

Faith in the Promises

This weeks reading is from Parashat Devarim (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 1:1-3:22*), the Scriptrues say *1:1 These are the words which Moses spoke to all Israel across the Jordan in the wilderness, in the Arabah opposite Suph, between Paran and Tophel and Laban and Hazereth and Dizahab. (NASB)* It appears that Deuteronomy begins following the end of Israel’s journey in the wilderness just prior to entering the Promised Land. Moshe speaks telling the people that the land the Lord swore to their fathers is before them to possess. Moshe recounts the things he had done choosing 12 men and sending them to spy out the land (*1:23-25*) and describe how the people were unwilling to go into the land (*1:26*). He then states, do not fear because *לֹא יִהְיֶה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם הַהַלֹךְ לְפָנֵיכֶם הוּא יִלְחֶמֶם לְכֶם כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה אֲתֶכֶם בְּמִצְרָיִם לְעֵינֵיכֶם: 1:30 ‘The Lord your God who goes before you will Himself fight on your behalf, just as He did for you in Egypt before your eyes, (NASB).* Moshe recounts how upon learning that they were going to remain in the wilderness for another 40 years they decided to go into the land and posses the land themselves. The Lord told them do not go because He is not in their midst, they will certainly be defeated (*1:41-45*). Following their defeat, the people set out for the wilderness by the path of the red sea, then the Lord commanded them saying they will pass through the land of their brother Esau (*2:1-12*). The Scriptures state it was 38 years until all of the men died from within the camp who rebelled against the Lord (*2:14-16*). Moshe describes the defeat of the king of Sihon and the possession of the land (*2:32-34*). It is written then that the King of Bashon was given into their hands for defeat (*3:1-11*). The Scriptures say in *Devarim / Deuteronomy 3:21 ‘I commanded Joshua at that time, saying, ‘Your eyes have seen all that the Lord your God has done to these two kings; so the Lord shall do to all the kingdoms into which you are about to cross. 3:22 ‘Do not fear them, for the Lord your God is the one fighting for you.’ (NASB)* According to the Aramaic Targum we read *כִּבְּ לֹא תִדְחִלּוּן מִגְּהוּן אַרְיִי יְיָ אֱלֹהֵיכֶון מִימְרָה יְגִיחַ לְכֶון: 3:22 ‘Do not fear them, for the Memra (Word) of the Lord your God is the one fighting for you.’* Here the Word of God is that which goes forth and makes war with the nations. The Torah principle on God’s Word going forth according to *Romans 8:3* says *8:3 For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh (NASB).* The Word of God went forth and made atonement for our sins in Yeshua the Messiah!

שְׂדוּקָה יִתֵּן / The Holy Scriptures

ספר דברים פרק א

Devarim / Deuteronomy 1:41-42

מֵא וְתַעֲנֶנּוּ | וְתֹאמְרוּ אֵלַי חֲטֵאנוּ לַיהוָה אֲנַחְנוּ נַעֲלָה וְנִלְחַמְנוּ כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר-צִוְנוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְתַחְגְּרוּ אִישׁ אֶת-קְלִי מִלְחַמָּתוֹ וְתַהַיְנוּ לַעֲלֹת הַהָרָה: מִבּ וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵלַי אָמַר לָהֶם לֹא תַעֲלוּ וְלֹא תִלָּחֶ-מוּ כִּי אֵינֶנִּי בְּקִרְבְּכֶם וְלֹא תִנְגַּפּוּ לְפָנַי אֲיָבִיכֶם:

1:41 ‘Then you said to me, ‘We have sinned against the Lord; we will indeed go up and fight, just as the Lord our God commanded us.’ And every man of you girded on his weapons of war, and regarded it as easy to go up into the hill country. 1:42 ‘And the Lord said to me, ‘Say to them, ‘Do not go up nor fight, for I am not among you; otherwise you will be defeated before your enemies.’” (NASB)

In this week’s portion, we read the retelling of Israel’s rebellion and decision to go against God’s word to enter into the Promised Land and fight after they had rejected God’s promise to their fathers. The Scriptures say *“Do not go up nor fight, for I am not among you.”* It is interesting that Scripture says *“do not go because the Lord is not in their midst.”* Is it possible to reject the promise of God and continue to have the Lord dwell in our midst? King David said in *Tehillim / Psalms 22:4* *22:3 Yet You are holy, O You who are enthroned upon the praises of Israel. (NASB)* The key word in *Tehillim / Psalms 22:4* *יוֹשֵׁב* “yoshev” that is derived from the root word *ישב* “yashav” meaning to “sit, remain, dwell.” David says that God is Holy and that he sits, remains, dwells within the praises of Israel. Most modern translations translate *יוֹשֵׁב* as “enthroned” instead of “to dwell” or to “inhabit.” The Hebrew word *יוֹשֵׁב* “yoshev” provides the sense of “dwell” or “sit,” and God who is King and Lord is sitting upon their praises as it is translated to mean “be enthroned” in the NASB translation. Dwelling upon the praises reminds us of how God is enthroned in his Temple on Zion in *Tehillim / Psalms 9:11, 29:10, 80:1* and in the prophecy of *Ezekiel 10:1*. Other Scriptures depict God as the victorious King, placing His people in the Promised Land by His mighty hands (*Shemot / Exodus 15:13-18, Tehillim / Psalms 24:7-10, 68:17-24, 132:7-14*). What is interesting about this week’s reading is the people were told do not go up to fight the Amorites because the Lord is not in their midst. David said that *“God is holy dwelling in the praises of Israel.”* When rejecting the promise of God to go up and take the Land, the praises of the Lord were not heard amongst the people. The Lord dwells in our praises today because He is truly the One who is to be praised in all circumstances no matter what has happened or what is happening in the lives of His people. Israel sinned and their idea of repenting was to turn and go up to fight the Amorites against God’s command. Because Israel’s praise was not in the Lord, He did not go with them into battle. As we place our faith and trust in Yeshua the Messiah, not only do our hearts change, our lives are to “turn” in repentance also and we are set on a journey of living for God and to glorify His Name in all that we do. This comes full circle back to the Lord inhabiting our praises. Or very lives are to give testimony (praise) of God’s work in faith, hope, and in action (deed). Similarly, David by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit wrote of the Testimony of the Messiah to make atonement for our sins saying *“they have pierced his hands and feet,” (Luke 23:33-34) “he can count all his bones,”* and they *“divide his garments among them casting lots for his clothing.” (John 19:24, Matthew 27:35, Mark 15:24, Luke 23:34).* Yeshua’s life gave testimony (praise) of God’s work in faith, hope, and in deed. Yeshua also said *“whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.” (Matthew 25:40, NASB)* At the judgment throne action gave testimony the sheep were truly children of the Most High God. Does your life in the messiah produce proof positive of faith in God’s promises according to the Scriptures?