

A Messianic Jewish Commentary on Parashah

Ki Tavoh (When you come)

Deuteronomy 26:1 – 29:9 (8), Isaiah 60:1-22, Luke 21:1-4

“And it shall be **when you have come** into the land...” (Deuteronomy 26:1)

The very first act that God instructed Israel to perform when they finally came into the Land He had given them for an inheritance was to **give back to God an offering**.

Once they had possessed the Land and settled there, they were commanded to put the first of all the fruit into a basket and present it to the priest. (Deuteronomy 26:2-4)

In giving this ‘**first-fruits offering**’, which included wheat, barley, vines, figs, pomegranates, olives and dates, the Israelites were offering their thanksgiving to God for all the amazing things He had done for them.

God had rescued them from bitter oppression in Egypt, from wandering in the wilderness; and had brought them into a good land to become a great nation, dwelling in comfort, safety and security in a rich and fertile land.

*“The Lord heard our voice, and saw our affliction, and our toil and our oppression, and the Lord brought us forth out of Egypt **with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm...and with signs and with wonders...**”* (Deuteronomy 26:7-8)

Their offerings were not given in silence, but with an audible confession of the awesome mercy and goodness of God! When we present our tithes and offerings to the Lord, we may also confess to one another the many ways we have seen the goodness and mercy of God in the land of the living.

We may not know where we are going, but if the Lord is taking us somewhere, it is going to be a ‘**good land**’. Halleluyah!



“And He has brought us into this place...**a land flowing with milk and honey...**”
(Deuteronomy 26:9)

When God brings us out of a difficult place, delivering us from the horrible pit and setting our feet on the solid rock, we need to acknowledge Him, thank Him, and be willing to give back materially from His incredible bounty.

When we do this we demonstrate that we know He is our source of all blessings.

“And now, behold, I have brought the first of the fruit of the land **which You, O Lord, have given me.**” (Deuteronomy 26:10)

REJOICE IN THE LORD!

As did Israel in ancient times, we can also recall when he has healed our bodies, delivered us from our enemies, and provided our needs in a miraculous way. Once we have given our offering, there is only one thing left to do – **REJOICE!**

“**And you shall rejoice in all the good which the Lord your God has given you...**”
(Deuteronomy 26:11)

Too often, however, the enemy seeks to steal, kill and destroy our joy. Why? Because **the joy of the Lord is our strength.** (Nehemiah 8:10) If we allow satan to steal our joy, we will not have the strength to possess the good land He has given us.

There are times when we just wake up weary and discouraged. Joy is nowhere to be found it seems. Maybe we have pain in our body, or lack in our finances; our relationships in our family could be going through a rough patch. Pressures in life can push us down and What do we do then to recover our joy?

There is only one solution - come in (tavoh) to **the presence of Adonai:**

“You will show me the path of life: **in your presence is fullness of joy;** at your right hand there are pleasures for ever more.” (Psalm 16:11)

Yeshua came to give us joy in abundance: “These things have I spoken unto you, that **my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full**” (John 15:11, KJV)

When our joy is full, others should be able to see it on our faces by a ready smile and a radiant glow. When we are full of His supernatural joy it will overflow and bring joy to others! We can be used by God to brighten someone else’s day.

We must not allow circumstances to dictate our level of joy. Paul, while in a prison cell, wrote the words, “**Rejoice in the Lord always and again I say rejoice!**” (Philippians

4:4) As Believers in Yeshua (Jesus) the Messiah, we have the privilege of rejoicing **continually** in our God, not just when circumstances seem to be going our way.

Because despite what may be going on around us, we can always **rejoice that our names are written in the Lamb's book of Life for eternity!** Halleluyah!

