



A lack of blessings may be your own fault

Parashat ki tavo (50) – When you enter/come in

Torah: *Debarim* 26:1 to 29:9

Haftarah: *Yeshayahu* 60:1-22

Apostolic Scriptures: *Hazon* 21: 10-27

Where we exited the land of the Gentiles last week, this week we come into the new land, the promised inheritance that YAH had promised to *Abraham* many years before. Only 70 people came out of the land to *Mitsrayim*, where YAH created a new nation from them. They grew to over 2 million people and were slaves for about 110 years, building two cities.

With a strong hand YAH delivered them from slavery, led them through a wilderness during which many lessons were learned by means of miracles, while a disobedient generation also died there. Now a new generation is being educated, taught YAH's rules, which the people would have to apply in the new land. On several occasions it is obvious that YAH issues commands to individuals. We also understand that YAH's Kingship is based on a system of autocracy, sole rule, with Him as the Head of all, including the whole of Creation (*cf. Mizmor* 24:1 *et al*). It is therefore necessary that not only individuals, but sometimes also certain groups, should be addressed. From these groups the head of each household will transmit and teach these rules to all under his authority and so it will be passed down *midor ledor*, from generation to generation.

Usually the first significant word at the start of a passage is used for the title of each *sidrah* and in this case it is 'come' or actually "come in", meaning into the new land. However, it is very interesting that the first mention made is regarding *רֵאשִׁית פְּרִי* (*r'Sheet p'Ree*), first fruits, also known as *בְּכוֹרִים* (*bee-koo-Reem*), firstfruits of the fruits that the land would yield. Due to our Western way of thinking and a total lack of the Semitic way of life, even the basic knowledge thereof, most of us consider the tithe that YAH requires of each one as His due, while we think the rest belongs to us.

The opposite is true, however, for when we walk the Way of Truth in all seriousness and realise that everything belongs to YAH and nothing belongs to us, we should have a completely different understanding. These fruits were already in the land, seven different types: grain, barley, grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives and dates. The firstfruits of which we read here are to be distinguished from those brought in recognition of the blessings of harvests (*cf. Shemoth* 22:29) as during *Pēsah* and *Shabu'ot*, as well as the offerings as prescribed in *Bemidbar* 18:8. The latter consist of preparations of the fruit of the earth, such as oil, flour, wine and the like, while in this case it concerns the raw product itself; the former deals with national and public offerings, while what we learn here is personal and possibly private offerings. However, everything is brought to the priest on duty.

In the last chapters of *Debarim* it is important to note that *Mosheh* gives many of the same instructions to individuals, but also to the nation as a whole. However, it still remains valid for each household and therefore it is important that heads of tribes and heads of houses will convey this information in the right way and ensure that it is properly applied. Our *sidrah* opens where *Mosheh* teaches the nation to be grateful for the produce of the land, but here the head of each house is addressed. There are also explicit words taught on how to thank *YAH* and bring praise to Him.

Some people have no respect for pre-arranged prayers or similar forms of supplication, yet what is mainly used during gatherings is in the form of songs. Each song is based on Scripture and the praise, thanksgiving and prayers that are brought to *YAH* by means of this, is like our burnt offerings – a sweet-smelling aroma to *YAH*. The book of *Tehilim*¹ is the best example in Scripture where many prayers and praises are recorded, most of which is set to music to praise *YAH*, but also to remind Him of His promises. Although pre-arranged prayers cannot be used in all cases, it is important that we bring *YAH*'s Word back unto Him through song and music, as well as corporate and individual speech. Many people, even some who have been on the Way of Truth for a long time, sometimes struggle with prayer, especially in public. This is where Scripture comes in so handy, by simply reading a simple prayer, as we find in *Mizmor* 30:1-5; 40:1-4; 46:7-11; 55:18-23; 139:13-14 and many others. Feel free to try it, perhaps alone at home, but later at your place of gathering.

It is with words like these that *YAH* is thanked for His provision, the first words we read at the beginning of our study for this week. *Mosheh* teaches the nation how to thank *YAH* for what they freely receive, the firstfruits of the land that they bring as an offering of thankfulness. He teaches them specific words with which to express their thanks with the offerings they bring. One part of this stands out above the others:

Debarim 26⁷ **Then we cried out to יהוה Elohim of our fathers, and יהוה heard our voice and saw our affliction and our toil and our oppression.** [emphasis added]

Sometimes it is necessary for us to cry out aloud to *YAH*, because He listens to every cry that comes to Him in earnest, every prayer, every form of supplication. It may be necessary for more than one prayer to go out, perhaps even a special prayer. Each of us, at one time or another, faces difficult circumstances, things that we may be unable to handle, but something for which we seek a solution or a way out. The children of *Yisra'el* were oppressed for a long time, not only by political forces, but they also had to work through spiritual struggles. Liberation from this type of oppression was not always easy, because difficult spiritual wars had to be fought to achieve salvation.

