

Parasha 48: Shoftim (Judges)

D'varim/Deuteronomy 16:18-21:9

***All Scripture References from The Orthodox Jewish Bible- Referred to as OJB- unless otherwise noted**

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Now, in this week's parasha, we are moving further in Moshe's *'speech'* to Am Yisrael. Let us take a moment as we have been, to refresh ourselves on the breakdown of this *'speech'*. It will help keep us acclimated to where we are as we continue on in our study.

- 1) The Introduction- Chapters 1-4
- 2) The Main Body- Chapters 5-26
- 3) The ReNewed Covenant- Chapters 27-28
- 4) The Call To Repentance- Chapters 29-30

As you can see, we have just crossed the *'half-way point in this speech'*. Moshe is about to give instructions to Am Yisrael concerning the necessity of *'maintaining the structure of both civil order as well as spiritual order'*. The former, *'civil order'*, is a necessity in any society. Because Yisrael, as a nation, is governed under the *'theocratic government'* of YHWH, the *'spiritual aspects'* must also be included in the *'establishment of societal order'*. This combination will insure that *'justice is present'* in all spheres of Yisrael's life. The necessity of which, will become of *'central importance'* once they cross over and begin to *'possess'* The Land of their inheritance.

YHWH'S Demand For Justice

"Shofetim [Judges] and shoterim [officers] shalt thou appoint thee in all thy she'arim [gates], which Hashem Eloheicha [YHWH your Mighty One] giveth thee, throughout thy shevatim [tribes]: and they shall judge HaAm [The People] with mishpat-tzedek [righteous judgment]. Thou shalt not pervert mishpat [judgment]; thou shalt not show partiality, neither take a shochad [bribe]: for a bribe doth blind the eyes of the chachamim [wise], and twist the D'varim [words] of the tzaddikim [righteous]. Tzedek tzedek [Justice, justice] (that which is altogether just) shalt thou follow, that thou mayest live, and inherit ha'aretz [the land] which Hashem Eloheicha [YHWH your Mighty One] giveth thee." (D'varim/Deuteronomy 16:18-20 OJB- definitions mine)

You must remember that when Yisrael was in Mitzrayim/Egypt, they were not yet a recognized nation. They were simply known as the *'Hebrews'*. Once they were led by YHWH, through Moshe and Aharon, in exodus out of Mitzrayim/Egypt, they were brought to Choreb/Horeb/Mt. Sinai. There they received YHWH's Torah, the *'Aserim HaD'varim/Ten Words'*, which would also become their *'constitution'* as a nation. Now, standing on the banks of the Yarden/Jordan ready to cross over, this *'nation of Hebrews'* was about to receive their own Land. Once on the other side, it would be important to institute YHWH's directives for *'establishing justice'* for Yisrael as a *'nation'*. YHWH is a Mighty One of order, not confusion or anarchy. (1 Corinthians 14:33)

In verse 20 of our opening chapter 16 in this week's parasha, we find YHWH's call for 'justice'. He, in fact, does so 'twice in the Hebrew text'. It reads 'Tzedek... tzedek or Justice... justice'. This 'double emphasis' shows the importance that 'justice' be implemented within Yisrael as a society. Now, there are some translations that render this as 'righteousness'. However, there is a 'distinct difference' between justice and righteousness. They are related, but not the same. 'Righteousness' has to do with 'our standing before' YHWH. It is based on our 'relationship' provided by the 'blood of His **ONLY** begotten Son', our Mashiach Yeshua to YHWH. 'Justice' is what YHWH calls us to when it comes to 'dealing with our brothers and sisters', but also with those outside the believing community. Therefore, the call in verse 18 is for the 'appointment of shoftim/judges and also shoterim/officers' throughout the walled cities where each tribe would settle. The 'shoterim/officers' would relate to our 'police'. They were appointed to see that the 'mishpat-tzedek/righteous judgments' of the 'shoftim/judges' were enforced.

