

Shoftim

"Judges"

You shall appoint judges and officers in all your gates, which the LORD your God gives you, according to your tribes, and they shall judge the people with just judgment.
Deuteronomy 16:18



Pray First

Father God,

We thank You for teaching us what justice and righteousness are through Your law. We ask You to help us demonstrate our love for You by correctly applying Your law to our lives in spirit and in truth. We praise You as we eagerly watch and wait for the day when we will know You completely and be able to worship You without the presence of sin in our lives.

In Yeshua's Name we pray. Amen

Next Read

Deuteronomy 16:18-21:9

In this week's Parasha Moshe (Moses) continued to give instructions to the Children of Yisra'el before they entered the Promised Land. He commanded them to appoint judges and officers from all their tribes to uphold God's just judgment determined by His law while in the land. They were not to show partiality or take a bribe when administering judgment. If they strictly enforced the laws of God while in the Land of Promise, they would inherit life and the land the LORD God was giving them to possess.

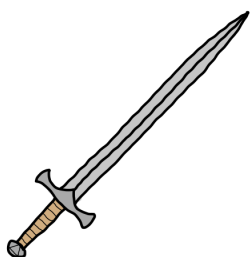
It was important for the Children of Yisra'el not to copy any of the ways the other nations had worshiped their gods nor should they excuse any man or woman among them that went after other gods to serve and worship them. This type of behavior was a transgression of God's covenant with His people, and the guilty one must be stoned to death at the city gates. Two or more witnesses were required to render a judgment of death for such an abomination against God.

The Levitical priests of God who dwelt among the Children of Yisra'el in the places designated by Him, were to decide the difficult cases that could not easily be determined by the judges and officers of the tribes. The judgment given by the priests of God was to be carried out exactly as it was decided according to the law. Anyone who refused to carry out the judgment that was pronounced was to be put to death so that the law of God would always be upheld in the Land of Promise. The death sentence administered to the one who refused to obey God's judgment would act to rid Yisra'el of evil. When the people in the land heard and saw the judgment carried out they would fear the consequences for disobedience. This served to encourage the people of God to obey and honor His law and order.

Moshe also gave instructions regarding the king of Yisra'el, the Priesthood of Yisra'el and the future Prophet of Yisra'el whom the LORD God would raise up from within their midst. He gave further instruction about the placement and need for cities of refuge to be established within the land. Judgment would be determined for all those who fled there to seek or avoid justice. Innocent bloodshed had to be atoned for or the Land of Promise would become polluted.

Moshe instructed the Children of Yisra'el that they should never let fear stop them from going out against their enemies in battle because the LORD God was with them. When they were on the verge of battle, the priest should encourage them not to be afraid nor to be terrified even when the enemy seemed stronger and more powerful. The priest should remind them that the LORD God would fight for them and save them from their enemies. The officers

should then speak to the soldiers to determine who would fight in the event of war and who would remain home for various reasons. Once the officers determined who would fight in the war, they appointed captains to lead the army.



No life was to be spared in the cities of the Hittite, Amorite, Canaanite, Perizzite, Hivite and the Jebusite. Their total destruction was necessary for the Yisra'elites to avoid learning the abominable ways these nations had worshiped their gods. The LORD God commanded these nations be utterly destroyed from the face of the earth! However, when the Yisra'elites went

out to fight a city far away from the land of these nations, they were to offer peace before fighting against them. If the city accepted the peace offering, it would remain unharmed and would be placed under Yisra'el's authority. It would serve Yisra'el and pay tribute to her. If the city did not accept the peace agreement, the men of the city would be killed by the sword. The city, along with the women, children, livestock and plunder, would then belong to the Yisra'elites.

When the Yisra'elites attacked a city for a long time, they were not to use any tree from the land that produced food to build siege works. Only trees that did not produce food could be cut down and used in this manner.

Finally, Moshe commanded that if a dead body was found lying in a field with no known suspect for murder or manslaughter, the elders and judges were to measure the distance from the dead body to the surrounding cities. The elders of the city nearest to the slain man were to take a heifer that had never done any manner of work down to the valley with flowing water that had never been plowed or sowed and break its neck. Then the Levitical priests, who the LORD God chose to serve Him and to bless in His Name while settling every controversy and every assault, were to come near to witness the elders of the city as they washed their hands over the heifer whose neck had been broken. The Levites were to pray to God, confessing that they did not shed the blood of the slain man nor did they know how he had died. They were to ask God not to lay the guilt of innocent bloodshed on the people of Yisra'el who He had redeemed but to provide an atonement for His people instead. Only when one does what is right in the sight of God will He provide atonement for the shedding of innocent blood.