We learn from Scripture that a cry, a shout, or even a noise may sometimes be necessary to get the needed answer to prayer. It is important to realise that this happens because of the anguish of the individual, not because we think that *YAH* is deaf. The word we learn here is צָעַק (*tzâ-âq*), which literally translates as "cry out". Most English translations use the word 'cry', something we know works very well with babies and small children, but especially with any person in trouble. It is the same cry we might give in times of danger, perhaps even when facing death. It is this sound that is heard in the heavens, the sound to which *YAH* responds:

Mizmor 107⁶ **Then they cried out to יהוה in their distress, He delivered them out of their troubles.**

When you find yourself in dire circumstances, do not hesitate to cry out to *YAH*. Go out into the field, hide your face in a pillow or close yourself in a room and scream as loud as you can to *YAH*. Cry out with all your might, with every ounce of trust and expectation to *YAH*, who also heard the nation of *Yisra'el* and helped them. He saved them from many a predicament and is able to save you from the circumstances that hold you captive.

¹ Collective name for the book of Psalms. The singular is *tehilah* and is used primarily for poems and laments where no music would be involved. When we refer to a psalm as *mizmor*, it is accompanied by music.

According to tradition, a farmer would regularly go through the fields or orchards and tie a red ribbon around any fruit that was in the early stages of ripening. This would be the indication of the firstfruits that were to be brought to the priest. At the appropriate time, the farmer would select the best of the firstfruits of his fruit, put them in a basket, and take them to the priest. The priest would take the basket and place it before the altar, while the farmer uttered a few prescribed words of gratitude and bowed down before YAH. It was very common for the Semites to consider a part of a unit as a whole unit (cf. *Yehoshua* 21:43-45; *Shemu'el Bēt* 5:6-10; *Melaḳim Aleph* 13:32; *Yirmeyahu* 31:5). They therefore did not see their offering as that which was due to YAH, but as everything they had received and actually belonged to Him².

The sacrifices and dedications we learn of here were only part of the nation's responsibilities. They also had to care for their brothers and other dependant, and we will explore this in more detail later. However, this did not just happen at the tabernacle as some would have it, but everywhere the nation lived. Again, the person bringing the sacrifice had to make a statement that the food offering was brought out of love and compassion, not to the dead (v. 14), and that it was done in gratitude. Adam Day³ gives us 5 good reasons why YAH created people to eat:

- 🥂 Food leads to recognition of dependance on YAH (cf. ch. 15);
- 🥂 it refers directly to YAH's provision for His people (cf. ch. 8);
- 🥂 food teaches believers to fear and trust YAH (cf. chss. 6, 14);
- 🥂 this shows that true satisfaction is found in YAH's Word (ch. 8);
- 🥂 food is a way to share with gladness and in joyful worship in YAH's favour and cultivate gratitude (cf. hss. 12, 16, 26).

Technically speaking, the Feast of First Fruits does not take place until after *Shabu'ot*, therefore late spring or early summer, and even *Shabu'ot*, is also known as חֵץ בְּכוּרִים (*chag habikurim* [pronounced châg hâ-bee-koo-reem]), the feast of first fruits, as introducing a season of joy, gladness, and sharing. We learn from the sages that a great procession was held by farmers of that time who loaded baskets of fruit onto oxen; the oxen were decorated with garlands of flowers, and these processions then proceeded to the predetermined place of assembly. On the way there, they would pass through several villages where similar processions and festival-goers would join them. The priests received their portion on this occasion, and the oxen would later serve as peace offerings.

Mosheh explains in detail how the tithe rule worked. Each person was required to bring one tenth of his harvest, or its equivalent, annually to the high priest who would divide it among all the priests and *Lēwites*. A second or additional tithe of the harvest was to be set aside by each farmer or household for their own use at the place of assembly. During the third year of the seven-year *Shabbat* cycle, a third tithe was distributed locally to the widows, orphans, and strangers. We summarise the rules as follows:

Deḅarim 26^{12a} When you have completed tithing all the tithe of your increase in the third year ...^{13d} I have not transgressed Your commands, nor have I forgotten ...¹⁵ Look from Your set-apart dwelling place, from the heavens, and bless Your people *Yisra'el* and the land which You have given us, as You swore to our fathers, "a land flowing with milk and honey."

We are taught from this that there is a direct correlation between faithful contributions of the tithe and all the other rules laid down. A person who is faithful in contributing tithes also gives praise and honour to YAH as the Owner of all that he or she possesses.

