

Torah Portion: Va'etchanan (Deuteronomy 3:23-7:11)

[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/>]

This portion is an incredibly rich portion with many commands related to how Israel is to live and behave to remain in covenant with the Elohim of Avraham, Itzhak, and Ya'acov. The commands are generally addressed to all of Israel, but it is the men who are specifically charged with performing, teaching, and perpetuating the covenant keeping command.

There are no specific commands dealing with marriage, headship, and patriarchy beyond the men being charged with teaching the commands to sons and grandsons. For this portion, we'll not deviate from our specific purpose, therefore this commentary will be short as I simply point out the general addressing of 'Israel' and the specific addressing of the men.

First, notice that God holds heads accountable and He is not one to go back on His Word.

Deuteronomy 3:²³ "I also pleaded with the Lord at that time, saying,
²⁴ 'O Lord God, You have begun to show Your servant Your greatness and Your strong hand; for what god is there in heaven or on earth who can do such works and mighty acts as Yours? ²⁵ Let me, I pray, cross over and see the fair land that is beyond the Jordan, that good hill country and Lebanon.' ²⁶ But the Lord was angry with me on your account, and would not listen to me; and the Lord said to me, 'Enough! Speak to Me no more of this matter. ²⁷ Go up to the top of Pisgah and lift up your eyes to the west and north and south and east, and see *it* with your eyes, for you shall not cross over this Jordan. ²⁸ But charge Joshua and encourage him and strengthen him, for he shall go across at the head of this people, and he will give them as an inheritance the land which you will see.'

Indeed, God is gracious enough to allow Moshe a view of the Land, but He is firm in His discipline and decision to disallow Moshe from entering at the head of the people. Men, there are times to relent in discipline. We have many examples of God doing so, but this example demonstrates that there are times to be firm and unmoving in discipline. God's purpose appears much more than 'frivolous.' There is a change of command happening as well as the prophetic image of Yeshua (Joshua is Yehoshua) leading the people into the Land. Still, God is just in His decision regarding Moshe.

The commands in this portion are generally given to 'Israel' as noted in the following examples,

Deuteronomy 4:¹ "Now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the judgments which I am teaching you to perform, so that you may live and go in and take possession of the land which the Lord, the God of your fathers, is giving you. ²You shall not add to the word which I am commanding you, nor take away from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you.

Deuteronomy 5:¹ Then Moses summoned all Israel and said to them:

"Hear, O Israel, the statutes and the ordinances which I am speaking today in your hearing, that you may learn them and observe them carefully. ²The Lord our God made a covenant with us at Horeb. ³The Lord did not make this covenant with our fathers, but with us, *with* all those of us alive here today.

Deuteronomy 6:¹ "Now this is the commandment, the statutes and the judgments which the Lord your God has commanded *me* to teach you, that you might do *them* in the land where you are going over to possess it, ²so that you and your son and your grandson might fear the Lord your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged. ³O Israel, you should listen and be careful to do *it*, that it may be well with you and that you may multiply greatly, just as the Lord, the God of your fathers, has promised you, *in* a land flowing with milk and honey.

4 “**Hear, O Israel!** The Lord is our God, the Lord is one! **5** You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

Throughout scripture, over and over, we see the direction of the commands as being given to the men to teach to their women and children. Moshe, in this address, is likely addressing the congregation of the men, though it may have been somewhat mixed. He is using ‘inclusive language’ to a degree to ensure the commandments are being passed down from husband to wife and to children. But, in this same address, he is direct at the men regarding the training of their sons. Remember, God held Adam accountable in the Garden, not Eve... until, Adam shirked his covering duties. The command not to eat of the Tree was given to Adam and nothing happened to Eve until Adam broke the commandment and ate. Here are some of Moshe’s instances of directness to the men.

Deuteronomy 4:²⁵ “When you become the father of children and children’s children [literally, “sons and sons’ sons”] and have remained long in the land, and act corruptly, and make an idol in the form of anything, and do that which is evil in the sight of the Lord your God so as to provoke Him to anger,

Deuteronomy 4:⁴⁴ Now this is the law which Moses set before the sons of Israel; ⁴⁵ these are the testimonies and the statutes and the ordinances which Moses spoke to the sons of Israel, when they came out from Egypt, ⁴⁶ across the Jordan, in the valley opposite Beth-peor, in the land of Sihon king of the Amorites who lived at Heshbon, whom Moses and the sons of Israel defeated when they came out from Egypt.

Deuteronomy 6:¹ “Now this is the commandment, the statutes and the judgments which the Lord your God has commanded *me* to teach you, that you might do *them* in the land where you are going over to possess it, ² so that you and your son and your grandson might fear the Lord your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged.

Deuteronomy 6:⁴ “Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one! **5** You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. **6** These words, which I am

commanding you today, shall be on your heart. ⁷ You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up.

Deuteronomy 6:²⁰ "When your son asks you in time to come, saying, 'What *do* the testimonies and the statutes and the judgments *mean* which the Lord our God commanded you?' ²¹ then you shall say to your son, 'We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, and the Lord brought us from Egypt with a mighty hand.

Deuteronomy 7:³ Furthermore, you shall not intermarry with them; you shall not give your daughter to his son, nor shall you take his daughter for your son. **4** For he will turn your son away from following Me to serve other gods; then the anger of the Lord will be kindled against you and He will quickly destroy you.

The point, as we have seen over and over in the Torah and supported throughout Scripture (see 1 Cor. 11:3), is that God has an authority structure and holds man accountable for his own house. Each man is to do what Adam did not.

This point cannot be overstated. While it may sound like a broken record, the overwhelming testimony of Scripture is that the responsibility falls upon man for teaching and disciplining his household. And, for this reason, judgment will fall more heavily on men who shirk or abuse this authority.

Isaiah 24:¹ Behold, the Lord lays the earth waste, devastates it, distorts its surface and scatters its inhabitants. ² And the people will be like the priest, the servant like his master, the maid like her mistress, the buyer like the seller, the lender like the borrower, the creditor like the debtor. ³ The earth will be completely laid waste and completely despoiled, for the Lord has spoken this word. ⁴ The earth mourns *and* withers, the world fades *and* withers, the exalted of the people of the earth fade away. ⁵ The earth is also polluted by its inhabitants, for they transgressed laws, violated statutes, broke the everlasting covenant. ⁶ Therefore, a curse devours the earth, and those who live in it are held guilty. Therefore, the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men are left.

I also strongly recommend Isaiah 3 and 4 as clear teaching that men will pay a heavy price for not ruling well, while women will be brought to shame for being uncovered and/or assuming leadership for which they are eligible. The women will then see the need for righteous covering and will seek out the Godly men who remain...

Israel *will not* be restored as an egalitarian or complementarian nation. Restored Israel will be decidedly patriarchal and will operate under the everlasting Torah of YHVH as originally given by Moshe and taught/enforced by the Holy One of Israel from Mount Zion. (Is. 2:1-5; Micah 4:1-8)

Selah!

Shabbat Shalom!