

# PARASHAT MATOT

(TRIBES)

NUMBERS 30:2[1]-32:42

## ETZ CHAYEEM HOO (HE IS A TREE OF LIFE)

**Y**eshua is a tree of life to those who take hold of Him, and those who support Him are praiseworthy. His ways are ways of pleasantness and all of His paths are shalom. Bring us back YHVH to You, and we shall come, renew our days as of old.

As we begin to study the Torah let us never forget that YESHUA THE MESSIAH is the Living Torah, the Torah-Word of Elohim made flesh. He is the way, the truth and the life — the Living Manna sent from heaven. Without Him living in our lives through the indwelling Presence of his Set-Apart/Kadosh Spirit (Who leads us into all truth and revelation) the Written Torah can become the dead letter of the law!

### Haftorah Reading

Jeremiah 1:1-2:3

### B'rit Chadashah

Yeshua on oaths: Matthew 5:33-37

### Outline of This Week's Parashah (Torah Portion):

- 30:2[1] Vows and Oaths to YHVH; Vows of Minors and a Married Woman
- 31:3 The Battle Against Midian—Vengeance for the Balaam Affair
- 31:13 Moses Rebukes the Military Leaders for Sparing the Female Midianites
- 31:21 The Laws of Koshering War Spoils and Utensils
- 31:25 The Division of War Spoils
- 32:1 Reuben and Gad's Request to Be Granted an Inheritance on the East Bank of the Jordan
- 32:6 Moses' Objection to the Request for Fear the Eastern Tribes Will Defect From the Western Tribes
- 32:16 Clarification of the Request: The Eastern Tribes Vow to Send Soldiers to Aid the Rest of the Tribes in Taking the Promised Land West of the Jordan River
- 32:20 In Light of These New Conditions Moses Concedes

### Study Questions For This Week's Midrash (Torah Discussion):

**1** 30:3(2), A vow (Heb., *neder*) is literally "a pledge to do something." It places upon oneself or others or upon objects of one's choice a status equivalent to that of a commandment of the Torah (*ArtScroll Stone Edition Chumash*, p. 900).

- ☞ One's word is one's bond. A *neder* is so strong that a person violating it can suffer the court-imposed penalty of lashes (Ibid.) The Set-Apart One of Israel is not a man that he should lie (Num 23:19). If we are to be set-apart or *kadosh* as he is *kadosh* (1 Pet 1:16; 2:9; Heb 12:14) we must be people of our word not only in large matters, but in the smallest of matters, too. Are you too casual with your words? Do you make commitments in order to sound good to others yet you have no real intention of fulfilling your obligations? Liars will have no part in the New Jerusalem (Rev 21:8).
- ☞ YHVH establishes order in the family structure. The man, as the head of the family, holds veto power over promises made by those under him in his family. This may be politically incorrect nowadays in a

society characterized by egalitarianism, feminism and children's "rights," but the Word of YHVH in the Torah is clear on the matter. This is given because the husband and/or father holds responsibility for promises made by those in his family (Num 30:15). To what degree are you swayed by the mores of society in this regard as opposed to the Word of Elohim? What rules do you play by in your marriage and family—society's or YHVH's?