The commandment regarding tithing is similar in many ways to the commandment regarding *Shabbat*: both are given to us to acknowledge YAH's Kingship. When someone brings his or her tithe, the person

² AJ Mattill Jr., "Representative Universalism and the Conquest of Canaan", *Concordia Theological Monthly* 35:1 (1967):8-17

³ Adam Warner Day, "Eating before the Lord: A Theology of Food According to Deuteronomy", *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 57:1 (2014):86

acknowledges YAH's control and ownership over matter, the substance or building block from which the (observable) world is created. The person who honours *Shabbat* acknowledges YAH's ownership of time. By giving a portion of our income and a portion of our time to YAH in a special way, the way He prescribes, through tithing and *Shabbat*, we open a door on which the rest of our income and other days of the week become the possession of YAH. These two commands are therefore platforms that help us to acknowledge YAH in all things and to be obedient to Him.

However, we must understand very well that our part, the tithe and the *Shabbat*, come first. We cannot expect blessings from YAH until we bring our tithes and honour the *Shabbat*. The tithe and the *Shabbat* come first, then the blessings come. Also, keep in mind that we do not bring a tithe and keep *Shabbat* in order to receive blessings or be saved – everything depends on YAH, because He knows with what attitude we do it. Bring your tithe and honour *Shabbat* in love and reverence for YAH and He will determine your blessings.

In the land known today as Israel, the Orthodox community still follows these rules regarding tithing, but only on a limited scale. According to most scholars, these rules would not apply outside the Promised Land. All produce grown in Israel today is still subject to the tithe being set apart, but because no one can provide absolute proof that he is a priest or *Lēwite*, the tithe is converted into money and distributed to the needy, usually through charitable organisations.

Today's Christian churches insist that tithes be a financial contribution paid directly to the church. It is sometimes questionable how those finances are used. In 585 AD, the Third Council of Mâcon imposed a penalty of ecclesiastical excommunication or censure on those who would not obey this ecclesiastical rule!

Unlike Christianity, under no circumstances was there any obligation placed upon the nation of *Yisra'el* regarding their tithes; all contributions were based on the honourability of each individual. An oath was taken before the priest, in honour of YAH, as we learned earlier (vv. 26:13-14). These words would apparently be spoken very softly, but the end of the statement would be spoken very loudly and clearly before all:

Deḇarim 26 ¹⁵Look from Your set-apart dwelling place, from the heavens, and bless Your people *Yisra'el* and the land which You have given us, as You swore to our fathers, "a land flowing with milk and honey."

The tithe for the poor and homeless was extremely important, as the fertility of the land would be determined by the observance of this command. A mutual declaration follows:

Deḇarim 26 ¹⁷You have today caused יהוה to proclaim to be your *Elohim*, and to walk in His ways and guard His laws, and His commands, and His right-rulings, and to obey His voice. ¹⁸And יהוה has caused you to proclaim today to be His people, a treasured possession, as He has spoken to you, and to guard all His commands,

What YAH is trying to teach us with these words, we have already encountered earlier in Scripture (cf. *Deḇarim* 10:12 ; *Mattithyahu* 22:37; *Marqos* 12:29,30; *Luqas* 10:27; *Romiyim* 8:28):

Deḇarim 6 ⁵And you shall love יהוה your *Elohim* with **all** your heart, and with **all** your being, and with **all** your might. [emphasis added]

It is of no use to have a lot of information but not applying it properly. A diploma or degree in any subject means nothing if the information the student has learned is not used and applied in the manner prescribed for the subject. Both surgeons and technicians use their hands to do their work, but that does not mean that one can necessarily do the other's work. It is therefore useless to recite *Torah* like a rhyme, but the content does not touch you personally.

YAH is not satisfied with mediocrity. If we do not love, serve, and obey Him with our entire being, we will not experience the favour of YAH. In the words of *Yeshua*, as recorded by *Yohanan*:

Hazon 3 ¹⁵I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I would that you were cold or hot.
¹⁶So, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I am going to vomit you out of My mouth.

The promise presented to us is that we, as obedient *talmidim*, will be a valuable possession of YAH. This is likened to someone who possesses a special treasure, cherishes it and protects it against every possible mishap. The result of our obedience is that we will stand out above other nations in set-apartness as an extremely powerful nation, not only in heaven, but also on earth.

Suddenly the narrative changes, not in terms of the commands, but in terms of the method of remembering and keeping. Two stages of covenant renewal now occur in a manner similar to that of a chieftain or king, handing over the reins to his successor; this is also typical of what would have been the custom in the ANE. When a king lay on his deathbed, all the subjects were called together to swear a covenant oath to him. After his death, when the new king was appointed, all the subjects gathered again to swear a covenant oath to the new king.

