

Ki Tetse **When You Go Out** **Effective Spiritual Warfare**
Torah: Deuteronomy 21:10-25:19
Haftarah: Isaiah 52:3-54:19 (Isiah 54:1-10 traditional)
Brit Chadashah: I Corin. 5:1-5
Reading Jo: p. 177 & Ps. 32. Jewish Hero: Mark. Carrier: Betty Taber

Deuteronomy is a summary of what was taught to the Exodus generation around the Holy Mountain and contains some modifications which reflect an altered situation which the new generation has to face. On the plains of Moab the new generation came close to annihilation because they succumbed so quickly to pagan idolatry and fornication of the Moabites. As they receive instruction and prepare for the crossing of the Jordan, there are some stipulations which go beyond the ones in Exodus and Leviticus, because they are in a fight for their lives against the intrusions of paganism, which was apparently not fully extinguished when the Moabite priestesses were killed and when the kings of Moab were punished.

One of the first issues is how to deal with a rebellious son who refuses to let go of the pagan debauchery that was so common among the Canaanites (21:18-21). A careful reading of the passage reveals that the child is an adult who has apparently succumbed to Canaanite paganism and wants to practice it at home. As Israel conquered the land, they did not permit the practice of paganism to continue, so after many attempts to get the son to relinquish the practice of paganism, he is treated the like the pagan he has functionally become. Kinship does not protect us when we cross back over the line into criminal paganism. He is executed.

Israel had full sovereignty as a nation and enforced her laws to create a distinct separation between the commonwealth of Israel and the fornicating idolaters who surrounded them. In our context, we practice exclusion, not execution (I Corin. 5:5 and 5:9-13) because we do not want the leavening of sin to regain a foothold in our lives or in our community. At least five times (21:21; 22:21,22; 22:24; 24:7) the people are warned against offenses which required capital punishment, not out of any sense of cruelty, but to prevent the regrowth of the newly suppressed paganism. Sin is stubborn, we have to be more stubborn and root it all out.

In our context, we live in a global society which is increasingly infected by the pagan virus of political correctness which openly and aggressively attacks both our beliefs and the morality these beliefs require from us. It is a sad day when the LGBT “community” is seen as a powerful political lobby group which could easily make or break the coming election for parties that do not accept their agenda. How do we relate to these pagan terrorists?

Those who do not share our biblical faith and who do not practice biblical morality are not welcome to join our community. It is our spiritual duty and our constitutional right to close ranks and exclude them. We will continue to shine and be salty in our darkening world and never violate anyone's civil rights, because exclusion is not a violation of anyone's civil rights. Along with this, it is our firm expectation that no one has the right to violate our civil rights, which include the right to practice freedom of religion (which includes the defense and practice of biblical morality and the practice of exclusion).

This passage does not advocate violence against children, but recognizes that when Israel formed a sovereign nation, there were a series of capital fences which were enforced to protect the nation against the progressive encroachment of Canaanite paganism.

The portion makes mention of crucifixion as a form of capital punishment and adds the stipulation that when someone was hung on a tree (a cross), their body could not remain on the tree overnight, or it would morally and spiritually contaminate the land. A careful reading of the conquest of Canaan under Joshua, reveals that not only were 31 kings executed, but that the form of execution was crucifixion. They and their bodies were hung on a tree until sunset, when they were taken down and buried (Jos. 8:29; 10:26; 10:30; 10:39 -says that they treated the kings like they treated the king of Jericho – the first one to be crucified).

The kings claimed pagan spiritual authority and their crucifixion spiritually cleansed the land. Yeshua's crucifixion spiritually cleansed the cosmos and all the nations and generations of mankind. He became a curse on our behalf to set us free from the curse of sin and death.

Chapter 22 lists a series of diverse precepts and ends with a whole section on protecting the sanctity of sexuality, which was only to be expressed as part of marriage. When a woman was accused of secretly losing her virginity, an investigation was undertaken and if she was innocent, her accusing husband was punished and was not ever allowed to divorce her. When a man raped a virgin, he had to marry her and was also never allowed to divorce her. I can well imagine that in both cases the ladies never let him forget his folly. Adultery and rape were capital offenses because no form of sexual violence was allowed in Israel.

Sexuality is sacred to marriage and this is our stand in our immoral, sexually obsessed society. When someone is sexually immoral and does not repent (and stop exhibiting this behaviour) we practice exclusion for the spiritual protection of our community – which is what delivering them over to Satan means (I Cor. 5:5). This verse was misapplied in the Middle Ages to justify murdering those who were considered heretics. While I am a supporter of the return of capital punishment, I am also a firm supporter of the rule of law where due process is followed when dealing with anyone accused of a crime. Capital punishment is not a crime.

