



Parasha Ki Tavo

September 17, 2022

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,” and refers to coming into the Land of Promise. The first verses are about bringing the firstfruits of the ground once Israel has entered the land, but 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. Our message today is entitled: “The Whole Lump Is Holy” referring to the firstfruits offering.

“When you come in” is a reference to the end of Israel’s long journey, not long in distance, but in time. As the crow flies from Egypt to Jericho is about 380 miles. Even if they had walked the most direct route at a regular pace, it would have been a journey of only about eleven days. That was ADONAI’s original plan for them. They would have entered the southern end of Canaan, defeated their enemies there, and continued to defeat them as they moved northward. But, because of their disobedience, their wanderings caused them to travel, some have said, more than 5,000 miles. Because of their wandering, they also had to go much further north to enter Canaan. They entered near Jericho rather than directly in from the south as described in Numbers 13. Bearing ADONAI’s punishment for the sin of the spies and the people’s sin of rejecting His promise of victory, the first generation died out in the desert. The second generation is now preparing to enter Canaan after their nation’s forty year journey.

The *mitzvot*, the commands described in this *parasha*, can only be carried out with a Tabernacle and a Levitical priesthood. Many times in our *parshiot* we find some *mitzvot* which are applicable for us today, but not so with *Ki Tavo*. Every command given requires the presence of the Tabernacle or the Temple and the Levitical priesthood. At this point in time Israel is directly under the Kingship and protection of ADONAI. He told them which path to take and He protected them, gave them great victories over the enemies 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 the Land of Israel, not only a separation from their family and people, but also a separation from ADONAI’s protection.

But 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 mostly unoccupied, but the original altar is still there. In 2005, we looked across and saw it from a mountaintop east of it. A recent archeological exploration there uncovered an ancient folded, lead amulet with paleo Hebrew writing, the oldest known artifact with Hebrew writing. The message was revealed by a special xray technique. It contains forty letters which begin with *alef*, ancient *alef*, a picture of an ox's head. It says: "Cursed, cursed, cursed - cursed by the God YHVH. You will die cursed. Cursed you will surely die. Cursed by YHVH - cursed, cursed, cursed." The *Torah* is true. These things did happen.

The other mountain, Mount Gerizim is occupied primarily by Samaritans today, people who have their own version of the *Torah* and belief system. We went to the top of Mount Gerizim on one visit to Israel. The Samaritans believe that Mount Gerizim was where ADONAI commanded that He be worshipped rather than Jerusalem. The Samaritan woman Yeshua encountered spoke of it: 19 "*Sir,*" *the woman tells Him, "I see that You are a prophet! 20 Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you all say that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem."* (John 4:19-20 TLV). Yes, Jerusalem! That is the place where ADONAI has placed His name forever.

After Israel entered the land, there were many ups and downs during the period of the Judges, but they received ADONAI's blessings for many years, especially later during the reigns of King David and King Solomon. The curses for disobedience 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. The result of the joining of the Israelites left in the land with the Assyrian people eventually produced the Samaritan religion.

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 slavery. 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). It is our prayer that that time will be soon.

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 was located. Joshua's initial camp in Israel was at

Gilgal and the Tabernacle remained there for about seven years, which was 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 the Tabernacle was there for 369 years. We have visited the site of the Tabernacle in Shiloh twice and even today as an empty site, it remains a very spiritual place. The Tabernacle was briefly at Nob near Jerusalem during King Saul's reign before being moved to Gibeon. 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. (2Kings 21:4). David's son Solomon, built the Temple there and the ark was placed in it. From that time forward, the firstfruits offerings were taken at the Temple in Jerusalem.

In this month, the month of *Elul*, we are examining our hearts to see if we have fallen short of what Yeshua has asked us to do. We have great concern for those who do not know Him and our chief prayer is for our brother and sister Jews. We pray that a spirit of grace and supplication would fall on them and they would mourn for Yeshua as stated in Zechariah 12:10. We pray for that same spirit of supplication to fall on the Muslims, the Hindus, the Buddhists, the Atheists and all who do not know Yeshua. As *Sha'ul* said, "to the Jew first, but also to the Gentile. He had a tremendous burden for his fellow Jews to know Yeshua and he spoke about it several times in his letters: *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* was referring to those Jews who did not know Yeshua at that time, the majority of Israel. He pointed out that he was 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* used his own personal experience as a Jew who knew Messiah to emphasize that Israel has not been totally 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 connect the word "knew" 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 an unfulfilled prophecy referring to the coming "salvation of all Israel." The word know in Jeremiah 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 it is possible that the TLV translators used "know" in Romans 11:2 to translate the Greek *proginóskó* (prog-in-oc'e'-ko) because Jeremiah used know in his prophecy. Most Bibles translate *proginóskó* as "foreknew." Both know and foreknew seem to fit because *Sha'ul* is referring to those whom ADONAI knows and also foreknew. He knew before the foundation of the earth which of us would trust Yeshua, and more importantly, would faithfully follow Him.