Mosheh acted as supreme ruler over the kingdom of YAH, but together with *Yehoshua* they would both act as intercessors for the nation. The entire nation is therefore gathered on the eastern bank of the *Yardēn* where they are ready to enter the new land and take the first part of the covenant oath. When they cross the *Yardēn* later, when they pass over, the second part of the covenant oath awaits them. Remember that *ever*, to pass over, is the root word for the word 'Hebrew'. Here we notice something similar to what kings would later have to do personally: to write the law in their own handwriting. In the case of the nation of *Yisra'el*, they had to take raw, unhewn stones and cover them with lime. This was a tried and tested method that their ancestors had already learned in *Mitsrayim* to prepare stones on which writing would be visible for a relatively long time. The reason for writing down the law was so that no person would have any excuse for disobeying it:

Debarim 27 ²"And it shall be, on the day when you pass over the *Yardēn* to the land which יהוה your *Elohim* is giving you, that you shall set up for yourselves large stones, and plaster them with plaster,

There is an important reason why *Torah* had to be written on whitewashed stone. Any person will be aware that whitewash will be washed away by wind and weather over time. However, *Torah* had to be lived out not only in the hearts of the people, but also in the land. When the whitewash was washed away and became part of the land, it would be a cry to heaven and earth: "The *Torah* of YAH rules over this land."

Gradually, the words of *Torah* would be absorbed by the soil and also spread by the winds to all corners of the earth. Through this, the lime would serve as an element to make the Word of YAH known to all. The word שֵׁד (sid [pronounced seed]), translates as 'whitewash', but is also seen as plastering. It contains the same letters as שֵׁדַי (*shâ-Dai*), one of the characteristics and Names by which YAH is known (cf. *Berēshith* 17:1 *et al*) and which translates as "the Almighty who is more than enough". Through this, the stones proclaim that YAH is the Provider of not only the land in which the nation would find themselves, but also the entire world:

Luqas 19 ⁴⁰But He answering, said to them, "I say to you that if these [believing *Torah* followers, *talmidim*] shall be silent, the stones would cry out."

These stones echo the rules of YAH to every person who looks at them, but also to those who wrote them. A stone does not always need to 'speak', it just needs to be 'clothed' with YAH's Law! You and I, as *Torah* believers, do not always need to speak either; our actions should be more than enough. Ironically, but not coincidentally, it was in *Shekem* that *Yeshua* uttered these words regarding stones. We are going to visit there again in a moment...

Obedience to *Torah* is not a request or suggestion:

Deḇarim 27⁵ and build a slaughter-place to יהוה your *Elohim* there, a slaughter-place of stones – do not use an iron *tool* on them. ⁶“Build the slaughter-place of יהוה your *Elohim* with complete stones, and you shall offer ascending offerings on it to יהוה your *Elohim*, ⁷and shall slaughter peace offerings, and eat there, and rejoice before יהוה your *Elohim*. ⁸“And you shall write all the Words of this *Torah* on the stones – plainly and well.”

This *mizbach*, altar, was to be erected on mount *Ĕyḇal*, something we have dealt with in the past with *parashat re'eh*. About 200 meters from the foot of *Ĕyḇal*, towards the south, is the foot of mount *Gerizim* and in between, surrounded by the mountains, lies the village of *Shekem*, approximately in the middle of the new land. This area forms a natural amphitheatre and is extremely suitable for what will soon take place here. It is also here where *Abraham* (cf. *Berēshith* 12:6-9) and *Ya'aqob* (cf. *Berēshith* 33:18-20) previously erected altars. We now clearly see how *YAH*'s promises to them are fulfilled. The twelve tribes, sons of *Ya'aqob*, are now divided into two groups, where leaders from the sons of *Lě'ah* and *Raḥēl* form one group and gather on Mount *Gerizim* - the place from which blessings will be pronounced. The leaders of the other six tribes, mostly descended from the maidservants *Bilhah* and *Zilpah*, as well as the eldest and youngest sons of *Lě'ah*, gather at *Ĕyḇal* from where the curses will be pronounced. The tribe of *Yosēph* stands here as one tribe and is not officially divided as the sons *Ephrayim* and *Menashsheh*, although they camped separately around the tabernacle and will also each be allocated territory later.

With representatives of six tribes on each mountain, we hear twelve curses from mount *Ĕyḇal*, the first eleven specifically surrounding transgressions against *Torah* and the twelfth a general summary of the eleven. Since this is clearly recorded in Scripture, we need not repeat it here, but attach it to [addendum A](#), along with an explanatory photograph of modern *Shekem*, now Nablus, as well as a photograph of the altar that was built.

Once we have heard the curses that await us as a result of disobedience, the wonderful blessings follow, if we do obey *Torah*. Several idioms are used here, as well as expressions that make us realise the type of prosperity that can be expected for us. When we read “shall come upon you”, it indicates blessings in v. 2, but it could also be applied as curses in v. 15. To be “blessed in the city and in the country” indicates a general, overarching blessing; yet, once again, we also experience the negative in the curses. If you are the head, you determine your own goals, your direction, but to be the tail means you are led and must just follow, regardless of the consequences. Everyone and everything needs rain and through obedience rain will fall at the right times, but keep in mind the 42 months that *Ĕliyahu* withheld rain due to lawlessness by the worshipers of *Ba'al*.