“And he shall say to them,
'Hear, O Yisra'el: Today you are on the verge of battle with your enemies; do not let your heart faint, do not be afraid, and do not tremble or be terrified because of them, for the LORD your God is He Who goes with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you.'
Deuteronomy 20:3-4





~ Focus Passage of Scripture ~

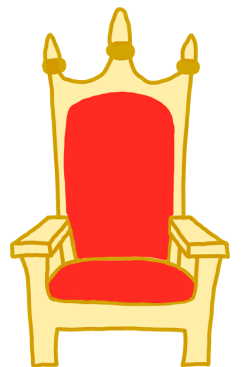
Deuteronomy 17:14-18:22

In Deuteronomy 17:14-15 we learn when the Children of Yisra'el desired a king to rule over them in the Land of Promise they should only place a king over them who the LORD God chose. God would choose a king from among their brothers. A foreigner should never be set as king over the nation of Yisra'el!

In Deuteronomy 17:16 we learn the future king of Yisra'el was not to rely on Egypt for power in battle nor should he cause the people of Yisra'el to return to Egypt to support them in battle. The LORD God had commanded that the Yisra'elites never return to Egypt again! God did not want the king of Yisra'el to trust in military power demonstrated by many horses. Instead, He wanted the king of Yisra'el to trust only in Him for protection. The Yisra'elites had gone down to Egypt to survive a great famine in the land but had become enslaved by the Egyptians. The LORD God had redeemed them from bondage in Egypt, and they were never to depend on the Egyptians again to sustain them!

In Deuteronomy 17:17 we learn that the future king of Yisra'el should not have an increasing number of wives. The kings of the nations often took many wives from other nations as a type of agreement to live in peace with one another. The king of Yisra'el was not to do as the other nations did. These foreign wives would only serve to turn the king away from worshiping God with all his heart because they did not know or worship the LORD God of Yisra'el. The king of Yisra'el was also not to concern himself with increasing his riches of silver and gold. Silver and gold have no eternal value, and the future king of Yisra'el should have no desire to increase an abundance of worldly wealth.

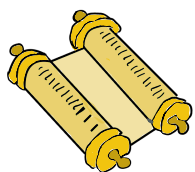
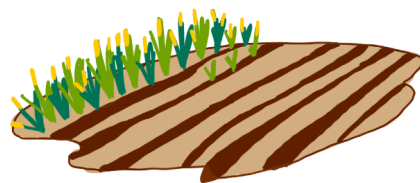
In Deuteronomy 17:18-20 we learn that when the king of Yisra'el sat on his throne, he should write a copy of the Torah. He should refer to it everyday of his reign, so he would learn to fear the LORD God and be careful to follow all the Words of God written in His law. Doing this would protect him from believing he was above the law of God and not subject to His judgment as his brethren were. The king of Yisra'el should not turn aside from the commandments of God to the right hand or to the left because as the leader of Yisra'el he, above all others, should always obey God. If the king of Yisra'el was careful to obey the law of God, his days would be prolonged along with the people living in the Promised Land.





In Deuteronomy 18:1-8 we learn that the Levitical priests are to have no inheritance with Yisra'el, rather, the LORD is their inheritance. Therefore, they were to eat the LORD's portion of the offerings given by the people. Of the burnt offerings, whether from the cattle or the flock, they were to receive the zeroah (upper arm), the cheeks and the stomach. They were to receive the first fruits of the grain, the new wine and the oil as well as the first of the fleece from the sheep for their livelihood in serving the LORD. The LORD God chose the tribe of Levi and his sons to stand and to minister to Him forever. If a Levite came from any city to wholeheartedly serve in the Name of the LORD at the place the LORD chooses for His presence to dwell, he will be given an equal portion to eat with his brethren who were serving there in addition to what is sold of their inheritance.

