is available to us if we will but have a heartfelt faith in him (Rom 10:4,9–10) 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.

**11 30:19**, *Heaven and earth to bear witness against you.* We find this phrase used elsewhere in Scripture to denote a lack of obedience or awareness to the plans and purposes of YHVH on the part of his people (Deut 4:26; 30:19; 31:28; 32:1; Luke 19:40). Scripture says that in any legal matter a word is to be established only in the mouth of two or three witnesses (Num 35:30; Deut. 17:6; 19:15; Matt 18:16). Heaven and

earth are two witnesses against the people of YHVH for their disobedience to his covenants. What happens to these two witnesses *after* the Millennium (or Messianic Era) who (anthropomorphically speaking) have seen and heard all the sins of YHVH's people and when sin (after the white throne judgment of Rev 20:11–15) is once and for all expunged from the earth via the cleansing flames of the lake of fire? (See Rev 21:1.) Rabbi Hirsch in his commentary on this verse states that Elohim sends the warning first by means of heaven and earth, and if no notice be taken, uses them as his instruments for the ruin of the guilty ones, even as they are the agents of his blessings when we have made ourselves deserving of them by devotion to our duty (*The Pentateuch/Devarim*, p. 605). Recognizing that heaven and earth are agents of both YHVH's blessings and curses upon his people, it behooves us to take notice of the hurricanes, tornados, earthquakes, floods, droughts and other natural calamities that are striking our nation as we are increasingly heading down the path of moral and spiritual decay and perversion toward outright rebellion and wickedness.

## Additional Comments on Deuteronomy 29:28

### Israel to Be Lost Among the Gentiles

Deuteronomy 29:28 states, “And YHVH rooted them out of their land in anger, and in wrath, and in great indignation, and cast them into another land [Hebr., *eretz acheret*], as it is this day.” How did the ancient Jewish rabbis understand this passage?

### Rabbinic Commentary on this Verse

*b. Talmud, Yevamot 17a* (c. 500 C.E.) (*Soncino Talmud*, Soncino):

[T]hey had declared them [i.e., the ten tribes of Israel, see rabbinic footnote below]<sup>19</sup> to be perfect heathens [or gentiles]; as it is said in the Scriptures, “They have dealt treacherously against YHVH, for they have begotten strange children.”<sup>20</sup>

Rabbinic footnote on this passage states, “(19) The ten tribes; (20) Hos. 5:7.”

*ArtScroll Tanach Series Bereishis/Genesis* (an Orthodox Jewish commentary on Genesis) states, regarding Genesis 48:19, Orthodox Jewish sage of the Middle Ages, Ibn Ezra wrote:

Many nations will descend from him [Ephraim]. That is, the word, *fullness, melo*, connotes “abundance,” *the* phrase meaning: and his seed will become the abundance of the nations (*Neter; Karnei Or*)” (p. 2121). According to Radak [Rabbi Dovid Kimchi Torah scholar in the Middle Ages], “This refers to the Exile when the lands of others will be filled with his scattered descendants. See also Hosea 7:8: Ephraim shall be mingled among the nations (Ibid.).

### Eretz Arazreth: Hebrew For Another Land or New World (?) to Which Israel Migrated

The apocryphal book of 2 Esdras 13:40–45 (elsewhere known as The Fourth Book of Ezra; quoted from *Lange's Commentary*; bracketed phrases are from an alternate translation by James H. Charlesworth in his book entitled, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha—Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments*); *Two Esdras* is a Jewish work written near the beginning of the Christian era,

[T]hese are the ten tribes, which were carried [led] away prisoners out of their own land [into captivity] in the time of Josia[h] the king, whom Salmanasar king of Assyria led captive, and carried them over the river, and they were brought over into another land. But they took this counsel [formed this plan] amongst themselves, that they would leave the multitude of the heathen [nations], and go forth into a further country [a more distant region], where mankind never dwelt, that they might there keep their own statutes, which they had not kept in their own land. But they entered into Euphrates by the narrow passages of the river; for the Most High then wrought signs for them, and held still the waves [stopped the channels] of the river, till they had passed over. But through that country there was a long journey to make of a year and a half; and the same region is called Arazreth [Hebrew for “another land”].

