



Parasha Shoftim

September 7, 2019

Deuteronomy 16:18-21:9

Isaiah 51:12-52:12

John 1:19-27

Shalom Mishpocha! Our *parasha* today is *Shoftim*, meaning, “judges.” *Shoftim v’shotrim titen-lecha.* “Appoint for yourselves judges and police.” That’s the beginning of the *parasha*. It’s a good subject for another time, but today we’re going on to the subject of the “prophet like Moses” in chapter 18. When we hear these words, we don’t have to stop and think: “who is this prophet?” As many times as we’ve read this *parasha*, surely, we have been able to answer that question. We know it’s Yeshua!! But, our brother and sisters in traditional Judaism have been taught that it was Joshua and by extension, all of the following prophets of Israel. Today’s message will present a different understanding, an answer supported by Scripture. We don’t agree with traditional Judaism on everything, but we do agree on many things. But, we don’t even agree on some things among fellow rabbis in Messianic Judaism. But, that doesn’t mean that we don’t love them and the same is true of our brothers and sisters in traditional Judaism.

We are now in the first Shabbat of *Elul*. In the month of *Elul*, we turn our hearts toward ADONAI on a daily basis, perhaps even more than during other months. But, our prayers during this time also include prayers for our brothers and sisters who have not yet met *Mashiach*, their Messiah Yeshua. That has been the central prayer of Messianic Jews since ADONAI began calling them back to their ancestral way of worship in the late 1960s. It has never been to make other Jews Christian, for all of us who are in this Movement are members of a Judaism. But, it is understandable that some Jews have a strong reaction to Messianic Judaism. So many terrible things have been done in Yeshua’s name. What began with the Crusades led to the Inquisition and then to the Holocaust and many terrible things in between. But, Yeshua was never a part of any of this nor were His true disciples. Many evil things have been done and continue to be done in His name.

Regarding our Jewish brothers and sisters, our hearts agree with *Sha’ul* who said: 1 “*I tell the truth in Messiah—I do not lie, my conscience assuring me in the Ruach ha-Kodesh—* 2 *that my sorrow is great and the anguish in my heart unending.* 3 *For I would pray that I myself were cursed, banished from Messiah for the sake of my people—my own flesh and blood,* 4 *who are Israelites*” (Romans 9:1-4a TLV). His anguish was for the many Jews at that time who did not know Yeshua. Yet, many of that time did know Him as the Book of Acts confirms. *Ya’akov* and the others were very excited to tell *Sha’ul* about this: 20 *They said, “You see, brother, how many myriads there are among the Jewish people who have believed—and they are all zealous for the Torah”* (Acts 21:20b TLV). Myriads, tens of thousands of Jews, were following Yeshua at that time, which was about 57-60 CE, more than ten years before the Temple was destroyed. And, they were zealous for the *Torah*, as we are. It is the foundational truth of everything which ADONAI has done on the earth and will do on the earth.

Speaking of his fellow Jews, *Sha’ul* continued: 4.... “*To them belong the adoption and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Torah and the Temple service and the promises.* 5 *To*

them belong the patriarchs—and from them, according to the flesh, the Messiah, who is over all, God, blessed forever. Amen” (Romans 9:4b-5 TLV). Everything which G-d planned for all of the people of the earth was presented through Israel. Speaking to Moses, ADONAI said: 5 “*Now then, if you listen closely to My voice, and keep My covenant, then you will be My own treasure from among all people, for all the earth is Mine.* 6 So as for you, you will be to Me a kingdom of kohanim and a holy nation.’ These are the words which you are to speak to *Bnei-Yisrael*” (Exodus 19:5-6 TLV). Israel was called by ADONAI to be a holy nation of priests. And, so they are. And, as many as have been adopted from the nations through the blood of Messiah are now *Israe’lim* and *kohanim* to the nations as well. As *Sha’ul* said, Israel was given the *Torah*, but not just for them. It’s for everyone. And he taught us the purpose of the *Torah* with regard to *Mashiach*: 4 “*For Messiah is the goal of the Torah as a means to righteousness for everyone who keeps trusting*” (Romans 10:4 TLV). The *Torah*’s goal is to point to *Mashiach* and He is found all throughout it; throughout the five Books of Moses, throughout the *Nevi’im*, the Prophets, and throughout the *Ketuvim*, the Writings, which is all of the *Tanakh*, the Hebrew Bible.