In our opening verse, YHWH instructed Am Yisrael to cause the 'shoftim/judges and shoterim/officers' to be set up at the 'city gates' to the walled cities. The 'gates of the city' was the 'place/seat of authority'. Here is where the 'legal issues and cases' were judged, rulings given, and sentences passed. With this in mind, we may understand with more clarity the words of our Master Yeshua to Kefa/Peter,

“And I also say to you that you are Shimon Kefa [Petros/Peter] and upon this TSUR [ROCK] I will build my Kehillah [Assembly], my Chavurah (the Community of Moshiach) and the shaarei Sheol (gates of Sheol/Hell) shall not overpower it.” (Mattityahu/Matthew 16:18 OJB-definitions mine)

The 'gates' in the above verse speak of the 'spiritual wicked principalities of the air' who seek to plot against the 'Kehillah/Assembly of YHWH'. (**Ephesians 6:12**) These 'powers of darkness' seek to 'resist the work of redemption' being carried out by the local assembly. The 'authority of YHWH will overcome' the counsels of these fallen angels and their shedim/demonic spirits who carry out their bidding. What is this 'Tsur/Rock' Master Yeshua is speaking of? In the verses preceding our verse above, there were many people giving their assessment of 'who' our Master was. Some said He was this navi/prophet. Some said He was that one. Finally, Master Yeshua asks his talmidim/disciples, 'who do you say I am?' He then asks Peter this same question. Immediately afterwards, if you were there you would have seen the 'change pass over Kefa's/Peter's face'. The light came on inside and he knew. **HE KNEW!** 'You are the Mashiach. Ben Elohim Chai (**Son of the Living Mighty One**)!' This **ROCK** wasn't Kefa/Peter or a 'something called church'. It was the 'operation of the giftings of YHWH through His HaRuach HaKodesh/The Spirit of His Holiness' known as a 'word of knowledge'. (**1 Corinthians 12:8-10**) This 'revelation knowledge' provided by Him to His talmidim/disciples is concerning 'events, people, places... etc.', not known previously. Our Master told Kefa/Peter, 'flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, it was my Abba who is in heaven!' This **ROCK**, 'revelation knowledge', will provide a 'fragmentary influx of information' about something either 'present or past' that will help those involved in the situation know how to handle it successfully. It will 'counter the scheming, premeditated plans of hellish intent' by Hasatan's ****[may his memory be blotted out forever]** principalities and powers. Their 'wicked counsels' **WILL NOT PREVAIL!** That 'fragmentary influx of knowledge' being revealed, at **JUST THE EXACT, RIGHT MOMENT**, will be what is needed to bring victory! These 'giftings and anointings' of YHWH's HaRuach Hakodesh/The Spirit of His Holiness are the promised **WEAPONS OF OUR WARFARE** provided to us. (**11 Corinthians 10:4**) YHWH doesn't expect us to enter a fight against 'supernaturally equipped adversaries' and **NOT BE EQUIPPED** at least on that same level or better. In fact, His provision is **GREATER** than any

weapon the ‘powers of darkness’ might ever have at their disposal. We are **MORE THAN CONQUERORS** through Him who loves us! (**Romans 8:37**)

Forbidding Using Pagan Ritualistic Artifacts

“Thou shalt not set up any tree as an Asherah near unto the Mizbe’ach [Altar] of Hashem Eloheicha [YHWH your Mighty One], which thou shalt make thee. Neither shalt thou set thee up any matzeivah (pillar); which Hashem Eloheicha [YHWH your Mighty One] hateth.” (D’varim/Deuteronomy 16:21-22 OJB- definitions mine)

The land of Cana’an, the seven nations and other peoples that lived there, was ‘steeped in the occult’. It was their proliferation with these ‘dark powers’ that ended up so deeply affecting their human conscience. So much so, that it ‘completely removed any rational ability to discern right from wrong or feel remorse for their depraved behavior’. So deeply had the ‘demonic affected the psyche’ of these nations that they even ‘offered their children in fire’ to these ‘*elohim acherim/strange mighty ones*’. Later, in our present parasha, YHWH warns Yisrael ‘not to learn the occult ways’ of these nations or practice their ‘dark methods of worship’ to their false mighty ones. It was for these very things that YHWH was about to ‘drive these nations out of The Land’.

“When thou art come into ha’aretz which Hashem Eloheicha [YHWH your Mighty One] giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to imitate the to’avot (abominations) of those Goyim [Nations].” (Devarim/Deuteronomy 18:9 OJB- definitions mine)

And...

