

מַטּוֹת

Mattot

(Tribes)

B'midbar [Numbers] 30:1-32:42

Obey – or Else!

B'midbar (Numbers) 33:56

“And it shall come to pass, that, as I thought to do to them, so will I do to you.”

YHWH gave some very specific instructions to Israel through Moshe that they were to carry out when they entered into the land that YHWH had promised to Avraham, Yitzchak and Ya'aqov. Let's look at what those instructions included. This is not a complete list, but a general overview.

B'midbar (Numbers) 33:51-52

51 “Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them, ‘When you pass over the Yarden into the land of Cana’an,

52 Then you shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you, and destroy all their figured stones, and destroy all their molten images, and demolish all their high places.’”

In this week's Torah portion YHWH specifically commands Israel that when they cross over the Yarden River that they are to drive out all the inhabitants of the land. Israel is to destroy all those things that they have built in the land that pertain to false worship. They are to completely destroy these things.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 7:25-26

25 “The graven images of their gods shall you burn with fire; you shall not covet the silver or the gold that is on them, nor take it for yourself, lest you be snared by it; for it is an abomination to YOU'RE YOUR Elohim.

26 And you shall not bring an abomination into your house, and become a banned thing like it; you shall utterly detest it, and you shall utterly abhor it; for it is a banned thing.”

Many of these idols and other items of false worship are made out of pure gold. But Israel is commanded not to keep these things. She is commanded to utterly destroy these items. The gold or silver or other precious metal that was fashioned into these images of false worship is unclean and it is

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B'midbar [Numbers] 33:1-36:13

not possible for us to cleanse it, they must be completely destroyed. Otherwise it will become a snare and a stumbling stone for us. The value of it makes no difference in the eyes of YHWH. We are to hear and obey His Voice in this matter.

Shemot (Exodus) 23:24

“You shall not bow down to their gods, nor serve them, nor do after their works; but you shall utterly overthrow them, and break in pieces their pillars.”

The nations that lived in the land at the time of the first crossing over worshipped many false gods. All of these practices are abominable to YHWH and Israel is not to do any of them for YHWH hates them all. What YHWH has commanded Israel to do is to destroy everything that has anything to do with false worship. There are to be no exceptions and no exclusions. If it has anything whatsoever to do with false worship, then Israel is commanded to destroy it.

Shemot (Exodus) 23:31-33

31 “And I will set your border from the Red Sea even to the sea of the Philistines, and from the wilderness to the River; for I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand; and you shall drive them out before you.

32 You shall make no covenant with them, nor with their gods.

33 They shall not dwell in your land, lest they make you sin against Me; for if you serve their gods, it will surely be a snare to you.”

On a side note the land that YHWH describes in the above passage is much larger than the land which is commanded to be divided by lot. All this land belongs to Israel because YHWH gave it to them, but not all the land given to Israel was to be divided by lot among the twelve tribes.

Please note that Israel is to make no covenant with any of the inhabitants of the land. As we will see shortly, the making of these covenants also includes the marriage covenant, one of the most sacred of all covenants. Furthermore, Israel is not to make any covenant, agreement or pledge concerning these false gods. What Israel is commanded to do is to destroy them completely.

YHWH warns us that if this commandment is not obeyed completely, then what will result is that in the manner that it is not completely carried out, this will become a snare. As one can read later in Scripture this does in fact come to pass in exactly the way that YHWH said that it would.

Israel did fail to drive out completely the inhabitants of the land and as a result have been continually vexed by them and their descendants ever since. Even at one point being tricked into making a covenant with some of the inhabitants because they failed to seek YHWH in the matter before and even after they discovered that they covenant which had been made was made under false pretenses. Israel is to serve YHWH and to seek His will and His ways. When she fails to do this, then dire consequences for Israel come about as a result.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 7:1-5

1 "When YHWH your Elohim shall bring you into the land where you go in to possess it, and shall cast out many nations before you, the Hittite, and the Girgashite, and the Amorite, and the Canaanite, and the Perizzite, and the Hivite, and the Yebusite, seven nations greater and mightier than you;

2 "and when YHWH your Elohim shall deliver them up before you, and you shall smite them; then you shall utterly destroy them; you shall make no covenant with them, nor show mercy to them;

3 neither shall you make marriages with them; your daughter you shall not give to his son, nor his daughter shall you take to your son.

4 For he will turn away your son from following Me, that they may serve other gods; so will the anger of YHWH be kindled against you, and He will destroy you quickly.

5 But thus shall you deal with them; you shall break down their altars, and dash in pieces their pillars, and hew down their Asherim, and burn their graven images with fire."

