

Shavua Tov



A Rood Awakening! Torah Commentary
By Glenn Mc Williams

Torah Portion: *Ekev*

בקע

“Because”

If only you listen to these laws, safeguarding and keeping them, then God your Lord will keep the covenant and love with which He made an oath to your fathers

Vehayah ekev tishme'un et hamishpatim ha'eleh ushmartem va'asitem otam veshamar Adonay Eloheycha lecha et-habrit ve'et-hachesed asher nishba la'avoteycha

Scripture for Study:

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 7:12 – 11:25

Haftarah Reading:

Yeshayahu (Isaiah) Isaiah 49:14 – 51:3

Exodus 2:10 And the child grew, and she brought him unto Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. And she called his name Moses: and she said, **Because** I drew him out of the water.

Exodus 3:1 Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father in law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of Elohim, even to Horeb. ²And the angel of YHWH appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. ³And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. ⁴And when YHWH saw that he turned aside to see, Elohim called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I. ⁵And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. ⁶Moreover He said, I am the Elohim of thy father, the Elohim of Abraham, the Elohim of Isaac, and the Elohim of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon Elohim. ⁷And YHWH said, I have surely seen the affliction of My people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; ⁸and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing

with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites.

There are times and seasons in our lives when the leading of the Holy Spirit takes us on a circuitous path to our destination. For a number of years I was baffled by the spiritual journey I found myself on. I was raised in a Christian family, my mother and grandmother being my Sunday school teachers. I was given my first King James Version Bible at the age of five. I attended the Lutheran church until the age of 15; then my family stopped attending church altogether. A few years later I began attending a little independent charismatic fellowship where the ember of love for YHWH and His Word was fanned into a consuming fire. A sense of calling ironically led me back to the Lutheran church with the desire to be a pastor. This led to me a Roman Catholic College and a job working at a Diocesan childcare facility.

During my college years this love of the Word and calling to serve Messiah was truly tested to the extreme. As a Religious Studies Major, I searched for the truth in comparative religions and the various sects of Christianity. Strangely it was Luther's sense of courage, rebellion, and reformation that I was drawn to. After wandering in the wilderness of college, the testing intensified at the Lutheran Seminary. After twenty years of service as a Lutheran pastor I felt the Holy Spirit calling me once again to leave the Lutheran Church and even Christianity, and live the Word of YHWH as written in the Torah and taught by Messiah.

As I searched for understanding and a source of income to support my family, I could not help but question the Holy One. If living and teaching the Torah was what YHWH wanted me to do from the beginning, then why was it necessary to take this scenic, spiritual route? The Holy One answered my prayers and showed me how He had prepared and equipped me to fulfill my calling in His service through the knowledge, experience, and wisdom gained in each of the various stages of my spiritual life. Now, as I am called upon to address the needs of those coming out of the Church and embracing a Torah-observant lifestyle, I realize how gracious YHWH was to patiently prepare and equip me to be a faithful servant in His kingdom. I believe that there is no such thing as wasted time or experience if we are willing to learn from it and consecrate it to the service of the kingdom of Messiah.

In the Scripture verses quoted above we likewise witness the circuitous path of the life of Moses. Born into slavery and under a death sentence from the moment of his birth, Moses' life took him from slavery to royalty, then to exile, and finally to the grand office of shepherd. And yet each one of these events and phases of Moses' life was orchestrated by the Holy One of Israel. By blood and parentage Moses was bound to the children of Israel. Through his adoption into the Egyptian royal family Moses learned about power and ruling over a people. As an exile he learned about survival in the wilderness, and as a shepherd Moses learned to lead with love, concern, compassion, and firmness. Now in the final days of his life and leadership Moses demonstrates all of these abilities in his dealings with the children of Israel as they prepare to enter the land of promise.

In our Torah portion this week we witness Moses' shepherding skills, fatherly instincts, and incredible love for YHWH'S mission for the children of Israel. Moses' desire to see YHWH'S plans and purposes fulfilled through Israel is rivaled only by his fear of the children of Israel's failure to understand or accept the unique honor, calling, and responsibility that has been

bestowed upon them. This desire and fear is clearly evident in Moses' every word as he addresses the children of Israel. In this address we witness Moses trying to encourage and exhort the children of Israel against faltering or failing. Once again we witness two very familiar themes in Moses' address.

