

## Torah Portion: Beshalach (Exodus 13:17-17:16)

[The focus of this Torah portion series is family structure and function as revealed in Scripture. I.e., headship, patriarchy, marriage, etc, graduating to understanding community and Israel as a whole. If you have not read other portions up to this point, you may want to as parts build on previous lessons in Torah, available at: <https://natsab.com/torah-portion-series/> ]

Central to headship and patriarchy as well as the respective roles and responsibilities of men and women is leadership. This portion will teach us some very important lessons about leadership and the interaction between man and woman along with a few significant matters regarding fact and emotion.

Paul in Ephesians 5:22-33 draws a clear parallel between man and woman and Messiah and the ekklesia. Let us read and be reminded of this comparison,

**Ephesians 5:22** *Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23* For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself *being* the Savior of the body. **24** But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives *ought to be* to their husbands in everything.

**25** Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, **26** so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, **27** that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless. **28** So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; **29** for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, **30** because we are members of His body. **31** FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND SHALL BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH. **32** This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church. **33** Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must *see to it* that she reverences her husband.

As we move forward into this portion, keep this clear parallel in mind. We know from our portion that it is God, as the angel of the Lord, that is leading and redeeming His people. The relationship we witness between the Redeemer and Israel *is to be the same relationship* between a man and his woman. God/the angel of God is the Head, Israel is the bride. [For those who have followed this series, you know that actually, God reveals in Ezekiel 23, Jeremiah 3 and 31 that He views Israel as two brides.... So this lesson, as we move along, has broader application than a single bride, but we'll not rehash that territory. ([Va'era](#))]

**Exodus 13:17** Now when Pharaoh had let the people go, God did not lead them by the way of the land of the Philistines, even though it was near; for God said, "The people might change their minds when they see war, and return to Egypt."  
**18** Hence **God led the people** around by the way of the wilderness to the Red Sea; and the sons of Israel went up in martial array from the land of Egypt. **19** Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, for he had made the sons of Israel solemnly swear, saying, "God will surely take care of you, and you shall carry my bones from here with you." **20** Then they set out from Succoth and camped in Etham on the edge of the wilderness. **21** The LORD was going before them in a pillar of cloud by day to lead them on the way, and in a pillar of fire by night to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night. **22** He did not take away the pillar of cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people.

**Exodus 14:14** The LORD will fight for you while you keep silent."

**15** Then the LORD said to Moses, "Why are you crying out to Me? Tell the sons of Israel to go forward. **16** As for you, lift up your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, and the sons of Israel shall go through the midst of the sea on dry land. **17** As for Me, behold, I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they will go in after them; and I will be honored through Pharaoh and all his army, through his chariots and his horsemen. **18** Then the Egyptians will know that I am the LORD, when I am honored through Pharaoh, through his chariots and his horsemen."

**19** The angel of God, who had been going before the camp of Israel, moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud moved from before them and stood behind them. **20** So it came between the camp of Egypt and the camp of Israel;

and there was the cloud along with the darkness, yet it gave light at night. Thus the one did not come near the other all night.

Please note, and I want to be very clear, the angel of God is the visible form of God. We have covered before that this is Yeshua! It is the Messiah leading and caring for Israel. He is the Redeemer!

This is very important *because it demonstrates that 1 Corinthians 11:3 is true from beginning to end of Scripture.* Every case of God interacting with man in a visible form, from Genesis 1:1 to Revelation 22:21 is Yeshua haMashiach! As demonstrated multiple times in this series,

God => Yeshua (Messiah) => man => woman.

The exit from Egypt is no different. Therefore, we can take a firm stand and understand headship and leadership lessons from this portion.

Our general overview, visible throughout the Torah and tested in the wilderness, is that God leads and protects His people. He has standards and expects obedience. But, as a gentle Shepherd, He is careful not to push too hard. He knows when to apply pressure to grow and mature His people, but He also does not tolerate dissent or rebellion.

The other *major* theme we can trace through this and future portions as we see the Redeemer lead is that Israel, the bride(s), relies entirely too often on emotion and fear instead of fact and faith. Without delving too deeply into human psychology, men generally rely on logic and women generally rely on emotion. It is how God made us and we do need the balance, but logic/fact must lead while being tempered by emotion.

Over and over, not just in this portion, but throughout the Torah, we will see Israel take the female role and ride the emotional rollercoaster, being driven not by faith and fact, but by fear and emotion. Here is our first example,

**8** The LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and he chased after the sons of Israel as the sons of Israel were **going out boldly**. **9** Then the Egyptians chased after them *with* all the horses *and* chariots of Pharaoh, his horsemen and his army, and they overtook them camping by the sea, beside Pi-hahiroth, in front of Baal-zephon.

