

Parasha Devarim Words (Psalm 137) G-d Keeps His Word, All of It.

Torah: Deut. 1:1-3:22

(1) 1:16, 17. (2) 1:27[39]. (3) 1:45. (4) 2:7. (5) 3:21, 22.

Haftarah: Is. 1:1-27

1:9-15 (ritual obedience without obedience and repentance is just as disgusting as the vilest of sins). 1:16, 17 (practical righteousness precedes authentic worship). 1:18, 19 (repentance [pre-obedience] and righteousness are the essence of true spirituality and need to be present when we practice ritual in order for our worship to be real and not just noise and ceremony – also these need to be present in order for the reality of G-d's presence by His Son to be present in our services (our lives). 1:21-23 When the people of G-d fall, they fall worse than the world and their last condition is worst than their first (2 Peter 2:20-22). 1:24 spiritual reality is more important than any other reality in our lives.

Brit Chadashah: Acts 13:13-23 (L); 7:51-8:4 (F)

(F) 7:59, 8:4

Welcome to Black Sabbath, the lowest point in the life of the House of Jacob, not once, not twice, but repeatedly. Instead of watching the L-rd smite their enemies, the House of Israel was smitten by her enemies, because she was behaving like the spiritual enemies of G-d.

Four comments before we observe the L-rd's Table:

(1) The resilience of the righteous core (2 Tim. 2:19-21)

(2) This portion refers to specific past historical disobedience and its consequential corporate punishment. G-d's love and care for Israel is immutable (Is. 54:10). We can never truly understand G-d's redemptive purposes unless we share this same *redemptive ruthlessness* (which is what Romans chapters 9-11 is all about). What is Redemptive Ruthlessness? Phil. 1:20, 21 and 3:13, 14 and 4:12, 13.

(3) Anti-Semitism and its theological equivalent (replacement theology or supersessionism) are not part of the judgment of G-d – they are a demonic attack on the apple of G-d's eye. Rom. 11:17-22

(4) Redemptive ruthlessness never gives up on four things:

(I) The mega purposes of G-d (Job 1:21)

(II) The sinner (Ez. 33:11),

(III) The hand of G-d in our own lives (I Cor. 10:13),

(IV) The spiritual mandate of Abraham

(Gen. 18:19) – Faith and obedience (see also 2 Cor. 6:4-10, 28 propositions).

May we exercise *redemptive ruthlessness* in our own lives and never be sidetracked into spiritual folly – be it anger at injustice or regrets over our own injustice and missed opportunities (disguised covetousness) or bitterness or the love of money, fame or power. The only real tragedy which a believer can encounter is for his or her spiritual life to fall to bits. Everything else is only temporary, no matter how black it may appear. Let's pray and observe communion.