In our *parasha Shoftim* is found one of these mentions of Messiah in *Torah* and we will read it in a moment. The revelation of *Mashiach* in the *Tanakh* has always been there, but could not begin to be understood until the New Covenant was activated by Yeshua’s death. One of the books of the *Tanakh* which reveals the Messiah and prophesies end time events is the Book of Daniel. Among the very first captives from the Kingdom of Judah to be taken to Babylon was Daniel. Even then, as a very young man, he had G-d’s call on his life. Much of what would happen in the future, even some events in our time, was revealed through him. Daniel was a man of prayer and his heart was always toward his G-d and Jerusalem. He faithfully prayed toward Jerusalem three times a day at the times of *shacharit*, *mincha* and *ma’ariv*, the morning afternoon and evening prayers of the Temple (6:14). As an older man, he had a vision of a *Rosh Hashanah* of the future: 9 “*While I was watching, thrones were set up, and the Ancient of Days took his seat. His garment was as white as snow, and the hair of His head like pure wool. His throne was ablaze with flames, its wheels a burning fire. 10 A river of fire was flowing and coming out from before Him. Thousands of thousands attended Him and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. The court was seated, and the books were opened*” (Daniel 7:9-10 TLV). Whether the books spoken about are the books of the righteous, the book of the dead and the book of those in an intermediate state, as the *Talmud* says, is unknown. What we do know from this verse is that there were books, plural. Daniel’s vision continued: 13 “*I was watching in the night visions. Behold, One like a Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days, and was brought into His presence. 14 Dominion, glory and sovereignty were given to Him that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will never pass away, and His kingdom is one that will not be destroyed*” (Daniel 7:13-14 TLV). In this vision, Daniel saw his Messiah. He didn’t know his name, but he clearly understood who he was. Yeshua was presented, not just alone, but in the presence of the Father, Him whose name consists of the Hebrew consonants, YHVH, and to whom we refer as *HaShem* and as ADONAI. Yeshua, who was born a man of Israel into the Tribe of Judah, will soon return to claim His kingdom, an event which we see pictured here in Daniel’s vision. Daniel saw “*One like a Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven.*” And, that title was not a secret to those around Yeshua. He referred to Himself in the Gospels as “Son of Man” 80 times.

It is He to whom Moses referred in our *parasha* when he said: 15 “*Adonai your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your midst—from your brothers. To him you must listen*” (Deuteronomy 18:15 TLV). And, Yeshua did come from Israel’s midst. He was born from the

Tribe of *Yehudah*, a much prophesied about tribe. Just before his death in Egypt, *Ya'acov*, Jacob, blessed his twelve sons. He said this to Judah: *10 “The scepter will not pass from Judah, nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet,..”* (Genesis 49:10a TLV). The first of these prophetic words was fulfilled in Judah’s descendant David as king and in his descendants after him until the earthly kingdom of Judah ended at the Babylonian Captivity. But, the second part of this verse speaks of Yeshua, the One to come: *10 “until he to whom it belongs will come. To him will be the obedience of the peoples”* (Genesis 49:10b TLV). Many years after this blessing of the twelve sons, at a time when Israel was in the Wilderness with Moses, the false prophet *Ba’laam* said this about a future king: *17 “I see him, yet not at this moment. I behold him, yet not in this location. For a star will come from Jacob, a scepter will arise from Israel”* (Numbers 24:17 TLV). This prophecy by a pagan idolater guided by ADONAI’s Spirit was a confirmation of what Jacob said about Judah’s descendants. The scepter spoken of by Jacob was David who, himself, received a prophecy about kingship. The Prophet *Na’atan*, Nathan, said: *11 “Moreover, I declare to you that Adonai will build you a house. 11 It will be that when your days are fulfilled to go with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, one of your own sons, and I will establish his kingdom. 12 He will build a house for Me and I will establish his throne forever”* (1Chronicles 17:11-12 TLV). This initially was about Solomon who would build the Temple, but the eternal throne part is about Yeshua. The scepter, the ruler’s staff, spoken of by Jacob to his son Judah and the eternal kingdom, “his throne forever,” spoken of by the Prophet Nathan are the same, the eternal Kingdom of *Yeshua HaMashiach*.