We notice 98 curses here in total; where it starts with something light, increasing rapidly and ends with two of the worst punishments that people can ever receive: exile and forced labour – it is almost as if the nation is going back to *Mitsrayim*! *YAH* promises to scatter the nation of *Yisra'ēl* among the nations, but as if that were not enough, they will be taught to serve gods of wood and stone – something that no one has known before. There will be no rest, so much so that people will wish for nights to turn into days, as well as days to turn into nights. Then the worst will come: the person who has not yet returned to *Torah* will be taken away on ships to *Mitsrayim*. This idiom indicates the reverse of what happened years earlier when they were delivered from slavery. Exile is one thing, because there may still be some degree of personal freedom. However, it is much worse to be a slave and never experience any freedom. This, my brother and sister, is what lies ahead for us if we do not humble ourselves before *YAH* in full obedience.

Mosheh reminds the nation of the comfortable life they are currently leading and how they never lacked anything – even the clothes on their bodies and the shoes on their feet did not wear out, after 40 years! They defeated kings and took their lands for themselves, even on the east side of the *Yardēn*. However, this

would only last as long as their obedience lasted. From personal experience, though, we know that none of us necessarily always follow all the rules – sometimes we think that we are as smart, or maybe smarter, than YAH; other times our own thinking is contaminated with something that the enemy transmits to us through the mind of a friend or acquaintance. Manipulation, brainwashing, is almost as bad and unacceptable to YAH as unheavenly incompetence. This is when we need to seek out people like the prophets, reading their words, to help us get back on track.

One of these prophets is *Yeshayahu*, and in today's *haftarah* he describes the future salvation of the nation of *Yisra'el* as a whole. YAH promises to shine His esteemed light upon every true believer and reveal His esteem, despite the hour of darkness and tribulation that is coming upon the earth:

Yeshayahu 60 ¹Arise, shine, for your light has come! And the esteem of יהוה has risen upon you. ²For look, darkness covers the earth, and thick darkness the peoples. But יהוה arises over you, and His esteem is seen upon you. ³And the nations shall come to your light, and sovereigns to the brightness of your rising. ⁴Lift up your eyes all around and see: all of them have gathered, they have come to you; your sons come from afar, and your daughters are supported on the side.

Sometime during the “plague of darkness” that represents the time of the Great Tribulation, the Day of YAH that will bring judgement upon the world, some of the wayward children of *Ya'aqob* will finally turn to YAH and receive *Yeshua* as their long-lost *Mashiach* (cf. *Zekaryah* 12:10). The veil will finally be taken away, and all the descendants of *Ya'aqob* will be saved (cf. *Romiyim* 11:26 ; *Yeshayahu* 59:20). The Light of Salvation (*ha'or Yeshua*) will be revealed and the Presence of YAH (*k'vod יהוה*) will shine gloriously (*zarach*) upon them. The land now known as Israel will be like *Goshen* during the times of the plagues of *Mitsrayim*, as the world powers will all be judged and destroyed. The survivors of the nations will then understand that *Yisra'el* is indeed YAH's nation and turn to Him in surrender:

Yeshayahu 40 ⁵“And the esteem of יהוה shall be revealed, and all flesh together shall see it. For the mouth of יהוה has spoken.”

Yeshua will return to *Tsiyon* to establish the Kingdom of YAH on earth (cf. *Zechariah* 2:10-13).

In this regard, it is tragic that most mainstream Christian denominations have deceived themselves into believing that they are the true recipients of ethnic Israel's blessings. In general, these more than 41 000 denominations confuse YAH's plan for the nations (and for *Yisra'el*) with YAH's plan for the 'church'. To confirm this statement, look at the “church architecture” or theology of the major Christian denominations in the world today. The confessions of the Catholics, Methodists, Lutherans, Presbyterians and many more all assume that the Christian church constitutes the “true covenant nation of YAH”. They see themselves as the “reconstituted *Yisra'el*” and are firmly convinced that ethnic Israel has been displaced from her privileged position, even reduced to the dustbin of history. Of course, theologians of these denominations may not openly declare that the church replaces *Yisra'el*, but their continued disregard for the covenant promises of YAH and their systematic reinterpretation of all the prophecies given to *Yisra'el* suggest otherwise. What makes this more misleading is that there are clear teachings on the subject of ethnic Israel from the pages of the Apostolic Scriptures. As *Sha'ul* taught us, the *mysterion* (μυστήριον), secret, of YAH's great plan of worldwide salvation includes the future restoration and glory of *Yisra'el* (cf. *Romiyim* 11:11-36). The leading church leaders need to reconsider their theological assumptions, especially as the world's day of judgment is fast approaching. *Yeshua* warned:

Mattithyahu 20 ¹⁶“Thus the last shall be first, and the first last. For many are called, but few chosen.”