*Azareth* or *another land* is a reference to the prophecy in Deuteronomy 29:28 that states, “And YHVH rooted

them out of their land in anger, and in wrath, and in great indignation, and cast them into another land [*Eretz Acheret*], as it is this day.” *Acheret* in the Hebrew means “another,” but also has the connotation of “new” such as “next year” (or in the *new year*, Gen 17:21), “another well” (Gen 26:21); “another man” (i.e., a new husband); and so on. Other Hebrew words for new include *chodesh* or *chadashah*, which can mean either “brand new” or “renewed” such as in *new moon*, *new heart*, or *new heaven and new earth*. Other Hebrew words found in Scripture referring to something *new* would be in reference to *new wine* or *new fruits*, which are unique Hebrew words which specifically describe those things and nothing else. The only other Hebrew word used in Scripture for *new* is *beriyah* and it is used once in Numbers 16:30 to describe the earth opening up to swallow Korah and his malcontents. The point of this brief word study is that *Eretz Acheret* can justifiably be translated into English as “new earth, or new world.” The term *New World* is a common historical reference to what geographical region? It was there that Scripture would seem to indicate that the Israelites would, in part, at least, be scattered and the Jewish writings of 2 Esdras 13:40-45 make reference to this land or *New World*.

(For a full treatment of this subject, see our teaching articles entitled, [“Scripture Prophecies the Return of the Lost Sheep of the House of Israel—What Scriptural, Linguistic, Secular Historical and Rabbinic Sources Reveal on the Subject”](#) and [“Is America in End-Time Bible Prophecy?”](#) These articles can be found on the “Teachings” page of the Hoshana Rabbah website at [www.hoshanarabbah.org](http://www.hoshanarabbah.org).)

## HAFTORAH READING — ISAIAH 61:10-63:9

### YHVH to Defeat Israel’s Enemies and to Give Israel’s Exiles Salvation

**1** **61:10**, *He has clothed me with garments of salvation ... robes of righteousness.* The Hebrew word for *salvation* is *Yesha* (Strong’s H3468), which forms the root for the word *yeshua* meaning “salvation,” which, of course is the derivation of the Messiah’s personal name, *Yeshua*. How does Scripture define the word *righteousness*? (For the brief answer, reference Ps 119:172.) We see in this verse an interplay between the concepts of being clothed in Messiah’s salvation and works of righteousness, which is Torah obedience. Now relate these two concepts to Ephesians 2:8–9, which describes how we are saved spiritually, and then to Ephesians 2:10, which describes the proof of our salvation.

Now let’s take the next step in our line of logic by turning to Revelation 12:17 and 14:12 to discover what are the identifying marks of the end-time saints. Now relate this to the robes of righteousness the bride of Yeshua will be wearing in Revelation 19:7–9 with special emphasis on verse 8. The KJV reads, “for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints,” while both the NIV and NAS read “righteous acts” for “righteousness.” What are the righteous acts of the saints? (Again read Ps 119:172 along with John 14:15 and 1 John 2:3–6. Now read 2 Pet 3:14; Eph 5:27; Heb 12:14; Matt 5:48 and John 12:48.) As a famous radio personality of our time likes to say, “Now go and do the right thing!”

**2** **62:2**, *The Gentiles shall see your righteousness.* Compare this verse with Isaiah 60:1–3. How will the heathens see your righteousness if you dress, act, speak, live like a heathen and follow the heathen religious customs and doctrines that have made their way into the church system? Remember (from point 1 above) how Scripture defines righteousness?

**3** **62:6**, *I have set watchmen upon your wall.* Who are these watchmen? (Read Isa 21:6,11,12; Ezek 3:17; 33:2,6,7; Hos 9:8.) What is the current state of many of the spiritual watchmen? (Read Isaiah 56:9–12 compared to John 10:7–13.) Other than guarding the sheep, what are the watchmen to be doing? Read Jeremiah 6:16–19 where we learn that they are to be turning YHVH’s people back to the ancient paths of YHVH’s instructions and precepts in righteousness—the Torah.

