

פרשת
נצבים-ויכר
Parashat Nitzavim/Vayelech

*Devarim / Deuteronomy 29:9-31:30, Isaiah 61:10-63:9
Luke 24:1-12 / Luke 24:13-43*

On Man's Sin may have Corporate Consequences

כח הנסִתֶּרֶת לִיהוָה, אֲלֵהֵינוּ וְהַנְּגִלָת לָנוּ וּלְבָנֵינוּ עַד-עוֹלָם לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת-כָּל-דְּבָרֵי הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת: 29:29 *The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may observe all the words of this law* (הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת). (NASB) Notice how Moshe says the secret things belong to the Lord, and those of us who obey God's word, they are revealed. This is the way Moshe describes the wisdom that is taught to God's people in applying God's Word to our lives. Rashi states, *"but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children that we may put away the evil from our midst; and if we do not execute judgment upon them, the whole community will be punished."* The concept here is taking responsibility for what is going on in our community, rather than operating as individuals, or islands who are unaware and uncaring of others, we are to get involved in our brothers life, and warn him if he goes astray. If what is being done in the open, we as a community must obey God's Word. To ignore what is going on in the life of our brothers brings guilt upon our souls. This is why Paul wrote about casting out the unrepentant sinner from the congregation. (1 *Corinthians 5:13*) According to verse 29:20 the Lord God

singles out individuals due to their sins, and in verse [29:21](#) it sounds as if the sins of a single individual could cause the Lord to react against the whole people, or at least against a whole family all on account of the single individual rebellion. This suggests we have a responsibility towards others. Moshe makes it clear that the Lord God is omniscient and knows what goes on in the hearts of each one of us. He will deal with the individual who is guilty and not engage in punishing the innocent as *“collateral damage.”* However, sins committed openly, and ignored by the community will bring guilt upon the community. This is the meaning of our bodies being the Temple of the Lord, and the significance of standing before the Lord our God, because He dwells in our midst. How do these things relate to Teshuvah? We are to live daily repentant lives and to turn from unfaithfulness. The reason is, [Devarim / Deuteronomy 31:1-3](#) provides us with the expectation of the Lord working powerfully in our lives by dwelling in our midst. This speaks of the Lord going before us and fighting our battles. In light of [Jeremiah 31:31](#), the *“making a covenant in a new way”* is related to the Messiah who does not do away with the Torah, but puts within our hearts the power of God to overcome sin in our lives (to obey Torah). Tur HaAroch writes, *“In appreciation of not being made responsible for such sins, Moses says that we will take care of knowingly committed sins, do penance, etc., and ask G’d’s forgiveness and undertake not to be negligent again. The curses Moses has called down on sinners do not apply to people who have sinned unintentionally.”* The idea is the community will be involved in leading one to repentance and restoration. Note again this is what Paul and others are teaching in the Apostolic Writings (see [Matthew 18:15](#), [Galatians 6:1](#), [James 3:14](#)). The Lord God is reminding the people that they are in a covenant with him. He is their God and they are his people, and that knowledge brings with it tremendous responsibilities. For example, he warns them about worshipping the gods of the other nations ([29:18](#)) and about persisting in doing things their own way ([29:19](#)). Such behavior will bring disaster upon them. He tells them, *“All the curses of God will fall upon you because you have received such blessings, and yet you’ve disdained the Lord. The whole land will become like Sodom and Gomorrah”* ([29:23](#)). There will be occasions when the people will cry out *“Why? Why has the Lord done this?”* ([29:24](#)). The answer is clearly give in the Scrip-

tures; it is because of their disobedience. The judgments of God are not a secret and they are no mystery, this is why Moshe wrote *“but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may observe all the words of this law”* in 29:29. The warnings have been made clear. In the great Day of Judgment lying before all of us no one will be perplexed. No one will say, *“But we didn’t know.”* The Lord God has written down these things in His Word (the Bible) and we are called to study, and apply them to our lives. The mysteries that remain are *“Why did this person fall away? Why did he or she embrace error? Why did this congregation collapse? and Why did suffering enter this life but not that life?”* These things occur to make us thankful for our calling and to seek the face of God each day in our lives. Let’s discuss these things further in this week’s Torah portion.

In this week’s Torah portion we are looking at *Devarim / Deuteronomy 29:29-31:3*.

Devarim / Deuteronomy 29:29-31:3

29:29 ‘The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may observe all the words of this law. 30:1 ‘So it shall be when all of these things have come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you call them to mind in all nations where the Lord your God has banished you, 30:2 and you return to the Lord your God and obey Him with all your heart and soul according to all that I command you today, you and your sons, 30:3 then the Lord your God will restore you from captivity, and have compassion on you, and will gather you again from all the peoples where the Lord your God has scattered you. 30:4 ‘If your outcasts are at the ends of the earth, from there the Lord your God will gather you, and from there He will bring you back. 30:5 ‘The Lord your God will bring you into the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it; and He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers. 30:6 ‘Moreover the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descen-

dants, to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, so that you may live. 30:7 'The Lord your God will inflict all these curses on your enemies and on those who hate you, who persecuted you. 30:8 'And you shall again obey the Lord, and observe all His commandments which I command you today. 30:9 'Then the Lord your God will prosper you abundantly in all the work of your hand, in the offspring of your body and in the offspring of your cattle and in the produce of your ground, for the Lord will again rejoice over you for good, just as He rejoiced over your fathers; 30:10 if you obey the Lord your God to keep His commandments and His statutes which are written in this book of the law, if you turn to the Lord your God with all your heart and soul. 30:11 'For this commandment which I command you today is not too difficult for you, nor is it out of reach. 30:12 'It is not in heaven, that you should say, 'Who will go up to heaven for us to get it for us and make us hear it, that we may observe it?' 30:13 'Nor is it beyond the sea, that you should say, 'Who will cross the sea for us to get it for us and make us hear it, that we may observe it?' 30:14 'But the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may observe it. 30:15 'See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, and death and adversity; 30:16 in that I command you today to love the Lord your God, to walk in His ways and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments, that you may live and multiply, and that the Lord your God may bless you in the land where you are entering to possess it. 30:17 'But if your heart turns away and you will not obey, but are drawn away and worship other gods and serve them, 30:18 I declare to you today that you shall surely perish. You will not prolong your days in the land where you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess it. 30:19 'I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and

