

וַאֲתַחֲנַן

Va'etchannan

(and I pleaded)

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 3:23-7:11

Enough!

Deuteronomy 3:23-29

23 "And I pleaded YHWH at that time, saying,

24 'Adonai YHWH You have begun to show Your servant Your greatness, and Your strong hand; for what god is there in heaven or in earth, that can do according to Your works, and according to Your mighty acts?

25 Let me go over, I pray, and see the good land that is beyond the Yarden (Jordan), that goodly mountain, and Lebanon.'

26 But YHWH was angry with me for your sakes, and did not listen to me; and YHWH said to me, 'Enough! Speak no more to me of this matter.

27 Get up to the top of Pisgah, and lift up your eyes westward, and northward, and southward, and eastward, and behold with your eyes; for you shall not go over this Yarden (Jordan).

28 But charge Yehoshua, and encourage him, and strengthen him; for he shall go over before this people, and he shall cause them to occupy the land which you shall see.'

29 So we abode in the valley over against Beth-peor."

When I read these verses, verse 27 brings a question to my mind. I wonder if Moshe really understood what it was that YHWH had just commanded him to do? If a person is standing on a mountain and they look in all four directions; i.e., west, north, south and east, and the only thing that person sees is the Land promised to Avraham, Yitzchak and Ya'akov, then does it not follow that one is standing in the midst of that Land? It is true that YHWH would not allow Moshe to cross over the Yarden (Jordan). But this commandment does not change the fact that he was already in the Land; it was just that it was on the east side of the Yarden and he (Moshe) wanted to cross over to the west side of the Yarden.

Rather it was to be Yehoshua that would lead the people across the Yarden into His Land. This teaches us something very important that we should not miss.

Gilyana [Revelation] 12:17

And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and went away to make war with the rest of her seed, that keep the commandments of Elohim, and hold the testimony of Yeshua;

Please note who it is that Satan, which is symbolized by the dragon, makes war against here in this passage. Notice that those with whom he makes war against have two qualifications. First, they keep the commandments of Elohim. That simply means that they keep and obey Torah. Second, they also have the testimony of Yeshua. That simply means that they are true followers of Yeshua. If both of these things are not true in a person's life, then they are not on his hit list.

Gilyana [Revelation] 14:12

Here is the endurance of the saints, they that keep the commandments of Elohim, and the faith of Yeshua.

Notice how it is that we are to overcome. It is because we keep and obey Torah (keep the commandments of Elohim), and we also have a true and vital faith in Yeshua. If both of these things are not present and true in a person's life, then eventually that person will succumb to the attacks of Satan and will be overcome by him.

Yisrael Shema

Deuteronomy 4:1

“And now, Yisrael, shema (hear & obey) to the statutes and to the ordinances, which I teach you, to do them; that you may live, and go in and occupy the land which YHWH, the Elohim of your fathers, assigns you.”

These two words “Yisrael” (ישראל) and “shema” (שמע) appear in the book of Devarim together twelve times. Sometimes it is found in the same order as in the verse above, at other times in the reverse order, and twice these two words are not together, although they are in the same verse.

“The Shema,” which is found in Devarim (Deuteronomy) 6:4 is one of those places where the order is reversed. We will examine this more closely later in this study.

Shema (שמע) basically means to listen carefully with the intent of obeying.

Please note that in the above verse, in order for Yisrael to be able to occupy the Land assigned to her, she must obey all of the statutes (חוקים) and all of the ordinances (משפטים) that YHWH our Elohim has commanded her. Please note that this is much more than just the Ten Commandments. The החוקים (hachuqqim) and the המשפטים (hamishpatim) make up the 613 commandments of Torah. Moshe is talking about the entire Torah. If we are not willing to keep every single commandment of Torah, then we will not be able to live in His land. No exceptions allowed!

No Adding or Subtracting Allowed!

Devarim [Deuteronomy] 4:2

You shall not add to the word which I command you, neither shall you take away from it, that you may keep the commandments of YHWH your Elohim which I command you.

If a person adds something to His commandment, several things are taking place. First, that person is presuming to speak for YHWH or even as YHWH. Basically, that person has set himself up as YHWH Elohim, judging what is right and what is wrong, rather than just being a doer of the Word.

Ya'aqov [James] 4:11

Speak not one against another, brethren. He that speaks against a brother, or judges his brother, speaks against the Torah, and judges the Torah; but if you judge the Torah, you are not a doer of the Torah, but a judge.