But, we will soon see that in Yeshua’s time, in the 1st century CE, the identity of the Prophet Like Moses was still an unsettled question. From what we read in Scripture, the people of that day appeared to believe that the “Prophet like Moses” was not Joshua and was one who had not yet come. When *Yochanan*, John the Immerser, was doing *mikvah* for *teshuvah*, immersion for repentance, at the Jordan River, he was asked several questions by *kohanim* and Levites who had been sent out from Jerusalem by the Judean leaders. They asked: *19....“Who are you”* (John 1:19b TLV). John immediately told them that he was not the Messiah. But, because so many people were coming out to the Jordan for *tevillah*, for immersion by John, they probably were really asking, “are you the Messiah.” But, he answered the question before they could ask. He said: “I am not the Messiah.” And then, they asked him other questions: *21 “What then? Are you Elijah?” they asked him. “I am not,” said John. “Are you the Prophet?” “No,” he answered* (John 1:21 TLV). Both of those individuals that they questioned John about were expected messengers of ADONAI. *Eliyahu*, Elijah, was and is understood to be the forerunner of the Messiah, one who comes before Him and proclaims His immediate coming. John answered, “no, I am not Elijah.” He didn’t know it, and probably never knew it, but in fact, he was Elijah for that generation. He proclaimed the Elijah message of *Yesha’yahu*, Isaiah, in Isaiah 40, verse 3, when he said: *23 ..., “I am ‘the voice of one crying in the wilderness, “Make straight the way of Adonai,” as the prophet Isaiah said”* (John 1:23 TLV). John didn’t know it, but he had been sent to be Elijah for that generation. He announced the coming of Messiah just a few verses later when he said: *29 “Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! 30 This is the One about whom I told you, ‘He who comes after me is above me, because He was before me. 31 I didn’t know Him, but I came immersing with water so that He might be revealed to Israel”* (John 1:29b-31 TLV). And, Yeshua confirmed that John was Elijah for that generation when He said: *13 “For all the prophets and the Torah prophesied until the time of John. 14 And if you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah who is to come”* (Matthew 11:13-14 TLV). John wasn’t a reincarnation of Elijah, but one who filled the position of forerunner of the Messiah for that

generation. And, we are looking today for “our Elijah” who is to come to announce the coming of Yeshua the second time. Yeshua, Who came two thousand years ago in the image of the ancient rabbi’s depiction of *Mashiach benYosef*, the suffering servant Messiah, died on the stake as an eternal blood sacrifice for our sins that we might receive eternal atonement. But, He will come again soon as *Mashiach benDavid*, Messiah, Son of David, the conquering and ruling king, Who will then rule and reign from Jerusalem. Then, the priests and Levites asked John a second question: “*Are you the Prophet?*” He answered, “no.” In the 1st century, in addition to the Messiah, these two men, Elijah and “the Prophet like Moses,” were most on the people of Israel’s minds.

More than 500 years before this time, Daniel had received several visions relating to the end times. But the interpretations of them have differed widely and for very good reason. In the last chapter, as the book was beginning to close, ADONAI said to Daniel: 4 “*But you, Daniel, close up the words and seal the book until the time of the end. Many will run back and forth and knowledge will increase*” (Daniel 12:4 TLV). And, the understanding of the most important prophecies of Daniel have been sealed for over 2500 years until recently. But, these chrono-specific prophecies, prophecies which are specifically “date accurate” in the times of events revealed, have now been unsealed. These are detailed in the book, *Daniel Unsealed*, by Dan Bruce.

I will give you a few of his conclusions, but strongly suggest that you read about these things yourself and see if you believe that his findings correctly interpret the prophesies. Predictive prophecy interpretation must correctly line up with events before we can receive it as truth. But, ADONAI does not give each of us the ability to understand “everything.” And, many times, we have to depend on others whom He has inspired. And, He has given many people great understanding. But, we should not receive it from them without our own critical examination, because, ultimately each of us is responsible to ADONAI for what we believe and how we act on it.

How were the prophecies of Daniel unsealed? They were unsealed by the tireless study of a dedicated follower of our Messiah whose perseverance through many years finally produced understanding. And, the key was an event which fulfilled a prophecy made by Yeshua, Himself. Dan Bruce found the key which unlocked, which unsealed, this prophecy given to Daniel. And, the unsealing of all of the prophecies in Daniel with regard to specific time came through the understanding of these verses: 13 “*Then I heard a holy one speaking and another holy one said to the one who was speaking, ‘How long will the vision last, the daily sacrifice be forsaken because of rebellion, the sanctuary be surrendered and the host be trampled?’*” 14 “*Then he said to me: ‘For 2,300 evenings and mornings; then the sanctuary will be vindicated’*” (Daniel 8:13-14 TLV). I won’t keep you in suspense. The end event of this prophecy took place on June 7, 1967. It was the recapture of the Temple Mount by Israeli forces during Israel’s Six Day War. If you want to learn how Dan Bruce arrived at this conclusion, you’ll have to read the book. But, what the prophecy in Daniel 8 was leading to was what this prophecy by Yeshua fulfilled: 24 “*They will fall by the edge of the sword and be led away captive into all the nations. Jerusalem will be trampled by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled*”. (Luke 21:24 TLV). We will come back to this as it relates to Daniel chapter 8 in a moment, but first some background information.