The first of these themes is Moses' continual fear that this second generation will follow in the spirit and ways of their fathers, fearfully and stubbornly refusing to enter the land as commanded. Most of us are the products of our upbringing. Our faith is largely shaped by what our parents, grandparents, and resident culture taught us. Even today I find myself interacting with my children in the same fashion that my father interacted with me. For good or for bad, we often assimilate and imitate our parents. From birth we accept their beliefs and assumptions as being true and sound, especially where religious beliefs are concerned. This in a large way is the reason why the sins of the fathers are visited upon the children to the third and fourth generations.

Exodus 20:5 Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I YHWH thy Elohim am a jealous Elohim, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me.

Exodus 34:7 Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation.

Numbers 14:18 YHWH is longsuffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation.

Deuteronomy 5:9 Thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them: for I YHWH thy Elohim am a jealous Elohim, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me.

Unless freed from the constraint of the parents' assumptions, the children will tend to walk in the same spirit, assumptions, and ignorance as did their fathers. We may recall the words of the Gentiles, who in the end days will proclaim:

Jeremiah 16:19 O YHWH, my strength, and my fortress, and my refuge in the day of affliction, the Gentiles shall come unto Thee from the ends of the earth, and shall say, Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, and things wherein there is no profit.

If the fathers have inherited lies, they will pass lies on to their children. If the parents despise and reject the sovereignty of YHWH in their lives, the chances are great that the children will likewise despise and reject YHWH'S sovereignty in their lives. If the parents fail to believe or give thanks to the Holy One for their life and salvation, then it will be unlikely that the children will give thanks and honor to the Holy One. If the parents accept the *takanot*ⁱ and *ma'asim*ⁱⁱ of the Rabbis or the pagan insertions of the Bishops as authority for life and faith, it is most

probable that the children will do likewise. For this reason Moses' fear that the children of Israel would repeat the sins of their fathers is indeed justified.

From the beginning of his relationship with the children of Israel, Moses fought this spirit of unbelief and fear.

Exodus 3:13 And Moses said unto Elohim, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The Elohim of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is His name? what shall I say unto them?

Exodus 4:1 And Moses answered and said, But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice: for they will say, YHWH hath not appeared unto thee.

Exodus 4:8 And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe thee, neither hearken to the voice of the first sign, that they will believe the voice of the latter sign. ⁹And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe also these two signs, neither hearken unto thy voice, that thou shalt take of the water of the river, and pour it upon the dry land: and the water which thou takest out of the river shall become blood upon the dry land.

Exodus 5:19 And the officers of the children of Israel did see that they were in evil case, after it was said, Ye shall not diminish ought from your bricks of your daily task. ²⁰And they met Moses and Aaron, who stood in the way, as they came forth from Pharaoh: ²¹and they said unto them, YHWH look upon you, and judge; because ye have made our savour to be abhorred in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of his servants, to put a sword in their hand to slay us.

Exodus 6:9 And Moses spake so unto the children of Israel: but they hearkened not unto Moses for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage.

Exodus 13:17 And it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that Elohim led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for Elohim said, Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt.

The Torah goes on to tell us that this fear and unbelief on the part of the children of Israel caused them to test YHWH ten times in the wilderness.

Numbers 14:22 Because all those men which have seen My glory, and My miracles, which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tempted Me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to My voice.

The ten times of testing are as follows:

1. Exodus 14:11-12 - The children of Israel cry out in unbelief at the Yam Suph.ⁱⁱⁱ
2. Exodus 15:24 - The children of Israel complain about the bitter waters at Marah.
3. Exodus 16:3 - The children of Israel murmur about the lack of food.
4. Exodus 16:20 - The children of Israel leave manna overnight in spite of YHWH'S clear prohibition against doing so.