THE BOOK OF LIFE

Yeshua told his disciples not to rejoice that demons were subject to them, but to rejoice that **their names were written in the Book of Life.** (Luke 10:20)

The Book of Life is an ancient Biblical concept that Jewish people use as a greeting and prayer at the time of the upcoming Fall Feast that is customarily called **Rosh Hashanah.** Jewish people traditionally send greeting cards to their friends and family with the words, "*May your names be written in the Book of Life.*"

Moses knew that his name was written in the Book of Life but he was willing for God to blot out his name if it meant the salvation of the Israelites whom he was sent to deliver from Egypt. When Israel constructed a golden calf and worshipped it, God was about to destroy them completely.



Sefer Torah at old Glockengasse Synagoge, Cologne

But Moses prayed, "Oh, these people have sinned a great sin, and have made for themselves a god of gold! Yet now, if You will forgive their sin-but if not, I pray, **blot me out of Your book which You have written'** " (Exodus 32:31-32).

What sacrificial, unfailing love Moses had for the people of Israel! Centuries later, Yeshua demonstrated such love for the lost sheep of the House of Israel that he gave his very life to redeem them from their sins. He said, "The shepherd gives his life for the sheep..."

The apostle Paul also followed in their footsteps, saying he felt the same way about his fellow countrymen (Romans 9:1-5). Those who shepherd God's people are called to this life of sacrificial love! May each of us be willing to make the sacrifices necessary for precious souls to be saved.

Once the Temple was destroyed, it became impossible to offer up blood sacrifices for atonement of sins. Therefore today, most Jewish people *hope* that their names will be written in the Book of Life through good deeds, prayer, repentance and the giving of charity. But as Believers in Yeshua the Messiah, we can know with a certainty that our names are recorded in God's book through faith in the His perfect and final sacrifice.

But he was pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins. He was beaten so we could be whole. He was whipped so we could be healed. (Isaiah 53:5 NLT)

Faith without works, however, is dead (useless), as James tells us (2:17); but when we know God through Yeshua, then the Holy Spirit (Ruach Hakodesh) will naturally lead us into a holy life which includes doing good works. Our deeds do count for eternity, which is why we must not grow weary in doing good:

And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is **the book of life**: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, **according to their works**. (Rev. 20:12, [King James Version](#))

God's Word clearly states that if our names are not written in the Book of Life then we are doomed to eternal condemnation.

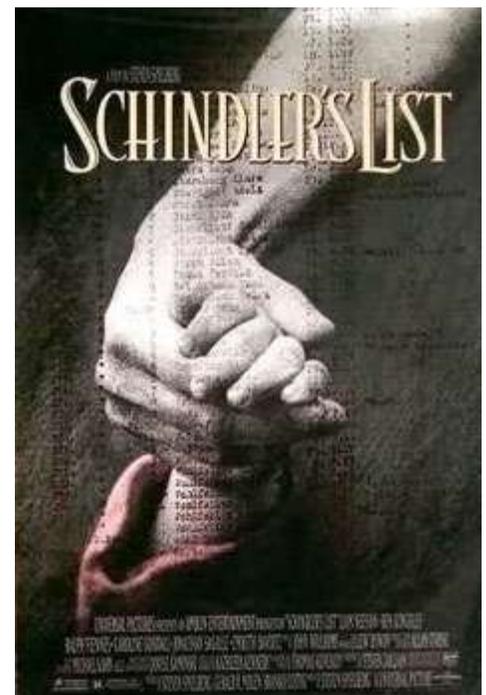
In Daniel 12:1-2, it says: "There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. But at that time your people—**everyone whose name is found written in the book—will be delivered**. Many who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: **some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt**."

In Revelation 20:14-15 we are told: "Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. **And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.**"

Obviously, whether or not our names are written in the Book of Life is a crucial issue.

Yad Vashem, the [Holocaust Memorial Museum in Jerusalem](#), displays a simple list of names – 1,100 of them. Obviously typed on an old, manual typewriter, this seems at first glance to be an ordinary piece of paper.