Chapter 23 begins with an outline of those who are generationally excluded from the assembly. It included someone who had been ritually castrated, which supposed becoming a ritual male prostitute. Their generational potential had been destroyed and while they were not executed, they were treated with the same level of exclusion as lepers. They would be fed and protected, but could not join one of the tribes.

Someone born of an illicit union was also excluded to prevent Israel from adopting any of the violations of kinship which the Canaanites and the Egyptians practiced. This is why the L-RD took the baby which David fathered with Bath-Sheba while she was still married to Uriah the Hittite. Israel was fighting for its life in a sea of criminal, violent paganism and had to block any potential pagan practices from being set up among Israel.

The Ammonites and the Moabites were excluded because of their failed attempt to entice the camp to join with them in the practice of criminal fornication. They were unwilling to abandon the practice of their form of criminal idolatry and remained a thorn in Israel's side for generations. Israel wanted to keep paganism on the outside and not let it take root in the inside. However, later Ruth, a Moabite was allowed to join the camp because she had openly renounced the pagan gods of her people. She also renounced being a Moabite.

One of the most heinous crimes of the Canaanites and later of the Greeks, was the practice of ritual prostitution by both men and women. It was not to be allowed in Israel.

Also nothing gained through the practice of anything abominable was allowed to be used as a payment for the fulfillment of a vow. You could not dedicate to the L-RD what had already been dedicated to a pagan god.

Chapter 24 begins outlining the rights of a divorced woman, who could not be reclaimed by her husband if her second husband died. It also outlines fair trade practices and stipulates that a father could not be put to death for his son's sins, nor could a son be put to death for his father's sins. As well, any punishment must fit the crime. It also says that the stranger, the orphan and the widow must be cared for and that you must not muzzle the ox who is grinding the grain. Later on Paul uses this to say that you must not muzzle the rabbi either, because he should be able to live off the offerings of the community.

Since this portion deals with the extensive combat which was to occur between biblical righteousness and the encroaching Canaanite paganism, once the land was conquered and the people were settled, there was some unfinished business to be taken care of. They had to finish exterminating Amalek because his bushwhacking was a generational declaration of war against the L-RD. We are also in a generational spiritual war with the flesh, the world and the enemy and we have to keep our hearts and lives – as well as our community, free of the pollutions of modern paganism as we wander through this life on our way home to our Father's Home in Glory. Are you engaging in effective spiritual war in your life?

Sermon: Fifth Shabbat of Consolation: The Case of the Missing Arm.

Passage: *“All we like sheep have gone astray and we have turned each to his own way and the L-rd has laid upon Him, the iniquity of us all (Isaiah 53:6). “When the mountains shall depart and when the hills shall be removed, my steadfast love shall not be shaken or depart from you, nor will my covenant of peace be removed, says the L-RD who has compassion on you (Isaiah 54:10).*

When the Greeks outlawed the Torah before the successful revolt under the Maccabees, scholars selected prophetic portions to read which reflected the forbidden Torah portions and we still read them to honour the courage of our people who never let the Bible be suppressed. No one knows exactly when the Torah portions took their final form and when the Haftarah readings were stabilized, but three concessions were made to reading the prophetic portions so that they remained in sync with the annual Torah reading cycle.

During festival times, the Haftarah and the Torah portions are often suspended so that festival readings can be read. Also, several times a year, the Torah portions and the prophetic portions are doubled up to make room for the special festival portions. Lastly, in the summer time, between the 17th of Tammuz and Rosh Hashannah, there are ten Sabbaths with special Haftarah readings. Three are called the Sabbaths of Affliction and seven are called the Sabbaths of Consolation. All seven Shabbats of Consolation are taken from the book of Isaiah and usually consist of either most of a chapter, or several chapters. They are designed to lift our spirits and prepare us to joyfully greet the Fall Festivals, but there is one problem.

On the fifth Sabbath of Consolation, the portion jumps from Isaiah 52:12 to Isaiah 54:1 and only has ten verses (54:1-10). Something is missing. There is no greater expression of the sacrifice of our Messiah anywhere in the Scriptures than Isaiah 53 and who He is and what He did for us, is the greatest source of consolation which the Scriptures have to offer.