- 2 31:3, *Avenge YHVH of Midian.*** YHVH is vehemently opposed to moral looseness. Midian, through seductive women, nearly destroyed Israel. The decisive actions of morally straight leadership prevented Israel from going the way of so many nations that have since collapsed due to moral decay. Sexual looseness and perversion must not be allowed to gain even a momentary toehold into our lives. Do you aggressively resist and fight against the spiritual Midianites that would destroy your life, your family, your marriage and your spiritual destiny, or do you even slightly countenance the enemies of your soul in the secret parts of your secret life just to placate the passions of your carnal man? The spirit of Midian is to be found everywhere from the magazine rack at the checkout stand to the morning newspaper advertising women's undergarments, from bumper stickers to billboards, from television ads (not to mention the television shows themselves) to the internet; from lewdness in the Oval Office of the presidential White House and the pastor's office to the modern immodest and decadent clothing styles of our youth, which barely cover the body, and where little is left to the imagination. How does one defend oneself against this incessant onslaught? Remember, the best defense is a strong offense. Resolve and settle in your heart and mind ahead of time how you will react against the darts of the enemy when you suddenly find them aimed at you and then stick to your game plan! Do you pull down every mental stronghold and take every thought captive to the mind of Yeshua? (2 Cor 10:3–6)
- 3 31:4, *A thousand from a tribe.*** All the tribes were equally represented in this fighting force to punish Midian for its responsibility in causing Israel to fall into the sins of idolatry and immorality resulting in the death of 24,000 Israelites (Num 25:1–9). What can we learn from this? Each person in the spiritual body of Yeshua (or "the camp of Israel") must take an equal role in fighting wickedness and immorality. What are you actively doing to combat these things around you? Whether you think you will make a difference or not, do you still vote, write letters to your political representatives, pray, take righteous stands against evil when and wherever possible, or support those who do so with your finances? If you are a parent, what is your responsibility to your children in this regard?
- 4 31:8, *Balaam ... they slew with the sword.*** Jude 11 talks about Balaam being greedy for money and indicates that there are those in the end times in the body of Yeshua who will follow after this sin. How is this possible? What will be the ultimate fate of these "tares"? (See Matt 13:40.) Had Balaam believed his own good prophecies concerning Israel and not have sided with Israel's enemies, would he not have been spared the sword of YHVH's justice? What were his motives for siding with them? Can greed and materialism blind one from YHVH's truth and cause one to side with YHVH's enemies? What is the end result of this action? Balaam was a deceiver and a hypocrite. He spoke one thing and did something else. Are we ever guilty of this? How rampant is the sin of duplicity within the body of believers in Yeshua? Are there people who claim to be prophets in the Christian church who, like Balaam, speak soothing and ear-tickling prophetic words in order to *profit* from the people? How can we know the difference between true and false prophets? A true prophet is not greedy like Balaam. (Read Deut 18:20–22 and Matt 7:15–20.) Can a true prophet of Elohim prophesy out of the flesh something false, and if he repents, when he finds he was in error, be spared from the death penalty? (Read 2 Sam 7:1–17.)
- 5 31:7, 17, *They slew all the males ... every male among the little ones ... and kill every woman that has known man by lying with him.*** Do you suppose that every Midianite who was slain was *directly* culpable for causing Israel to fall into idolatry and sexual immorality? If not, why were they slain? We see a similar situation with Korah and his malcontents where the earth swallowed up not only Korah, Dathan and Abiram, but their families, as well (Num 16:31–33). Even those who are not directly culpable for a particular sin, if they maintain company with sinners they will become morally tainted (1 Cor 5:6; 15:33; Gal 5:9). If the righteous dwell near the wicked is it possible for YHVH's judgments against the wicked to overlap onto the righteous? If this were not possible then why did YHVH instruct the righteous Israelites to separate

themselves from the environs of Korah's camp (Num 16:23–27), and why does YHVH call his people to *come out* of Babylon the Great in the end times (Rev 18:4)? How do we separate from the wicked? In the examples just cited, we see two kinds of separation from evil: physical and spiritual. We can separate spiritually without separating physically, but will there ever come a time when YHVH's people will have to separate physically? (Read Rev 12:14.) How will the woman know when to do this and where to go? Will the Good Shepherd abandon or lead his sheep in the day of trouble? (Read John 10:1–5.) May we always be pressed into Yeshua, our spiritual Shepherd, so that we may always hear his voice concerning what to do and where to go.

**6** **31:49**, *Not a man of us is missing*. The remarkable grace of YHVH is evidenced in the fact that only one-fiftieth of Israel's fighting force (12,000 of 600,000 men) took part in the campaign to defeat Midian and that not a single man was lost. What promise of YHVH was this a fulfillment of if Israel would walk in Torah-obedience? (See Lev 26:8; Deut 32:30.) What principles can we learn from this when applied to spiritual warfare? When our spiritual battles against evil are just, righteous and in accordance with YHVH's perfect will what results can we expect? (See Mark 16:17–18; Luke 9:1; 10:19; Rom 8:31, 37; 1 John 4:4.)

**7** **32:1–15**, Both Christian commentator Matthew Henry and the Jewish *ArtsScroll Stone Edition Chumash* suggest that materialism played a role in Reuben's and Gad's request to settle the east side of the Jordan River. Henry further notes that the request showed disregard for the land of Canaan, distrust for YHVH's promises, and an unwillingness to encounter the difficulties and dangers of conquering and driving out the inhabitants of that land. Yeshua admonished his disciples to endure to the end (Matt 10:22; 24:13; Heb 3:6). What did Yeshua say about getting embroiled in the cares of this life? (Luke 21:34). What does Scripture say about being overcomers? (1 John 5:4,5; Rev 2:7, 11,26; 3:5,12,21; 21:7). Henry continues that ill comes to any of YHVH's people who sit down unconcerned about the difficult and perilous concerns of their brethren, whether public or personal. Moses then reminds them of the fatal consequences of the unbelief and faint-heartedness of their fathers, when they were, as themselves, just ready to enter Canaan. We might add to Henry's commentary by asking the question, in the face of self-assured pride and spiritual slackness or reluctance to do our part to help move the kingdom of Elohim forward, what dangers await us? (See 1 Cor 10:11–12.) Was Paul concerned about these issues for his own life? (See 1 Cor 9:27.)

