

Torah Portion: Devarim (Deuteronomy 1:1-3:22)

[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 the 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/>]

We begin Deuteronomy, the last of the five Books of Moshe. Much of this book is a retelling of the Torah to the generation that will inherit the Land. We will see repeated many of the patriarchal lessons already covered, though occasional additional details will be revealed that were not previously given. As we encounter the various lessons a second or third time, understand that God doesn't change and these retold instructions function as second or third witnesses to what we have already seen. May the repetition validate and cement in our minds the importance of the patriarchal thread that is so central to the flow of history and God's ordained system of order.

Deuteronomy 1:⁹ "I spoke to you at that time, saying, 'I am not able to bear *the burden* of you alone. ¹⁰ The Lord your God has multiplied you, and behold, you are this day like the stars of heaven in number. ¹¹ May the Lord, the God of your fathers, increase you a thousand-fold more than you are and bless you, just as He has promised you! ¹² How can I alone bear the load and burden of you and your strife? ¹³ Choose wise and discerning and experienced men from your tribes, and I will appoint them as your heads.' ¹⁴ You answered me and said, 'The thing which you have said to do is good.' ¹⁵ So I took the heads of your tribes, wise and experienced men, and appointed them heads over you, leaders of thousands and of hundreds, of fifties and of tens, and officers for your tribes.

¹⁶ "Then I charged your judges at that time, saying, 'Hear *the cases* between your fellow countrymen, and judge righteously between a man and his fellow countryman, or the alien who is with him. ¹⁷ You shall not show partiality in judgment; you shall hear the small and the

great alike. You shall not fear man, for the judgment is God's. The case that is too hard for you, you shall bring to me, and I will hear it.'
¹⁸ I commanded you at that time all the things that you should do.

A major aspect that we have considered along our journey is how Israel functions as a nation when the authority structure is God => Messiah => man => woman. (See often cited I Cor. 11:3)

The incorrect assumption often made is that if all men answer directly to Messiah, then there is no need for an intermediate structure that has some form of governance. In actuality, while all men *will* answer to the Messiah, not all men *do* answer to the Messiah. Simply, there are differences of understanding of basic Torah guidelines, and men (as well as women) are by nature, sinners and therefore can run afoul of God's very simple instructions.

Several factors should be considered here:

First, the clear guidance is to choose *men*. In keeping with all of the instruction up to this point in the Torah and a clear obedience to God's ordained order, the weight and duty of leadership and decision making falls on men.

Second, these are to be *wise and discerning* men. The men being chosen to lead are proven, likely mature in age and well experienced having demonstrated over and over that they are wise and discerning. Paul, in two separate texts in the Brit Chadashah, gives qualifications for an elders that include such lines as: 'one who rules his own house well.' (1 Tim. 3:1-13; Tit. 1:5-9) Surely, he bases those qualifications on Torah expectations for a man in leadership.

Third, these wise and discerning men come from their *own tribes*. Each man, judging for a hundred or a thousand, is not judging a group to which he is not associated. He is standing as judge among his own people. This is not Judah ruling over Reuben or Ephraim, this is *each tribe ruling themselves*. Family will almost always deal more compassionately and with more understanding when dealing with their own. This alone is the significance of families, clans and tribes in a national confederation. Israel, a single nation, was a collection of different major branches in the family... twelve brothers from one father and four mothers.

Fourth, to ensure that the men act wisely and impartially, Moshe commands impartiality in verses 16-18.

What we do not see is the huge bureaucracy that is normal to most modern governments. In fact, I would assume that all governments grow in bureaucracy over time, however modern governmental structures are especially so. One might point at the seeming breadth of

governance that may not have been present at the time of Mount Sinai, however, a truly Torah based society with men uniformly pursuing righteousness should lead to a significant *reduction* in need for layers of oversight and mountains of rules, committees, and governing bodies. Color me ‘idealist,’ but I tend to think the Messiah’s Kingdom will not need the mountains of government present in this age.

Moshe continues his recounting of the history of Israel to the new generation.