5. Exodus 16:27 – The children of Israel search for manna on the Sabbath again in spite of YHWH'S clear commandment to the contrary.
6. Exodus 17:2 – The children of Israel murmur for water at Rephidim.
7. Exodus 32:4 – The children of Israel build a golden calf.
8. Numbers 11:1 – The children of Israel complain and are smitten with fire.
9. Numbers 11:4-6 – The children of Israel complain about the manna.
10. Numbers 14:1-4 – The children of Israel believe the evil report of the spies.

There are numerous lessons to be learned from this reality, not the least of which is that seeing does not equate with believing. It was this inability or unwillingness to trust in the provision and promises of YHWH that caused the first generation who came out of Egypt to wander until they dropped in the wilderness. We should recognize how true this reality is. If we do not come to faith in the Holy One, then we too have condemned ourselves to wander from one vain pursuit or purchase to another, hoping to find meaning, joy, and life. If we refuse to believe, we too shall wander meaninglessly until we drop, always searching but never finding our peace and contentment. It would be wise to heed the words of Messiah as he spoke to his *talmid*^{iv} Thomas:

John 20:29 Yeshua saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.

The condemnation that fell upon this first generation that came out of Egypt was justified in that they had seen the numerous miracles, and yet still failed to believe or trust that YHWH was willing and able to fulfill all that He had promised them. We have seen in the previous portions how Moses fears that this generation will likewise fall prey to fear and unbelief. Moses' fear is most overtly revealed in his response to the request of Reuben and Gad to inherit land outside the prescribed boundaries of Israel.

Numbers 32:6 And Moses said unto the children of Gad and to the children of Reuben, Shall your brethren go to war, and shall ye sit here? ⁷And wherefore discourage ye the heart of the children of Israel from going over into the land which YHWH hath given them? ⁸Thus did your fathers, when I sent them from Kadeshbarnea to see the land. ⁹For when they went up unto the valley of Eshcol, and saw the land, they discouraged the heart of the children of Israel, that they should not go into the land which YHWH had given them. ¹⁰And YHWH'S anger was kindled the same time, and He sware, saying, ¹¹Surely none of the men that came up out of Egypt, from twenty years old and upward, shall see the land which I sware unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob; because they have not wholly followed Me: ¹²save Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite, and Joshua the son of Nun: for they have wholly followed YHWH. ¹³And YHWH'S anger was kindled against Israel, and He made them wander in the wilderness forty years, until all the generation, that had done evil in the sight of YHWH, was consumed. ¹⁴And, behold, ye are risen up in your fathers' stead, an increase of sinful men, to augment yet the fierce anger of YHWH toward Israel. ¹⁵For if ye turn away from after Him, He will yet again leave them in the wilderness; and ye shall destroy all this people.

Moses rehearses the sins of the first generation as well as his own sins before the hearing of the children of Israel in order that he may remind them of the dire consequences of disobedience.

Deuteronomy 1:25 *And they took of the fruit of the land in their hands, and brought it down unto us, and brought us word again, and said, It is a good land which YHWH our Elohim doth give us. ²⁶Notwithstanding ye would not go up, but rebelled against the commandment of YHWH your Elohim: ²⁷and ye murmured in your tents, and said, Because YHWH hated us, He hath brought us forth out of the land of Egypt, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us. ²⁸Whither shall we go up? Our brethren have discouraged our heart, saying, The people is greater and taller than we; the cities are great and walled up to heaven; and moreover we have seen the sons of the Anakims there.*

Deuteronomy 1:35 *Surely there shall not one of these men of this evil generation see that good land, which I sware to give unto your fathers.*

Deuteronomy 1:37 *Also YHWH was angry with me for your sakes, saying, Thou also shalt not go in thither.*

Deuteronomy 1:45 *And ye returned and wept before YHWH; but YHWH would not hearken to your voice, nor give ear unto you.*

Realizing that the apple doesn't fall far from the tree, Moses is sincerely concerned that the second generation would follow after their fathers and fearfully and faithlessly rebel, refusing to enter the land. Moses also clearly realizes that the possible greater danger to this second generation does not lie outside the land, but within it. While the first generation suffered the testings of oppression, slavery, and the poverty of the wilderness; constantly questioning the ability and willingness of the Creator to provide for their needs, protection and pleasures; the second generation would face the temptation of prosperity in the land. Thirteen times the Torah speaks of the land of Canaan as being a land flowing with milk and honey. Evidence and testimony of the abundance and fertility of the land was indeed brought back to the camp by the men sent to spy out the land.