But upon closer examination, one can see that this was no ordinary list – this was **Schindler's list**. During the Nazi occupation of Europe during WW II, for the Jewish laborers of the Plaszow work camp, being on the list meant the difference between life and death.



Being listed in the Book of Life is like this – whether or not someone's name is written on God's list or not means the difference between eternal life and eternal death – between heaven and hell. God gives us the free will to choose blessing or cursing.

Those whose names are written in this wonderful book will have life for eternity and also the privilege of being part of the Bride of Messiah, the New Jerusalem.

" Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, prepared **as a bride adorned for her husband**" (Revelation 21:1-2).

But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but **only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life**" (Revelation 21:27).

Let us pray fervently and continually for all those whose names are not yet written in the Book of Life that they may also rejoice in the Lord that their names are written in heaven.

CLEARING OUT THE TITHE

The next thing that the Israelites were commanded to do, was to make sure that they had **cleared the whole tithe out of their possession**, saying: "*I have put away the hallowed things out of my house, and also have given them unto the Levite, and unto the stranger, to the fatherless, and to the widow, according to all Thy commandment....*" (Deuteronomy 26:13)

I don't know about you, but I have come to the point in my walk with the Lord where I have a holy 'fear' of holding onto my tithe too long. I just want to clear it out of my possession as soon as possible, because I have seen that if for some reason it stays too long with me, things start to go wrong.

The washing machine may break down, the car needs a repair, we lose some money, business deals we were hoping for fall through, a messy legal situation rears its ugly head....the negative possibilities are endless.

But so are the possibilities for God to shower us with blessings when we obey Him – to open the windows of heaven and pour out such a blessing we can barely keep up! Halleluyah!

Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the LORD Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it. (Malachi 3:10)

God promises that if we obey Him in giving our tithe, He will rebuke the devourer for our sakes and bless the remainder of our finances. **"Then I will rebuke the devourer for you, so that it will not destroy the fruits of the ground; nor will your vine in the field cast its grapes," says the LORD of hosts.** (Malachi 3:10)

But the reverse holds true as well: if we fail to give to God the 'hallowed portion' of our income, then we are breaking covenant by 'robbing God'. Then the 'devourer' can be given free rein to work havoc and destruction our finances and we come under a curse.

It is by giving our tithe – removing it from our possession, that we can return to God and He will return to us.

Return to me, and I will return to you," says the LORD Almighty.

"But you ask, 'How are we to return?'

⁸ "Will a mere mortal rob God? Yet you rob me.

"But you ask, 'How are we robbing you?'

"In tithes and offerings. ⁹ You are under a curse—your whole nation—because you are robbing me. (Malachi 3:6-9)

Sometimes if the Lord has blessed me, I can't even wait until I get to the kehilla (congregation), but I start to get nervous about keeping the tithe in my possession. I do give my tithe to the Messianic Congregation which we attend in Jerusalem, but there are times when I pray, *"Holy Spirit, show me who to give this tithe to. I just don't want to carry it around much longer. Lead and guide me to someone who needs it."*

And he always answers this prayer in such a beautiful way – someone who has a desperate need may approach me or I may hear of someone in need and am able to help them, which fills me with joy! Truly it is even more blessed to give than to receive.

The giving of Tzedakah (charity) is considered such an important mitzvah (commandment) that if someone does not fulfill this law, their lineage actually comes under suspect.

Giving to the poor is an obligation in Judaism, a duty that cannot be forsaken even by those who are themselves in need. Some sages have said that tzedakah is the highest of all commandments, equal to all of them combined, and that a person who does not perform tzedakah is equivalent to an idol worshipper.

This principle is affirmed also in the New Testament, where if we don't give when we see a brother in material need, then it comes into doubt whether or not the love of God truly dwells within us.

1 John 3:17 If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him?

The Lord promises that when we give to the poor and needy, the widows and orphans, He will pay us back for what we have given.