YAH's salvation was first⁴ given to the 'Jews' by the 'Jews' who were *porosis* (πώρωσις), partially hardened, by the sovereign hand of YAH so that the blessing of the new covenant could be extended to the non-'Jews'

⁴ Although this word refers to one tribe of *Yisra'el*, for the sake of uniformity, it will be used throughout this study as a collective name for the Hebrew nation at the time of the wilderness journey, their exile, and *Yeshua*'s ministry.

(Gentiles). This is the idea regarding “first-shall-be-last”. However, Scripture emphasises that the ‘Jewish’ people will indeed accept YAH’s salvation at the end of the age and that the prophetic pronouncements for ethnic Israel and Tsiyon will be completely fulfilled – once again the principle of “last-shall-be-first”.

After the Great Tribulation period, *Yom יהוה*, the day of YAH, *Yeshua* will establish the Millennial Kingdom on earth and all the ‘Jews’ who were taken into exile will be gathered back to *Yisra’el*. Interestingly, some sages state this as *תְּחִיַּת הַמֵּתִים* (*t’chee-Yât hâ-mê-Teem*), the resurrection from the dead (cf. *Yeshayahu* 60:4). In addition, all the surviving nations will flock to the land and bring gifts in praise and worship of the YAH of *Yisra’el* (cf. *Yeshayahu* 60:6-9). *Rashi* notes that the reference to the “camels of *Midyan*” may allude to the patriarch *Yosēph* who was restored to his father after exile. (In this regard we see how *Yeshua* will be made known to the ‘Jewish’ people, although He was ‘hidden’ from them for a season [a period of time].) “Those who fly like clouds” may refer to the souls of deceased ‘Jews’ who are brought back to *Yisra’el* at this time (cf. *Yeshayahu* 60:8). The walls of the city of *Yerushalayim* will be rebuilt by other nations and foreign kings will serve and honour YAH’s nation (cf. *Yeshayahu* 60:10). The gates of the city will be open so that the wealth of the nations can be poured into *Tsiyon*, and the whole world will be subject to *Mashiach*’s rule (cf. *Yeshayahu* 60:11-12). As part of all these promises, we also see:

☞ *Yeshayahu* 60 ¹⁶“And you shall suck the milk of the nations, and shall suckle the breast of sovereigns. And you shall know that I, *יהוה*, your Saviour and your Redeemer, am the Mighty One of *Ya’aqob*.”

☞ *Yeshayahu* 60 ¹⁸“Violence shall no longer be heard in your land, neither wasting nor ruin within your borders. And you shall call your walls Deliverance, and your gates Praise.”

The *haftarah* ends with a glimpse into the future of the new heaven and earth, a place where YAH’s glory will illuminate *Tsiyon* forever:

Yeshayahu 60 ¹⁹“No longer is the sun your light by day, nor does the moon give light to you for brightness, but *יהוה* shall be to you an everlasting light, and your *Elohim* your comeliness. ²⁰“No longer does your sun go down, nor your moon withdraw itself, for *יהוה* shall be your everlasting light, and the days of your mourning shall be ended.”

This statement is reminiscent of an earlier prophecy:

Yeshayahu 30 ²⁶“And the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day that *יהוה* binds up the breach of His people, and heals the wound of His blows.”

It is very possible that this statement alludes to the Millennial Reign of Peace, while the prophecy refers to YAH himself being the *or olam*, Eternal Light, the “heavenly *Yerushalayim* from above” (cf. *Hazon* 21:23; 22:5). In both cases the imagery of intense light indicates a greater understanding of YAH’s Presence:

Qorintiyim Aleph 13 12a For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face.

This is the image of eternal comfort, where *Tsiyon* will be established on earth, just as YAH always planned:

Yeshayahu 60 ²⁰“No longer does your sun go down, nor your moon withdraw itself, for *יהוה* shall be your everlasting light, and the days of your mourning shall be ended. ²¹“And your people, all of them righteous, shall inherit the earth forever – a branch of My planting, a work of My hands, to be adorned.”

Briefly, this unique *haftarah*, the sixth of seven “*Haftarot* of Consolation”, describes the complete salvation of the ‘Jewish’ people (cf. *Romiyim* 11:26; *Yeshayahu* 59:20-21; *Yirmeyahu* 3:17; *Yehezqel* 37:21; 39:25; *Hoshēa* 3:5; *Yo’el* 3:16; *Amos* 9:14-15, *Mikah* 7:15, *Zekaryah* 10:12). The return of *Yeshua* cannot occur until “all *Yisra’el*” is saved:

Romiyim 11 ²⁶And so all *Yisra'el* shall be saved, as it has been written, “**The Deliverer shall come out of Tsiyon, and He shall turn away wickedness from Ya'aqob**,” [emphasis original]

Compare also the end of the previous chapter, 59:20-21. *YAH* promised *Tsiyon* to become a praise in all the earth, and He will fulfill His word to the ‘Jewish’ people. It is therefore our earnest desire to see *Yisra'el* “arise and shine” because of the esteem of *YAH*’s salvation given in *Yeshua*, the Anointed One.