Numbers 13:23 *And they came unto the brook of Eshcol, and cut down from thence a branch with one cluster of grapes, and they bare it between two upon a staff; and they brought of the pomegranates, and of the figs. ²⁴The place was called the brook Eshcol, because of the cluster of grapes which the children of Israel cut down from thence. ²⁵And they returned from searching of the land after forty days. ²⁶And they went and came to Moses, and to Aaron, and to all the congregation of the children of Israel, unto the wilderness of Paran, to Kadesh; and brought back word unto them, and unto all the congregation, and shewed them the fruit of the land. ²⁷And they told him, and said, We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it.*

In our portion this week Moses again reminds the children of Israel of the great, fertile, lush, and productive land that lies before them.

Deuteronomy 8:7 *For YHWH thy Elohim bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills; ⁸a land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil olive, and honey; ⁹a land*

wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack any thing in it; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass.

We must remember that the land the children of Israel are about to enter into is not an uninhabitable, barren wasteland, but a very productive and fertile land that is already inhabited. The promised land is the land of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, Jebusites, and Gergashites. It is these inhabitants that are in fact behind both of Moses' fears for the children of Israel. Lest we think YHWH cruel to drive people from their land in order to give it to His chosen people, the Torah reminds us what type of people they are. These are people who practice, promote, and teach incest, bestiality, homosexuality, prostitution, confusion, child sacrifice, human sacrifice, all manner of lewdness, and devil worship.^v Moses clearly states that YHWH has judged these people for defiling the land.

***Leviticus 18:24** Defile not ye yourselves in any of these things: for in all these the nations are defiled which I cast out before you: ²⁵and the land is defiled: therefore I do visit the iniquity thereof upon it, and the land itself vomiteth out her inhabitants. ²⁶Ye shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, and shall not commit any of these abominations; neither any of your own nation, nor any stranger that sojourneth among you: ²⁷(For all these abominations have the men of the land done, which were before you, and the land is defiled;) ²⁸that the land spue not you out also, when ye defile it, as it spued out the nations that were before you. ²⁹For whosoever shall commit any of these abominations, even the souls that commit them shall be cut off from among their people. ³⁰Therefore shall ye keep Mine ordinance, that ye commit not any one of these abominable customs, which were committed before you, and that ye defile not yourselves therein: I am YHWH your Elohim.*

***Deuteronomy 9:5** Not for thy righteousness, or for the uprightness of thine heart, dost thou go to possess their land: but for the wickedness of these nations YHWH thy Elohim doth drive them out from before thee, and that He may perform the word which YHWH sware unto thy fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.*

Thus Moses reminds the children of Israel that they have no reason to be afraid, for even though there are people already in the land who may seem to be greater, bigger, and mightier than they, still these pagan inhabitants are under the judgment of YHWH ELOHIM and will surely be spewed out of the land.

***Deuteronomy 7:17** If thou shalt say in thine heart, These nations are more than I; how can I dispossess them? ¹⁸Thou shalt not be afraid of them: but shalt well remember what YHWH thy Elohim did unto Pharaoh, and unto all Egypt; ¹⁹the great temptations which thine eyes saw, and the signs, and the wonders, and the mighty hand, and the stretched out arm, whereby YHWH thy Elohim brought thee out: so shall YHWH thy Elohim do unto all the people of whom thou art afraid. ²⁰Moreover YHWH thy Elohim will send the hornet among them, until they that are left, and hide themselves from thee, be destroyed. ²¹Thou shalt not be affrighted at them: for YHWH thy Elohim is among you, a mighty Elohim and terrible. ²²And YHWH thy Elohim will put out those nations before thee by little and little: thou mayest not consume them at once, lest the beasts of the field increase upon thee.*

Deuteronomy 9:1 Hear, O Israel: Thou art to pass over Jordan this day, to go in to possess nations greater and mightier than thyself, cities great and fenced up to heaven, ²a people great and tall, the children of the Anakims, whom thou knowest, and of whom thou hast heard say, Who can stand before the children of Anak! ³Understand therefore this day, that YHWH thy Elohim is He which goeth over before thee; as a consuming fire He shall destroy them, and He shall bring them down before thy face: so shalt thou drive them out, and destroy them quickly, as YHWH hath said unto thee.