If we judge for ourselves what we should do, and what we should not do, from Torah, then we have set ourselves up as a judge of the Torah. We have set ourselves over and above the Torah, making our words to be of higher importance than YHWH's words of the Torah. Brethren, we should not do this. We should simply do as Ya'aqov admonishes us to do.

Ya'aqov [James] 1:22

You be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deluding your own selves.

If a person does not obey Torah, then he has truly deluded and deceived himself. Self delusion is one of the strongest delusions there is, and all but impossible to overcome. Let us simply be doers of His commandments, not taking away from, nor adding to them!

The church today has added to His commandments. They have added things like "holy" days; i.e., Christmas and Easter. They have also attempted to change the Shabbat from the seventh day of the week to the first day of the week.

All such adding is sin!

Furthermore, if a person takes away from His commandments, he again is presuming to speak in His place. YHWH commands us to keep each and every commandment. If we are, in fact, His people, then it follows that we should obey Him in all of His commandments. Otherwise, how can we be His people?

Again, the church is guilty of doing this very thing. They have twisted the original meaning and intent of Scripture to make it say something that it does not say. Thus, the church teaches the doctrine that Yeshua came to do away with the Law (Torah).

However, to even suggest that the Torah is not in effect, is sin according to the Scripture passage above, for it is taking away from His Torah.

All such subtracting is sin!

If we truly desire to return to the land and to be a part of His people Israel, then we need to stop adding to and taking away from His commandments.

Ba'al Worshippers destroyed

Devarim [Deuteronomy] 4:3

"Your eyes have seen what YHWH did because of Ba'al-peor; for all the men that followed Ba'al-peor, YHWH your Elohim has destroyed them from among you."

YHWH does not tolerate false worship. If a person makes the very poor choice of including the worship of pagan idols with his worship of YHWH (mixed worship), then YHWH will destroy that person. This is, of course, unless that person truly repents. Please make no mistake about this, these are His words!

Should this not admonish us to be as pure as possible in our worship of Him?

Should we not all do the hard work of purifying ourselves before Him?

Let us take, for example, the pronunciation of His Name. There is much discussion on just exactly what is the correct pronunciation of His name, YHWH. And we should always strive to achieve the correct pronunciation. But just because a person does not know exactly how to say YHWH, is this a valid reason to use pagan names and titles? No! Of course it isn't. In fact, it is a violation of Scripture.

Yeshua taught that all who truly worship the Father must worship Him in "Spirit and in truth." The church really knows how to worship in the spirit, but what spirit are they using to worship in when the church tosses aside truth?

Is there anyone in our day who does not know that Yeshua was not born on Christmas? I certainly have not found anyone recently. There is nothing about Christmas that has anything to do with His truth. So why be involved in it?

There are many other things that we could also discuss; e.g., Easter, the names, Shabbat or the sun-day, festivals, circumcision and many other topics that Scripture has much to say about. Yet, the church twists and reasons away, substitutes and adds to, in order to maintain control over the people, rather than teaching the people how to live under the control of YHWH. Is it not time that we simply submit to the fullness of all His commandments and obey them with a whole heart, mind and being, to show that we are truly His people? Do His people reason away

a commandment of His so that he does not have to walk in it? No, His people do not do that! His people obey Him and obey His commandments because they love Him!

Clinging to YHWH Brings Life

Devarim [Deuteronomy] 4:4-8

4 "But you that did cling to YHWH your Elohim are alive every one of you this day.

5 Behold, I have taught you statutes and ordinances, even as YHWH my Elohim commanded me, that you should do so in the midst of the land where you go in to occupy it.

6 Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples, that shall hear all these statutes, and say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.

7 For what great nation is there, that has an Elohim so near to them, as YHWH our Elohim is when so ever we call upon him?

8 And what great nation is there, that has statutes and ordinances so righteous as all this Torah, which I set before you this day?"

Yisrael has spent the last forty years wandering in the wilderness because they rebelled against YHWH and refused to obey His Voice. Now at the end of those forty years, only those who had a heart to obey are alive. YHWH sent many plagues upon Israel because of their incessant complaining and their unwillingness to obey His Voice. YHWH simply destroyed them. Only those whose heart was true to obey all His commandments were left alive.

Galatians 6:7

Be not deceived; Elohim is not mocked; for whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap.

A person can fool many people into believing that he is a Torah keeper. A person can fool me as well. But there is One he can never fool: YHWH! Be sure of this one thing, YHWH knows what is in our hearts.

Ivrim [Hebrews] 4:13

And there is no creature hidden from his sight; but all things are naked and laid bare before the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.

