



Parasha Va'etchanan

July 29, 2023

Torah: Deuteronomy 3:23-7:11

Haftarah: Isaiah 40:1-26

Ketuvim Shlichim: Romans 3:27-31

Shabbat shalom mishpacha! Our *parasha* today is *Va'etchanan*. *Va'etchanan* means "I pleaded" and the speaker is Moses. 23 "I pleaded with Adonai at that time, saying, 24 'O Lord Adonai, 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 deeds and mighty acts like Yours? 25 Please! Let me cross over and see the good land across the Jordan—that good hill country and the Lebanon.'" (Deuteronomy 3:23-25 TLV). ADONAI would not relent and Moses died after only having seen *Eretz Yisra'el*, the Promised Land from a distance: 7 *Moses was 120 years old when he died. His eye was not dim nor his vigor gone.* (Deuteronomy 34:7 TLV). This last chapter was most likely written by Joshua. *Moshe* was an amazing man whose life story should be made into a movie. Actually, I think it has been. But, the five Books of Moses don't fill in some of the details. Stephen the *shamash*, in his testimony before the High Priest in the *Sanhedrin*, Israel's highest court, gave some details about Moses' age: <4> 23 "When he was approaching forty years of age, it came into his heart to visit his brothers, *Bnei-Yisrael*." (Acts 7:23 TLV). Moses had been miraculously spared from a death sentence on the Hebrew boy babies and was raised in Pharaoh's palace by his daughter. After he visited his Hebrew brothers and killed an Egyptian who was mistreating them, he fled Egypt when some of his brothers revealed that they knew what he did.

So, he was about forty when he fled into the wilderness of Midian. There he met Zipporah, the daughter of Jethro, the Priest of Midian, and married her. While tending Jethro's sheep, he fathered two sons. Stephen tells us what happened next: 30 "When forty years had passed, an angel appeared to him in the wilderness of Mount Sinai in the flame of a burning bush." (Acts 7:30 TLV). We know the story of the burning bush. It was there that ADONAI called Moses to deliver His people Israel from Pharaoh's slavery. I cannot pass up this opportunity to comment on Stephen's words. Exodus 3 describes the event at Mount Sinai: 2 *Then the angel of Adonai appeared to him in a flame of fire from within a bush. So he looked and saw the bush burning with fire, yet it was not consumed.* (Exodus 3:2 TLV). Two weeks ago, I spoke about the *Malakh ADONAI*, the Angel of ADONAI in the *Torah*. This is one of the several places that this title is found. Stephen stated that the one described as *YHVH* was "an angel," *angelos* in Greek. Whether this was the pre-incarnate Yeshua or not, we don't know and can't state that is who it was based on the limited and circumstantial evidence which we have. It may have been Yeshua and we will find out soon enough, but we can wait. Let's follow the example of Stephen and also of Hosea who wrote concerning Jacob wrestling with a man in Genesis 32:24: 5 *Yes, he wrestled with the angel and won; he wept and sought his favor.* (Hosea 12:5 TLV). While, the Scripture also says Jacob wrestled with G-d and won, Hosea only referred to this individual as angel, *malakh*, meaning messenger. Are we more discerning than Hosea and Stephen? We must stick to context and limit our statements to that which Scripture establishes conclusively.

