

you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances” (Ezekiel 36:24-27).

Both a heart circumcision and transplant refer to how the Lord will give His people the desire and ability to fully obey Him and walk in His ways. This will come not out of compulsion, but rather be a positive result of the love people have toward Him and for the acts of deliverance He has accomplished. There is no greater act of deliverance that we can conceive of than the sacrifice of Yeshua the Messiah at Golgotha (Calvary), and how it results in us possessing eternal life:

“He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us richly through Yeshua the Messiah our Savior, so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to *the* hope of eternal life” (Titus 3:5-7).

Do you truly have a circumcised heart of flesh, that eagerly desires to obey the Lord and accomplish His tasks for your life? Do you receive of the blessings promised to those who follow the commandments? How will the Lord describe your life when you meet Him face to face? If there were any descriptions of your life employing the Hebrew word *ekev*, would they at all be similar to those of Abraham, Isaac, and Caleb?

## *Re'eih* רֵאֵה

See

### “Choices and Tests”

Deuteronomy 11:26-16:17

Isaiah 54:11-55:5

*Re'eih* continues where *Ekev* left off. Moses is persistent in encouraging the Israelites to obey the Lord with due faithfulness, so that they can prosper in the Land He is going to give them. **If** Israel chooses to listen to and obey the commandments of the Lord, **then** blessings will emanate from Him. On the other hand, **if** Israel chooses to disobey the commandments of the Lord, **then** curses will manifest themselves. Once again, the bottom line for Ancient Israel is how their choices—positive *or* negative—will affect them when they dwell in the Promised Land. Will Israel choose to follow Moses’ Teaching? Or will Israel choose to abandon it? *Re'eih* opens with a rather critical admonition:

“See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse: the blessing, if you listen to the commandments of the LORD your God, which I am commanding you today; and the curse, if you do not listen to the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside from the way which I am commanding you today, by following other gods which you have not known” (Deuteronomy 11:26-28).

It is not difficult to compute how obedience to the Lord will result in people being blessed by Him, and how disobedience to the Lord will *at least* result in some kind of penalties being dispensed. If people desire to obey the Lord, then such obedience is a

manifestation of one's love and loyalty to Him. What does it say of those who do not desire to obey Him?

In *Re'eih* this week, we are introduced to a variety of tests that the Lord will use to ascertain whether His people will truly choose to follow Him. The tests which are given are fairly challenging, as they will come not only in the form of false prophets, but even one's close personal relatives. False prophets, in particular, are said to be allowed to perform signs and wonders that come true:

“If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder comes true, concerning which he spoke to you, saying, ‘Let us go after other gods (whom you have not known) and let us serve them,’ you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams; for the LORD your God is testing you to find out if you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. You shall follow the LORD your God and fear Him; and you shall keep His commandments, listen to His voice, serve Him, and cling to Him” (Deuteronomy 13:2-5).

These visible and/or tangible signs and wonders have the intention of drawing people away to worship and serve other gods—especially when the signs or wonders the false prophets claim will occur, come true. But, because false prophets have every intention of leading people away from God's commandments, Israel is instructed to execute them:

“But that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death, because he has counseled rebellion against the LORD your God who brought you from the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of slavery, to seduce you from the way in which the LORD your God commanded you to walk. So you shall purge the evil from among you” (Deuteronomy 13:5).

As serious as detecting a false prophet may be, even more hard-hitting is the fact that spiritual tests may come via one's own kin:

“If your brother, your mother's son, or your son or daughter, or the wife you cherish, or your friend who is as your own soul, entice you secretly, saying, ‘Let us go and serve other gods’ (whom neither you nor your fathers have known, of the gods of the peoples who are around you, near you or far from you, from one end of the earth to the other end), you shall not yield to him or listen to him; and your eye shall not pity him, nor shall you spare or conceal him” (Deuteronomy 13:6-8).

At this point, Moses warns Israel that siblings, children, best friends, and even wives can be used as vessels of temptation to get people to deny the Lord. God knows how intimate relationships with people who are *unfaithful toward Him*, can easily draw us away from Him. For Ancient Israel, at least, the answer was to similarly see that those close people would be put to death. And, the one who was tempted by a fellow family member, is the first one who had to throw stones:

“But you shall surely kill him; your hand shall be first against him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people. So you shall stone him to death because he has sought to seduce you from the LORD your God who brought you out from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. Then all Israel will hear and be afraid, and will never again do such a wicked thing among you” (Deuteronomy 13:9-11).

*This is a difficult test.* After your loved one has been accused and convicted of enticing you away from serving the One God of Israel, you were required to be the first to cast a stone to initiate the capital punishment. **Thankfully, we now live in an era where Yeshua's sacrifice has absorbed such capital punishment** (Colossians 2:14). Yet, even if we might not stone false prophets or relatives who worship other gods—we still

have to be very mindful of the deceptive influences present in our world. We have to avoid them and not listen to them! Each of us has to make the conscious choice to fully love and serve the Lord—or pursue other things that take us away from Him *and His promised blessings*. Such has always been the age-old question for the followers of the God of Israel.