Sha'ul recalled the situation with Elijah and the Prophets of Baal to point out that ADONAI always has a remnant (Romans 11:2-4). ADONAI told Elijah that there was a remnant of 7,000 men who had not worshipped Baal and *Sha'ul* says that there was also 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 large. The Jerusalem elders reported to him: 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 the faithful in Elijah's day. According to the Pew Research Center, the faithful remnant is much greater today. In 2013, 1.6 million Jews identified themselves as Christians. "All Israel" today, those Jews who do not know Yeshua, is more than 13 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*, His Good News. And now, there are 2.3 billion Christians in the world. But, Israel only stumbled. They did not fall and as the apple of ADONAI's eye, they will come to Yeshua once they've been made jealous. *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). Who are those who are not a nation? It is 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 the Christian's relationship with ADONAI. Many Christian theologians believe that their jealousy will come through the Church 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, mostly anti-*Torah*. But, G-d's word is true. It will come to pass. Is the answer that Christians in the future will reject their antinomian views, their anti-*Torah* views, and ADONAI will bless us all with a great outpouring of His covenant blessings? We don't know, but whatever the case, all Israel shall be saved: 26 ..., *as it is written, "The Deliverer shall come out of Zion. He shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob. 27 And this is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins."* (Romans 11:26b-27 TLV).

Israel's rejection was necessary. The Jews initially rejected Yeshua because ADONAI ordained it. It was a part of His plan. 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)? Their rejection of Yeshua has brought us almost to the place in time of "the fullness of the Gentiles coming in." *Sha'ul* spoke in faith that all Israel will accept Yeshua and it will be life from the dead, eternal life.

It is said that there is more antisemitism today than ever before. And, that is understandable because of where we are in the last days. But, the Jews didn't cause Yeshua's death. They are not to blame as some like to say. We know that Yeshua willingly gave His life for us that our sins might be forgiven. This was made clear in Acts 4. Peter and John healed a lame man at the Temple which led to the salvation of 5,000 men. They were jailed by the captain of the Temple and questioned the next day by the High Priests Annas and Caiaphas and some elders. After being threatened, they were released. They reported all this to the group of Yeshua's followers. These verses are a part of their prayer of thanksgiving: <17> 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 will eventually lead to the reconciliation of all of the Jews. The acceptance of Yeshua by “all Israel” will mean “life from the dead.” By ADONAI’s standards, “all Israel” is presently spiritually dead. They do have a relationship with Him now, but not His salvation. His standard of life is whether or not a person knows Yeshua according to the salvation plan of His 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 foreknew will also receive the blessing of Abraham, the blessing, salvation, which came to the Gentiles through Abraham’s seed, Yeshua.

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 was given to the priests. The firstfruit, the grain given to the priests was set apart, holy, and because it was holy, the remainder of the grain, the whole lump of dough from which it was separated, was also set apart, holy. 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 our High Priest, Yeshua. 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 ADONAI. 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. Pray that many will trust Yeshua and join their firstfruits brothers and sisters even before the salvation of “all Israel.”

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 may have known Him and later rejected Him. Every congregation has had some who have turned away from Yeshua. We have as well. Their fate is in their own hands if their hearts are not so hardened that they cannot return.

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). “They” were those who had initially professed Yeshua and become a part of the body, but later turned away, rejected Him.

According to John, those who have rejected Yeshua 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*: 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). In my opinion, the rejection of Yeshua is the ultimate sin, the sin of blasphemy of the Holy Spirit. The spirit which causes it 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 our fellowship 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 choosing the faith of Abraham without Messiah, they have sealed their eternal fate. They sought a solely Jewish 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 as well and their fate is sealed. They will spend eternity in Hell, the dark and frightening separation from ADONAI unless they repent and return to Yeshua. *Yehudah*, Judas, was very sorry that he betrayed Yeshua, but he couldn't repent. He couldn't say "forgive me." There is no sin of which we can't be forgiven, if we sincerely repent of it.

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 near. 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 between a husband and a wife. A husband and wife are *echad*, one, because they are two who have become *basar echad*, one flesh. ADONAI is *echad* in a similar way as best we understand. The Father and the Son along with the *Ruach* which precedes from them, are *echad*, אֶחָד, one, 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. *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!

Yeshua said: 44 *But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,* 45 *so that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.* 46 *For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Even the tax collectors do the same, don't they?* 47 *And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than anyone else? Even the pagans do that, don't they?* 48 *Therefore be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect"* (Matthew 5:44-47 TLV). It's not easy to love those who curse us. It's not even easy to love those who don't like us for some reason. But we have been commanded to be perfect in our love. Yeshua didn't say "do your best to love them." He said "love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." This is a major theme of the month of Elul; how to live with our fellow man with a God-like love. If we're not in a righteous relationship with our fellow man, our neighbor, we're more than likely not in a right relationship with G-d. Yeshua said: 14

“For if you forgive others their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 But if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your transgressions.” (Matthew 6:14-15 TLV). Each of us must examine our heart to see if we’re really where we think we are with regard to both G-d and our fellow man. May we be counted worthy. *Shabbat shalom!*