**8** What can we learn in Chapter 32 about the needs and wants of the individual or the local community versus the needs of the larger community or nation? Is it necessary for us sometimes to forgo our personal wants for the greater good of society? (See Phil 2:3; Rom 12:10.) What was Moses' response to Reuben's and Gad's request? Why did he respond so forcefully? What does this teach us about the role of YHVH-ordained leadership to steer YHVH's people in paths of righteousness and to correct those who err? The two tribes had their interests in mind and not those of the nation. Moses helped them to understand the bigger picture. What was the response of these two tribes in the face of correction? Did they decide to split off from Israel and start their own nation (or in our day, their own church or denomination) as what often happens today in congregations when leaders attempt to correct those who err?

## THE ATONEMENT: BLOODLESS OR BLOODY?

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**I**n **Numbers 31:50** we read, "*We have therefore brought an oblation for YHVH, what every man has gotten, of jewels of gold, chains, and bracelets, rings, earrings, and tablets, to make an atonement for our souls before YHVH.*"

The concept of atonement can be a confusing one. Some in rabbinic Jewish circles teach that Torah does not require the shedding of blood for atonement of one's sin to occur. According to the above Scripture, this *could* appear to be the case.

In the Apostolic Scriptures (New Testament), there is no question that when the concept of *atonement* is presented it is related to the blood of Yeshua, the Lamb of YHVH, being shed for the remission of sins, which is

the means through which reconciliation (resulting in man's salvation) between Elohim and man occurs. In the Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament), however, the idea of atonement is somewhat broader and at times more generalized in scope. Herein lies the confusion and the misconceived disparity between the Former and Latter Covenants. Are they in opposition to one another, or is the latter the logical outgrowth of the former and compliments or elucidates the Torah?

(To read the rest of this teaching article, go to <http://www.hoshanarabbah.org/pdfs/atone.pdf>.)

## HAFTORAH READING — JEREMIAH 1:2–2:3

### Is YHVH Raising Up Modern Day Jeremiah's?

Jeremiah the prophet received a direct call from YHVH Elohim to warn the nation of Judah, YHVH's people, of impending judgment if they would not repent and return to his Torah. YHVH commissioned the prophet to warn and to rebuke those at all levels of society: kings, princes, priests and people (1:18). Is it likely that YHVH will raise up a prophet or prophets in the last days prior to the return of Yeshua the Messiah who will be doing the same thing as Jeremiah?

Jeremiah did not feel adequate to the job (1:6), yet YHVH assured him that he was, for YHVH personally had called and empowered him to do what seemed to be an impossible task: for one man, as YHVH's representative, to set his face against an entire nation and to survive the resulting wrath of the wicked against that righteous man of YHVH (1:7–10; 18–19).

In the end times, will there yet arise true prophets in which the Word of YHVH is shut up like fire in their bones (Jer 20:9) who will utter forth the fiery oracles of YHVH, which like a hammer will smash to pieces the rock-hard hearts of YHVH's obstinate, rebellious and sinful people (Jer 23:29)?

Yeshua prophesied that in the last days false prophets would arise, and if possible, would deceive the very elect (Matt 24:11,24). If Satan the adversary has his false prophets on the scene just prior to Yeshua's return attempting to deceive YHVH's people, will not YHVH have his true prophets likewise ministering to warn, rebuke, provoke, incite, encourage, and give spiritual direction to YHVH's people?

Some Christian teachers through their unbiblical teachings on the subject of prophets and prophecy are inoculating YHVH's people against believing that Jeremiah-type prophets will arise in the last days. It is taught that during the New Testament dispensation until the second coming the character and ministry of the prophets is totally different than those during Old Testament times. Since we are living during the so-called age of grace, these teachers reason, YHVH's prophets now speak *only* words of edification, exhortation and comfort, and any modern prophets who warn, rebuke, judge, call YHVH's people to repentance, or otherwise speak in harsh, black and white tones could not be sent of YHVH, for that type of prophet is a thing of the past. They tell us that such a prophet brings strife, division, and disharmony within the church, makes people feel uncomfortable in their sin and therefore cannot receive the church system's stamp of approval. Is it reasonable to assume that YHVH will limit himself and the going forth of his Word to the constraints of these soft-shoe teachers?

Yeshua said that he did not come to send peace on earth, but a sword. He stated that he came to set a man at variance with his father, daughter, mother and every other member of his family (Matt 10:34–39). Scripture says that YHVH's Word is like a sharp sword of truth that cuts into the very soul and spirit of man leaving the true heart and intents of man wide open and naked (Eph 6:17; Heb 4:12–13). Did Yeshua commission his disciples to carry forth this style of prophetic ministry?