Deuteronomy 11:23 Then will YHWH drive out all these nations from before you, and ye shall possess greater nations and mightier than yourselves. ²⁴Every place whereon the soles of your feet shall tread shall be yours: from the wilderness and Lebanon, from the river, the river Euphrates, even unto the uttermost sea shall your coast be. ²⁵There shall no man be able to stand before you: for YHWH your Elohim shall lay the fear of you and the dread of you upon all the land that ye shall tread upon, as He hath said unto you.

So it is that by positive enticement and promise of protection Moses seeks to remove fear from the children of Israel and build within them a desire to enter the land of promise. Once in the land, however, there will be new threats to the children of Israel. The greatest threat facing this second generation to come out of Egypt is not the Canaanites, Hittites, Hivites, Jebusites, Perizzites, Amorites, or even the sons of Anak, but forgetfulness! While the first generation wrestled with a fear of their enemies and an inability to trust YHWH, the second generation's greatest shortcoming would be trusting their enemies and failing to fear YHWH ELOHIM. Prophetically Moses warns the children of Israel to remember and not forget how they came to be in the land, why they are in the land, and by whose strength and mercy they remain in the land of promise. Twenty times in the book of Devarim Moses commands the children of Israel to remember and not forget who it was that brought them to the land and all they witnessed along the way.

Deuteronomy 4:9 Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons.

Deuteronomy 4:23 Take heed unto yourselves, lest ye forget the covenant of YHWH your Elohim, which He made with you, and make you a graven image, or the likeness of any thing, which YHWH thy Elohim hath forbidden thee.

Deuteronomy 5:15 And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that YHWH thy Elohim brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore YHWH thy Elohim commanded thee to keep the sabbath day.

Deuteronomy 6:12 Then beware lest thou forget YHWH, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.

Deuteronomy 7:18 Thou shalt not be afraid of them: but shalt well remember what YHWH thy Elohim did unto Pharaoh, and unto all Egypt.

Deuteronomy 8:2 And thou shalt remember all the way which YHWH thy Elohim led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep His commandments, or no.

Deuteronomy 8:11 Beware that thou forget not YHWH thy Elohim, in not keeping His commandments, and His judgments, and His statutes, which I command thee this day.

Deuteronomy 8:14 Then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget YHWH thy Elohim, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.

Deuteronomy 8:18 But thou shalt remember YHWH thy Elohim: for it is He that giveth thee power to get wealth, that He may establish His covenant which He sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day.

Deuteronomy 8:19 And it shall be, if thou do at all forget YHWH thy Elohim, and walk after other elohim, and serve them, and worship them, I testify against you this day that ye shall surely perish.

Deuteronomy 9:7 Remember, and forget not, how thou provokedst YHWH thy Elohim to wrath in the wilderness: from the day that thou didst depart out of the land of Egypt, until ye came unto this place, ye have been rebellious against YHWH.

Deuteronomy 15:15 And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt, and YHWH thy Elohim redeemed thee: therefore I command thee this thing to day.

Deuteronomy 16:3 Thou shalt eat no leavened bread with it; seven days shalt thou eat unleavened bread therewith, even the bread of affliction; for thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt in haste: that thou mayest remember the day when thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt all the days of thy life.

Deuteronomy 16:12 And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in Egypt: and thou shalt observe and do these statutes.

Deuteronomy 24:9 Remember what YHWH thy Elohim did unto Miriam by the way, after that ye were come forth out of Egypt.

Deuteronomy 24:18 But thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in Egypt, and YHWH thy Elohim redeemed thee thence: therefore I command thee to do this thing.