“For all that do these things are a to’evot Hashem [abomination to YHWH]; and because of these to’evot [abominations], Hashem Eloheicha [YHWH your Mighty One] is about to drive them out before thee.” (D’varim/Deuteronomy 18:12 OJB- definitions mine)

The ‘*asherah*’ was a ‘wreath like ring’ that was placed over an upright pillar. The pillar, known as a ‘*Matzeivah*’ in Hebrew or ‘*Standing Pillar*’, was ‘intended to be a replica of the male sexual organ’. The ‘wreath’ was placed over the ‘pillar to simulate illicit sexual union’. All of these things find their origin in the ‘*Ba’alim a conglomerate of false mighty ones*’ which were worshipped by many different cultures of that time. The worship of ‘*Ba’al Peor*’ was one of the most powerful of these false mighty ones. The rituals involved were some of the most lurid, depraved practices imaginable. Though YHWH warned Yisrael ‘not to learn their ways’, the instruction went unheeded. Shortly after the ‘*northern house of Yisrael*’, Yosef-Ephraim, split from the ‘*southern house*’ of Yehudah/Judah under the reign of Yarob’am/Jereboam, he immediately led the ten tribes into gross ‘*Avodah Zarah/Strange Worship*’.

“And they forsook all the mitzvot [commandments] of Hashem Eloheihem [YHWH your Mighty One], and made them massekhah [molten images], even two agalim [calves], and made Asherah, and worshiped all the Tzava HaShomayim [Hosts of The Heavens], and served Ba’al.

And they caused their banim [sons] and their banot [daughters] to pass through the eish [fire], and practiced kesamim [divination] and practiced witchcraft, and sold themselves to do rah [evil] in the eyes of Hashem [YHWH], to provoke Him to anger.” (M’lekhim Beit/11 Kings 17:16-17 OJB- definitions mine)

This penchant for paganism, idolatry and sexual immorality is what eventually brought the *'house of Yosef-Ephraim'* into judgment from YHWH. Most of the *'northern house'* was taken captive into Assyria and *'stripped of their Hebraic identity'*. They were then *'assimilated'* into the Assyrian culture and finally *'scattered out among all the nations'*.

The *'southern house/Yehudah/Judah'* was not much better. They too ran after paganism, idolatry and sexual immorality. As a result, they too were *'taken into captivity into Babylon'* a little over a hundred years after the *'northern house'* was exiled. However, while exiled in Babylon for almost 70 years the *'house of Yehudah/Judah'* managed to *retain its culture and identity'*. At the end of that exile those Jewish captives were allowed to return to The Land of Yisrael. Sadly, only a remnant returned and began the rebuilding process of restoration.

Now, here is the sad thing. The *'church of Christendom'* has followed right after this same spirit. Many churches have the *'symbols of Ba'al'* on and around their buildings and property. The *'pointed steeple'* is a *'product of this same spirit'*. The *'obelisks, four cornered standing pillars'* can be found on many church properties. There is one of these pillars in front of St. Peter's Catholic Church in Rome. Even our very own country, the United States of America, has a famous pillar like this in Washington D.C. It is called the Washington Monument!

The Torah forbids these things. These *'pagan artifacts'* are not to be found anywhere close to the place YHWH would choose to set up His Mizbe'ach/Altar. There is to be **NO MIXTURE** between the *'holy and the profane'*.

By The Mouth Of Two Or Three Witnesses

"At the mouth of shneyim edim [two witnesses], or shloshah edim [three witnesses], shall he that is worthy of death be put to death; but at the mouth of ed echad (one witness) he shall not be put to death." (D'varim/Deuteronomy 17:6 OJB- definitions mine)

The Torah does permit capital punishment. However, the foremost concern is always the need to establish *'justice'*. Therefore, YHWH institutes a *'principle of witnesses'* that are necessary in order to determine guilt or innocence. There must be at least *'two or three witnesses'* involved in the process in order for *'capital punishment'* to be invoked. In the case here in our parasha, if a man or woman is found disobeying YHWH's instruction on going after *'elohim acherim/strange mighty ones'*, they may be charged for that offense. If the witnesses provide *'corroborating testimony'* that proves the charges were warranted, then the person charged could be put to death by stoning.

