



Parasha Ki Tavo

August 28, 2021

Torah: Deuteronomy 26:1-29:8

Haftarah: Isaiah 60:1-22

K'tuvim Shlichim: Romans 11:1-15

Shabbat shalom Mishpacha! Our *parasha* this week is *Ki Tavo*, meaning “when you come in,” referring to the Land of Promise, the land presently called Canaan. The first few verses are about bringing the firstfruits of the ground once they have entered the land. It would be some time before they would be able to bring them because they would first be in the process of subduing the land, defeating the inhabitants. But, at some point in time they would bring the firstfruits offering.

“When you come in” was a reference to the end of Israel’s long journey. If the Israelites could have taken a plane from Egypt to Jericho, they would have flown about 380 miles. If they walked the most direct route at a regular pace, it would have been a journey of only eleven days. That was ADONAI’s original plan and His desire for them. They would have entered the southern end of Canaan, defeated their enemies there, and continuing to move north, capturing the land as they moved. But, because of their disobedience, it is estimated that their wanderings caused them to travel over 5,000 miles during their journey. Their adjusted journey also caused them to have to go much further north and to enter Canaan near Jericho rather than enter directly in from the south as hinted at in Numbers 13. After bearing ADONAI’s punishment for their final act of disobedience, the sin of the spies and the people’s sin of rejecting ADONAI’s promise of victory, the first generation died out in the desert. The second generation is now nearing the end of their forty year journey.

The *mitzvot*, the commands described in this *parasha* can only be carried out with a Tabernacle and Levitical priesthood. Many times we find some *mitzvot* which are still applicable for us today, but not so with *Ki Tavo*. At this point in time Israel is directly under the guidance and protection of ADONAI. He would tell them which path to take and He protect them, giving them great victories over the enemies which they encountered. If they kept His *mitzvot*, they would not bring upon themselves the curse of the *Torah*. The effect of the curse was to be separated from Israel, not only a separation from their family and people, but also a separation from ADONAI’s protection. Israel is continuing to reply to ADONAI that they will be obedient. In chapter 26, two commands are pointed out to this second generation and they affirmed them before ADONAI. Moses explained, saying: 17 “*Today you have affirmed Adonai as your God, that you will walk in His ways, keep His statutes, mitzvot and ordinances, and listen to His voice*” (Deuteronomy 26:17 TLV). The two commands were to bring the firstfruits and not to withhold the tithe of the third year, the one which was to go to the widow and the orphan. Each person was told that when the firstfruits and the third year tithe were given they were to say: 13 ... “*I have removed the holy tithe from my house and also have given it to the Levite and to the outsider, to the orphan and to the widow, according to all Your mitzvah that You have commanded me. I have not transgressed or forgotten any of*

Your mitzvot" Deuteronomy 26:13b TLV). It was a serious sin to not bring in the whole tithe. But, other things had to be done before they could bring these offerings.

First, they had to enter the land. This *parasha* describes what they were to do. When they crossed the Jordan River to enter the land they were to select stones upon which to write the *Torah* of Moshe. They were to take them to *Har Eval*, Mount Ebal, where they would coat them with plaster and write the *Torah* on them. They were also to build an altar of uncut stones on Mount Ebal and offer sacrifices there. One-half of the tribes would stand on *Har Gerizim*, Mount Gerizim, and speak the blessings which are found in this *parasha* while the other half of the tribes would stand on Mount Ebal and speak the curses found in this *parasha*. The blessings would be the result of obeying the *Torah* and the curses the result of not following Torah. Mount Ebal is today unoccupied, but the original altar is still there. Some of us have seen it from a distance. The other mountain, Mount Gerizim is occupied primarily by Samaritans, people who have their own version of the *Torah* and belief system and believe that Mount Gerizim was where ADONAI commanded to worship Him rather than Jerusalem.