During the ministry of Yeshua, we also see some tests present, similar to what is described this week in *Re'eih*. The Apostolic Scriptures warn about the coming of false prophets, with signs and wonders, which are again going to be used by God to test the hearts of those who have claimed faith in His Son. In His Olivet Discourse on the Last Days, Yeshua warned His Disciples about the eventual coming of false messiahs and false prophets who will arise to show great signs and wonders, saying,

“For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and produce great signs and omens, to lead astray, if possible, even the elect” (Matthew 24:24, NRSV).

The significance of such signs and wonders will be *to test the hearts of the elect*. The signs and wonders will be designed to mislead, and have the capacity to seriously disrupt how Messiah followers are to be exclusively loyal to Him. Taking Yeshua’s warning to serious heart today, we should always question the motives of any minister or ministry that is actively (or exclusively) soliciting a following based on the manifestation of “signs and wonders.” Are they the genuine activity of the Holy Spirit? Are they *really* confirming evidences of the work of the Lord, and in helping people be set free from their sins?

Just as *Re'eih* says that one’s close family may be a source of temptation, Yeshua also told His Disciples that there will be division in families, because of belief in Him:

“Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I came to SET A MAN AGAINST HIS FATHER, AND A DAUGHTER AGAINST HER MOTHER, AND A DAUGHTER-IN-LAW AGAINST HER MOTHER-IN-LAW; and A MAN’S ENEMIES WILL BE THE MEMBERS OF HIS HOUSEHOLD” (Matthew 10:34-36; cf. Micah 7:6).

In both Moses’ and Yeshua’s instructions, it is asserted how God’s people are going to be tested. False prophets will arise with signs and wonders. Families will be at odds because of loyalty to God and to His Messiah. Sadly today, the reality of circumstances on the ground is that many people actually desire to hear ear-tickling and sensational words—rather than receive instruction which can aid them in their relationship with the Lord and spiritual effectiveness. As the Apostle Paul wrote his colleague Timothy,

“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but *wanting* to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths” (2 Timothy 4:3-4).

## The Final Test and Choice

Within Deuteronomy the subject of prophets is seen multiple times,<sup>30</sup> but it is not exclusively about false prophets who will plague the Israelites. Moses will later speak of a Greater Prophet who will be raised up by God and speak definitive words that the people must heed. This Prophet will provide the ultimate test, and not heeding what He says will bring disastrous consequences:

“I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. It shall come about

<sup>30</sup> Deuteronomy 13:1, 3, 5; 18:15, 18, 20, 22; 34:10.

that whoever will not listen to My words which he shall speak in My name, I Myself will require *it* of him” (Deuteronomy 18:18-19).

The Apostle Peter knew who this Greater Prophet was, as he made a direct appeal to Deuteronomy 18:19—applying it to the ministry and work of Yeshua the Messiah:

“Moses said, ‘THE LORD GOD WILL RAISE UP FOR YOU A PROPHET LIKE ME FROM YOUR BRETHREN; TO HIM YOU SHALL GIVE HEED to everything He says to you. And it will be that every soul that does not heed that prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people’” (Acts 3:22-23).

Here, the test of believing in Yeshua is clearly stated. The consequences of unbelief are utter and complete ruin. **Have you placed your trust in Yeshua the Messiah, the Greater Prophet?** Anything else short of this, and you will have *chosen poorly*. Only by expressing true saving faith in the Messiah of Israel, can one also possess the wisdom and discernment to identify all of the false prophets and deceivers out there—which the world will throw at us!

## *Shoftim* שֹׁפְטִים Judges “Words Required for Life”

Deuteronomy 16:18-21:9  
Isaiah 51:12-52:12 (or finish at 53:12)

*Shoftim* continues to establish the constitution for the emerging nation of Israel. Moses addresses issues like the judicial system<sup>31</sup> and the inevitability of Israel having a monarchy,<sup>32</sup> and how all are to be subject to God’s Law and authority. Specifics about the Levitical priesthood are also described,<sup>33</sup> and warnings are issued to Israel about some of the abominable practices that will be tempting the people as the conquest of the Promised Land proceeds.<sup>34</sup> Specifics about the cities of refuge are reiterated,<sup>35</sup> and further definitions about court proceedings are discussed.<sup>36</sup> Preparations for war with the obligations of the selective service or draft are outlined, with the rules of engagement for war included.<sup>37</sup> Finally, some specifics about how to handle homicide are detailed.<sup>38</sup> As you read and reflect upon *Shoftim*, you can easily see how the God of Israel is indeed a Master of order. He has laid out important aspects of the judicial, executive, and priestly functions that are to make His chosen nation be prosperous.

However, in the midst, of all of this instruction for the people of Israel, is a strikingly significant Messianic prophecy. Moses speaks of a Greater Prophet who will one day rise up with the words of God in His mouth. This Greater Prophet will speak all the words that

<sup>31</sup> Deuteronomy 17:1-13.

<sup>32</sup> Deuteronomy 17:14-20.

<sup>33</sup> Deuteronomy 18:1-8.

<sup>34</sup> Deuteronomy 18:9-14.

<sup>35</sup> Deuteronomy 19:1-13.

<sup>36</sup> Deuteronomy 19:14-21.

<sup>37</sup> Deuteronomy 20:1-20.

<sup>38</sup> Deuteronomy 21:1-9.