An important point to make here is, that the witnesses in the proceedings resulting in the death penalty being imposed, must be the first to cast the stones! **(17:7)** To be a witness in such a case, meant responsibility not only in the testimony, but also in the *'carrying out of the sentence'*! Justice must be served at *'every portion of the process'*. If, in the *'process of the trial'*, it comes about that there was a witness whose testimony was false, then *'diligent inquiry'* was to be made by the Shoftim/Judges. If this was found to be true, then what was to be done to the one accused was to be done to the one providing the false witness... **THEY WERE TO BE PUT TO DEATH!** Justice demands honesty on every level. As it is written,

“...So thou shalt put harah (the evil) away from among you.” (D’varim/Deuteronomy 17:7b OJB)

****[We can see, that this Torah instruction was violated during the trial of our blessed Master Yeshua. Justice nor righteousness was served in His case. He was wrongly accused and falsely witnessed against in His trial. However, it was necessary for YHWH’s redemption on our behalf to be realized. Baruch HaShem YHWH for His faithfulness and mercies. Also, for the great love of our blessed Master Yeshua for His willingness to suffer in our place to provide for our redemption. Amein!]**

It may seem hard to imagine someone being put to death for engaging in such activity. But, the spiritual condition of the nations there in The Land into which Yisrael was about to enter, was proof of the depravity that was capable. YHWH forbid *‘tampering with that realm’*, because of how quickly and completely the human heart could be corrupted beyond the possibility of redemption. **IF WE TRULY UNDERSTOOD WHAT SIN WAS CAPABLE OF, WE WOULD STAY FAR, FAR AWAY.** It was LOVE that demanded YHWH instruct Yisrael not to engage the realm of darkness. It was His **MERCIES** that demanded judgment when those instructions were violated. To obey the Torah’s delineation between the *‘realms of life and death, the holy and the profane, clean and the unclean’* was the only hope of redemption and abundant life.

Torah Sh’be’al Peh: The Oral Torah

“If there arise a matter too hard for thee in mishpat [judgment], between dahm and dahm [blood and blood], between din and din [verdict and verdict], and between nega and nega [assault and assault], being matters of controversy within thy she’arim [gates], then shalt thou arise, and get thee up into the place which Hashem Eloheicha [YHWH your Mighty One] shall choose;

And thou shalt come unto the kohanim [priest], who are the Levi’im, and unto the Shofet [Judge] that shall be in those days, and inquire; and they shall show thee the devar HaMishpat (word of judgment);

And thou shalt do according to the devar [word], which they of that place which Hashem [YHWH] shall choose shall show thee; and thou shalt be shomer [guard] to do according to all that they teach thee;

According to the pi hatorah [mouth of the Torah] which they shall teach thee, and according to the mishpat [judgment] which they shall tell thee, thou shalt do; thou shalt not turn aside from the devar [word] which they shall show thee, to the right hand, nor to the left.”

(D’varim/Deuteronomy 17:8-11 OJB- definitions mine)

Now, in this section, YHWH is giving instructions concerning dealing with situations that arise on a ‘local level’ resulting in controversy. We’ve already seen earlier that each ‘walled city’ in The Land was to have ‘shoftim/judges’ who were to hear and judge cases as they arose. Here, a further instruction points to a time when a ‘larger ruling body of shoftim/judges’ are to be appointed. This larger ‘governing body’ would function in the sense of a ‘Supreme Court’. In later times, this ‘governing body’ would become ‘The Great Assembly’ known as ‘The Sanhedrin’. This body would hear those cases that were not able to be resolved on a ‘local level’. Their ruling was to be considered final. Literally, that ruling was to be considered ‘pi hatorah or the mouth of the torah’. It is out from this, what has become known in rabbinic circles as ‘Torah Sh’be’al Peh or the ‘Oral

Torah’, has evolved. Space does not allow for a full consideration of this subject and its relation to the ‘*Torah Sh’bi’ktav/written Torah*’. I will make a few comments and reserve the right to do an extended article on this subject at a later time.

First, it is clear from the TaNaKh (**Hebrew Scriptures**) that the Torah existed in an ‘*oral form/Torah Sh’be’al Peh*’ prior to Moshe. There are hints of this throughout the sefer/book of B’resheet/Genesis. Such as when Noach/Noah was commanded to take the animals into the ark before the flood. YHWH’s ‘*instruction*’ was to take the ‘*unclean in by twos*’. The ‘*clean*’ were to be taken in ‘*by seven pairs*’. (**B’resheet/Genesis 7:2**) This terminology is ‘*Torah language*’. Where did Noach/Noah get this from? When he got off the ark after the flood, he offered ‘*clean animals and clean birds*’ to YHWH on an ‘*mizbe’ach/altar*’ as an ‘*olah/a burning ascension offering*’. Again, how did Noach/Noah know to do this? It is because YHWH had ‘*instructed*’ Noach/Noah on ‘*how to do this*’ by His ‘*spoken Word*’. Thus, the Torah in ‘*Oral Form/Torah Sh’be’al Peh*’ continued to be ‘*handed down through the generations as a continuous means of revelation*’. Finally, through Moshe, YHWH gave what is known as the ‘*Torah Sh’bichtav/The Written Torah*’.