After entering land, there were many ups and downs during the period of the Judges, but Israel did receive the blessings for many years, especially during the reigns of King David and King Solomon. The curses are terrible, things beyond imagination. Even though Israel's sins were great, ADONAI was merciful and withheld His final punishment for many years. But, finally, because of their many sins, He brought the major curses upon them. They first came upon Israel, the northern kingdom, and they were taken into captivity by Assyria. About one hundred years later, Judah, the southern kingdom, was also judged. When Jerusalem was surrounded by the Babylonians, starvation became an issue. ADONAI had said in the curses: 53 "*You will eat the fruit of your womb, the flesh of your sons and daughters Adonai your God has given you, in the siege and stress with which your enemies will distress you*" (Deuteronomy 28:53 TLV). And, that became true as they were surrounded for a long period of time. In 586 BCE, Judah was taken captive to Babylon. Something very similar to this happened when Rome surrounded Jerusalem in the year 70 CE. During that time, starvation also became an issue and many died from starvation. Whether they ate their children at that time, we don't know, but we do know from Josephus that during that siege over one million died and 600,000 were taken into captivity. These things were the result of the curses, punishment levied for not being obedient to ADONAI's *Torah*. But, ADONAI has not abandoned His chosen people Israel and our *haftarah* reading today again confirms it. Speaking of the days after the return of the Messiah, ADONAI said: 18 "*No more will violence be heard in your land, devastation nor destruction within your borders. But you will call your walls Salvation and your gates Praise*" (Isaiah 60:18 TLV).

The firstfruits offering which we read about in our *Torah* service today was an entirely agricultural offering. It was to be brought to the priests where ADONAI would place His name, the place wherever the Tabernacle would be located. Joshua's initial camp in the Land was at Gilgal and the Tabernacle was there for about seven years, the approximate period of time that it took for Israel to mainly subdue the Canaanites. After the land was subdued, the Tabernacle was set in a more permanent location. 1 *Then the whole congregation of Bnei-Yisrael assembled at Shiloh and set up the Tent of Meeting there, after the land was now subdued before them* (Joshua 18:1 TLV). Shiloh was both the religious and the military capital of Israel during the time of the Judges and it was there for a total of 369 years. It was briefly at Nob near Jerusalem during King Saul's reign before being moved to Gibeon. You may remember that the Philistines captured the Ark of the Covenant while it was at Gibeon.

After that, it slowly made its way from the Philistines to Jerusalem where David set it up in a tent. Jerusalem was the final and permanent place where ADONAI placed His name. David's son Solomon, built the Temple there and the ark was placed in it. From then on, it was there that the firstfruits offerings were taken.

In the month of *Elul*, we are examining our hearts to see how we may have fallen short of what Yeshua has asked us to do. A part of what He has asked of us is concern for others who do not yet know Him, and our chief prayer is for our brother and sister Jews. *Sha'ul* has a tremendous burden for his fellow Jews to know Yeshua and he speaks about it several times in his letters. Here is one: 1 *"I say then, God has not rejected His people, has He? May it never be! For I too am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin"* (Romans 11:1 TLV). *Sha'ul* is referring to those Jews who do not know Yeshua, the covenant people as a whole, the majority of Israel. He points out that he is a Jew who does know Yeshua. He may have been thinking about what the psalmist said: 14 *"For Adonai will not forsake His people. He will never abandon His inheritance"* (Psalm 94:14 TLV). *Sha'ul* uses his own personal experience as a Jew who knows Messiah to emphasize that Israel has not totally been rejected, but that which is happening is a part of ADONAI's plan.

2 *"God has not rejected His people whom He knew beforehand. Or do you not know what the Scripture says about Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel"* (Romans 11:2 TLV)? There is a very important point in this verse. We can possibly connect the word "knew" here with the word "know" in Jeremiah 31:33: 33 *"No longer will each teach his neighbor or each his brother, saying: 'Know Adonai,' for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest." it is a declaration of Adonai"* (Jeremiah 31:33 TLV). We mention this verse frequently as being a prophecy referring to the coming "salvation of all Israel." The words knew and know in this verse come from the Hebrew *yada*, יָדָע, "to know," and refer to intimacy, also frequently used in the sexual sense. I don't know if it's true, but I think possible that the TLV translators used "know" in Romans 11:2 because Jeremiah used it in his prophecy. Most Bibles translate the Greek *proginóskó* (prog-in-oc'e'-ko) in Romans 11:2 as "foreknew." Both know and foreknew seem to fit because *Sha'ul* is referring to whom ADONAI both knows and also foreknew.