The last forty years of Moses' life were also described by Stephen: *36 This man led them out, performing wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and at the Red Sea, and in the wilderness for forty years.* (Acts 7:36 TLV). That's a total of one hundred twenty years of life, just as Deuteronomy 34 tells us. With such an amazing life of service to ADONAI, we would think that ADONAI would not hold this one little offense against Moses and his brother Aaron. But, He did. Why? ADONAI told Moses to gather Israel and then bring forth water from the rock by speaking to it. But, Moses didn't obey and he angrily struck the rock twice, his patience with the people apparently at an end. Because of that, ADONAI judged Moses and Aaron together: *12 "But Adonai said to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not trust in Me so as to esteem Me as holy in the eyes of Bnei-Yisrael, therefore you will not bring this assembly into the land that I have given to them."* (Numbers 20:12 TLV). It appears that ADONAI judged Moses *"Because you did not trust in Me so as to esteem Me as holy in the eyes of Bnei-Yisrael."* Was it a question of Moses' faith, a lack of trust which caused Moses' to be judged by ADONAI? Or was it because of his anger and frustration at the people? Whatever it was, ADONAI judged both Moses and Aaron, Aaron because he was with Moses at the Tabernacle when ADONAI gave the instructions for both of them to appear before the people. Because Moses' faith in ADONAI wavered and he acted in the flesh, both he and Aaron lost the opportunity to share in the fulfillment of the amazing four hundred year old promise which ADONAI had made to their ancestor Abraham. What is the lesson of Moses' judgement for us? I wouldn't dare to presume what ADONAI judges in an individual believer's conduct, except to say: "We are called to be faithful."

We continue now with part 2 of our subject of two weeks ago, "Who is Yeshua," but we will return to our *parasha*. "Who is Yeshua" is a huge subject! We can never in just a few pages cover every aspect of Scripture which has been written about Yeshua. But, we will try.

1. Yeshua is the only begotten Son of YHVH (John 3:16).

"Begotten" means that his incarnation and birth were of the human type, the type that we, as humans, can understand. The Jewish virgin, *Miryam*, was impregnated by *Ruach HaKodesh* in a supernatural way (Matthew 1:18), the baby grew in her womb, and after a normal human gestation period, Yeshua was born a natural human birth. At His birth He was both fully G-d, the divine Son of G-d (Matthew 1:23), and fully man (1Timothy 2:5) in his physical and emotional composition (Hebrews 4:15). Yeshua was ADONAI's begotten Son Who was crucified for our sins and resurrected from the dead before creation. In this regard, He is eternally begotten.

2. *1 In the beginning was the Word. The Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning. 3 All things were made through Him, and apart from Him nothing was made that has come into being.* (John 1:1-3 TLV). Let's break this down.

a. *In the beginning was the Word:*

Yeshua is the "Living Word," *Logos* in the Greek and *Memra* in Aramaic. *Logos* can also be translated as "reason" or "plan." It is the divine reason or divine plan behind the universe which set all creation in order. Yeshua was with YHVH in the beginning as the "*Word, Logos, or Memra,*" who at the time of John's writing, was alive in the human sense. The understanding of this one word, *Logos*, is that Yeshua is the divine mind behind the creation of everything. *Sha'ul* said essentially the same thing in Colossians 1:15-17.

b. *The Word was with God and was God.*

We are told by both *Yochanan* and *Sha'ul* that *Yeshua* was with *ADONAI* in the beginning. The meaning of “He is G-d” is that He is divine, the Son of G-d. This means that *Yeshua*, the Son of *Elohim*, is also *Elohim*, G-d, but He is not *YHVH*, the Father who begot His human nature. That is the mystery. Multiple Scriptures, taken together, tell us that *ADONAI*, *Yeshua* and *Ruach HaKodesh* are *echad*, “one.” An example is from *Yeshua*’s immersion is: *21 Now when all the people were immersed, Yeshua also was immersed. And while He was praying, heaven was opened*²² *and the Ruach ha-Kodesh came down upon Him in bodily form like a dove. And from out of heaven came a voice, “You are My Son, whom I love—with You I am well pleased!”* (Luke 3:21-22 TLV). This Scripture reveals the compound unity of *echad*, three being one, and not an absolute unity of *YHVH* as traditional Judaism believes. The nearest human example to this compound unity is the mystery of a husband and wife being *echad*, “one,” in their sexual joining in the marriage bed.

c. *All things were made through Him.*

As we have already stated, *Yeshua* is the *Logos* Who created everything. *Sha'ul*’s words to the Corinthian congregation are very familiar to us because we confess them each *Shabbat* as a part of our liturgy in the *K'riat Shema* (Reading of the *Shema*): *6.. yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things, and we exist for Him; and one Lord, Yeshua the Messiah, through whom are all things, and we exist through Him.* (1Corinthians 8:6 TLV). This explains a mystery: “all things, that is, everything made, came from G-d, the Father through *Yeshua* the Messiah.