Two days before His death on the stake, the same day at which He spoke about the trampling of Jerusalem by Gentiles, Yeshua said this to His *talmidim*: 15 “*So when you see ‘the abomination of desolation,’ which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the*

Holy Place (let the reader understand), 16 then those in Judea must flee to the mountains. 17 The one on the roof must not go down to take what is in his house, 18 and the one in the field must not turn back to get his coat. 19 Woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! 20 Pray that your escape will not happen in winter, or on Shabbat. 21 For then there will be great trouble, 22 And unless those days were cut short, no one would be delivered. But for the sake of the chosen, those days will be cut short" (Matthew 24:15-22 TLV).

To put this in context, Yeshua was speaking to Jews regarding something which would happen in Jerusalem and in Judea and not to the whole world as many Christians believe. The event about which Yeshua spoke was the destruction of the city of Jerusalem and the Temple in the year 70 CE, about 40 years in the future from when He spoke. It was "great trouble," as the Tree of Life Version of the Bible says; "great tribulation" as many other Bibles say. But, it happened in the year 70 CE, and as Yeshua said, it is: "*such as has not happened since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will.*" It's already happened and you can take our Messiah's word for it; it never will again. It happened in Jerusalem and it was terrible! Earlier that same day, Yeshua had spoken about the Temple and said that not one stone would remain standing upon another. And forty years later, it came to pass. The Temple was destroyed. But, the most terrible thing which came to pass forty years later happened to the Jews of Jerusalem. Many in the city had come there from elsewhere for Passover in the year 70 and they became trapped there. Josephus, the historian, who was present, wrote about it. It has been estimated that the population of Jerusalem at that time was about 600,000. But, there were many more people there who had come for Passover. The city was soon surrounded by the Romans, barricaded, and many of those trapped there for those three months, starved to death. Josephus reported that as many as 1,100,000 Jews died or were killed during the siege of Jerusalem by the Roman Army, the "abomination of desolation" to which Yeshua referred. Josephus also said that 97,000 Jews were sold as slaves. As we read Yeshua's words of warning to His disciples, we can certainly understand why He told them to flee. That time of tribulation was a terrible, terrible thing, "the great tribulation," but one which will never happen again. And, we pray for safety and security for our brothers and sisters in the Jerusalem of today and in all of Israel!

That's the background surrounding these words which Yeshua spoke: 24 "*They will fall by the edge of the sword and be led away captive into all the nations. Jerusalem will be trampled by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled*". (Luke 21:24 TLV). The Romans conquered it, trampled it, and Jerusalem was controlled by people of other nations for almost two thousand years. But, on June 7, 1967, that changed. Israel recaptured Jerusalem and the "times of Gentile control were fulfilled." That was the end event to which Daniel 8:13-14 was pointing and is the key to unlocking the very specific times and meanings of the seven prophecies given in the Book of Daniel. After the events of June 7, 1967, Jerusalem is now in "the times of the Jews." These events taken together, let us know that we are in the *acharit hayamim*, the end of days. Of course, there is much more which adds to this understanding. The miraculous re-establishment of Israel as a nation in 1948, the fact that many Jews living in the diaspora, the dispersion, are returning to Israel and even the current events of the nation of Israel, let us know that ADONAI's plan is in its latter stages.

We close with this: 4 "*But you, Daniel, close up the words and seal the book until the time of the end. Many will run back and forth and knowledge will increase*" (Daniel 12:4 TLV). Until recently, it has been sealed to our full understanding. Many have run back and forth, that is, much has happened in the intervening years and knowledge has certainly increased. The

final three verses of Daniel also are challenging: 11 “*From the time that the daily burnt offering is taken away, and abomination of desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days. 12 Happy is the one who keeps waiting, and reaches the 1,335 days. 13 But you, go your way till the end. You will rest and then at the end of days you will arise to receive your portion*

Yeshua is the Prophet like Moses. He has been called the 2nd Moses by some, who, himself, was a prophet, a priest and a king. But, Yeshua is greater than Moses. He is *HaNavi*, “the Prophet.” He is *Kohen HaGadol*, our High Priest. And, He is *Melekh Yisra’el*, our King. But, He’s also *Ben Elohim*, the Son of G-d, who gave His life for us. Daniel was told: “*go your way till the end. You will rest and then at the end of days you will arise to receive your portion.*” Daniel was promised that he would attain the resurrection of the dead and would arise at the end of days when Yeshua returns, just as those of us who have trusted in Yeshua have also been promised (1Corinthians 15:51-53; 1Thessalonians 4:16-18). Yeshua is *Mashiach!* Obey Him! Blessed are You, *Adonai Eloheinu*, Who is restoring Jerusalem! *Shabbat shalom!*