Sha'ul's remarks about Elijah in verse 2 and the next two verses are made to point out that there is a remnant. ADONAI told Elijah that there were 7,000 men, and probably a great number of women, who had not worshipped Baal. *Sha'ul* states there is a remnant in his day: 5 *"So in the same way also at this present time there has come to be a remnant according to God's gracious choice"* (Romans 11:5 TLV). The remnant in *Sha'ul's* day was even greater as reported by the Jerusalem elders to him when he visited them: 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 means "tens of thousands." This means that the believing remnant in *Sha'ul's* day was much greater than in Elijah's, possibly even ten times as many! We don't know the size of the remnant of Israel today, Messianic Jews, but maybe even hundreds of times greater than in Elijah's day. But, "all Israel" today, those who do not know Yeshua, is near 15 million, but their salvation is not a job too difficult for ADONAI.

11 *"I say then, they did not stumble so as to fall, did they? May it never be! But by their false step salvation has come to the Gentiles, to provoke Israel to jealousy"* (Romans 11:11 TLV). ADONAI used Israel's stumbling to bring salvation to the Gentiles, a group which readily accepted Yeshua's *Besorah*, the Good News. And now, there are two and a half million

Christians in the world today. But, Israel only stumbled. They did not fall and they will come to Yeshua once they've been made jealous. Going back one chapter, in Romans 10:19, *Sha'ul* quoted Deuteronomy 32:21 when he said: 19 *"But I say, did Israel not understand? First Moses says, 'I will provoke you to jealousy by those who are not a nation, with a nation empty of understanding I will vex you'"* (Romans 10:19 TLV). First, who are those who are not a nation? That's easy to understand. *Sha'ul* is referring to the Gentile Body of Messiah collectively. But, how are they going to make Israel jealous? They're definitely not jealous now, at least not jealous of Christian's relationship with ADONAI. Most theologians believe that it come through their receiving the covenant blessings, the very things which our *parasha* today lists. But, there is a problem. The blessings listed in *Ki Tavo* are a result of following *Torah*, which Christianity as a whole does not do. They are in fact, anti-*Torah*. But, G-d's word is true. It will come to pass. I have come to believe that the answer is that Christians will in the future reject their antinomian views, their anti-*Torah* views, and ADONAI will bless us all with a great outpouring of His covenant blessings. This may happen after the "great final revival" and the scales fall off the eyes of Yeshua's Gentile followers. Is it not possible that ADONAI has blinded them in order to set the exact time for Israel's salvation. The covenantal blessings being poured on the Gentiles will cause jealousy in the Jews and prepare them for ADONAI's gracious gift of salvation. Their jealousy will cause them to mourn for Yeshua as one mourns for an only son (Zechariah 12:10).

15 *"For if their rejection leads to the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead"* (Romans 11:15 TLV)? Israel's rejection was necessary. The Jews initially rejected Yeshua because ADONAI ordained it. It was a part of His plan. But, they didn't cause His death. We know that Yeshua willingly gave His life for us that our sins might be forgiven. *Shimon Kefa*, Simon Peter, said this to the High Priests and elders who were accusing him: 27 *"For truly both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, were gathered together in this city against Your holy Servant Yeshua, whom You anointed. 28 They did whatever Your hand and Your purpose predetermined to happen"* (Acts 4:27-28 TLV). ADONAI planned and foreordained that Herod and the Romans and many of the Jews would reject Yeshua. And, their rejection has led to the reconciliation of the "world," the Gentiles of the world and eventually all of the Jews. The acceptance of Yeshua by "all Israel" will mean "life from the dead." All Israel is presently spiritually dead by ADONAI's standards. His standard of life is whether or not a person knows Yeshua according to the salvation plan of the operative covenant today, the New Covenant. Currently, Jews have no hope of spending eternity with their *Mashiach*. But, they will, because ADONAI has also foreordained that those whom He knew, that is, covenanted with, will also receive the blessing of Abraham, the blessing which came to the Gentiles. That blessing is that which came through Abraham's seed, Yeshua, salvation.