Deuteronomy 24:22 And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt: therefore I command thee to do this thing.

Deuteronomy 25:17 Remember what Amalek did unto thee by the way, when ye were come forth out of Egypt.

Deuteronomy 25:19 Therefore it shall be, when YHWH thy Elohim hath given thee rest from all thine enemies round about, in the land which YHWH thy Elohim giveth thee for

an inheritance to possess it, that thou shalt blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven; thou shalt not forget it.

Deuteronomy 32:7 Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations: ask thy father, and he will shew thee; thy elders, and they will tell thee.

The first temptation Moses addresses with the children of Israel is that of idolatry. Moses is concerned that when the children of Israel see all the pagan altars, shrines, and temples amidst the lushness of the fields, orchards, and gardens, they will forget that YHWH ELOHIM is responsible for all that they see and not the false elohim and devils worshipped by these condemned people. For this reason Israel is instructed to destroy every pagan altar, idol, and image in the land.

Deuteronomy 7:25 The graven images of their elohims shall ye burn with fire: thou shalt not desire the silver or gold that is on them, nor take it unto thee, lest thou be snared therein: for it is an abomination to YHWH thy Elohim. ²⁶Neither shalt thou bring an abomination into thine house, lest thou be a cursed thing like it: but thou shalt utterly detest it, and thou shalt utterly abhor it; for it is a cursed thing.

In the wilderness there were no other elohim to tempt Israel. It was only when they came in contact with the nations such as Midian and Moab that the children of Israel fell to the temptations of the lewd practices of these pagan idols.

Numbers 25:1 And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab. ²And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their elohim: and the people did eat, and bowed down to their elohim. ³And Israel joined himself unto Baalpeor: and the anger of YHWH was kindled against Israel.

In the wilderness the children of Israel were clear that it was YHWH who parted the sea, made the bitter water sweet, provided quail and manna, and protected them from spiders, snakes, scorpions, and the heat. In the wilderness the children of Israel learned to receive each day their daily bread from the Holy One. In the wilderness only YHWH spoke life into the children of Israel.

Deuteronomy 8:2 And thou shalt remember all the way which YHWH thy Elohim led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep His commandments, or no. ³And He humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that He might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of YHWH doth man live. ⁴Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot swell, these forty years.

Once the children of Israel would enter the land of plenty, they would have to learn how to provide for themselves. Israel would inherit vineyards, fields, orchards, and homes. The second great temptation facing the children of Israel in the land would be the delusion of self-sufficiency. Moses warns the children of Israel not to forget that it was YHWH who brought them this far and fed them along the way. Moses then goes on to command the children of

Israel that when they have eaten of the provision that they themselves have grown, they are still to bless YHWH who brought them to the land.

Deuteronomy 8:10 *When thou hast eaten and art full, then thou shalt bless YHWH thy Elohim for the good land which He hath given thee. ¹¹Beware that thou forget not YHWH thy Elohim, in not keeping His commandments, and His judgments, and His statutes, which I command thee this day: ¹²lest when thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly houses, and dwelt therein; ¹³and when thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied; ¹⁴then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget YHWH thy Elohim, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage; ¹⁵who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where there was no water; who brought thee forth water out of the rock of flint; ¹⁶who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not, that He might humble thee, and that He might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end; ¹⁷and thou say in thine heart, My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth. ¹⁸But thou shalt remember YHWH thy Elohim: for it is He that giveth thee power to get wealth, that He may establish His covenant which He sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day.*

Deuteronomy 9:4 *Speak not thou in thine heart, after that YHWH thy Elohim hath cast them out from before thee, saying, For my righteousness YHWH hath brought me in to possess this land: but for the wickedness of these nations YHWH doth drive them out from before thee. ⁵Not for thy righteousness, or for the uprightness of thine heart, dost thou go to possess their land: but for the wickedness of these nations YHWH thy Elohim doth drive them out from before thee, and that He may perform the word which YHWH sware unto thy fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.*

By blessing YHWH after we have eaten of the fruit of the land and by remembering where we have come from and how we have arrived where we are, we are reminded of who we are, whose we are, and what our purpose, calling, and mission in life are. By remembering that we are the children of Israel and the chosen of YHWH ELOHIM; by remembering that we are YHWH'S betrothed; and by remembering the phenomenal grace and mercy that has been shown to us; we are protected from the sin and blindness of arrogance, self-righteousness, and idolatry. These words are especially true for those of us living outside the land of Israel in a land of exile and religious diversity.