If a person truly desires to obey YHWH and to please Him, then this is a wonderful verse. However, if a person is holding back part of his life and not willing to go all the way with YHWH, then He will know and the person will reap accordingly. You cannot fool YHWH!

What does a wise person look like?

A person showing wisdom and understanding is one who is living Torah; i.e., all the statutes and ordinances. Please note that the Torah is righteous.

Romans 7:12

So that the Torah is holy, and the commandment holy, and righteous, and good.

So it follows, that if we are to be a righteous people then we must keep and do the Torah. If we are not obeying Torah, then there is no way that we can be considered righteous. Mind you now, we are not talking about self-righteousness here. Keeping Torah does not give one self-righteousness, but rather it is through one's obedience to Torah that He is able to impart His righteousness to him.

This then makes many passages in the Brit Chadasha (NT) that speak of being righteous easier to understand when taken in this context and in this Scriptural understanding.

Eye Witnesses

Devarim [Deuteronomy] 4:9

"Only take heed to yourself, and keep your being diligently, lest you forget the things which your eyes saw, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life; but make them known to your children and your children's children;"

The name of this book is Devarim (דברים). In the Hebrew text it takes the form of Had'varim (הדברים). We find this word in this form in the verse above. Translators that did not take the time to understand the Hebrew mind often mistranslated this word in the current passage into English as "things".

One could translate that phrase into English as:

"...lest you forget the words which your eyes saw..."

But how does a person see "words"?

This seems to be a direct reference to the giving of the Ten Words (Ten Commandments) when the entire Nation witnessed their giving with all the accompanying signs and wonders, at which point they begged YHWH not to speak to them directly. They asked that YHWH speak to Moshe and then Moshe speak to them.

Some of the sages even have taught that YHWH caused the Nation to see His words as He spoke them. That understanding would certainly be in line with what the text literally states as well as this passage in Shemot.

Shemot [Exodus] 20:22

And YHWH said to Moshe, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, 'You yourselves have seen that I have spoken with you from heaven.'"

But the main point in Devarim 4:9 is that we are to know His commandments well enough to teach our children and grandchildren as we “see” the words of the commandments obeyed in our everyday lives. So they in turn, can pass the commandments on to their children as well. Why?

Because the Torah is our life!

Not to have all of Torah is death.

The Host of Heaven

Devarim [Deuteronomy] 4:19

and lest you lift up your eyes to heaven, and when you see the sun and the moon and the stars, even all the host of heaven, you be drawn away and worship them, and serve them, which YHWH your Elohim has allotted to all the peoples under the whole heaven.

I find this passage a very intriguing passage. Why? Notice the end of this verse in which it teaches us that YHWH has given as an allotment the host of heaven to the nations of this world. The nations will worship either the sun, the moon, or the stars. Christianity is basically a sun worshipping cult. Islam worships the moon. And Babylon worships the stars. Every single religion can all be traced to one of these three types of worship. And all three of them can be traced to the tower of Babel.

To be involved in any one or all three of these types of worship is wrong and is sin. We are to come out of these false systems and worship the One who created all these things in the heavens, rather than the creation.

Watch!

Devarim [Deuteronomy] 4:23-24

23 “Watch yourself, lest you forget the covenant of YHWH your Elohim, which he made with you, and make yourself a graven image in the form of anything which YHWH your Elohim has forbidden.

24 For YHWH your Elohim is a devouring fire, a jealous El.”

In verses 15-19 preceding this passage, we find the admonishment that Yisrael is not to make any likenesses of anything, male or female, animal, crawly thing, bird, fish (anything alive), nor the sun, the moon, nor stars, nor anything else in the heavens, to worship them and serve them.

Here is where religious symbols cross the line. While most people would object that they do not worship a cross or a star or any other such thing, here is the problem.

YHWH is the Unseen One. He has neither form nor shape.

To adopt a shape or form of any kind as representing Him in some fashion, is actually misrepresenting Him.

Let us take, for example, the use of religious logos. A logo (image) of any kind does not, nor can it accurately represent Him. In fact, He commands us not to do this.

But, one will object, "We do not use the star or the cross to represent Him." Then what is it representing? It is a religious symbol, is it not? The person so using such a symbol: is he not using it to identify that he belongs to Him? So is not the symbol supposed to tell the observer that the person displaying the symbol belongs to YHWH? So ultimately, does not the symbol represent YHWH? Can we not be honest and admit that this is breaking this commandment?

If we expect to go back and occupy the Land, then we have to obey all of His commandments, not just the ones we find easy to do.