Now, there is within Scripture hints that YHWH did indeed continue an ‘*Oral tradition*’. It was ‘*handed down through succeeding generations*’. However, by the time that our blessed Master Yeshua came on the scene, the ‘*Oral tradition*’ of that day was in its infancy as a ‘*written work*’. It was known as the ‘*Traditions of the Elders*’. It was the ‘*predecessor*’ to what has become in ‘*rabbinic Judaism*’ known as, the compendiums of the ‘*traditional writings of Jewish Oral Law*’: ‘*Talmud and Mishnah*’. It is from these ‘*traditional works*’ that brother Judah has devised the ‘*orthodox halachah/way to walk*’. Through these writings the ‘*Sages of Jewish Yisrael*’ have tried to answer and define many of the questions that the ‘*Written Torah/Torah Sh’bichtav*’ leaves unanswered. Unfortunately, while there are many good insights contained in it, in ‘*Orthodox Judaism*’ today, the ‘*Oral Torah/Torah/Sh’be’al Peh*’, has not only become viewed to be ‘*equal*’ with the ‘*written Torah/Torah Sh’bichtav*’, it has actually been allowed to supersede it! More emphasis is placed on the ‘*words of the Sages*’ than on the ‘*written words of Moshe*’ given by YHWH Himself!

As a ministry, we at ‘*Gates To Zion*’ have a deep respect for the ‘*Oral Traditions*’ of our elder brother Yehudah/Judah. However, we believe that **ONLY** the ‘*Written Torah/Torah Sh’bichtav*’ itself is to be accepted as the ‘*Word of YHWH*’. The ‘*Torah proper, the first five books*’ of our Bible, are **THE ROOT** of all other Scripture. Therefore, ‘*all of the other books*’ outside of the ‘*Torah proper*’, the Nevi’im/Prophets and Ketuvim/Writings (**Tehillim/Psalms, Mishle/Proverbs...etc.**), must ‘*answer back*’ to those first five books. This includes the compendium of written books known as the ‘*Messianic Writings/Ketuvim HaNotzrim/Writings of the Nazarenes*’. (**Matthew-Revelation**) We at ‘*Gates To Zion*’ believe that **ALL** of Scripture from the ‘*TaNaKh/Hebrew Scriptures*’ all the way through to the ‘*Messianic Writings/Ketuvim HaNotzrim/Writings of the Nazarenes*’ are **ONE WHOLE EXPRESSION OF THE WHOLE COUNSEL OF YHWH IN WRITTEN FORM**. Therefore, we see the entire Bible to be the **CENTER AND CIRCUMFERENCE** as the ‘*mind of YHWH*’ for doctrine, guidance, reproof, and instruction in righteousness. (**11 Timothy 3:16**) The ‘*Oral Torah/Torah Sh’be’al Peh*’ has many important and useful insights. Unfortunately, due to the ‘*excessive additions of the rabbis and their traditions*’, we believe these writings are **NOT** ‘*equal to the written Torah/Torah Sh’bichtav*’ itself or those of the Messianic Writings. (**Matthew-Revelation**) It must be remembered, that ‘*rabbinic Judaism is a reaction against*’ our blessed Master Yeshua. As we saw in last week’s Torah parasha, ‘*Re’eh*’, the church of Christendom has contributed to the problem