Whoever is generous to the poor lends to the LORD, and he will repay him for his deed. (Proverb 19:17)

I've learned these principles through experience and know that the Word of God is true and that we will be blessed when we walk more and more in agreement with God.

A SPECIAL TREASURE (SEGULAH)

The Lord promises Israel will be 'His treasured People' in accordance with Exodus 19:5,6 IF they keep His commandments and to be a holy people unto the Lord:

Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine,⁶ you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation (mamlechet cohanim v'am kadosh.)'

In the New Testament, all followers of Yeshua Hamashiach (the Messiah) are called God's special people –**But you are A CHOSEN RACE, a royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light** (1 Peter 2:9) (NASB)

Because of our covenant with the Almighty God through the blood of Yeshua, both Jew and Gentile can know that we are God's most treasured possession. Wow! In Hebrew, the word is Segulah, סגולה which means to be a valued treasure. The color purple in Hebrew is sagol סגול – same root letters! Purple is the color of royalty!

As the Lord's 'segulah', we are clothed in sagol – we are children of the King and He is our Father. He values and treasures us. There is no need to look at externals or superficial qualifications. This is simply our identity in the Messiah!

We may look at ourselves and say, I don't look much like a treasure; I'm too short or too tall, too fat or too thin, not pretty or smart enough to be a treasure. We might check in with our emotions and say, I don't feel that I qualify to be called a treasure of God; I have so many faults and weaknesses – I lose my temper...I'm not disciplined enough...don't witness enough...whatever we consider our weaknesses..

But as the apostle Paul says, we are to put no confidence in our attributes of the flesh. (Philippians 3:3) If anyone could have qualified as a treasure by the certificates on his wall and trophies on his desk it was the apostle Paul: “*circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law, faultless.*” (Phil. 3:5-6)

Faultness – wow! How many of us could say that about ourselves? And yet Paul said

⁷ But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Messiah. ⁸ What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Messiah Yeshua Adoni (my Lord), for whose sake I have lost all things.

***I consider them garbage**, that I may gain Messiah⁹ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Messiah—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith. ¹⁰* (Phil. 3:7-10)

Did we catch that? Garbage. Paul called all his external qualifications and faultless performance as garbage compared to the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of ‘faith’. We must accept by faith that if we are doing our best to obey God and walk in His ways by His Spirit, then we are in truth, His special treasure.

We are of value to the Lord, even with our faults, weaknesses and imperfections, we can say “I am royalty – a child of the King of Kings - **the segulah of the Lord – a precious, valued treasure!**”

Why are we treasures? Simply because we are His covenant children and are each created in the image and likeness of the Almighty God. He all contain a spark of His **divine shechinah glory** within us.

How do we treat treasures? We put them in special places and guard them jealously, keeping them in a safe, secure place.

If we have a \$100 bill and it accidentally drops on the ground, getting soiled, stepped on, crumpled and bent – is it worth any less than \$100? No it retains its value.

So too is it with us. Some of us have not always been treated like a treasure. Perhaps parents, school mates, or later spouses have not treated us with honor, value and respect. We may have even been abused or mistreated terribly by people, as if we are someone inconsequential.

But God does not see us this way; He still sees us as His special treasure. Even if we have been sullied or broken; even if our heart has been torn in two or our whole life shattered, we are still a beautiful treasure to the Lord – a crown of beauty and a royal diadem in the hand of our God. (Isaiah 62:3)

When I was a little girl, I collected butterflies. Somehow one butterfly managed to stay with me in my store of ‘treasures’, even through the many moves I have made in my life. I kept it in cotton so that its wings would not be damaged, and protected it enclosed within a pretty perfume box from my mother. This little ‘treasure’ meant a lot to me, as butterflies became a symbol to me of transformation, beauty, and freedom. Somehow this little dried butterfly stayed in my possession for over forty years! Wow!