So what if other people do not understand why we are doing something? As long as we can point to Scripture and say, "Thus says YHWH," what true objections can they have?

And should we not live our lives to be pleasing to Him rather than to be pleasing to man?

The Consequences of False Worship

Devarim [Deuteronomy] 4:25-26

25 "When you shall have children, and children's children, and you shall have been long in the land, and shall corrupt yourselves, and make a graven image in the form of anything, and shall do that which is evil in the sight of YHWH your Elohim, to provoke him to anger;

26 I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that you shall soon utterly perish from off the land where to you go over the Yarden (Jordan) to possess it; you shall not prolong your days upon it, but shall utterly be destroyed."

YHWH wants a bride/wife whose heart is fully for Him.

YHWH will accept nothing less than a bride/wife whose heart is fully for Him and Him alone.

If His bride/wife goes after others, particularly due to worshipping a god (idol) other than YHWH our Elohim, then He will take steps to remove those who are going after other gods. These steps include completely destroying the generation that has corrupted itself in worship and are disobedient to His commandments.

Being Given Over

Devarim [Deuteronomy] 4:27-28

27 "And YHWH will scatter you among the peoples, and you shall be left few in number among the nations, where YHWH shall lead you away.

28 And there you shall serve gods, the work of men's hands, wood and stone, which neither see, nor hear, nor eat, nor smell."

In Romiyim chapter 1, shaliach Shaul speaks of this very thing in great detail. We learn that, because Yisrael exchanged the incorruptible for the image of the corruptible, YHWH gave them over to the impurity of their hearts.

Worshipping anything other than YHWH will bring destruction. Because Yisrael did the very thing that He warned against doing, by going and worshipping and serving other gods, He took disciplinary action and removed us from the Land. He then scattered the Nation throughout all the nations of the Earth.

In the Latter Days

Devarim [Deuteronomy] 4:29-31

29 "But from there you shall seek YHWH your Elohim, and you shall find Him, when you search after Him with all your heart and with all your life.

30 When you are in tribulation, and all these things have come upon you, in the latter days you shall return to YHWH your Elohim, and shema (hear and obey) to His Voice;

31 for YHWH your Elohim is a merciful El; He will not fail you, neither destroy you, nor forget the covenant of your fathers which He swore to them."

Please note, that after all these things: namely, that we have gone astray and worshipped other gods, and that YHWH has scattered us throughout all the nations of the world, then in the latter days (which is now), we will begin to seek Him again.

Now this is an amazing thing: because we begin seeking Him with all our heart and life, we will actually find Him. This is a wonderful promise of compassion from YHWH to us! One thing that causes us to begin seeking YHWH again is tribulation (testing). This testing causes us to return to YHWH and to once again begin to hear and obey (shema) His Voice.

Because we are returning to YHWH, verse 31 teaches us that He will be merciful to us and remember the covenant that He made with our fathers. In the verses following these, Moshe asks us to consider that no one has ever heard about any other Elohim Who has taken a people for His own from the midst of another nation with signs and wonders and a mighty hand. He

then brought us to the Mountain and showed us even greater signs and wonders and we heard His Voice.

That It May Go Well With Us

Devarim [Deuteronomy] 4:39-40

39 "Know therefore this day, and return in your heart, that YHWH He is Elohim in heaven above and upon the earth beneath; there is no one else.

40 And you shall keep His statutes, and His commandments, which I command you this day, that it may go well with you, and with your children after you, and that you may prolong your days in the land, which YHWH your Elohim assigned to you, for ever."

There are two separate things that we must understand in our day and in our time. The first is that we must get our act together before YHWH will cause us to reenter His Land. The second is that if we hope to stay there we need to keep our act together.

Both of these can only come about through wholehearted obedience to His Torah commandments from a heart of love for Him. If we are not trying our best to obey Him, He will not bring us back into the Land. It was for the reason of disobedience that He removed us from His Land in the first place. It does not make any sense to think that He will cause us to reenter His Land when we have not purified ourselves and submitted our hearts and lives to Him and His Torah.

Purity

Ya'aqov [James] 3:17

But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without variance, without hypocrisy.

These are some very important words. Please note that His wisdom is first and foremost pure. Peace follows purity, not the other way around. We need to really think about the characteristics of wisdom as listed here. Then, carefully consider some of the encounters that we have had in the past with those who claim to be talmidim of Yeshua who did not exhibit these characteristics. When we have encounters in the future with those who do not exhibit these characteristics, then perhaps we should seriously consider just walking away from that person.