which ‘*normative Judaism*’ has with our Master Yeshua. Through their theology, they have presented our Adon/Lord Yeshua as a ‘*Torahless Messiah*’. As we further saw last week, D’varim/Deuteronomy 13 clearly declares that anyone who openly seeks to lead others away from the Torah, they are to be considered a ‘*navi sheker/false prophet*’. Their punishment is to be death! However, the compendiums of the ‘*Oral Torah/Torah Sh’be’al Peh*’ are at issue themselves on numerous points with the ‘*Written Torah/Torah Sh’bichtav*’. Not the least of which is the ‘*Written Torah’s instructions*’ **NOT** to ‘*add to the Words of YHWH*’. (**D’varim/Deuteronomy 4:2; 12:32**) This is no small matter indeed. We agree, there was a time where the Torah of YHWH existed in an ‘*Oral form/Torah Sh’be’al Peh*’. There was also a time when it existed as a ‘*true companion*’ to the ‘*written Torah/Torah Sh’bichtav*’ of Moshe. However, due to the ‘*rejection of Master Yeshua by rabbinic Judaism*’ and the inclusion of many subsequent ‘*man-made religious traditions*’, which only serve to ‘*muddy the waters of true Scriptural integrity*’, such can no longer be said. We hold the **WHOLE** of recognized Scripture, ‘*Genesis to Revelation*’, to be true **WITHOUT CONTRADICTION** as the Word of YHWH and **WITHOUT COMPROMISE OR QUESTION**. All else is simply commentary. YHWH is well able to lead us by His HaRuach HaKodesh/The Spirit of His Holiness in the application of His Word to determine our ‘*Messianic halachah/way to walk*’ in a manner that is both ‘*sound and safe*’ regarding His Truth.

The Choosing Of A King

In our Torah parasha, we are told of a time when Yisrael would come to a place where they desired a king. Now, most of us are familiar with the Scriptural record of the time of the navi/prophet Sh’muel/Samuel, when Yisrael did desire a king. It turned out to be a very ‘*unwise decision*’ on their part. (**Sh’muel Alef/1 Samuel 8**) However, the problem was not that Yisrael in that day wanted a king. The problem was, they desired to be ‘*like the nations*’. In doing this, they ultimately ‘*rejected*’ their True King, YHWH! Here in our Torah parasha, YHWH knows the day will come when Yisrael will desire a king. He doesn’t tell them they can’t have one. Instead, He gives them ‘*instructions*’ in His Torah in order to ‘*safeguard His nation*’ in their choice. If having a king was in and of itself an evil thing, then YHWH would have come right out and forbid them then and there! Instead, YHWH gives His ‘*instructions about how to choose a king*’. If they followed those ‘*instructions*’, then it would be a very good choice for all involved.

“When thou art come unto ha’arets [the land] which Hashem Eloheicha [YHWH your Mighty One] giveth thee, and shalt possess it, and shalt dwell therein, and shalt say, I will set a melech [king] over me, like Kol HaGoyim [All The Nations] that are about me; Thou shalt in any wise set him as melech [king] over thee, whom Hashem Eloheicha [YHWH your Mighty One] shall choose; one from among thy achim [brothers] shalt thou set as melech [king] over thee; thou mayest not set an ish nokhri [stranger/foreign man] over thee, which is not achicha (thy brother, i.e., a fellow Hebrew).

But he shall not multiply susim [horses] to himself, nor cause the people to return to Mitzrayim [Egypt], to the end that he should multiply the sus [horse]; forasmuch as Hashem [YHWH] hath said unto you, Ye shall henceforth return no more that way.

Neither shall he multiply nashim [wives] to himself, that his lev [heart] turn not away; neither shall he greatly multiply to himself kesef [silver] and zahav [gold].

And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the kisei mamlakhto (throne of his kingdom), that he shall write him a mishneh hatorah hazot (copy of this torah) in a sefer [book] out of that which is before the kohanim [priests], the Levi'im;

And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life; that he may learn to fear Hashem Elohav [YHWH his Mighty One], to be shomer [at guard] over kol divrei hatorah hazot [all the words of this torah] and these chukkim [ordinances], to do them; That his lev [heart] be not lifted up in pride above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the mitzvah [commandment], to the right hand, or to the left; to the end that he may prolong his days in his mamlachah [kingdom], he, and his banim [sons], in the midst of Yisroel.” (D’varim/Deuteronomy 17:14-20 OJB- definitions mine)

Here are the ‘governing guidelines’ for Yisrael in choosing a m’lekh/king according to YHWH’s instructions:

- 1) The king must be from among the ‘Hebrew nation’ of Yisrael. He was not to be a ‘stranger or a foreigner’ from another nation
- 2) He was not to ‘multiply to himself horses’. The horse is a ‘picture of strength’. Yisrael’s ‘strength’ was YHWH Himself! To multiply horses was to turn from YHWH to ‘trust in man’s strength and ability’. It was a return, in heart, to the ways of Mitzrayim/Egypt. (Yeshayahu/Isaiah 31:1-3)
- 3) The king was not to ‘multiply to himself wives’. The result would be a ‘weakened heart’. A heart that was divided between love and faithfulness to YHWH. One that sought after pleasing and the pleasures of numerous women. The ‘allowance of Torah for plural wives’ was a **CONCESSION** toward the ‘customs of the society of that day’. It was **NOT A COMMANDMENT!** The ‘Edenic culture’ is YHWH’s ‘purist picture of marriage’: **ONE** man and **ONE** woman. Even Master Yeshua referenced this. (Mattityahu/Matthew 19:4-8) One need only look at the dysfunctionality that plagued Ya’akob/Jacob who fathered our nation. The ‘plurality of wives’ and the jealousy, envy, strife and hatred that was generated in the relationships between the women involved bled down to the children. Ya’akob’s/Jacob’s sons ‘emulated that dysfunction’ and even resorted to attempted murder, kidnapping and extortion. Out of all of the many things that the returning house of Yosef-Ephraim needs to have restored in this day... **MULTIPLE WIVES IS NOT ONE THEM!** A revival of the ‘principle of the execution stake’ is the greatest need. We are called by our Master, who left us His example, to embrace it **DAILY**. Learning to ‘put sin to death, deny the flesh and our soul-life’ at every hand. Remember the words of Rav Sha’ul, ‘Dead men don’t sin’! (Romans 6:11) We are **DEAD** ‘in Mashiach’ to sin, having ‘died with Him’ on that tree. Therefore, we are made **ALIVE** ‘with Him’, to **LIVE** together ‘with Him’ to the glory of YHWH. Amein!
- 4) He was not to ‘multiply to himself silver and gold’. The ‘love of money is the root of all evil’. (1Timothy 6:10) Both David and his son Sh’lomo/Solomon violated this principle, including the one above about ‘multiplying wives’. In the end, David ultimately escaped the evil this failure to obey YHWH’s instruction will bring, but Sh’lomo/Solomon did not. The sefer/book of ‘Mishle/Proverbs’ testifies of the ‘glory of YHWH’ when a man lives a life dedicated to the Torah. The sefer/book of ‘Kohelet/Ecclesiastes’ is a testimony to what happens when a man becomes ‘estranged from the wisdom of Torah’. **ALL IS VANITY**. Sh’lomo’s/Solomon’s sinfulness in these areas brought great judgment on himself, on his son Rechavam/Rehoboam and ultimately the whole house of Yisrael.
- 5) The m’lekh/king was to ‘hand write’ a copy of the Torah scroll in book form. He was to read and study it every day. Through it, he would have the wisdom to lead YHWH’s nation. It would act as a deterrent to sin, pride, strife and leaving the ways of YHWH’s Torah, the commandments, and being judged for such things. The end result would be, he, his sons

and the nation of Yisrael would all live the fullness of their days out. They would live in the abundance of YHWH's life and blessing.

Unfortunately, we know the path that was chosen. One of sorrow, destruction and expulsion. However, YHWH, through His Son, Yeshua HaMashiach/The Messiah, by His HaRuach HaKodesh/The Spirit of His Holiness, is regathering His nation Yisrael, both houses. The 'scattered/outcast house' of Yosef-Ephraim and the 'dispersed house' of Yehudah/Judah. **(Yeshayahu/Isaiah 11:12)** Our blessed Master Yeshua, M'lekh Mashiach/King Messiah will return at the appointed soon coming time. We may not know the exact day or time, but we do know the season. The Torah and the Messianic Writings **(Matthew-Revelation)**, both show us it will be during the fall 'Mo'edim/Appointed times' of YHWH. Upon our blessed Master Yeshua's return, He will be enthroned, the Whole House of Yisrael will be regathered into The Land and the earth will enter into the time of the 'Great Shabbat', The Millennial Reign of the Kingdom of YHWH. The earth will be filled with YHWH's glory for a thousand years!