3. *Yeshua* died for us.

His death on the *tzelav* (stake; cross) as a sinless sacrifice has made it possible for each of us who has sincerely repented of our sins us to be forgiven of our sins and to become a part of G-d's family. Here are some of the facts surrounding *Yeshua*'s sacrifice.

a. *Yeshua*’s death, burial and resurrection.

Yeshua died: *50 And Yeshua cried out again with a loud voice and gave up His spirit.* (Matthew 27:50 TLV). He was buried: *59 And Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth. 60 And he laid it in his own new tomb, which he had cut in the rock.* (Matthew 27:59-60a TLV). He was raised from the dead on the third day: *40 ..but God raised Him up on the third day and caused Him to be visible—* (Acts 10:40). He ascended into heaven: *9 After saying all this—while they were watching—He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.* (Acts 1:9 TLV). *Yeshua* now sits at the right hand of the Father in Heaven: *12 ..., when this One offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, He sat down at the right hand of God—* (Hebrews 10:12b TLV).

b. *Yeshua* is our Passover Lamb.

Yeshua is our *Pesach*, the Lamb who caused spiritual death to pass over us and who takes away the sins of the world. His cousin *Yochanan HaMatabil*, John the Immerser, said: *29 ..., “Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!* (John 1:29b TLV). He was sacrificed for us: *7 ...— for Messiah, our Passover Lamb, has been sacrificed.* (1Corinthian 5:7b TLV).

c. All authority is given to *Yeshua*.

Yeshua met with His disciples after His resurrection: *18 And Yeshua came up to them and spoke to them, saying, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me.”* (Matthew 28:18 TLV). *Sha'ul* who had a heavenly encounter with *Yeshua* also revealed: *22 God placed*

all things under Messiah's feet and appointed Him as head over all things for His community— (Ephesians 1:22 TLV). *Sha'ul further said: 9 ... God highly exalted Him and gave Him the name that is above every name, 10 that at the name of Yeshua every knee should bow, in heaven and on the earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue profess that Yeshua the Messiah is Lord—to the glory of God the Father.* (Philippians 2:9b-11 TLV).

d. By his stripes we are healed.

Healing is in the atonement provided by Yeshua's sacrificial death. Isaiah prophesied of the Suffering Servant Messiah: *5 ..., and by His stripes we are healed.* (Isaiah 53:5c TLV). *Shimon Kefa also testified: 24 He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, so that we, removed from sins, might live for righteousness. "By His wounds you were healed."* (1Peter 2:24 TLV).

e. Yeshua is interceding for us.

34 ... It is Messiah, who died, and moreover was raised, and is now at the right hand of God and who also intercedes for us. (Romans 8:34b TLV).

f. He sends us His Holy Spirit.

Yeshua told His disciples he had to leave in order for the *Ruach* to come: *26 "But the Helper, the Ruach ha-Kodesh whom the Father will send in My name, will teach you everything and remind you of everything that I said to you."* (John 14:26 TLV). He repeated it just a few minutes later: *26 "When the Helper comes—whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father—He will testify about Me."* (John 15:26 TLV).

g. Yeshua will return as King.