However, there is another side to this story – the selfishness of the *Y'hudim*, or as we have called them until now, the ‘Jews’, who build a fence around the *Torah* so that other nations cannot partake of it. Just like the Catholics who believe that they can change their Scriptures at will, the ‘Jews’ claim that the *Torah* was given only to them, as the “chosen nation”. As a result, a mutual hatred has arisen between ‘Jews’ and Christians and even some *Torah* believers. It is an established fact that, by the nature of the original language, the ‘Jews’ have a much better knowledge and insight into the *TaNakh* than most other people. We must therefore never just dismiss any writings as unacceptable and this includes the *Mishnah* and both versions of the *Talmud*. Although there are many inconsistencies and non-‘Jews’ are referred to as dung in great detail, the writings contain certain truths that we will not find anywhere else. This again comes down to the “fish-and-bones” idea. We should remove the bones from the fish and not throw out the baby with the bathwater!

A similar hatred that the ‘Jews’ have for the non-‘Jews’ has unfortunately also arisen in the opposite direction: anti-Semitism. This is where everything that is ‘Jewish’ is summarily rejected without being thoroughly examined. Remember the words of *Sha'ul*:

Tas'loniqim Aleph 5 ²¹prove them [prophecies] all. Hold fast what is good.

None of us have ever had the opportunity to read any translation of the *Bavli Talmud* or *Yerushalmi Talmud* in its entirety, let alone study it. When certain negative thoughts are found in them, most people discard it and refuse to read further. This is a pity, because the books do contain treasures, but they must be explored with discernment, under guidance of the *Ruach HaQodesh*.

The *talmid* of love, *Yoḥanan*, was part of the inner circle of *Yeshua*. He experienced the transfiguration of *Yeshua* with *Kēpha* and *Ya'aqob* and, as requested, did not mention or write anything about it until after *Yeshua* rose from the dead. However, he recorded the following event in full so that everyone would be fully aware of it. When a woman from *Shomeron* wanted to draw water at the well of *Ya'aqob* in *Shekem*, *Yeshua* asked her to give Him water as well. After a short exchange, we hear His words:

Yoḥanan 4 ²²“You worship what you do not know. We worship what we know, because the deliverance is of the *Yehuḏim*.”

There are several references⁵ to ‘Jews’ to be found in the footnote. In order to ensure that there is no uncertainty about the meaning of this verse, here are some other translations:

- 🏆 **Yoḥanan 4** ²²You give worship, but without knowledge of what you are worshipping: we give worship to what we have knowledge of: for salvation comes from the Jews. (BBE)
- 🏆 **Yoḥanan 4** ²²You worship that which you don't know. We worship that which we know; for salvation is from the Judeans. (HNV)
- 🏆 **Yoḥanan 4** ²²You people don't know what you are worshipping; we worship what we do know, because salvation comes from the Jews. (CJB)
- 🏆 **Yoḥanan 4** ²²Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for yeshu'ah is of the *Yahudiym*. (תא Cepher)

⁵ *Mizmor* 147:19; *Yeshayahu* 2:3; 14:1; 56:6-8; *Yeḥezqēl* 47:22-23; *Zekaryah* 2:10-11; 8:23; *Romiyim* 2:20; 3:2; 9:4, *Ḥazon* 21:12; 21:24

The words 'deliverance', 'salvation' and "yeshu'ah" all mean the same thing: salvation. So what *Yeshua* is trying to convey to this woman (and each of us) is that salvation comes from one tribe of *Ya'aqob*'s children, the tribe of *Y'hudah*, but the other tribes will also benefit from it, as well as those grafted in. After all, it was *Y'hudah* who prevented *Yoseph* from being killed by selling him to slave traders instead. However, the same cannot be said of the other tribes when *Yeshua* was hanged on a torture stake; there may even have been people from the tribe of *Y'hudah* who shouted just as loudly for Him to be hanged!

The fact remains: *Yeshua* comes from the Semitic tribes and he is our salvation, the fulfillment of prophecies that we already learn in *Bereshith* 3:15, 49:10 and many other verses after that. He was a Hebrew, from the tribe of *Y'hudah* and always will be. Therefore, if we want to discredit the original covenant nation that *YAH* established in an anti-Semitic way, even the 'Jews', we also do it to ourselves, as part of the *Yisra'el* that *Yeshua*, as the living *Torah*, reestablished for all through the renewal of the original covenant received at *Sinai*.

