

MORDEKAI'S DRASH — יִתְרוֹ



Torah: *Yitro* (Jethro/abundance), *Sh'mot* (Exodus) 18.1-20.23(26)

Haftorah: *Yesha'yahu* (Isaiah) 6.1-7.6, 9.5(6)-6(7)

Suggested Messianic Writings reading: *Mattityahu* (Matthew) 5.8-20

Shalom,

In the previous parashah, Israel had just defeated Amalek, the Amalekites, and now has another “visitor” from the family. What we have here has been essentially a family gathering, for all the involved are descendants of Avraham. Amalek is descended from *Esav* (Esau), the brother who lost his inheritance to *Ya'akov* (Jacob). *Yitro* (Jethro) is descended from Midyan, who was a son of Avraham and Keturah, Avraham's wife after the death of Sarah. The spirit of jealousy that had developed in Esav continued down his family line, and still continues to this day, in all the spiteful attacks against Israel. The children from Keturah do not seem to have as *deep* a need for vengeance, and in our current picture, Yitro from Midyan became an advisor and a helper to Israel.

Many years earlier, Moshe had been a wanderer in the desert when he “happened” upon the camp of Yitro, where he ended up staying and marrying a daughter of this High Priest of Midyan. Now Yitro comes, and throughout the chapter he is described as the father-in-law of Moshe – a role reversal in a sense, as Moshe had become the greater leader.

Yitro had come for two reasons: to bring Moshe's wife and sons back to him, and because he had heard of all the great things that HaShem had done for Israel, bringing them out of Egypt. Amalek had undoubtedly heard the same report, and here we have a contrast in what the mind and heart of a man will lead him to do. Those whose hearts are angry and spiteful will remain the same, if that is their base desire, and as we saw in the case of Pharaoh, their heart will be *strengthened* in that area. A heart that is dark will only become darker, short of receiving *Light* from the Creator. Amalek came to fight, to defeat a hated enemy. “Midyan” came to help out, to impart wisdom. Both had heard of the miraculous rescue of Israel out of Egypt. The ArtScroll commentary notes that, “Miracles alone do not transform the beliefs of the Amaleks of the world; those who refuse to recognize the hand of God will always interpret events to suit their own purposes.” How true that is. Unfortunately, the ArtScroll authors – non-Messianic Jews – do the same when it comes to the miracles surrounding Yeshua.

Yeshua gives us a picture of this contrast between hinder or help in this week's *Messianic Writings* reading, from *Mattityahu* (Matthew) 5, looking at verses 13-14: “You are *Salt for the Land*” – salt is a preservative, and had Amalek used their strength to righteously defend, protect and *preserve* Israel, they would have had a worthy history, but since they chose the opposite, “ADONAI will fight Amalek generation after generation” (Sh'mot 17.16). On the other hand, Yitro from Midyan encouraged Israel to be a *Light for the world*. His advice to Moshe has lasted for millennia: “You should teach them the laws and the teachings, and show them how to live their lives and what work they should do” (Sh'mot 18.20). That is the whole point of Torah, and Yeshua and *Sha'ul* (Saul/Paul) and *Kefa* (Peter) and the others in the Messianic Writings built upon this foundation, as did the prophets and poets and writers of the Tanakh – Isaiah and David and Hosea and Solomon, on and on – “This is how HaShem wants us to live and work, not as the pagans do, but as He does.”

This world is still given the choice of fighting against HaShem and His people, as did Amalek, or supporting the work of HaShem. We can either be worthy salt and preserve the ways of HaShem, or else become tasteless and worthless to His kingdom. We as believers are to be a light and show others how to live their lives in His Light, for we *are* a city on a hill that cannot be hidden. This is what Torah living is all about, serving the One who created us, whose name is Yeshua. His is the Name above *all* names (Eph 1.21; Phil 2.9). He is the One who holds the world in His hand; He is the One in control of all, who has all authority. The Father has basically released all authority into the Son's hands regarding this planet, and when the Son will return to this earth, He will reign for 1000 years and straighten everything out, and “then comes the end, when *He hands over* the kingdom to God the Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet” (1 Cor 15.24-25).

As I have noted many times in past drashes, the true understanding of *Grace* is “the power to do the right thing”. What is the right thing? “...how HaShem wants us to live and work.”

As we serve the One who created us, Yeshua (see Col 1.16), we come to realize that this One who became a man, and is still a man, is somehow God at the same time – fully God, fully man, and a part of the mysterious triune God-head of *Av*, *Ben v'Ruakh*, Father, Son and Spirit. And when we come to that reality, then we have to understand that, as He works in the hidden spiritual realm, that there is an enemy in that hidden realm also, and that enemy is against all who stand with Yeshua.

We are instructed by Sha'ul in Ephesians 6 to put on the full armor of God in our fight against the enemy. Eugene Peterson states it well in his paraphrased Bible called The Message, "God is strong, and he wants you strong. So take everything the Master has set out for you, well-made weapons of the best materials. And put them to use so you will be able to stand up to everything the Devil throws your way. This is no afternoon athletic contest that we'll walk away from and forget about in a couple of hours. This is for keeps, a life-or-death fight to the finish against the Devil and all his angels. Be prepared. You're up against far more than you can handle on your own. Take all the help you can get, every weapon God has issued, so that when it's all over but the shouting you'll still be on your feet" (Eph 6.10-13).

And if we have stood, when it is all over, we will be shouting halleluyah's!

שְׁאַלוּ שְׁלוֹם יְרוּשָׁלַיִם – *Sha'alu shalom Yerushalayim* – Pray for the peace of Jerusalem! Pray for those "Yitro's" to come alongside Israel and stand with her, imparting wisdom from above. Pray for [spiritual] eyes to be opened to see Yeshua for who He is – Messiah and King of Israel.

B'rakhot v'todah rabbah
(Blessings & thank you very much)

Mordekhi

This Yeshua, who has been taken away from you into heaven, will come back to you in just the same way as you saw him go into heaven.
(Acts 1.11 CJB)