In Deuteronomy 18:9-14 we learn that when the Children of Yisra'el came into the land God chose to give them, they were not to learn to follow the abominations that the other nations. There was to be no Yisra'elite among them who sacrificed his son or daughter to a false god. There was to be no one who practiced witchcraft, no soothsayer, one who interprets omens, a sorcerer, one who conjures spells, a medium, a spiritist or one who calls up the dead. Everyone who does these things are an abomination to the LORD, and the Children of Yisra'el were to be blameless before the LORD. They were not to be like the nations who did all these abominable things, causing them to be driven out of the land by the LORD God. The reason God dispossessed these nations from the land was because they listened to soothsayers and diviners, but the Children of Yisra'el were not set apart for such evil.



In Deuteronomy 18:15-19 we learn the LORD God was going to raise up a Prophet like Moshe from the midst of the Children of Yisra'el in the future. Moshe explained that when God raised this Prophet up, they would hear all His Words according to what they had heard at Mount Horeb/Mount Sinai in the day of the assembly before God when they had cried out to Moshe saying:

“Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, nor let me see this great fire anymore, lest I die.”

On that day the LORD responded to them by saying that it was good that they had spoken these words because He was going to raise up for them a Prophet like Moshe, Who would be the Redeemer. God declared He would put His Words in His mouth and He would say to them all the Words that God commanded Him to say. Anyone who does not hear God's Word spoken by Him in His Name will be utterly destroyed.

In Deuteronomy 18:20-22 we learn that any prophet who spoke a word in God's Name that God had not commanded him to speak would die. When a prophet spoke in the name of the LORD and what he had spoken did not happen, then he was not a prophet of God. This one was a false prophet who was acting outside the power of God and should not be feared! The words of God spoken through His prophets had a dual occurrence for this reason. In some instances the prophet of God was a living example of the Words he spoke from God. The Words spoken by a prophet of God often came true during the prophet's lifetime to affirm their validity for the end of days.

~ Torah Recap Review ~

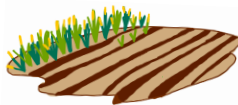
Directions: Write the letter of the statements below in the correct column



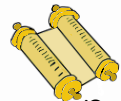
King



Priest



Promised Land



Prophet

1. _____

6. _____

11. _____

16. _____

2. _____

7. _____

12. _____

17. _____

3. _____

8. _____

13. _____

18. _____

4. _____

9. _____

14. _____

19. _____

5. _____

10. _____

15. _____

20. _____

- A. No witch-craft allowed here
- B. Should not take many wives
- C. Words spoken always came true
- D. Only from the tribe of Levi
- E. Must obey the law of God
- F. Spoke the Words of God
- G. God's choice

- H. Inheritance is the LORD
- I. Must write a personal copy of the Torah
- J. No sacrifices to false gods to be given here
- K. Received first fruits of grain as part of salary
- L. Should not accumulate riches
- M. Given to the set apart people of God
- N. Abominable nations cast out by God
- O. God raised up another one like Moshe

Haftarah

Isaiah 51:12-53:12



In this week's Haftarah the prophet Yesha'yahu (Isaiah) spoke Words from God to the Children of Yisra'el (Israel). He explained God is the only One Who can destroy both body and soul. Therefore, Yisra'el should not fear man, who is here today and gone tomorrow, but she should only fear the eternal LORD God. 📖

Yesha'yahu explained that Yisra'el had forgotten the LORD God their Maker Who created the heavens and the earth. Because God has demonstrated Who He is through His creation since the beginning, His Words can be trusted! Instead of fearing the LORD God to make Him their top priority, the Children of Yisra'el had continually feared Satan's fierce anger that manifested through man's desire to destroy them. All those who fear man over God will be destroyed by the LORD God and will receive no connection to the Kingdom of God forever! 📖

The Children of Yisra'el have been in exile and oppressed throughout history due to their lack of fear in God. However, a change is coming quickly to all those who repent. These will have eternal life even though they die. Just as God was able to separate the waters at the time of creation He was able to divide the roaring waves of the sea. The God of hosts (armies) is able to do all things! 📖

God has placed His Words into the mouths of the Children of Yisra'el. He has covered them with His Hand to protect them for His Kingdom purposes in the future. God will accomplish His Word concerning Yisra'el and He will say to Zion:

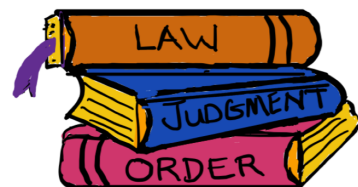
"You are My people."