16 *"If the firstfruit is holy, so is the whole batch of dough; and if the root is holy, so are the branches"* (Romans 11:16 TLV). Numbers 15, verses 17-21 tell how the grain offering is to be separated. Verse 20 says: 20 *"You are to offer a cake from the first of your ground-up meal as an offering from your threshing floor—so you are to lift it up"* (Numbers 15:20 TLV). The "first of your ground-up meal" is a firstfruits offering of grain and it was given to the priests. The firstfruit, the grain given to the priests was set apart, holy, and because it is holy, the remainder of the grain, the whole lump of dough from which it was separated, is also set apart, holy. The holiness of the firstfruits grain offering was determined by its only being eaten by the *kohenim*, the priests. 16 *"If the firstfruit is holy, so is the whole batch of dough; and if the root is holy, so are the branches"* (Romans 11:16 TLV). In *Sha'ul's* example, the Jews who knew Yeshua were the holy firstfruits who were set apart as an offering for

Him, our *Kohen HaGadol*, Yeshua our High Priest. But, the remainder of the lump of dough, the Jews who did not know Yeshua, were also set apart. Even though they don't yet know Yeshua, they are holy. They are set apart, holy, because of the faith of their firstfruits brothers and sisters and the foreordaining of their salvation. By trusting in Yeshua, the Jews who have accepted Yeshua have made their brothers and sisters holy. *Sha'ul* makes it very clear that in ADONAI's perfect time, the whole lump of dough, also pictured as olive tree branches, will become that for which they have been set apart to be, disciples of Yeshua.

As we pray for their salvation, we should also remember the rest of the Gentile world, those who do not know Yeshua. While 2.3 billion Gentiles profess Yeshua, there remain over 5 billion who do not know Him. Our prayer is also for them. Within that five billion are some who have known Him and later rejected Him. Every congregation has had some who have turned away from Yeshua. I can think of at least ten over the years who were a part of our congregation who professed that He was their Messiah but who have now turned away, rejected Him. I have a burden for them. I am not even sure that they can come back to Yeshua, but that should not stop us from praying for them.

Yochanan wrote: 18 *"Children, it is the last hour. Just as you heard that the anti-messiah is coming, even now many anti-messiahs have come—by this we know that it is the last hour"* (1John 2:18 TLV). The last hour, the "end times," began in the 1st century and we are now, twenty centuries later, nearing the end of the last hour. The anti-messiah that John spoke of was not and is not a coming world ruler. That's a myth that has taken many in. The anti-messiah is a spirit which can reside in anyone and even in John's day there already many of them. The next verse explains: 19 *"They left us, but they didn't really belong to us. If they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us. But they left us so it became clear that none of them belongs to us"* (1John 2:19 TLV). The "they" was those who had initially professed Yeshua and become a part of the body, but later turned away, rejected Him. We could say that this is true about those who have left us, that they left because they really didn't belong with us. Maybe that's not true in their case. If there is any hope at all that they can make *t'shuvah* and turn from their sin and return to Yeshua, we should pray for them.

But, as they are now, they are liars. 22 *"Who is the liar, if not the one who denies that Yeshua is the Messiah? This one is the anti-messiah—the one who denies the Father and the Son"* (1John 2:22 TLV). And, not only are they liars, they are anti-messiahs. They have a spirit that is not from G-d, but from *HaSatan*. We can make a case of that from this verse: 8 *"The one who practices sin is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. Ben-Elohim appeared for this purpose—to destroy the works of the devil"* (1John 2:8 TLV). I would say that the rejection of Yeshua is the ultimate sin and this spirit which comes from *HaSatan*, the spirit of anti-messiah, can cause a person to turn from the truth to darkness. All of the people who have left us are Gentiles, Gentiles who became enamored with Judaism. Their continuing to seek special knowledge that they felt we couldn't give them and even converting to Judaism in some cases, was the result of their temptation by the anti-messiah spirit. And, now they are anti-messiahs themselves. It is sad, because by seeking Abrahamic faith without Messiah, they have sealed their eternal fate. They sought a solely Abrahamic faith, a faith without Yeshua, but *Yochanan* has told us that is not possible. 23 *"No one who denies the Son has the Father; the one who acknowledges the Son also has the Father"* (1John 2:23 TLV). Seeking the Father by denying the Son, they have also lost the Father and their fate is sealed. They will spend eternity in Hell, the dark and frightening separation from ADONAI, that is, unless they repent and return to Yeshua. Please

pray for these people and others like them that they have not fallen so far that they cannot repent. *Yehudah*, Judas, was very sorry that he betrayed Yeshua, but he couldn't repent of it. He couldn't say "forgive me." There is no sin that we can't be forgiven of, if we can repent. Pray that these can repent and will repent and rejoin us whom they left.