Let it be our goal to live as *Yeshua* lived in every way, while also teaching others accordingly. If your family and friends do not respond to your outreach, leave them to their own devices and reach out to strangers; reach out to people in hospitals, prisons, institutions and bring the Word of *YAH* as He will equip you through *Ruach haQodesh*.

Shabbat shalom!

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12 Elul, 5785 / 4 September 2025

Sources:

We prefer to not use the word 'God', because of personal conviction. In most cases, unless quoted from another source, it will be replaced by '*Elohim*' or inflections of the same word.

All citing of Scripture is taken from *The Scriptures* 2009⁶, unless indicated differently.

Albert Barnes' Notes on the Bible

Messianic *Torah* with Commentary – Gary Gardner Ph.D. (Kindle Edition)

Artscroll Sotne Edition *Chumash*

John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible

The Expository Notes of Dr. Thomas L. Constable

Faithlife Study Bible

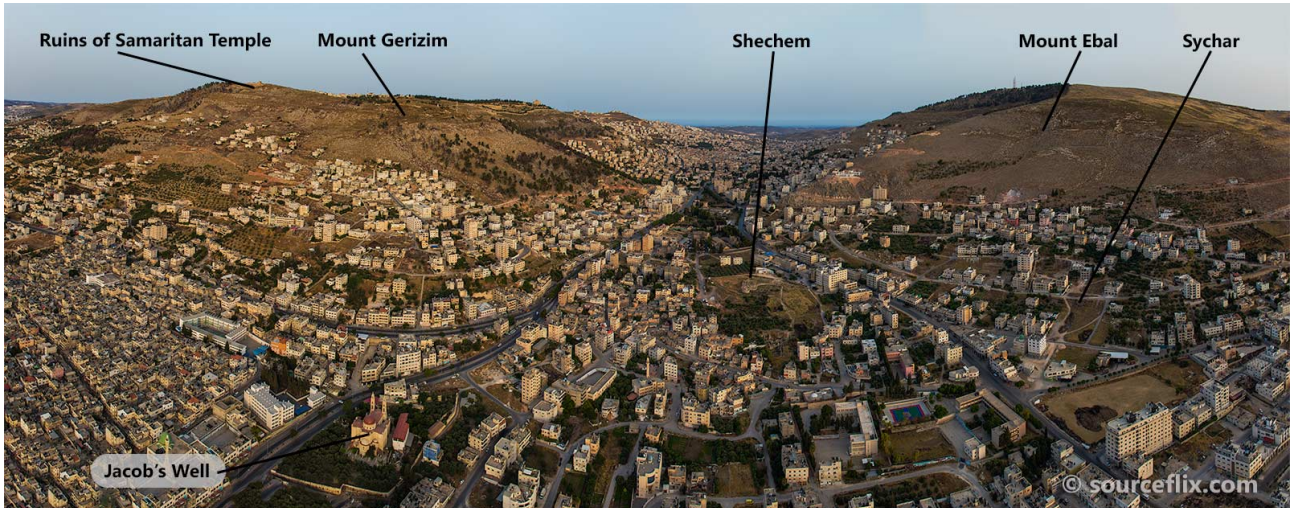
Adam Clarke's 1810/1825 commentary and critical notes on the Bible

The Word of יהוה is free, therefore this study may be distributed free of charge, provided no changes are made.

⁶ <https://isr-messianic.org/>

Addendum A

The town (city) of *Shekem* (now Nablus) as it looks today. This photo was taken from the east, as the nation of *Yisra'el* would have entered into the land at that time. The people of *Shomeron* used to worship on the mountain and the remains of their temple is shown on the far left. Below this we see the fountain/well of *Ya'aqob* where *Yeshua* spoke to the woman.



In the words of Scripture (*Debarim* 27:14-26):

The *Lěwite* shall then declare and say to all the men of *Yisra'el* with a loud voice:

Cursed is the man who

- ☞ makes a carved or cast image, which is an abomination to *YAH* – the work of the hands of a craftsman and setting it up in secret;
- ☞ dishonours his father or his mother;
- ☞ moved his neighbor's boundary line;
- ☞ leads a blind man astray on a strange road;
- ☞ perverts righteous judgement for the stranger, the orphan, and the widow;
- ☞ lies with his father's wife, because he has uncovered his father's nakedness;
- ☞ lies with any animal;
- ☞ lies with his sister, the daughter of his father or the daughter of his mother;
- ☞ lies with his mother-in-law;
- ☞ kills his neighbour in secret;
- ☞ accepts a bribe to kill an innocent person;
- ☞ does not confirm the words of this law by doing them.

In order to ensure that everyone understood what was being said, at the end of a curse, the entire nation had to respond: '*Aměn*' - It is true.