YHWH tells us that there are seven nations which Israel is commanded to kill and destroy completely. Israel is specifically not to intermarry with any of these nations. Doing so will cause our children to go and worship their false gods and turn them away from worshipping YHWH our Elohim. If this happens then the anger of YHWH will burn against Israel and YHWH will come and destroy Israel (see verse 4).

What Israel is commanded to do is to destroy these nations and all that they possess, particularly all those things that they have and have built up in order to worship their false gods.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 20:16-18

16 "But of the cities of these peoples, that YHWH your Elohim gives you for an inheritance, you shall save alive nothing that breathes;

17 but you shall utterly destroy them; the Hittite, and the Amorite, the Canaanite, and the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Yebusite; as YHWH your Elohim has commanded you;

18 so that they do not teach you to do after all their abominations, which they have done to their gods; so would you sin against YHWH your Elohim."

YHWH specifically instructs Israel through Moshe that of those nations which dwell in that portion of the land that is to be divided by lot among Israel, there is to be nothing left alive that breathes. This command includes all animals and livestock belonging to these nations as well as all the people regardless of gender or age. Israel is commanded to kill them all. YHWH explains why He has given Israel this commandment. So that all those abominations that these nations do in the worship of their false gods will not be passed on to Israel and Israel play the harlot against YHWH our Elohim.

B'midbar (Numbers) 33:55

"But if you will not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you, then shall those that you let remain of them be as pricks in your eyes, and as thorns in your sides, and they shall vex you in the land wherein you dwell.

However, if Israel makes the very unwise choice to not fully and completely obey YHWH in this matter, then these same people whom YHWH has commanded Israel to destroy will become an occasion of her own downfall and sin against YHWH. These same people whom Israel would choose to unwisely spare will become a means to vex Israel who dwells in the land.

Furthermore, YHWH is very clear when He in His instructions.

B'midbar (Numbers) 33:56

“And it shall come to pass, that, as I thought to do to them, so will I do to you.”

If Israel will not completely obey, leaving nothing undone, then YHWH will come and do to Israel what He had commanded Israel to do to these nations. Simply put this means death and destruction.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 30:15-20

15 “See, I have set before you this day life and good, and death and evil;

16 in that I command you this day to love YHWH your Elohim, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His ordinances, that you may live and multiply, and that YHWH your Elohim may bless you in the land where you go in to possess it.

17 But if your heart turn away, and you will not hear, but shall be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them;

18 I denounce you this day, that you shall surely perish; you shall not prolong your days in the land, where you pass over the Yarden to go in to possess it.

19 I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse; therefore choose life, that you may live, you and your seed;

20 to love YHWH your Elohim, to obey His Voice, and to cleave to Him; for He is your life, and the length of your days; that you may dwell in the land which YHWH swore to your fathers, to Avraham, to Yitzchak, and to Ya'aqov, to give them.”

YHWH has set before us life and death and His desire is for us to choose life. Please choose life. In order to choose life we must obey His Voice. Later in the history of Israel king Shaul found this out, but only too late.

Sh'muel Aleph (1st Samuel) 15:22-23

22 And Sh'muel said, “Does YHWH have as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the Voice of YHWH? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.

23 For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as idolatry and iniquity. Because you have rejected the word of YHWH, He has also rejected you from being king.”

YHWH has given us instructions through Moshe and His prophets and finally, He has sent us His own Son to show us the way in which we are to walk. It is a very simple matter really, to obey His Voice brings life and blessings. If one chooses not to obey His Voice, then life and blessings do not come, what comes is death and destruction.

Israel had never completed this commandment concerning the possession of the land. We are coming up to the time of the second and greater exodus. When this happens and YHWH prepares Israel to enter into the land once again, then she will be faced with these same commandments. YHWH expects Israel to hear and obey His Voice. Whether she does or not will determine whether she is blessed or cursed.

The same is true for the individual as well. If an individual desires to be blessed by YHWH, then that person will understand that His blessings can only come if a person strives to hear and obey His Voice.

ABBA YHWH open our ears so that we may hear Your Voice, so that we may obey Your Voice, in the name of Yeshua our Mashiach, Amein.

חַזַּק חַזַּק וְנִתְחַזַּק בְּמָשִׁיחַ יֵשׁוּעַ

Chazak! Chazak! Venischazeik B'Mashiach Yeshua!

Be strong, be strong, and may you be strengthened in Mashiach Yeshua!

Shabbat Shalom

Zerubbabel ben Emunah

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