



MORDEKAI'S DRASH — KI TETZE

Torah: *Ki Tetze* (When you go out), *D'varim* (Deuteronomy) 21.10-25.19

Haftorah: *Yesha'yahu* (Isaiah) 54:1-10

Suggested *Messianic Writings* reading: 1 Corinthians 5.1-5 [but read entire chapter]

Shalom,

This parashah contains what may seem a set of miscellaneous rulings, but in fact four primary concerns are dealt with here: Holy Warfare (war that is conducted under the leading of ADONAI); sexual issues and family; caring for the poor and needy; and basic humanitarian concerns; in fact, what is dealt with in this parashah are expansions, or further explanations, of commandments 6-10 of the Ten.

We are going to look at one ruling in particular right now, one which touches every one of us who are followers of Yeshua *HaMashiakh* (the Messiah). *D'varim* 21.22-23 say this, "If someone has committed a capital crime and is put to death, then hung on a tree, his body is not to remain all night on the tree, but you must bury him the same day, because a person who has been hanged has been cursed by God - so that you will not defile your land, which Adonai your God is giving you to inherit."

We will first of all note that the terms "hung, hanged" in this particular usage in the Tanakh do not mean hung by the neck on a gallows. In days of old it was pretty much the norm that the dead body of a convicted criminal was put up on a tree, or a stake, as a warning to what happens to one who breaks the law. The body may have been impaled, or the arms may have simply been put up on a crossbeam and tied with rope, and then the stake was placed near some sort of a public roadway to be more visible to passersby.

Contrary to what we often see in the news today, in many ancient middle-east cultures there was somewhat of a respect for a dead body, even of an enemy, in that the body would eventually be buried after a public display, rather than tossed out to rot or be left for the scavengers. But here ADONAI commanded that the body be buried the same day. ADONAI was/is very much against the shedding of innocent blood, and this is a case where the killing of a violent person is justified and necessary under the guidelines of God. The previous parashah ended with a discussion on this topic. When the guilty one is buried the same day he dies, this in a sense purges the land of the bloodguilt brought by the criminal. (Scripture says that life is in the blood, and when a commandment of ADONAI regarding life has been violated, when an innocent life has been taken, that is bloodguilt.) And the statement that the person is "cursed by God," means that the person had already been cursed by God because of their actions and therefore punished and hung on a stake; it does not mean that they were cursed as a *result* of being hung on a stake.

Sha'ul referred to this form of punishment and this exact passage from *D'varim*, in Galatians 3.13: "The Messiah redeemed us from the curse pronounced in the Torah by becoming cursed on our behalf; for the Tanakh says, 'Everyone who hangs from a stake comes under a curse.'" Our Messiah took upon Himself the "curse of the Law". This does NOT mean that the Law was a curse, and that He freed us from that; rather, the meaning of "the curse of the Law" is death, physical and spiritual, a complete separation from the Creator. At the other end, the "blessing of the Law" is life, both in the physical and the spiritual. This is what Moshe meant near the end of *D'varim* (30.19) when he urged Israel to "choose life". A *Messianic Writings* term we are familiar with, which means the same thing as "the curse of the Law," is "the wages of sin is death". One "earns" death by continued disobedience to the Creator of life.

So, for a brief moment in time, Yeshua was actually cursed by His Father – "At about three, Yeshua uttered a loud cry, 'אֱלֹהֵי אֱלֹהֵי לָמָּה שָׁבַקְתָּנִי' Eli! [Ey-lee] Eli! L'mah sh'vaktanee? (My God! My God! Why have you deserted me?)" (*Mattityahu* (Matthew) 27.46). The Hebrew of "curse" in *D'varim* 21.23 is קללה *kah-lahl*, which, as we have studied in the past, is the "lighter" of the two curses found in *B'resheet* (Genesis) 12.3, and essentially means "despised". Yeshua took upon Himself what should have been laid upon each of us. He took upon Himself the sin of the world, He "became sin" (2 Corinthians 5.21) for us. He did not become a sinner, but as the perfect Sacrifice Lamb, the sin of the world was placed upon Him (Isaiah 53.6). He did this for *all* of mankind as the ultimate gift, but when one receives a gift, one must open the gift to get any use of it. This is the meaning of *Mattityahu* 22.14, "For many are called, but few

are chosen". The word *called* in Greek is κλητός *klay-tos'*, which means, "invited". *Chosen*, in Greek, is ἐκλεκτός *ek-lek-tos'*, from which comes our term "elected," but the root means, "make the choice". "Many are invited, but few make the choice."

This is why the righteous Jewish people who were with Yeshua at His death rushed to get His body buried – they knew this commandment, and wanted to do the honorable thing in obedience to ADONAI. This also shows the hypocrisy and vileness of the "Roman puppet" chief priest and those around him, who seemingly cared not about this Law, cared not about ridding the land of bloodguilt; "His blood be on us and on our children!" And from this statement, uttered by the unrighteous crowd who were stirred up by those unrighteous leaders, all of Israel has for centuries been condemned by the church. The fact that the righteous of Israel were obedient to the Father at that same time has meant little to nothing in much of church history.

As we see another Torah passage fulfilled in the person of Yeshua, we understand more and more that the GOAL of *all* of Torah was found in the Messiah Yeshua – He was not the END of the Law, rather He was the FULFILLMENT of the Law; His purpose was not the ABOLISHMENT of Torah, but the PRESERVATION, the COMPLETION of Torah. The ESSENCE of Torah is found in a short line found four times in our parashah, "Put an end to such wickedness among you". (Sha'ul teaches on this, quoting probably from the Septuagint, in 1 Corinthians 5.13.) The PURPOSE of Torah was to teach Israel – and those who joined with – how to live a righteous life away from the norms of a pagan unrighteous society. Regarding the last days, Yeshua said, in Mattityahu 24.12, "And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold." With a Hebraic understanding, the CJB translates the same as, "and many people's love will grow cold because of *increased distance from Torah*" (my emphasis). The HEART of Torah is found in an answer to a question put to Yeshua in Mattityahu 22.36-40, "Rabbi, which of the mitzvot [commandments] in the Torah is the most important?' He told him, "'You are to love Adonai your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.' This is the greatest and most important mitzvah. And a second is similar to it, "You are to love your neighbor as yourself." All of the Torah and the Prophets are dependent on these two mitzvot."

If we will "Put an end to such wickedness among [us]," then can we do as the prophet *Yesha'yahu* (Isaiah) wrote, from this week's Haftarah, "Enlarge the space for your tent, extend the curtains of your dwelling; do not hold back, lengthen your cords, make your tent pegs firm." Individual life affects corporate life.

שְׁאַלוּ שְׁלוֹם יְרוּשָׁלַם – *Sha'alu shalom Yerushalayim* – Pray for the peace of Jerusalem! Pray for the true peace that will only come with the return of *Sar Shalom*, the Prince of Peace. If the leadership of Israel would only call upon the G-d of the Covenant, the G-d of their ancestors, things would quickly change.

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)