But when contemplating my move back to Israel, obviously I couldn't take everything in my suitcases or carry on, so I gave my most valuable treasures – the pearls from my parents, the rings from my special friend in Japan, a few other things of great value to me – and of course my butterfly – to a person who was to bring these later in his carry on.

Well, it's a long story, but to make it short, the 40 year old butterfly never made the trip to Israel. Later I found out that some children got into my things and ‘played’ with the fragile dried specimen and it had been destroyed. I felt sad and angry that my ‘treasure’ had been left unprotected to be treated so carelessly!

If I, as a human being, felt this intensely about a simple dried butterfly, can we even fathom the grief and wrath that God feels when someone ‘messes’ with His segulah?

We need to leave these injustices and hurts in the hands of the Lord who says He will vindicate us. Our only choice is to forgive those who have hurt and mistreated us.

If we don't see ourselves as valuable and worthy of respect, then we will project this to others and they will often treat us as such – with a lack of honor, value and respect. When the Israelites saw themselves as grasshoppers, they said that so did the giants!

But when we begin to value and respect ourselves, (in a balanced way) we will find more and more that the people in our lives also begin to value and appreciate us as well. Part of our healing and recovery is to transform the way we see ourselves – **to know our identity in the Messiah – righteous, whole, precious, valuable.** We receive these precious attributes only through **Divine Covenant.**

TURNING CURSES INTO BLESSINGS

There was a man in the Bible who definitely did not think of himself as a treasure. He had been dropped by his nurse as a small child and grew up a cripple. His name was **Mephiboshet**, but he called himself a **'dead dog'**. That was his self image which had taken shape over the years through his crippled condition and the self pity that likely accompanied his handicap.

But Mephiboshet had one thing going for him - he was the grandson of King Saul, a child of Prince Jonathan – covenantal friend of King David. Life had not been fair to Mephiboshet. Yes, it had started out well, after all, the child was royalty, and so he enjoyed all the privileges of royalty. At that time, he even had a different name: **"Mirab Baal"**, meaning **opponent of Baal, a false god.**

But after King Saul and Jonathan had been killed in battle, when Mephiboshet was just a little boy, about five years old, a man from the terrible battlefield came running into the palace shouting,

"King Saul and his sons are dead!"

"King Saul and his sons are dead!"

Mephiboshet's nurse picked him up and they ran for their lives; but in their haste, she dropped the little boy and at that moment, his life was forever changed. He became a useless cripple. Even his name was changed from Mirab Baal, mighty opponent of Baal to **Mephiboshet – Son of Shame.**

And this is how he lived – in shame – in a place called Loh Davar, which means in Hebrew literally "no thing". He was a nothing from nowhere – at least that's how he saw himself.

But none of this changed the fact that he was **a covenant child of royalty.** When King David went looking for someone in Jonathan's lineage that he could bless, he discovered Mephiboshet, languishing in Loh Davar. When he heard that King David had summoned him, he thought, *"What would the King want with a dead dog like me?"*

But David answered, *"Don't be afraid, for I will surely show you kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan. I will restore to you all the land that belonged to your grandfather Saul, and you will always eat at my table."* (2 Samuel 9:6-8)

Because of the love of God that was in King David's heart, the curse over Mephiboshet was turned into a blessing. Some of us have had some of these 'life altering moments' that took us from a place of privilege and position to being a 'nobody from nowhere'. Our

lives may have seemed cursed and we have come to think of ourselves as no better than 'dead dogs', living with a continual sense of shame.

But God promises **that instead of our former shame, we shall have double** in our land! Halleluyah! (Isaiah 61:7)

We can be a 'David' in someone's life to help them see the value in themselves that has always been there lying dormant. We may be crippled in some way – maybe not physically handicapped but perhaps emotionally or sexually crippled through abuse, but please hear me now – there is Someone who absolutely loves and values you! He sees you as His special treasure and carries you in a place right next to His heart. He will never leave you nor forsake you. His name is Yeshua – God saves.