Yeshua will return as *Melekh Mashiach*, King Messiah, to rule and reign on the earth and over the New Jerusalem for eternity. *16 For the Lord Himself shall come down from heaven with a commanding shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the blast of God's shofar, and the dead in Messiah shall rise first. 17 Then we who are alive, who are left behind, will be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air—and so we shall always be with the Lord.* (1Thessalonians 4:16-17 TLV). After this, Yeshua will return to defeat His enemies, after which He will rule and reign on the earth. The Prophet Micah said: *1 But at the end of days the mountain of Adonai's House will be established as chief of the mountains, and will be raised above the hills. Peoples will flow up to it. 2 Then many nations will go and say: "Come, let us go up to the mountain of Adonai, to the House of the God of Jacob! Then He will direct us in His ways, and we will walk in His paths." For Torah will go forth from Zion, and the word of Adonai from Jerusalem. 3 He will judge between many peoples and decide for mighty nations far off. They will beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning shears. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, nor will they learn war again. 4 But each man will sit under his vine and under his fig tree, with no one causing terror, for the mouth of Adonai-Tzva'ot has spoken.* (Micah 4:1-4 TLV). Isaiah also prophesied: *2 It will come to pass in the last days that the mountain of Adonai's House will stand firm as head of the mountains and will be exalted above the hills. So all nations will flow to it. 3 Then many peoples will go and say: "Come, let us go up to the mountain of Adonai, to the House of the God of Jacob! Then He will teach us His ways, and we will walk in His paths." For Torah will go forth from Zion and the word of Adonai from Jerusalem. 4 He will judge between the nations and decide for many peoples. They will beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning knives. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, nor will they learn war any more.*

(Isaiah 2:2-4 TLV). This will happen in the *acharit-hayamim*, the “end of days, the time in which we are now living.

h. Yeshua will return ADONAI’s authority to Him.

In the end, Yeshua will defeat death and subject everything to his power. Then he will return ADONAI's authority which had previously been given to him, to his Father, YHVH, ADONAI. *24 ..then the end, when He hands over the kingdom to God the Father after He has destroyed all rule and all authority and power. 25 For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. 26 The last enemy to be destroyed is death. 27 For God has “put all things in subjection underneath His feet.” But when the psalmist says that “all” has been put in subjection, it is clear that this does not include God Himself, who put all things under Messiah. 28 Now when all things become subject to Him, then the Son Himself will also become subject to the One who put all things under Him, so that God may be all in all.* (1Corinthians 15:24-28 TLV). After Yeshua has returned authority to his Father, we see in the new Jerusalem of the new heavens and earth that both ADONAI and Yeshua are on the throne. *3 No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in the city, and His servants shall serve Him. 4 They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads.* (Revelation 22:3b-4 TLV). This is the revelation of the mystery of the G-dhead which we will soon see. We shall see *Elohim*, G-d, face to face. What this means is not explained in Scripture. Take it as it is. We shall see Him soon enough. There are many more Scriptures that we could have used as support for each of these points. This, along with two weeks ago, is a brief summary of the relationship of ADONAI, Yeshua and *Ruach HaKodesh*. We believe by faith. Yeshua, Himself, will correct us if we are wrong when Micah’s and Isaiah’s prophecies are fulfilled and Torah goes forth from Jerusalem. We see through a glass darkly and don’t have all truth, but Yeshua will lovingly set us straight when He returns.

There are two especially important subjects in *Parasha Va’etchanan*. The first is the Ten Commandments, in Judaism called, *Aseret HaDibrot*, the Ten Sayings. What is their significance? It is that they are the foundation of ADONAI’s Covenant with Israel at Sinai. They are words that Israel heard from ADONAI’s own mouth, words which they agreed to obey. Everything else in the covenant was given to them through Moses. These ten sayings are also the basis of morality in the world. As the only commands breathed by ADONAI Himself, they are extremely important for us as followers of Yeshua.

In this *parasha*, we also find these words. Moses said: *3 “Hear, therefore, O Israel, and take care to do this, so that it may go well with you and you may increase mightily, as Adonai the God of your fathers has promised you, in a land flowing with milk and honey.”* (Deuteronomy 6:3 TLV). Hear, *Shema*, in Hebrew, is followed by the words “take care to do this,” which emphasizes that it’s not just hearing, but also doing. Then Moses said: *4 “Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. 5 Love Adonai your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.”* (Deuteronomy 6:4-5 TLV). Why, 1300 years later, did Yeshua pick out this statement and emphasize it as the greatest commandment? Both Matthew and Mark wrote that Yeshua quoted Deuteronomy 6:4. Luke also wrote about it. In Matthew, Yeshua called this statement “the greatest commandment” and in Mark, He called it “the first commandment.” In both Matthew and Mark, Yeshua also quoted the middle portion of this particular commandment: *18 “You are not to take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but **love your neighbor as yourself.** I am Adonai.”* (Leviticus 19:18 TLV). Why did Yeshua say that loving ADONAI was the greatest commandment? Obviously, because He is our Creator whom we should love, but also