Prophets existed within the early community of believers of the first century (Acts 11:27; 13:1; 15:32; 21:9,10; 1 Cor 12:28,29; 14:29,32,37; Eph 2:20; 4:11). Scripture says that YHVH is the same yesterday, today and forever (Heb 13:8). If the ministry of prophets is not for us today, then perhaps that of pastors, evangelists and teachers are presently irrelevant. Scripture shows that these ministry giftings operated within the body of believers to help build it up; to perfect the saints "until we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of Elohim, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Messiah" (Eph 4:11–13). When the spiritual body of Yeshua has achieved this stature, then perhaps the office of the prophet will cease.

Yet, again, some Christian teachers declare that the ministry of the New Testament (NT) prophet is a kinder

gentler breed of ministry than those under the so-called Old Testament dispensation. As proof, they will claim that no examples of the “repent or perish, turn or burn,” condemning and judgment style of preaching can be found among those listed as prophets in the New Testament. Based on this notion, these teachers have taught many Christians to either totally reject or to have a strong aversion toward any Jeremiah-type prophets that YHVH may send in our days. Is their analysis correct or have they led the people astray?

Though they did not claim to be prophets, do we find any of the apostolic writers acting like “Old Testament” prophets? How about Peter, John, Jude, James and Paul? They were apostles, but Scripture reveals that they were also prophets who rebuked, warned, and prophesied judgment. Did they speak only ear-tickling, light-duty, soft-shoe words to YHVH’s people avoiding harsh criticism and strong rebuke as do many of the so-called “prophets” today in the Christian church? Absolutely not. Several Scriptures should confirm this question once and for all: 2 Peter 2; Jude (entire book); 2 Thessalonians 2; 1 Timothy 4:1–2; 2 Timothy 3:1–9; 4:1–4; James 4:1–4; 5:1–6; 1 John 2:18; 4:1–3; Revelation (entire book).

After reading these Scriptures, it would seem that the spirit of Jeremiah was alive and well among the early apostolic writers—even during what some Christian teachers would call the “New Testament dispensation of grace”! Will this same prophetic spirit rise up among some of YHVH’s servants in the last days prior to the second coming?

Malachi the prophet answers that question. In chapter four of his book, Malachi speaks of an end-time generation who would return to the Torah of Moses, and about an Elijah (or one coming in the spirit of Elijah) who would turn the hearts of the children to the fathers of their faith.

Isaiah the prophet echoes this idea, as well, when he spoke about a voice crying in the wilderness saying, “Prepare you the way of YHVH, make straight in the desert a highway for Elohim. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain.” (Isa 40:3–4.)

John the Baptist came in the spirit of Elijah prior to Yeshua’s first coming, but this was not the ultimate fulfillment of Malachi’s prophecy, since the day of YHVH’s wrath has yet to occur. Another Elijah, or one(s) coming in the spirit of Elijah, is/are yet to come.

As John the Baptist came in the spirit of Elijah, likewise the end-time Torah-keeping saints will be those who will come in the spirit of Elijah to prepare the way for the return of Messiah. They will help turn the hearts of the children back to the fathers of the faith (the Jewish or Hebrew roots of the Christian faith as modeled in the Book of Acts) and will help YHVH’s people to restore the ancient paths of Torah (Jer 6:16,19).

As they preach the message of repentance, a return to the Torah (YHVH’s instructions, precepts, teachings in righteousness from his own lips), and strongly admonish YHVH’s people to obey his command to come out of spiritual Babylon (Rev 18:4), which is the spiritual blend of biblical truth and traditions of men that make of none-effect the Word of Elohim, they will, like Jeremiah, come into direct conflict with the church system. As Jeremiah spoke directly and pointedly to the kings, princes, priests and people of his day, so YHVH’s bold Jeremiah-like Elijah generation of remnant warriors who are helping to prepare the way for the Messiah will speak directly and pointedly to the spiritual and secular and humanistic leaders of the last days urging all to repent of their rebellion against YHVH and his Word. Some of these “prophets” will even suffer as spiritual or even physical martyrs, as Yeshua predicted would happen (John 16:2).

Judgment begins first at the house of YHVH (1 Pet 4:17). If those in the house of Elohim are worldly, we will be judged along with the rest of Babylon (Rev 18:4), unless we repent of our ungodly ways and follow YHVH’s command to “come out of her my people.”

Some of Yeshua’s parables spoke of true and false converts coexisting side by side in the last days (e.g., the Parable of the Wheat and Tares). YHVH is calling his wheat out of Babylon right now. The tares will stay in Babylon to get burned up in the wrath of Elohim that will be poured out on rebellious man. (See Rev 14:4–5 versus 15–20.)

Right now, the Jeremiah the prophet-like Elijah-generation watchmen are sounding the alarm on the city wall urging YHVH’s people to repent and to return to the old or ancient paths of YHVH’s Torah, which were good and gave rest for the soul (Jer 6:16–19). Some will hearken and repent, many will not, but will, instead of taking the message to heart, kill the messenger, as they did to the prophets of old.