Therefore, wake yourself up Yisra'el! You have already experienced the cup of God's fury from His wrath because you were stubborn and rebellious. You have been and will be judged by God to the very end. But, your rebelliousness will be brought to its completion. Because the leadership of Yisra'el has ignored the truth of God's Word, there has been no one among her to make her strong. In her weakness God will cause two things to happen:

#1- No one will care what happens to Yisra'el 📖

#2- Destruction, famine and the sword will come upon Yisra'el

The Sons of Yisra'el will die before God's final redemption comes to Yisra'el. They will experience the rebuke of the LORD during the time of Yakov's (Jacob's) trouble. Their affliction from God due to their sin will allow them to hear His voice clearly. God has and will justly judge Yisra'el's iniquities. When His judgment is complete, He will again comfort her. Just as Moshe contended for the people, the Messiah will contend for the nation of Yisra'el, and God will spare His people from the full extent of His wrath.



When the LORD God has been comforted by executing His judgement, He will respond by extending His Grace to the nation of Yisra'el. He will destroy the nations who come against her to destroy her. In this way the entire people of Yisra'el will be saved! When these things occur, Zion (Jerusalem) will awaken to the truth of God and become strong in the LORD their Messiah and Redeemer. They will learn to fear only God, and their deeds will reflect His character. No longer will sin against God be tolerated within the gates of Zion. Only those who enter into the new covenant with Messiah will receive God's blessings.

Everyone who enters into the new covenant with God will shake off all traces of the world and rise up to serve Him. Yisra'el will never to be moved out of position again due to their rebellion against God, and God's purpose for them will be fulfilled as they become the leaders of the world.



Yisra'el willfully went down to Egypt as a result of her refusal to accept Yosef (Joseph), God's choice for her redemption. This rebellion placed her under bondage, having no benefit! She was redeemed not by money but by the blood of the lamb. Yisra'el has willfully returned to Egypt, spiritually, by refusing to accept, Messiah Yeshua, God's choice for her eternal redemption. This rebellion has placed her under bondage again, having no benefit! She will not be redeemed by money but only by the precious Blood of the Lamb of God, Messiah Yeshua!

Assyria did not attack Yisra'el because they agreed with God and wanted to serve Him. Rather, they attacked Yisra'el with no benefit for themselves because they allowed Satan to manifest through them. God allowed this affliction from the enemy to discipline His people for their sin of idolatry, which sent them into exile from the Land of Promise.

The Word of God spoken concerning the descendants of Avraham (Abraham) can not be fulfilled while the Children of Yisra'el are in exile physically and spiritually, and this blasphemes the Name and Character of Almighty God. It only serves Satan by implying to the nations that God is not able to accomplish His will. For the sake of His Name God will judge the enemies of Yisra'el, and rejoicing will be heard in the Kingdom of God. The Children of Yisra'el will one day look upon Messiah Yeshua and know that He is the LORD God Who redeems them from the bondage of sin and the persecution of the enemy.

When Messiah Yeshua returns, how pleasant will His authority be? His feet will proclaim the good news to all governments of the earth. He will cause everyone to hear and respond to the fulfillment of His will. The fulfillment of God's will results in peace on the earth. He will cause the Way of Salvation to be known by all, allowing victory to be experienced over the things of the world. These things will happen because our God reigns!



All those who know the Way to Salvation are expecting and watching for Messiah Yeshua's return. Every eye will see the return of the LORD Messiah Yeshua to Zion! When His Kingdom is established, those in exile will rejoice because the LORD has comforted His people and redeemed Yerushalayim (Jerusalem). When God reveals His Son the Redeemer to the Children of Yisra'el, all nations will see the Salvation of God.

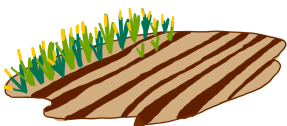
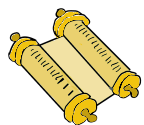
As in the days of the exodus from Egypt, the leaders of Yisra'el must make a change and turn from their rebellious ways to become clean before the LORD. This will not be done as before when Yisra'el left Egypt fearfully fleeing in haste. Instead, the LORD God of Yisra'el will go before her to gather her up and her enemy, Satan, will be no more!