**10** As Pharaoh drew near, the sons of Israel looked, and behold, the Egyptians were marching after them, and they became very frightened; so the sons of Israel cried out to the LORD. **11** Then they said to Moses, "Is it because there were no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? Why have you dealt with us in this way, bringing us out of Egypt? **12** Is this not the word that we spoke to you in Egypt, saying, 'Leave us alone that we may serve the Egyptians'? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness."

Previously, we read that Israel went out in 'martial array' and now we see the term 'boldly.' The Hebrew means 'with a high hand.' This is triumphant attitude and action. Their Redeemer has just kicked Egypt, Pharaoh and all those false gods in the teeth! Then, like a rollercoaster diving down a steep slope they accelerate into gut wrenching FEAR! They take their eyes off of the Head that is responsible for them and begin to accuse Moses, the head, that they can see! Memory is so short. Faith is so limited....

Man, when operating in the submissive role to the Messiah, stands in the position of 'woman' in the relationship. Here is an illustration to help us understand the picture we see over and over throughout Scripture.

Authority	Subordinate
God	Messiah
Messiah	Man
Man	Woman
Woman	Children

While God the Father and the Messiah are one, we see clearly that Yeshua *only* does the will of the Father and was obedient even unto death. He is in *complete submission* to His Father and trusts Him implicitly, the perfect example of how one is to perform in the subordinate or submissive role. But, Messiah is also the perfect example of how to be the head and leader, a perfect Shepherd, provider, protector and advocate.

Messiah then is the example for us, regardless of where we are in the authority structure. Men, as leaders, whether individual heads of house or corporate as Israel exhibits in this portion, we see how

we are to act and react in a righteous manner. Women, likewise. How you walk before Messiah, your husband and your children are each pictured in the table and in this portion.

Both men and women in this illustration function in both the position of head and follower. And, we do so individually and corporately. Let's take a quick 'big picture' look at this portion and draw some other illustrations from the whole of the Torah.

The cycle of faith collapsing into fear, fact into emotional reaction, will repeat a couple times in this portion as well as at other times in Torah.

Fact (God's provision or felt need)	Emotion	Response
Egypt crushed by plagues	Elation and triumph	March out boldly
Pharaoh pursues	Fear	Cry out to God and against Moses
Red Sea parts and Egyptian army drowned	Elation and victory	Miriam leads in song and dance
Thirst and limited water	Defeat and loss	Grumbling and complaining
Hungry	Need and physical weakness	Grumbling
Manna	Satisfaction and trust	Trust
Thirst	Weariness	Quarreling and grumbling

Be reminded of other points of Israelite obedience or disobedience. The return of the spies from the Land is a glaring example of emotion and fear over riding fact (God is Omnipotent) and faith. Another is the fear of the loss of Moses and faith placed in a golden calf. Etc...

The real point that I want to illustrate with this table and illustrations is that over and over, Israel let their emotions and feelings cause them to act in the wrong way instead of trusting and remembering in faith that God, their Redeemer, was in control and could provide. This is incredibly important for us as individuals, both men and women, and especially for us corporately if we desire to be restored.

The Redeemer, as the Head, has a right - even a responsibility - to test and 'harden' or temper His people.

A man has this same role in his family and a woman has this function with training up her head's children!

Consider this very important passage,

**1 Corinthians 10** For I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea; **2** and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea; **3** and all ate the same spiritual food; **4** and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Messiah. **5** Nevertheless, with most of them God was not well-pleased; for they were laid low in the wilderness.

**6** Now these things happened as examples for us, so that we would not crave evil things as they also craved. **7** Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written, "THE PEOPLE SAT DOWN TO EAT AND DRINK, AND STOOD UP TO PLAY." **8** Nor let us act immorally, as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in one day. **9** Nor let us try the Lord, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the serpents. **10** Nor grumble, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer. **11** Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

Israel's problem was continued reliance on emotion and what they could *see* instead of trusting their Head, the Redeemer, and Moses their *visible head*!

Men, how do you respond to the leading of Messiah? Is it rooted in 'fact,' regardless of the emotion welling up in your heart? Do you lead your family as Moses did Israel? Do you listen for instruction and follow it? We see that there are points Moses expresses concern to God, but it is exceedingly rare that we see him complain. And, in a future portion, we will see him move to protect Israel from God who is ready to 'torch them all!'

Ladies, do you question or act insubordinately to your visible head, your husband? Do you react based on emotion or out of fear because you don't trust him? If you don't trust the head you *can see*, what makes you think you truly trust the One you *can't see*? Besides, the one you can see is the visible representative of and appointed authority over you, placed there by Yah Himself.