Isaiah 52:13 to 53:12 appears to be left out of the reading cycle on purpose because it is a such a perfect description of what Messiah Yeshua accomplished for us on the cross. I call this portion the case of the missing arm and I have re-introduced it into the reading for the fifth Shabbat of consolation and I want to base my sermon on what it teaches.

To begin with, I want to talk about a sad element mentioned in the passage. When Israel was told we would be returning from exile in Babylon, G-d promised to never again be angry with us and to no longer rebuke us. It says in Amos 9:15 that our people would be planted back again in the land and would never again be forcefully removed out of it. There was no need for a second dispersion and our people could have theoretically remained in the land peacefully until the Messiah's return. What caused the second dispersion?

Two things happened. First Israel did not recognize or acknowledge the only Messiah who will ever be sent to them and then, when the Romans overran the Holy Land, they did not remove an intact nation of Israel to a new place of exile, like the Babylonians did. Our people were slaughtered in their millions and the remnants were scattered among the nations. This did not have to happen, but our people broke their word never to rebel against the Roman emperor and though they fought with great bravery, due to a series of mishaps, they were eventually overcome by the Romans, not once, but twice. This was so unnecessary.

Their rejection was prophesied (52:14; 53:3, 4; 53:8) and even though it is drawing to a close as our people come home to the land and to the Messiah, the acceptance of the Messiah by the nations was also prophesied (52:15 and 53:11). Judaism is fully a Messianic religion because He and His kingdom's arrival is the primary focus of all we hope for and all that we are waiting for. The Messiah has always been the central theme of Judaism.

So what's the problem? Basically it is twofold: timing and the nature of His coming. In Daniel, the arrival of Messiah was prophesied to occur at the time when it did occur. In the days of the Messiah there was such a heightened expectation – especially among some scholars who realized that the time was right for the Messiah to be manifest. The early chapters of Matthew and Luke attest to this heightened expectation.

The Sanhedrin was splintered into so many differing opinions that the Talmud records that there were either 24 or 72 versions of Judaism, all competing for the people's allegiance. False Messiah's were popping and leading rebellions against Rome and the Sanhedrin was afraid that if this continued, the Romans would get fed up and come and destroy the nation and burn the Holy Temple. But despite this fear, they could not come up with a concise explanation of who Messiah was and when He would come and this did not happen for several hundred years after Jerusalem was destroyed and our people were scattered.

In Genesis there was another prophesy about the arrival of Messiah that went along with Daniel's prophecy about when He would arrive. It said that the scepter would not depart from Judah, until Shiloh came (Gen. 49:10). Jewish scholars usually understood this to mean that Messiah would come before sovereignty of the Holy Land would pass out of the hands of a Jewish monarch. The Talmud still does not offer a satisfactory explanation of this prophecy.

While many hated Herod and despised his family, he was Jewish (his family descended from Edomite converts in the time of the Maccabees). When his son Archelaus was deposed, a Jewish scholar lamented: "The scepter has passed from Judah and Shiloh has not come".

What he did not realize that Shiloh (the one to whom the scepter belongs) had come during the evil reign of Archelaus and settled in the Galilee. He came at the right time (G-d's appointed time) and accomplished salvation in the way His Word said He would. You see, Israel was to be a great nation and in Messiah, was to be a blessing to all nations. In order to do that, He had to come once to die and resurrect and then this message was to be taken to all nations before His return (Is. 52:15 and 53:11). Throughout the Bible, there are numerous other references that the Good News [of Messiah] was to be taken to the ends of the earth.

In the first century many groups of Jews believed that Messiah would equip them with magic weapons which would overcome their enemies and take the Good News to the end of the earth by force. Two problems with that. First what was the nature of the Good News they were to take? Of course it was the Good News of Salvation, but it had to be won first, before it could be announced. Secondly there is no suggestion in the Bible that this proclamation would occur in a single generation or that it would occur during the lifetime of those who first heard it. Be careful about imposing upon the Bible limits or descriptions it does not teach.

So when Messiah came at the right time and did what He was supposed to do, His resurrection troubled many Jews, because they expected His resurrection to occur at the same time as the end of the world and the resurrection of the dead. You see their eschatology (doctrine of the end of the world) was clouded by their expectations of an end of the world which would come quickly. They were not equipped to handle one that would take many generations to come.

Early Christians also suffered from this impatient delusion and every generation of believers since our L-rd ascended, has had those who were firmly convinced that the return would occur in their life time. Things haven't changed much. Messiah came at the right time. He ascended at the right time and He will return at the right time. Is His right time good enough for you? Joyful anticipation is not the same thing as delusional impatience.