Deuteronomy 1:²¹ See, the Lord your God has placed the land before you; go up, take possession, as the Lord, the God of your fathers, has spoken to you. Do not fear or be dismayed.’

²² “Then all of you approached me and said, ‘Let us send men before us, that they may search out the land for us, and bring back to us word of the way by which we should go up and the cities which we shall enter.’ ²³ The thing pleased me and I took twelve of your men, one man for each tribe. ²⁴ They turned and went up into the hill country, and came to the valley of Eshcol and spied it out. ²⁵ Then they took *some* of the fruit of the land in their hands and brought it down to us; and they brought us back a report and said, ‘It is a good land which the Lord our God is about to give us.’

²⁶ “Yet you were not willing to go up, but rebelled against the command of the Lord your God; ²⁷ and you grumbled in your tents and said, ‘Because the Lord hates us, He has brought us out of the land of Egypt to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites to destroy us. ²⁸ Where can we go up? Our brethren have made our hearts melt, saying, “The people are bigger and taller than we; the cities are large and fortified to heaven. And besides, we saw the sons of the Anakim there.”’ ²⁹ Then I said to you, ‘Do not be shocked, nor fear them. ³⁰ The Lord your God who goes before you will Himself fight on your behalf, just as He did for you in Egypt before your eyes, ³¹ and in the wilderness where you saw how the Lord your God carried you, just as a man carries his son, in all the way which you have walked until you came to this place.’ ³² But for all this, you did not trust the Lord your God, ³³ who goes before you on *your* way, to seek out a place for you to encamp, in fire by night and cloud by day, to show you the way in which you should go.

This passage is dripping with rebellion. In an authority structure, rebellion by a subordinate over the head is absolute poison. When the men of Israel rebelled against YHVH, they were trying to assume authority over Him.

Targum Onkelos gives an even more interesting picture. Verses 30 and 32 state that it is the 'Memra de Yeya,' the 'Word of the Lord,' aka 'Yeshua' who was going before them and against Whom they rebelled. Maybe you've never heard this, but John's use of 'the Word' (John 1:1ff) is not original. Authoritative Aramaic translations of the Torah done by the rabbis, some 150+ years *before* Yeshua, used 'Memra' or 'Memra de Yeya' (Word, or Word of the Lord) about 100 times in the Torah to describe manifestations of Yehovah. John just had the audacity to say that they were right and that Yeshua is the Memra, the Word!

What is particularly important is that it supports Paul's assertion: God => Messiah => man => woman. Targum Onkelos says, in Deuteronomy 2:7 that the 'Memra your God' was with Israel for forty years in the wilderness and they lacked nothing. The term is additionally used in 2:33 and 3:22 in this portion! (As a side note, I strongly encourage the reader to use a computer to secure copies of several different Targumim [Onkelos, Yerushalayim, Yonatan] and search them for 'Memra' and 'Memra de Yeya' and note the many fascinating places the rabbinic translators ascribed a visible physical manifestation of YHVH.)

The bottom-line is that the rebellion of Israel was against YHVH-Yeshua. I'll not open more widely that theological can of wigglers, but besides the Angel of the Lord occurrences in the Tanak that say and do things only YHVH can say or do, the Memra study is amazing!! (Search 'memra' on natsab.com for a few teachings on the subject. And, while you are at it, consider the following 'Angel of the Lord' Study Guide I assembled a couple years ago. It is shorthand notes for an expanded study, but reveals that, behold, Yeshua stands between YHVH and man, throughout the Torah!!)

Angel of the Lord Study Sheet

Originally produced 7/19/15

John 5:45-47 and Luke 24:27 We should be able to see Yeshua in the Torah since "Moses wrote about Me."

Genesis 16:7-13

Note the claims this 'malak' – messenger – makes:

- “I will multiply...”
- “Yehovah (The Lord) spoke with me...”
- “Have I remained alive after seeing Him?”

Read John 1:18 and 5:37. Who did Hagar see and hear that made these astounding claims?

Genesis 22:11-18

Again, note claims:

- “from Me...”
- “I will bless...”
- “My voice...”

