

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 system³¹ and the inevitability of Israel having a monarchy,³² and how all are to be subject to God’s Law and authority. Specifics about the Levitical priesthood are also described,³³ 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.³⁴ Specifics about the cities of refuge are reiterated,³⁵ and further definitions about court proceedings are discussed.³⁶ Preparations for war with the obligations of the selective service or draft are outlined, with the rules of engagement for war included.³⁷ Finally, some specifics about how to handle homicide are detailed.³⁸ 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

³¹ Deuteronomy 17:1-13.

³² Deuteronomy 17:14-20.

³³ Deuteronomy 18:1-8.

³⁴ Deuteronomy 18:9-14.

³⁵ Deuteronomy 19:1-13.

³⁶ Deuteronomy 19:14-21.

³⁷ Deuteronomy 20:1-20.

³⁸ Deuteronomy 21:1-9.

God commands Him to speak. Not listening or heeding the words this Prophet will speak will incur a man or woman some severe 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 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).

This expectation has a degree of finality to it. Moses declares that this future Prophet will speak words that must be obeyed by those who hear them. If they are not obeyed, then God Himself “will call...to account” (NIV) those who ignored or disregarded them, holding those responsible who did not take seriously the words conveyed. Deuteronomy 19:18-10 is a powerful prophetic statement made by Moses, which pointed ahead to the eventual arrival of the Messiah. And yet, when the Messiah did come, how many chose to really believe His words?

One group of people who fully believed and acted on the words of the Greater Prophet were the Disciples of Yeshua the Messiah. Ten days after the ascension of the Messiah into Heaven, on the day of *Shavuot*/Pentecost, the Ruach HaKodesh or Holy Spirit was poured out upon the Believers. As it is recorded in Acts 3, the Apostle Peter confidently declared that Yeshua was indeed the Greater Prophet who Moses had foretold:

“But the things which God announced beforehand by the mouth of all the prophets, that His Messiah would suffer, He has thus fulfilled. Therefore repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord; and that He may send Yeshua, the Messiah appointed for you, whom heaven must receive until *the* period of restoration of all things about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time. **Moses said, ‘THE LORD GOD WILL RAISE UP FOR YOU A PROPHET LIKE ME FROM YOUR BRETHREN; TO HIM YOU SHALL GIVE HEED [Deuteronomy 18:19] 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.’** And likewise, all the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and *his* successors onward, also announced these days. It is you who are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant which God made with your fathers, saying to Abraham, ‘AND IN YOUR SEED ALL THE FAMILIES OF THE EARTH SHALL BE BLESSED’ [Genesis 22:18; 26:4]. For you first, God raised up His Servant and sent Him to bless you by turning every one *of you* from your wicked ways” (Acts 3:18-26).

Peter directly quotes Deuteronomy 18:19, which details who the Greater Prophet is to be,³⁹ and identifies Him to be Yeshua the Messiah. But there is further amplification as to what the concept of “requiring” one to recognize Him actually means. Peter makes it much more succinct and to the point. He states that: **“Anyone who does not listen to him will be completely cut off from among his people”** (NIV). This statement is really to be taken seriously, because those who disregard Yeshua will have severe consequences leveled against them. The early Messiah followers understood that Moses was indeed foretelling of Yeshua—because before he was stoned, the young disciple Stephen likewise directly quoted from Deuteronomy 18:15, defending himself with the word,

³⁹ Kurt Aland, et. al., *The Greek New Testament, Fourth Revised Edition* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft/United Bible Societies, 1998), 418.

“This is the Moses who said to the sons of Israel, ‘GOD WILL RAISE UP FOR YOU A PROPHET LIKE ME FROM YOUR BRETHREN’” (Acts 7:37).⁴⁰

Based on the prophecy delivered by Moses, and the confirmation offered by Peter and Stephen—we **must believe in and heed the message declared by the Greater Prophet**, Yeshua the Messiah—or the consequence will be eternal punishment. This might seem like a harsh word, but the author of Hebrews’ words are even more direct than those witnessed in either Deuteronomy 18:19 or Acts 3:23:

“For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a terrifying expectation of judgment and THE FURY OF A FIRE WHICH WILL CONSUME THE ADVERSARIES [Isaiah 26:11]. Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on *the testimony of* two or three witnesses. How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know Him who said, ‘VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY.’ And again, ‘THE LORD WILL JUDGE HIS PEOPLE’ [Deuteronomy 32:35, 36; Psalm 135:14]. It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Hebrews 10:26-31).

Reading this rather direct and stern admonition—born again Believers should recognize how they have the authority to not only rebuke those who have heard the knowledge of the truth and keep on sinning, **but also** those who completely turn away from the truth that the Messiah is Yeshua, the only Savior for humanity.

Brothers and sisters, you do not want to find yourself a sinner who fails to turn from bad habits, one who has known but has rejected the good news, or one who has just rejected the good news. While all of these negative predicaments are terrible—those who once professed to believe in, *but later deny*, the blood atonement of Yeshua on their behalf—are going to be punished even more seriously than those who just reject Him outright.

Have you truly believed in the words of the Messiah? Has the good news of salvation in Yeshua changed your heart, and truly enabled you to love God and neighbor like never before? If you have not experienced the supernatural power of the gospel—**now is the time to go before the Lord in prayerful repentance!** One must believe in the words of Yeshua to experience eternal life; it is not enough to only have the words of Moses.

***Ki-Teitzei* כִּי־תֵצֵא** When you go out “Be Well and Prolong Your Days”

Deuteronomy 21:10-25:19
Isaiah 54:1-10 (or finish at 52:13)

The final stretch of the Deuteronomy Torah portions through the month of Elul to *Yom Teruah/Rosh HaShanah* and the Fall feasts is now upon us (2003/5753). Our reading for this week, *Ki-Teitzei*, details many commandments that will directly apply to the Israelites upon their occupation of the Promised Land. A wide variety of unique subjects, ranging from

⁴⁰ Ibid., 433.