Most in the believing world today (read that as Christians, Messianics, and Nazarenes) work for some type of unity based upon peace. This only comes through the avenue of compromise. Those people so working, compromise purity of life in order to achieve their goal of peace.

This can never lead to lasting peace or even true peace. True peace comes from purity and as the verse above states it is without hypocrisy (no impurity), this means without mixture.

Worldly peace is directly linked to self interest,
Which in itself brings conflict.
This in turn is self-defeating
And the final end is no peace at all.

However, heavenly peace is directly linked to interest in others,
Which in Elohim vanquishes conflict.
This in turn is self-denial
And the final end is peace with all!

YHWH gave me the words to the poem above (1985) as I meditated upon purity and peace and the dependence of peace upon purity. We will deal more with this in this week's Brit portion.

Hear Yisrael

Deuteronomy 5:1

And Moshe called to all Yisrael, and said to them, "Hear, Yisrael, the statutes and the ordinances which I speak in your ears this day, that you may learn them, and observe to do them."

How can a person teach his children something that he does not know? It is not possible.

Before we can teach our children His Torah, we must obey this commandment to learn and do the commandments. Then, we may pass on to the next generation the blessing of Torah. If we do not obey Torah, then it is a given that we will not be able to pass on to our children obedience to Torah.

The Rest of the Parasha

Devarim [Deuteronomy] 5:6-21 is a restatement of the Ten Commandments, which is preceded by Moshe's admonishment to be careful to learn, keep, and do all these commandments that he spoke to them that day, in order to stay in the Land. Please note that he not only spoke to them the Ten Commandments, but his discourse beginning at 5:1 goes through the end of chapter 26. So, since Moshe states several times that he is speaking all these words "today," then this is at the very least a reference to chapters 5-26.

Then we find The Shema in Devarim [Deuteronomy] 6:4-9. Please take careful note of the following verses found after The Shema.

Watch Yourself

Devarim [Deuteronomy] 6:12-15

12 "then beware lest you forget YHWH, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

13 You shall fear YHWH your Elohim; and Him shall you serve, and shall swear by His name.

14 You shall not go after other gods, of the gods of the peoples that are round about you;

15 for YHWH your Elohim in the midst of you is a jealous El; lest the anger of YHWH your Elohim be kindled against you, and He destroys you from off the face of the earth."

Following, serving, worshipping, swearing by another god, or any other such thing, brings the wrath of YHWH Elohim upon those so involved.

Please take the time to reread the above passage. Let it soak into your mind and heart.

YHWH will not tolerate false worship of any kind.

Please examine your heart, mind and actions for anything that is not pleasing to Him. Ask Him to reveal to you any and all impurities so that you can get rid of them. Then do the hard work of actually getting rid of everything that is not pleasing to Him. Please understand that if you pray this prayer that YHWH will actually reveal to you those things that are not pleasing to Him. He will also expect you to get rid of those things that He reveals to you that are not pleasing to Him. If you are willing to do that, then by all means pray such a prayer.

Please understand that it is not what I think that matters. It is what He says in His Word and what the Set-apart Spirit says to us personally that we must obey. He is the one that we must please, not some man; actually, not any man. If there is a man whom YHWH has placed over us in authority, then such a man will surely be pleased with one's following hard after YHWH and obeying His Voice! And how can we please Him if we are involved in practicing false worship or mixed worship to any degree?

Doing Right and Good in His Sight

Devarim [Deuteronomy] 6:16-18

16 "You shall not tempt YHWH your Elohim, as you tempted him in Massah.

17 You shall diligently keep the commandments of YHWH your Elohim, and His testimonies, and His statutes, which He has commanded you.

18 And you shall do that which is right and good in the sight of YHWH; that it may be well with you, and that you may go in and occupy the good land which YHWH swore to your fathers.”

In this day of the internet a person can easily find any brand of doctrine to follow that the mind and heart can imagine. But He commands us that we are not to do that. Rather, He commands us to do what is right and good in His sight. He does not command us to do what is right and good in our own sight or in the sight of someone else.

We must please Him!

If we are not willing to obey Him in all things then He will not allow us to enter the good Land which He promised to our fathers.

ABBA YHWH, please give us Your wisdom so that we may do that which is right and good in Your sight at all times and in all places. Please remove from us anything and everything that is not pleasing to You. Place in each one of us a growing desire to please You and live for You and obey Your Voice in order that we may enter the good Land soon; in the name of Yeshua our Mashiach. Amein.

Shabbat Shalom

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