

**Behar/Bechukotai****On the Mountain    Divine Property Rights****Torah:**

Lev, 25: 1-26:2/26:3-27:34

(1) 25:23. ***The land shall not be sold in perpetuity; for the land is mine, and you are like strangers and sojourners (aliens and tenants) in it.*** The Jubilee means that every generation belongs to G-d and all that we owe belongs to Him forever.

(2) 25:55: ***For the children of Israel are my slaves whom I have made to come out of the land of Egypt. I am YHVH your G-d.*** He never stops being the master and we never stop being His bond slaves.

(3) 26:33: ***I will disperse you among the nations and I will draw the sword after you and your land shall be devastated and your cities shall be deserted.*** Our people have twice been dispersed, never because of any enemies we have encountered, but because we have failed to walk with Him according to His nonnegotiable ownership of all that we are and all that we have.

(4) 27:18: ***If someone consecrates a field after the Jubilee, the priest shall make an evaluation of the price considering the number of years to the next Jubilee and there shall be a reduction in its evaluation.*** Nothing has final value but G-d and His kingdom and all that we have remains His and is only valuable in relationship to the Kingdom. We are only tenants and sojourners working His land and gathering treasures for Him. What are you doing with His property?

**Haftarah:**

Jer. 32:6-27/Jer.16:19-17:14

(5) 32:27: ***Behold, I am YHVH, the G-d of all flesh, is there anything to hard for Me?*** There are some incredibly powerful barriers to faith in this increasingly dark world, but we remain His and His kingdom remains unstoppable – Is there anything which is stopping it in your life?

(6) 17:14: ***Heal me and I shall be healed, save me and I shall be saved, for you are my glory.*** If He is on our side, nothing can stop us, if we are not on His side, nothing will work. Whose side are you on?

**Brit Chadashah:**

Lk. 14:12-24/Mt. 22:1-14

(7) Matt. 22:14: ***For there are many who are called and few are chosen.*** This is not a great theological mystery, but a practical statement about the impact of our choices. Either we respond and acknowledge His property rights on our soul as we head for the cosmic Passover feast in glory, or we are passed over for strangers, who are spiritually weak and crippled and lame and blind, but who have enough sense to respond to His gracious invitation. How about you? Doesn't matter how crippled, blind or lame or weak you feel – He is capable of pulling you into His kingdom and delivering you as surely as He delivered Israel and as surely as He resorted Israel – and He is also capable of hounding you and chasing you down, every day of your life until either you respond or are passed over.

**Psalm 112/105 (Jack)****Jewish Hero:** Danielle (shofar blowing)

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One of the struggles I have as I prepare my messages throughout the year is to make sure that I do not end up giving you too much theology – and also that I do not end up not giving you enough. With this in mind, I want to give you a message to day on how the Bible is the Word of G-d and there are basically two reasons for this. Firstly, there are those who have a strange and mystical idea about the Bible and feel that every single word in it is so full of meaning and power, that when you hear it and read it, even if you do not understand it, it will have a spiritual impact on your lives.

This is the position of many rabbinic Jews and some evangelicals who feel that the holiness of the Word goes beyond its message and somehow infects the very words of the text. Now don't get me wrong, there is power in every word of the message and the Bible alone of all the works of religion that have appeared over the years is the Word of G-d.

However, if you were to take all the times the word “the” appears in the Bible and recited them – out of the context of meaning, then you would have nothing holy. The words that are used in the Bible only become holy when they are attached to the meaning they are intended to convey. If anyone wants me to expand more on this concept, come to our Thursday evening Yeshiva and we will explore it more.

The second reason I want to share this message is that there are spiritual predators out there whose stated purpose is to undermine your faith, both doctrinally (the majestic gobbledygook of evolutionary nonsense and its co-conspirators relativism, materialism and humanism) and morally (the sexual revolution or as it should be known, revolting sexuality).