We pray especially today for our brother and sister Jews and the nation of Israel. Chosen by ADONAI from before the foundation of the earth, their destiny is drawing nearer. Because the firstfruits are holy, so is the whole lump of dough. Zechariah prophesied: 9 "*Adonai will then be King over all the earth. In that day Adonai will be Echad and His Name Echad*" (Zechariah 14:9 TLV). ADONAI will be "*echad*" means that ADONAI will be revealed as both the Father and the Son. *Echad* means "one," but it is a compound unity such as the unity of a husband and a wife. They are *echad*, one, because they are two who have become *basar echad*, one flesh. ADONAI is *echad* in the same way. The Father and the Son along with the *Ruach* which precedes from them, are *echad*, אֶחָד, one, they are united in the special relationship which they have. There is another Hebrew word meaning one. *Yachid*, יָחִיד, means an absolute one, but it is not used in connection with ADONAI. The final full and complete understanding of all this is still a mystery to us, but we will understand soon. Yeshua is returning soon as King Messiah, after having conquered all His enemies. *Sha'ul* tells us what will happen then: 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 15:28 TLV). What does "all in all" mean? It's a mystery! We don't know what it means, but we know that it will be good.

Zechariah said: *In that day Adonai will be Echad and His Name Echad*. This is the central theme of the *Aleinu*. Let's pray this prayer to close our service today as we stand facing Jerusalem. *Aleinu l'shabeiach la'adon ha'kol; lateit g'dula l'yotzeir b'reishit; shelo asanu k'goyei ha'aratzot; v'lo samanu k'mish'p'chot ha'adama; shelo sam chelkeinu kahem; v'goraleinu, k'chal ha'monam. (bow) Va'a'nachnu ko'r'im u'mish'tachavim u'modem; lifnei melech, malchei ham'lachim; ha'kadosh, baruch hu. Shehu noteh shamayim v'yoseid aretz, u'moshav y'karo ba'shamayim mi'maal, ush'chi'nat uzo, ush'chi'nat uzo, b'gav'hei m'ro'mim. Hu Eloheinu, ein od. Emet malkeinu, efes zulato, ka'katuv b'torato: V'yada'ta ha'yom, V'yada'ta ha'yom, va'ha'sheivota el l'vavecha, Ki Adonai hu ha'Elohim, ba'shamayim mi'maal, v'al ha'aretz, v'al ha'aretz, mi'ta'chat, ein od.* Let us now praise the Master of all and exalt the Creator of the world, for He has made us distinct from the nations and unique among the families of the earth. Our destiny is not like theirs; our calling is our task. We therefore bow (bow) down and acknowledge before the King of Kings that there is none like Him, for He spread forth the heavens like a tent and established the earth. His glorious presence is everywhere He is our God; there is no other. Truly there is none like our Lord and King. As the *Torah* says, "You shall know this day and reflect in your heart that it is ADONAI Who is God in the heavens above and on the earth beneath; there is none else." We hope, ADONAI our God, to soon behold Your majestic glory when all abominations shall be removed and all false gods shall vanish from the earth. Then shall the world be perfected under Your rule, ADONAI Most High, and all mankind shall call upon Your glorious Name. For to You every knee must bow and every tongue declare that You are God. Reign over us soon and forever, and may the kingdom of David's greater son, Messiah Yeshua, be established forever. *Ve'ne'emar: V'haya Adonai l'melech al kal ha'aretz; ba'yom hahu, ba'yom hahu, yih'ye Adonai echad, u'sh'mo, u'sh'mo, u'sh'mo echad.* For then shall the words be fulfilled: "ADONAI shall be King forever," and "ADONAI shall be King over all the earth; on that day ADONAI shall be One and His Name One!" *Shabbat shalom!*