Exodus 3:2-6 and following...

- “appeared...”
- “The Lord saw... God called from the midst...”
- “holy ground.” - worship
- “afraid to **look at God**...”
- V.14: “I Am who I am...”
- V.15: YHVH
- “to all generations...”

[Aside: YHVH/Yahweh/Yehovah – name removed 6800 times from text... Check your translator notes in the front of your Bible... See Jeremiah 16:19-21]

Numbers 22:22-35

- v.31 Angel of the Lord **accepts** worship (compare to other angels that say 'don't worship...')
- “contrary to Me...”

- v. 35 “Speak only the words **I** tell you..”
- Numbers 23:5 “Yehovah (The Lord) put a word in Balaam's mouth...”

Exodus 14:19

- Angel of the Lord leads...
- Compare to Exodus 13:17-18 (“...God did not lead, God led...”)
- Compare Exodus 14:24 “Yehovah looked down..fire and smoke...”

Judges 2:1-4

Note again the astounding claims of the Angel of the Lord

- “**I** brought you out...”
- “**I** have sworn to your fathers...”
- “**My Covenant...**”
- “...have not obeyed Me!”
- See Acts 7:38 “...angel who was speaking with him on Mt. Sinai...”

Judges 6:11-23

Note the claims:

- “Yehovah is with you...”
- “Have **I** not sent you?...”
- “**I** will be with you...”
- Accepts offering vss. 18, 20-21

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Judges 13:2-23

- v. 3 “appeared”

- v.11 “**I am...**”
- v. 16 & 23 “burnt offering...”
- v. 18 “wonderful” (a riddle not understood for 500 years... compare Genesis 32:29-30 and Isaiah 9:6...)
- v.22 “...**We have seen God...**”

Deuteronomy 23:14

Who walks in the midst of the camp?

Knowing all of this...

Exodus 24:9-11

Remembering, 'no man can see God...'

- “...they saw the God of Israel...”
- “...they saw God and He did not stretch out His hand...”
- Who did they see?

The One they saw is the One Colossians 1:15 says is, “...the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation...” The One they saw was Yeshua.

Knowing this, if Yeshua stood on Mt. Sinai, and James 4:12 calls Him the Lawgiver, and Hebrews 13:8 tells us [He is] “the same, yesterday, today, forever, then, what does He mean when He says, “If you love Me, you will keep MY commandments.”

What commandments is He talking about? What commandments did He give?

For additional study on the Angel of the Lord, I recommend Asher Intrater’s *Who Ate Lunch With Abraham?* (I do not agree with Asher’s position regarding Torah being only incumbent upon Jews...)

A final consideration from this portion is,

Deuteronomy 2:¹⁴ Now the time that it took for us to come from Kadesh-barnea until we crossed over the brook Zered was thirty-eight years, until all the generation of the men of war perished from within the camp, as the Lord had sworn to them. ¹⁵ Moreover the hand of the Lord was against them, to destroy them from within the camp until they all perished.

¹⁶ "So it came about when all the men of war had finally perished from among the people, ¹⁷ that the Lord spoke to me, saying, ¹⁸ 'Today you shall cross over Ar, the border of Moab.

It would *seem* from this passage that the judgment levied on Israel for their rebellion after the spies incident was upon the men of war and not the entire generation. I am not aware of any direct contradiction to that understanding, but hold it with an open hand at this point. What it would indicate, if so, is that in the creation order/authority structure, God primarily deals with the man and expects the man to deal with his house. This is easily supported by our study of Numbers 5:11-31 wherein the woman is not judged by God until the man brings her and 'uncovers her' thus exposing her directly to the Almighty, instead of having her under his protective covering. Other portions of Scripture seem to support this understanding.

Basically, God adheres to and condescends toward His ordained authority structure. Therefore, any woman who chooses to walk outside of God's plan effectively places herself in jeopardy through direct judgment that might otherwise be softened by submission to a man who is himself under the covering of Yeshua/the Memra. Put another way, why would a woman stand in an open field during a lightning storm when she can get under a roof?

Selah!

Shabbat Shalom!