Their attacks take on various versions of: “Has G-d really said” (Gen. 3:1) and the ever recycled versions of “the vain and profane discourses of false science which end up turning some away from the faith” (I Tim. 6:20, 21). Leaving the assaults which come against us from the outside, I want to briefly touch on one which comes to us from the inside, from theologians and teachers of a “liberal” (backslidden) persuasion and they say one of two subtle lies about the Bible.

Some say the Bible contains the Word of G-d, along with myths and legends which have been added over the years and it is our job to sift through the documents until we find what really comes to us from G-d and that which is merely of human origin. This may sound noble until you look at the nature of the accusation, which takes everything supernatural and miraculous and especially prophetic and claims it was written into the Bible after the original words were penned.

They claim that the original message of Yeshua (Jesus) was simpler and definitely non-supernatural and that this ethical, moral reformer wanted to bring about radical social change without making any of the claims to divine authority which the Gospels are full of.

How do you relate to these under miners of the Word? First you ask is there any evidence for their claims, either in the texts of the Bible or in the history of how the Bible was copied and came down to us – and there is none. The passages where our L-rd lays claim to His mandate as the Messiah of Promise are in the oldest copies we have and there is no evidence they were written into the text later on (redactionism) – in fact it is those who are making this claim who are really wanting to rewrite the Bible – not by adding content, but by removing it.

Next, given that the belief in the supernatural and the miraculous has always been held by Jewish people and other groups of ancient peoples, what they are really trying to do is to undermine a basic belief which has been held for thousands of years and which cannot be separated from the text of the Bible. Now some beliefs in the supernatural are extreme and extravagant, with all kinds of magical nonsense and witchcraft, but the Bible has none of these.

There is no goose which lays the golden egg and no bean stack which grows up into the clouds. Belief in the supernatural is a bedrock belief taught in the Bible and inseparable from its teachings.

Well the next subtle attack claims that the Bible becomes the Word of G-d when you agree with it or understands it – and while this might sound nice, it is really saying that only that which we understand or agree with in the Bible is from G-d and the rest does not apply. The message of the Bible does not need my understanding, or my agreement to be either true or real.

What my faith does is to allow the truths of G-d's word to become part of my life and part of how I see the world, but it is not my faith which makes the Bible real, rather it is my faith in the Bible which makes my faith real and true. The truths of the Bible are eternal and objective and all my faith can do is to access them, and not somehow bring them into existence.

My faith places me under the protection of the Creator and never becomes a creative force which gives me any power over my world, as if somehow I became a kind of co-creator with G-d.

2 Timothy 3:16, 17 says that the Bible is the Word of G-d and it is a record both of all that G-d has said and done and along with all of this, it also records the experiences which godly men and women have had from the time of our first ancestors down through a series of crises until the time when the disciples of our resurrected Messiah taught us to take this full meal deal message, complete and intact unto the ends of the earth, while we await the coming Kingdom which His return shall inaugurate.

What are these crises which the Bible records? I will go over them with you and invite all and any of you who like more clarification to come and chew them over with us at our weekly Yeshiva Bible Study. Now you can read many good summaries of what the Bible teaches in any number of good commentaries, but this morning I am going to give you mine – the fourteen spiritual crises which the Bible teaches. Hang on to your pews, here it comes!

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| 1. Creation       | (the finished masterpiece of the cosmos)  |
| 2. The Garden     | (our expulsion from paradise because of sin)  |
| 3. The Flood      | (the extermination of evil doers which should be a warning to all mankind)            |
| 4. Babel          | (the protective fragmentation of mankind into nations and languages)                  |
| 5. Isaac          | (the selection of the seed of Abraham to bless all mankind)                           |
| 6. Egypt          | (the incubation of a mighty nation)   |
| 7. The Exodus     | (the deliverance of Israel from the oppression of those who serve false gods)         |
| 8. The Conquest   | (the call to turn the site of the original garden back into a paradise)               |
| 9. The Kingdom    | (the call to show the nations of the world the wonder of faithful obedience)          |
| 10. The Captivity | (a warning for us to know that we shall reap what we sow)                             |
| 11. The Return    | (to show us the power of determined repentance)                                       |
| 12. The Messiah   | (to demonstrate G-d's redemptive love for all the nations and generations of mankind) |
| 13. The Gospel    | (our generational call to take this message to the ends of the earth)                 |
| 13A. The Diaspora | (because our people did not do it, we have been scattered to the ends of the earth)   |
| 14. The Return    | (bringing all things to their fulfillment to announce G-d's coming kingdom).          |