This takes us back to the heart of the premise for this entire Torah Series study on headship and patriarchy. Adam and Chava were placed in Gan Eden for a purpose. Adam was to image God and Chava was to image man (1 Cor. 11:7). *All of life and this thing we call 'marriage'* is to image God's relationship with His people and it is to work in us His very character!! Headship and patriarchy are central. Man, to image God, needs someone to lead and teach. Woman, to image man, needs to be led and taught. *Both* have a lot of learning and growing to do to *properly* image God and His people. Our very purpose, as humankind and the people of Yah, is to reveal Him to the world and be preparing as His people to possess the Land and be His ambassadors!

What God is doing in this portion through Moses and Israel is showing *us* how we will be tested and how we are to respond! Learning and beginning to keep Shabbat is a test. Eating clean is a test. Keeping feasts is a test. Wearing tzitzit is a test. Walking in proper roles of headship and patriarchy is a test. Understanding what God says regarding marriage and *being willing to walk it out if called* is a test! We can rely on or respond with emotion, or we can trust the **facts** in God's Word and simply be obedient, trusting Him! The latter leads to life, the former to judgment and death.

Reread this and understand the gravity of what Paul is saying and why this is so very important!!

**1 Corinthians 10:6** Now these things happened as examples for us, so that we would not crave evil things as they also craved. **7** Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written, "THE PEOPLE SAT DOWN TO EAT AND DRINK, AND STOOD UP TO PLAY." **8** Nor let us act immorally, as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in one day. **9** Nor let us try the Lord, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the serpents. **10** Nor grumble, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer. **11** Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

Paul is not teaching a new idea. Ezekiel has already told us the very same thing,

**Ezekiel 20:33** "As I live," declares the Lord GOD, "surely with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm and with wrath poured out, I shall be king over you. **34** I will bring you out from the peoples and gather you from the lands where you are scattered, with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm and with wrath poured out; **35** and I will bring you into the wilderness of the peoples, and there I

will enter into judgment with you face to face. **36** As I entered into judgment with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so I will enter into judgment with you,” declares the Lord God. **37** “I will make you pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant; **38** and I will purge from you the rebels and those who transgress against Me; I will bring them out of the land where they sojourn, but they will not enter the land of Israel. Thus you will know that I am the LORD.

God is very intentional in this portion to make clear that as the Head, He has the right to test His people. Further, He is not required to tell them everything in advance. Notice these verses from the portion.

**Exodus 16:4** Then the LORD said to Moses, “Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a day’s portion every day, **that I may test them, whether or not they will walk in My Torah.**

**Exodus 16:28** Then the LORD said to Moses, “**How long do you refuse to keep My commandments and My Torah?**

There are so many layers in this portion that address the roles of men, women, Israel, individual and corporate obedience as well as faith over fear and fact over emotion. Let us notice some other related elements.

**Exodus 16:15b** And Moses said to them, “It is the bread which the LORD has given you to eat. **16** This is what the LORD has commanded, ‘Gather of it every **man** as much as he should eat; you shall take an omer apiece according to the number of persons each of you has in his tent.’” **17** The **sons** of Israel did so, and *some* gathered much and *some* little. **18** When they measured it with an omer, he who had gathered much had no excess, and he who had gathered little had no lack; every **man** gathered as much as he should eat. **19** Moses said to them, “Let no **man** leave any of it until morning.” **20** But they did not listen to Moses, and some left part of it until morning, and it bred worms and became foul; and Moses was angry with them. **21** They gathered it morning by morning, every **man** as much as he should eat; but when the sun grew hot, it would melt.



The commandment is given to the men to be carried out by the men for their respective households. Then, each man is judged according to his obedience.

This is exactly what we would expect to see with our model being Adam. He was given a commandment and was expected to carry it out for his 'house.' In fact, throughout the Torah, we see over and over, just as was explained in the last portion commentary, that God gives the command through Moses, the visible head, to the men. The men, then, as head of their respective houses, are expected to teach and properly implement them.

Consider such examples as Korach and his house being judged (Numbers 16), or Achan and his house (Joshua 7). Conversely, the Jailer, in Acts 16:31 is baptised and the text seems to indicate that *his righteous act* affected the whole house.

Besides what we have already covered in studying the disobedience of the first Adam as compared to the obedience of the Second Adam, and the imputation of sin or righteousness to all, there is much support throughout Scripture concerning the role of the head of the house as priest and mediator that has a covering and protective role for the house. However, when walking in unrighteousness, the head exposes the whole house.

Through our Genesis portions, we witnessed God building a family. Now, we are seeing Him begin to mould this very large family into a nation. The roles of men will continue and be more clearly defined as we learn the details of God's instructions, but we will also begin to understand how God deals with the corporate nation of Israel as a bride (or brides, if you understand Ezekiel 23). Focus on the lessons for man and woman and how we are to interact, not only with each other, but in the layering of authority before Messiah. Also, notice what poor interaction looks like as Israel rebels and follows emotion and fear instead of fact and faith.

May your Shabbat be restful!

Shalom!