It is strange how soon we forget where we came from, or even where we now are. I hear so many in the Messianic/Hebrew Roots movement speaking with such arrogance since coming to this "new," Hebraic perspective of the Scriptures. I hear so many from the House of Israel bragging over their brothers in the House of Judah. Even worse is our attitude toward our brothers and sisters still lingering in fear in the Christian church. These criticisms include me. Yes, I too am often guilty of this arrogance and self-righteousness. Then I hear Moses' call to remember where I came from and how YHWH showed me mercy and grace to bring me this far. I remember that I am still in exile; a stranger to the land of promise. I am living in exile because of sin. I do not know the language of YHWH, and I am not sure how to pronounce the name of my Elohim or of my Messiah. I am the descendant of a stiff-necked people who forgot their Elohim. Now by the grace of YHWH, He is restoring His bride. Now we are being called

out of Egypt and Babylon and the four corners of the earth. We are being called out of exile. We are being prepared to live by the Word of YHWH alone. YHWH is revealing Himself again to His scattered ones. He is renewing His calling.

Deuteronomy 10:12 And now, Israel, what doth YHWH thy Elohim require of thee, but to fear YHWH thy Elohim, to walk in all His ways, and to love Him, and to serve YHWH thy Elohim with all thy heart and with all thy soul, ¹³to keep the commandments of YHWH, and His statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good? ¹⁴Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens is YHWH'S thy Elohim, the earth also, with all that therein is.

Let us not forget where YHWH found us; let us not forget how He called us; let us not forget what we have been called for; let us not forget who has brought us to this day; and let us not forget who our Elohim is – YHWH is our Elohim. Let us praise, honor, serve, and love YHWH with all of our hearts, souls, and beings. And let us show grace, mercy, and compassion to our brethren who have not yet heard the calling, who have not yet seen the light, and who are still living where we were once so comfortably rooted.

It is indeed tempting to point the finger at those living in Egypt and Babylon and boast of our great advancements. But in truth, most of us are still living in exile; most of us are only one or two steps away from where we started. Many of us have not yet “CROSSED OVER” into our identity as the children of Israel, instead of being “Christians” or “Jews” (as defined by the Rabbis). If we recognize that it is the Holy Spirit leading us, then we should utilize our past experience to gently lead and encourage others to look at their faith from a different perspective.

Moses did not return to Egypt and beat his brothers over the head with the revelation that he had received from YHWH; he spoke the promises, showed the signs, interceded on his face before the Sovereign One, and faithfully and patiently led the children of Israel out of bondage. The militant strength that Moses demonstrated was not with the children of Israel, but with Pharaoh the captor. Many who have come out of the Christian church or out of Rabbinic Judaism have paid a price to do so. Leaving family traditions and heritages is not always understood or easy. We must remember the journey that YHWH has lead us on that we may sanctify these experiences and utilize them in helping to encourage others to follow the Torah as taught by Messiah Yeshua.

We are called to love YHWH with all of our hearts, souls, and beings. This means that we should utilize all our experiences to serve YHWH ELOHIM and to encourage the spread of His reign upon the earth. When we come into our “understanding” we should not forget where we came from, how we got here, and who led us and provided for us the entire journey. Let us cleave unto YHWH our Elohim, put away all arrogance, and humbly give YHWH the honor and glory He so rightly deserves.

SHAVUA TOV!

ⁱ *Takanot* are enactments or rulings of the Rabbis

ⁱⁱ *Ma'asim* are rulings of the Rabbis based upon precedents

iii The Yam Suph is the Red Sea

iv Disciple

v Leviticus 17:7; 18:1-23; Deuteronomy 32:17