This is not an exhaustive list of all that the Bible teaches, but every word in the Bible comes directly from the inspiration of G-d and we cannot elevate those portions where He speaks directly above those where details are given or where principles are taught, or where prayers and praises are offered. It is a full meal package deal, with no additions, deletions or substitutions permitted because it is the integrated, complete story of how G-d has dealt with mankind to bring us to faith in His eternal kingdom.

I Corin. 10:6-11 says that His Word is the record of G-d's dealings with the Jewish people and it is both a treasure of promises and of warnings for us and for all the generations and nations of mankind. Now there are key passages which help us to understand the full message of the Bible, but each and every passage of the Bible contains instructions for us, so that in every situation and in every context we encounter, we would be able to find a reflection

of the kind of things we are going through that would allow us to discover how we should apply its teachings and this is especially true when we study the various personalities and experiences of the Bible we encounter in the Bible. Now as I bring my meditation to a close, let me say that the pages of the Bible give various examples of two categories of sin we should learn to avoid and two categories of positive spirituality we should adopt as we examine this marvellous record of all He has said and done in the lives of so many. And you've often heard me talk about both of these categories.

We are told to avoid the two besetting sins of Israel: idolatry (spiritual fornication) and fornication (physical idolatry), where we both change how we believe in G-d and where we also violate the limits He has placed to protect how each new generation is to come into the world.

On the other hand, we are taught two categories of healthy spirituality: faith (in the promises of G-d) and obedience (to the Word of G-d), which we must grow in, if we are to actually walk with the L-rd on our way home to His home in glory.

All other issues we may encounter on our pilgrimage need to revolve around faith in Him and obedience to what His word requires. The Bible does not contain the Word of G-d and we do not have to sift through its pages to discover either the historical Jesus or the real teachings of our Saviour and L-rd. The Bible does not become the Word of G-d when we place our faith in it – it brings life to us when we study and obey it – we do not bring it to life by our faith.

Now I did not go into any of the major glorious passages of the Bible which blow me away when I read them – and here I am talking about places like the Shema, the L-rd's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, the Sermon on the Mount, and the various psalms which never fail to send chills up and down my spine. But since the entire Bible is the Word of G-d, how should we relate to this amazing document, and I will close with this – and you guessed it – three things.

We need to approach the Bible with **personal devotion** as we get to know its contents and allow it to speak to the circumstances of our lives, from the moment we come to faith until that glorious day when slip into His presence to wait for the final chapter to burst forth into our dark and confusing world. Do you read the Bible daily and regularly, because it is the supermarket where you need to learn to feed your hungry soul?

We also need **personal study** where we tackle the contents and the teachings of this ancient document and get a firm grip on what it says and doesn't say, so that no one can rip it out our hands and replace with anyone of the lesser, false sources of final truth which are ravaging our world spiritually.

Finally we need **community proclamation** where we gather as a group to hear its teachings and to explore them in a group setting, where both our personal devotion and our personal study are challenged and enriched, weekly, monthly and annually – for indeed His word is the hard drive which needs to drive our spiritual lives , individually and corporately.

The Bible is and always shall be the Word of G-d, and may you be enriched as you allow it to be the source of your spiritual growth and also as you let it remain the spiritual clearing house where all ideas and teachings are examined to make sure that what we believe and how we live will draw us closer to our King and to His coming Kingdom. This is especially true as we continue to prepare for Shavuot (Pentecost) – our annual celebration of this Word and of the Spirit which inspired it and which wants to empower each of us as we learn to walk in the pathways of the Word.

Let's pray.