because of this truth which Yeshua stated: 40 *“The entire Torah and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”* (Matthew 22:40 TLV). What does this mean? It means that all of ADONAI’s commandments, every one of them, “hang on,” that is, are “based on” these two important commandments about love. Everything in our relationship with G-d and our fellow man must be based on love. We could quote hundreds of Scriptures about love. “G-d is love.” It’s the nature of the Father and His Son Yeshua. And, that’s the nature that He wants us, those whom He created, to have.

In order for us to learn and carry out love principles in our lives, Yeshua has called all of His followers to be His disciples. What does it mean to be a disciple? A basic definition is: “a follower or student of a teacher.” That works for us. We have to learn. We are both followers and students of our teacher, Yeshua. His final statement about disciples was to His physical disciples: 18 *And Yeshua came up to them and spoke to them, saying, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, immersing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Ruach ha-Kodesh, 20 teaching them to observe all I have commanded you.”* (Matthew 28:18-20a TLV). He wasn’t telling them to make disciples for themselves, but to make disciples for Him. And, that command has been passed down to His modern day disciples. We are to call every follower of Yeshua to be His disciple.

You have heard these verses and may have even formed an opinion about what they mean: 8 *“But you are not to be called rabbi; for One is your Teacher, and you are all brothers. 9 And call no man on earth your father; for One is your Father, who is in heaven. 10 Nor are you to be called teachers; for One is your Teacher, the Messiah.”* (Matthew 23:8-10 TLV). But, what do they mean? The answer is another example of why we must look at Scripture through Jewish eyes because they wrote it. It was a product of their Hebrew thought processes. When He said this, Yeshua was talking about the rabbis of His day who proclaimed themselves great authorities and had their own bands of followers. Their disciples hung on their every word and referred to them as rabbi, father, teacher or master. They gave more devotion to these men than they should have.

Possibly the two greatest rabbis of the second Temple period were *Hillel* and *Shamai*. They lived about a generation before Yeshua. Yeshua even said something that *Hillel* had said, but in slightly different words. *Hillel* said: “That which is hateful to You, do not do to your fellow! That is the whole *Torah*, the rest is interpretation.” (Babylonian *Talmud*, *Shabbat* 31a). What *Hillel* said was good, but Yeshua stated it in the positive: 12 *“So in all things, do to others what you would want them to do to you—for this is the Torah and the Prophets.”* (Matthew 7:12 TLV). *Hillel* and *Shamai* were just two, but there were many more men who had their own following, disciples who lived with and ate with their rabbi and followed him everywhere he went. When Yeshua said this, He wasn’t talking about me or any of our Messianic rabbis. My honorary title of *rabbi* just means teacher, a different way of saying, leader of the congregation. When He said “father,” He was not talking about Roman Catholic or Anglican priests, either. The same is true for teacher. Yeshua was speaking directly to those in His day who were exalting their leaders and in a sense, making gods of them. Modern examples of this are David Koresh and Jim Jones who collected disciples for themselves. Their so-called ministries ended in the tragic deaths of 76 and 909 people respectively. But, Yeshua’s message is also for today for those who exalt themselves. And, there are many more out there today that we don’t know about who seem to have a hypnotic effect on their followers and establish cult followings.