We can still rejoice and the hills can still skip and the mountains can still crumble, not as the announcement of the closeness of the return. It should be a wild expression of joy, both for what the L-rd did in returning Israel from Babylonian exile, and in what He accomplished on the cross when Messiah took upon Himself the sins of all mankind.

G-d's steadfast love has never been removed from Israel, even as we were slaughtered in our millions for wrongly rebelling against Rome. He made sure that enough of us would survive as a testimony of His love for the chosen people and despite centuries of persecution and continued slaughter, His blessing has always followed His people. Whenever we have not been molested we have prospered and have blessed our host nations. We have been teachers, scholars, doctors and sometimes even generals and continue to be a light to the nations. We may have been badly wrong about the timing of the Messiah's arrival, and about the nature of His sacrifice and even the timing of His return, but the love of G-d has haunted us and we have never lost our love of His Word, with one big "whoops" (the Talmud).

The Talmud was compiled in stages from the time between the two temples, until it took its final form in the 14th century. The final edition was put together by a French Jew (Joseph Caro). It was called the Shulchan Aruch (the full meal). During its compilation, there have been shifts in its teachings and many strange foreign teachings have snuck in. It was intended to be a six part commentary on the Torah, but it became a discussion of Jewish theology and a receptacle of generations of Jewish traditions and legends.

It contains wonders and it contains follies. However, the Bible still stands as the only source of

faith and practice for believers – and every word in the Bible was written by Jews. Over the centuries, long disagreements have erupted and they are still erupting today, but no weapon forged against Jews has prospered and G-d has blessed those who blessed us and has cursed them who have cursed us (Is. 54:17 and Gen. 12:3).

Talmudic teachings falsely indicate that there are two Messiahs who each come once. Supposedly, there is the suffering Messiah (Ben Joseph) and the glorious Messiah (Ben David). Close, but no cigar. The Bible teaches that there is only one Messiah who will come twice. He will come first as the suffering servant (Is. 52:13 to 53:12) and then as the Glorious King (Is. 35:3-10). This theme is repeated in many other places throughout the Scriptures.

It gets worse. You will probably never run across a more intense and convinced philosemite (Lover of the Jews) than me, but let me say clearly that all we (Jews) like sheep have gone astray and the L-rd has laid the iniquity of us all (Jews) upon Him (the Messiah). The Talmud wrongly indicates that the generations of Israel are a corporate Messiah Ben Joseph and we are suffering for the sins of the world and our suffering will bring redemption to the world. No way. Only a spotless, sinless Saviour can die for the sins of the world and we Jews are sinners and could never pay for the price of Salvation and redeem mankind by our suffering.

Our suffering is because of the wrath of the enemy against us for giving birth the Messiah who would bruise the head of the serpent (Gen. 3:15). He is also furious because the resurrected Messiah overcame him and cast him out of the heavenlies. Therefore, he is motivated with great wrath against Jews and even against Christians who hold the testimony of Yeshua and who keep the commandments of G-d (Rev. 12:17)

The Messiah from Nazareth died for us and for the world. Jews died because of the hatred of the world and the devil and not as a means to pay the ransom for the salvation of mankind. A false view of the Messiah has caused endless troubles for Jewish people over the centuries. However, from the first century onwards, there has been a steady stream of Jews becoming believers in Yeshua AND a steady stream of Christians forsaking their faith in Yeshua and becoming Jews. This is still happening today. There have also been some 2,000 Jews who have falsely claimed to be the Messiah, but none of them died on a cross at the right time, rose from the dead and ascended in to Heaven with the promise to return.

In the Tanakh (Old Testament), Yeshua is referred to some 37 times as the arm or right arm of G-d. The case of the missing arm is a sad reflection of the blindness of our people when they refused to accept the biblical testimony of Yeshua and clung to their false understanding of a military Messiah who would immediately bring about the end of the world. We were called to conquer the world with the sword of the L-rd, which is the word of G-d. We are to take the message of salvation to the ends of the earth so that the many nations and generations of the dispersed children of mother Eve and father Adam could forsake their darkness and return to the light of G-d. We can rejoice because, as I speak, this is still happening today

I am consoled because we follow the Right Arm of G-d and He is not missing from our lives. It is my constant prayer that Jews would discover the Arm they are missing and accept Him into their hearts and lives. He came first for the Jews and many of our people are flocking into the Gospel in our generation, both around the world and in Israel. Join me as we pray and as we shine and are salty, so that more and more Jews would listen to the voice of G-d's Spirit who has never ceased to call out to them to come to the Messiah and never will.