The Promised Coming Of The Navi/Prophet Like Unto Moshe

"I will raise them up a Navi [Prophet] from among their achim [brothers], like unto thee, and will put My words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not listen unto My words which he shall speak Bishmi (in My Name), I will require it of him." (D'varim/Deuteronomy 18:18-19 OJB- definitions mine)

The above is the 'prophetic promise' given by YHWH of a coming Navi/Prophet that He Himself would raise up. This Navi/Prophet would be 'like unto Moshe', just as YHWH's Word became a part of 'Moshe's very being.' In essence, YHWH'S **WORD BECAME FLESH IN HIM!** So, this coming Navi/Prophet would not only be a 'manifestation of a portion' of YHWH's Word. **HE WOULD BE YHWH'S WORD IN FULL MANIFESTATION IN HUMAN FORM!** Those who would not listen to the Words of YHWH that this Navi/Prophet speaks, YHWH Himself would require it of them! Who is this coming Navi/Prophet? Read the following Scriptures and see what you think.

"Philippos [Phillip] finds Natan'el [Nathaniel] and says to him, He whom Moshe [Rabbeinu/our Teacher] wrote of in the Sefer [Book of the] Torah, he whom the Nevi'im [the Prophets] also wrote of—Yehoshua ben Yosef (Yehoshua full Hebrew name/Yeshua the shortened Aramaic Name) son of Joseph [ben/son of Dovid], from Natzeret [Nazareth] we have found!" Yochanon/John 1:45 OJB- definitions mine)

"For if you were having emunah [trusting faithfulness] in Moshe, you would have had emunah [trusting faithfulness] in me, for he himself wrote concerning me." (Yochanon/John 5:46 OJB- definitions mine)

"This is the Moshe who said to the Bnei Yisroel [Children of Yisrael] NAVI MIKIRBECHA ME'ACHECHA KAMONI YAKIM ("A prophet from among you from your brothers like me [Moshe] Hashem [YHWH] will raise up.")" Ma'aseh/Acts 7:37 OJB- definitions mine)

When Philip found his brother Nathaniel, he wanted him to come see the Rabbi/Teacher he had been following. How did he describe Him? *'This is He, whom Moshe wrote of in the Torah'*! Phillip was citing the same verse we are looking at from our present Torah parasha! **(D'varim/Deuteronomy 18:18)**

When our Master was speaking to the Pharisees in our second verse, He tells them plainly. The reason they *'can't hear His words'* is because they do not have *'trusting faithfulness'* in the words of Moshe. If they *'believed'* Moshe, then they could *'hear His words and believe Him too'*.

Lastly, in the defense that Stephen was making before the Sanhedrin, he quoted the words of Moshe from the very verse we are looking at right now. **(D'varim/Deuteronomy 8:18)** He had been proving to all who heard him preach, that Master Yeshua **WAS** the *'promised Mashiach of Yisrael'*. The *'very one'* whom YHWH had promised through Moshe that He would raise up. The anointing on Stephen and his words was overwhelming. No one was able to refute his preaching. So, in frustration, they resorted to *'false accusations'* in order to have him arrested and drawn before the *'Great Assembly'*, the Sanhedrin. They too were unable to refute Stephen's words. In a rage, they rushed upon him, drug him out of the city and stoned him to death. Yet, Stephen, like his Master before him cried out for YHWH to forgive those who were stoning him. Suddenly, the heavens opened, and Stephen saw the glory of YHWH. Our Master Yeshua was there, standing on His right hand. Stephen prayed and YHWH received his spirit into heaven.

Beloved, our blessed Master Yeshua **IS** this Navi/Prophet whom Moshe spoke of. Our elder brother Yehudah/Judah has been *'partially blinded'* to their Mashiach. **THE WORDS OF THE JEWISH TRADITIONAL WRITINGS OF TALMUD AND MISHNAH ARE NOT THE PURE WORDS OF MOSHE FROM THE WRITTEN TORAH.** Why? If they were, then as our Master said, **THEY WOULD HEAR HIS WORDS AND BELIEVE!** The day is coming when the **BLINDERS** are going to come off. Our elder brother **WILL SEE** their Mashiach, even as we have come to **SEE** the Torah! May that day come quickly and in our time. Amein!

We say the following blessing as we continue each week's study of Torah...

*Chazak u'Barukh...
Strength and Blessings*

****Click the link below to listen to the mp3 audio-reading of our parasha**

[Parasha 48: Shofetim/Judges](#)