**4** **62:10**, *Lift up a standard.* The Hebrew word for *standard* is *nec*, pronounced *nace* (Strong’s H5251/TWOT 1379a) meaning “signal pole, banner, ensign, sign or sail.” According to *The Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, *nec* generally refers to “a rallying point or standard, which drew people together for some common action or for the communication of important information.” This usually happened at a high or conspicuous place within the camp or community. There, a signal pole, sometimes with a flag attached,

would be raised as a point of focus or object of hope. In Exodus 17:15, we discover that one of YHVH's covenant names is *YHVH-Nissi* or *YHVH Our Banner*. Isaiah prophetically declares that Yeshua, the Root of Jesse, would be "an ensign to the nations" (Isa 11:10) signifying the lifting up of Israel's messianic king around whom all men would gather (vol. 2, p. 583). In Isaiah 62:10–12, the prophet declares that a standard will be lifted up over the nations for the daughter of Zion (the land of Israel) signalling their return to Israel from the nations among which they have been scattered. What makes this end-time remnant of Israel *holy* (set-apart) and *redeemed*? What is this standard or rallying point that YHVH will lift up over the nations causing them to return to their land and spiritual roots? How is this being fulfilled today among YHVH's people?

**5** **63:1–6**, *Comes from Edom*. Who is Edom? Both Christian and Jewish Bible commentators see this passage referring to YHVH avenging Israel for Edom's perpetual hatred and persecution of Israel. The Jews relate Edom to not only the literal descendants of Esau, but use Edom as a metaphor for all those who have persecuted the Israelites down through the ages including the Babylonians, Greeks, Assyrians, Romans, and even the Germans. (Relate this passage to the parallel passages in Rev 14:14–20.) Even as Esau and his small army stood blocking the way of Jacob's return to the Promised Land in Genesis 32, so Edom will attempt to prevent Jacob's descendants from doing the same in the end days. How is this being fulfilled in the land of Israel today? Who is attempting to thwart Israel's every attempt to re-establish itself in its homeland today? Isaiah 63 shows us how YHVH will eventually deal with Edom for their antagonism against YHVH's people. Other Scriptures that deal with Edom's demise and punishment at YHVH's hands because of their perpetual hatred for Israel include Jeremiah 49:7–22; Ezekiel 25:12–14; 35 (entire chapter); 36:5 (where *Idumea* is another reference to *Edom*) Joel 3:19; Amos 1:6, 9, 11; 2:1; the entire Book of Obadiah, and Malachi 1:4.

**6** **63:9**, *The angel of his presence saved them*. This is another one of those short prophetic passages that could be easily passed over, but which is significant. The word *angel* is *malak* (*Strong's H4397*) meaning "messenger" or "representative" and can refer to both an earthly or human messenger, as well and a heavenly or divine/supernatural messenger. With regard to the latter, Scripture reveals that some are angelic messengers (e.g., Gen 19:1; Pss 91:11; 103:20), as well as a singular divine messenger who comes in the name of Elohim, from the Presence of Elohim acting as Elohim, and revealing himself to be Eohim, while presenting himself in humanesque form (e.g., Gen 22:11; 31:11; 48:16; Exod 3:2; 23:20, 23; etc.) The word *presence* in Isaiah 63:9 is *panyim* (*Strong's H6440*) meaning "face." To whom is this a reference? Compare Genesis 32:30 (*Peniel* means *face of El/God*) with Hosea 12:3–4. Most Christian Bible commentators see this *messenger* as a preincarnate appearance of Yeshua, which in theological terms is referred to as a *theophany*, or more specifically, a *Christophany*. In Isaiah 63:9, what does this Messenger from YHVH's Presence or face of Elohim do for Israel? Discuss the concepts of *salvation* and *redemption* relating this to the work of Yeshua the Messiah as revealed in the Apostolic Scriptures.