It is not often that I weep in the Holy Spirit while writing my own Torah commentaries but this is one of those times. I believe that even now as you read this story of Mephiboshet, that God is doing a deep work of healing in your life.

Yeshua came to carry on himself the curse, so that we could receive our covenantal blessings. (See article Kotzim (thorns): www.voiceforisrael.net)

He who knew no sin became sin for us, in order that we could become the righteousness of God in Him. (2 Corinthians 5:21)

God can turn even the worst, most painful moments in our lives into blessings, and use them to bring us back to Him, so that we are restored to being sons and daughters of the King again, eating at the table that He has prepared for us.

For me, personally, God took the very worst moment of my life – when the father of my unborn child betrayed and abandoned me – and turned it into my greatest blessing! This crisis pregnancy led to my salvation through a revelation that Jesus (Yeshua) is actually the Jewish Messiah and Savior of all humankind. Halleluiyah!

His promise to us is that all things will work together for the good of those who love him, who are called according to his purpose.

Lord, heal our broken image of ourselves and restore us to dining with you in Your royal palace once again . Help us by the transforming power of Your Holy Spirit, to throw off that 'dead dog' mentality, pull back our shoulders, lift up our heads and be willing to look people in the eye, realizing that we are God's segulah - His special treasure!

The final portion of this parashah deals with the blessings and curses of the Mosaic covenant. We don't need to look far to see that the Jewish people have been blessed by the Almighty God as He promised; but they have also done more than their fair share of suffering over the centuries through these 'curses of the covenant' (Deuteronomy 28:15-69).

As Teviah, the father in the Fiddler on the Roof put so well when talking to God after his horse became lame just before the Sabbath, "*God, I know that we are Your chosen people, but....couldn't You choose someone else for a change?*"

Indeed, those who have been given much privilege also carry a greater responsibility.

As I pondered how to approach this section of the parashah, I prayed for wisdom, to write only what the Father would want to be communicated to His people. And what the Holy Spirit really impressed upon my heart is that we need to know that we are children of God through the New Covenant – not like the Old (Mosaic) Covenant – which they broke, says the Lord.

Through the Prophet Jeremiah, God promised His people a covenant which includes **the forgiveness of all our sins and wickedness.**

Jeremiah 31:31-34

New International Version (NIV)

³¹ “The days are coming,” declares the LORD,
“when I will **make a new covenant**
with the people of Israel
and with the people of Judah.

³² **It will not be like the covenant
I made with their ancestors
when I took them by the hand
to lead them out of Egypt,** (the Mosaic Covenant)
because they broke my covenant,
though I was a husband to them,”
declares the LORD.

³³ “This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel
after that time,” declares the LORD.

“I will put my law in their minds
and write it on their hearts.

I will be their God,
and they will be my people.
³⁴ No longer will they teach their neighbor,
or say to one another, ‘Know the LORD,’
because they will all know me,
from the least of them to the greatest,”
declares the LORD.

**“For I will forgive their wickedness
and will remember their sins no more.”**

Not only does God forgive our sins – He doesn’t even remember them anymore!

Let us walk in the freedom , the joy, the peace we have been given in the New Covenant, bought
at such a high price with the precious blood of the sinless Lamb of God – Yeshua Hamashiach!

May Adonai bless you and keep you , may He shine His countenance upon you and be gracious
unto you. May He lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace. Shabbat Shalom!

Love Hannah

Thank you for studying Torah (Bible) with us. Please feel free to share this
message with others by e-mail or link us to your website: www.voiceforisrael.net

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Hannah Neshher grew up in an Orthodox Jewish home and received her education in a religious Hebrew school in Canada. During a crisis pregnancy, she came to know Jesus (Yeshua) as her Messiah and Savior. She now lives in Israel with her children and grandchildren, teaching about the Jewish roots of the Christian faith.



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“For out of Zion shall go forth the Torah, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.” (Isaiah 2:3)

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