We are not to make disciples for ourselves as Koresh, Jones and others are doing. We are called to make disciples for Yeshua, He who is love personified. If we love ADONAI with all of our hearts, strength and minds and our neighbor as ourselves, we will not go off on tangents and create our own little kingdom. When I read these words: 12 *“Observe Yom Shabbat to keep it holy, as Adonai your God commanded you. 13 Six days you are to labor and do all your work, 14 but the seventh day is a Shabbat to Adonai your God,”* (Deuteronomy 5:12-14 TLV), I understand in my heart that this is about today, *Yom Shabbat*, and not any other day that I might choose on which to worship G-d. The seventh day, Saturday in our calendar, was the seventh day of creation and is the seventh day that ADONAI spoke of at Mount Sinai. That is what we believe here in *Beit Shalom*. I am not speaking to those who may understand it differently. We do not judge anyone’s day of worship. But, for us, we also understand that when Yeshua said: 17 *“Do not think that I came to abolish the Torah or the Prophets! I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill. 18 Amen, I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or serif shall ever pass away from the Torah until all things come to pass,”* (Matthew 5:17-18 TLV), He meant it. Every *Torah* command in the *Tanakh* and every command in the *Ketuvim Shlichim* is still on the books, our Bible. But, that doesn’t mean that every one is for us today.

Don’t we trust ADONAI to tell what He expects of us? Of course, we do. Regarding the New Covenant, He said: 32 *“But this is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after those days” —it is a declaration of Adonai— “I will put My Torah within them. Yes, I will write it on their heart. I will be their God and they will be My people.* (Jeremiah 31:32 TLV). Some six hundred years later, He cut the New Covenant with His own Son’s blood. About forty years after Yeshua died on the cross for our sins, the Temple was destroyed and the Levitical priesthood was put out of a job. I don’t say that ADONAI caused the Romans to do this, but the effect of the destruction of the Temple was the placing of every command that requires either the Temple or Levitical priesthood on hold. But, they are still on the books and as Yeshua said, “not one will pass away before heaven and earth pass away.” They are still on the books, but they are inactive for us. We don’t need a Temple or Levitical priesthood to obey the remaining commands, including the commands to worship on *Shabbat* or to not eat pork or shellfish.

Wishing to be obedient to G-d’s commands is not legalism. We are saved by confessing our sins, trusting in Yeshua and following after Him as His disciples. But, legalism is a danger. You can overemphasize the “doing aspects” and underemphasize the “heart aspects” of salvation. But of course, the reverse is also true. You can underemphasize the “doing aspects” and overemphasize the “heart aspects.” There must be balance. That is why Yeshua told His disciples: 16 *“I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper so He may be with you forever—“* (John 14:16 TLV). The Helper, the Comforter, the *Ruach*, which Yeshua sends to all His followers, lives in our hearts. That’s where ADONAI’s commands for us are written. Yeshua’s statement immediately before saying that He would send the *Ruach* was: 15 *“If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.”* (John 14:16 TLV). What are His commandments? They are: “Love G-d with all your heart, mind and strength and love your neighbor as yourself.” But, they are also 5 *“Observe Yom Shabbat to keep it holy as ADONAI your God commanded you”* (Deuteronomy 5:12 TLV) and 2 *“These are the living things which you may eat among all the animals that are on the earth.”* (Leviticus 11:2b TLV).

In our MJAA Bible reading last week, I was especially struck by *Sha’ul’s* words to Timothy: 3 *For the time will come when they (people) will not put up with sound instruction, but they will pile up for themselves teachers in keeping with their own desires, to have their*

ears tickled. 4 And they will turn away from hearing the truth and wander off to myths. 5 You, however, keep a clear mind in all things, withstand hardship, do the work of proclaiming the Good News, and fulfill your service. (2Timothy 4:3-5 TLV). Sounds like today doesn't it? We all like to have our ears tickled a little bit, but they must be tickled with the truth. We can't focus on what the rabbis said and learn the truth. We can't focus on tradition and learn the truth. We must keep our eyes focused on the Holy Scriptures and base our understanding of truth only upon ADONAI's words. And, we must be filled with the Holy Spirit, ADONAI's secret weapon to keep us from error. When our hearts are circumcised with the truth of Yeshua as Messiah and His Spirit is guiding us, we will have the proper balance of law and Spirit. Both are necessary. We are Yeshua's disciples. May He find us to be faithful disciples when He returns. *Shabbat shalom!*