~ Let's Pray ~

Father God,

We praise You for all the great things You have done for us! You have raised up from among the Children of Yisra'el the Prophet like Moshe, Who is Messiah Yeshua. He has spoken all Your Words concerning redemption. You have anointed Him as the High Priest to make atonement with His blood that He shed on the cross allowing us to be set free from our bondage to sin. You have re-established the nation of Yisra'el in the Land of Promise to receive Him when He returns as the King of Yisra'el. He has only one bride, who is the church. He is the Word and will rule according to Your commandments with no concern for worldly riches. He will rule with all Power and Authority, securing and protecting all those who enter into His Kingdom of Rest to worship Him. May You receive all glory, honor and praise forever and ever for all the great things You have done for us!

In Yeshua's Name we pray. Amen



~ New Testament ~

John 1:19-34



In this week's New Testament Scripture the Jewish leadership among the Pharisees in Yerushalayim (Jerusalem) sent priests and Levites out to Yochanan (John) in order to determine who he was. Yochanan confessed that he was not the Messiah, Eliyahu (Elijah) nor the Prophet Who Moshe had declared the LORD God would raise up from among them. Yochanan informed them that he was the voice the prophet Yesha'yahu had foretold would be sent to cry in the wilderness saying, "Make straight the way of the LORD!"

The priests and Levites then asked Yochanan why he was immersing people if he was not the Messiah, Eliyahu or the Prophet. Yochanan explained to them that he immersed with water, but among them stood the One they were inquiring about but did not know. Yochanan explained that this One came after him but is preferred over him because He existed before him. Yochanan confessed that he was not worthy to untie this One's shoes. All this took place in Beit- Avarah (House of Crossing Over) on the other side of the Yarden (Jordan) River where Yochanan was preparing Jews to receive redemption from the Messiah. The next day Yochanan saw Messiah Yeshua walking toward him and he said:

"Behold! The Lamb of God Who takes away (lifts up) the sin of the world! This is He Whom I said, 'After me comes a Man Who is preferred over me, because He was before me.' I did not know Him; but that He should be revealed to Yisra'el, therefore I came immersing with water." John 1: 29-31

Yochanan was speaking about the Divinity of Messiah Yeshua, the Son of God Who is fully God and came from heaven to become fully man in order to redeem the world. Yochanan explained that he did not know Who the Messiah was but that he was sent to perform immersion for repentance in order that Yisra'el could receive Him. Yochanan continued to explain that the One Who sent him to do this work of immersion told him that the One he saw the Spirit of God descending upon and remaining upon was the Messiah Who immerses with the Holy Spirit.

Yochanan then testified that when he immersed Messiah Yeshua he saw the Spirit of God descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him. Yochanan saw and testified that Messiah Yeshua is the Son of God!

~ Recap Review Fun ~

Word Bank

Judged	Messiah
Holy Spirit	High Priest
Strong	Elijah
Covenant	Yisra'el
Son	God
Fear	People
Repent	Man
Water	Grace
King	Prophet
Yeshua	Sword
Destroy	Leadership

Directions: Fill in the blank using the words from the word bank.

1. Only _____ can destroy both body and soul.
2. All those who fear _____ more than God will be destroyed by God.
3. God will _____ all nations who come against Yisra'el.
4. All those who _____ will be quickly changed.
5. The LORD God will say to Yisra'el, "You are My _____."
6. Yisra'el will learn to only fear God and this will make her _____.
7. During the time of Ya'kov's trouble no one will care what happens to _____ and she will endure destruction, famine and the _____.
8. Once God has justly _____ Yisra'el He will again comfort her and extend His _____ to her.
9. Exile from God and oppression from the enemy result when one lacks the _____ of God.
10. Yisra'el has not been strong in the past because her _____ has ignored the truth of God's Word.
11. Only those who enter into the new _____ with God will receive His blessings.
12. The Word of God spoken to the Children of Yisra'el will only be fulfilled when they are living in the Land of Promise and they receive Messiah _____ as the Redeemer Who saves them from their bondage to sin.
13. Yochanan confessed he was not the _____ nor _____ or the Prophet.
14. Yochanan was sent to immerse with _____ but the Messiah Yeshua was sent to immerse with the _____.
15. Messiah Yeshua is the _____ of God, the _____, the _____ and the _____ of Yisra'el.