the curse. So choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants, 30:20 by loving the Lord your God, by obeying His voice, and by holding fast to Him; for this is your life and the length of your days, that you may live in the land which the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them.’ 31:1 So Moses went and spoke these words to all Israel. 31:2 And he said to them, ‘I am a hundred and twenty years old today; I am no longer able to come and go, and the Lord has said to me, ‘You shall not cross this Jordan.’ 31:3 ‘It is the Lord your God who will cross ahead of you; He will destroy these nations before you, and you shall dispossess them. Joshua is the one who will cross ahead of you, just as the Lord has spoken.

In this week’s Torah portion, Moshe writes saying, 30:15 *‘See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, and death and adversity; 30:16 in that I command you today to love the Lord your God, to walk in His ways and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments, that you may live and multiply, and that the Lord your God may bless you in the land where you are entering to possess it. (NASB)*

Look at what Moshe is telling us, -טז אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי מְצַוְךָ הַיּוֹם לְאַהֲבָה אֶת-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְלַכֵּת בְּדַרְכָּיו וְלִשְׁמֹר מִצְוֹתָיו וְחֻקֹּתָיו וּמִשְׁפָּטָיו וְחַיֵּית וְרַבִּית וְיִבְרַכְךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּאֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר-אַתָּה בָּא-שָׁמָּה לְרִשְׁתָּהּ: Moshe leads telling us to love the Lord our God, and the expression of this is found in walking in His ways and keeping His commandments. This is similar to what Yeshua taught on what it means to love our Father God in *John 14:15 ‘If you love Me, you will keep My commandments. 14:16 ‘I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; 14:17 that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you. (NASB) and 14:23 Jesus answered and said to him, ‘If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him. 14:24 ‘He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father’s who sent Me. 14:25 ‘These things I have spoken to you while abiding with*

you. (NASB) The idea here is of loving the Lord God of Israel which leads to our obeying His commandments. This is paralleled to our loving Yeshua the Messiah and following his example.

Devarim / Deuteronomy 30:1 states, וְהָיָה כִּי-יָבֹאוּ עָלֶיךָ כָּל-הַדְּבָרִים, הָאֵלֶּה הַבְּרָכָה וְהַקְּלָלָה אֲשֶׁר נָתַתִּי לְפָנֶיךָ וְהַשְׁבֹּתָ אֶל-לְבָבְךָ בְּכָל-הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר הָאֵלֶּה הַבְּרָכָה וְהַקְּלָלָה יִהְיֶה לְךָ וְהָיָה לְךָ אֶלֶּהֶם וְשָׂמָה: *When all these things befall you—the blessing and the curse that I have set before you—and you take them to heart amidst the various nations to which the LORD your God has banished you,* We are reminded of all these things when these things come upon us as the Torah states which is to lead to our repentance. These things help us to reflect upon the protections that were afforded Israel because they had the Lord on their side. The Hebrew name of God, YHVH (יְהוָה), is rendered with the circumlocution Lord in this verse. YHVH means “*the existing One*” and is the proper name of the one true God. At this time, Israel was surrounded by nations who worshiped many gods, yet the psalmist reminds the people that it is because they had the One True God, the One who had always existed, on their side that they are saved from their enemies. Note today the nation of Israel still is surrounded by nations that worship other gods i.e. the Muslim god is not the God of Israel. We are called to love the Lord God by obeying His voice (*30:20*) and this is the message that is given to us in the Apostolic Writings as well. We are responsible as a people before the Lord as individuals and as a community. This responsibility is extended to our family, and our brothers, our neighbors and even to our enemies. The definition of our responsibilities are laid out in the Torah.

The commentary Daat Zkenim agrees and states the following:

Daat Zkenim on Deuteronomy 29:28

הנסתרות לה' אלו קינו, “*concealed acts concern the Lord our G-d;*” seeing that the Torah had written in verse 20 of our chapter that G-d singles out individual sinners for retribution,” and verse 21 sounds as if the sins of a single individual could cause G-d to react angrily against the whole people, or at least against a whole family all on account of that single rebellious Jew, Moses now reassures the people that precisely because He is omniscient and knows what goes on in the hearts of

each one of us, He will deal with the individual who is guilty and not engage in punishing the innocent as “collateral damage.” However, sins committed openly, and ignored by the judiciary, thereby constituting collective guilt by the people who had appointed corrupt judges, will become the subject of what for the uninitiated looks like collective punishment. In fact, the retribution for openly committed sins and tolerated by the courts, will result in the punishment extending beyond a single generation as long as we do not wipe out the phenomenon of open rebellion against the covenant that the whole people had voluntarily entered into with Hashem. The Talmud in tractate Sanhedrin, folio 43 points out that the dots above the letters לָנוּ וּלְבָנֵינוּ and above the letter ע of the word עַד, are to inform us that as long as the Israelites had not crossed the river Jordan and been on sacred ground, G-d had not punished anyone for sins committed in private, not witnessed by even family members. The reason for this was that only after crossing the Jordan did the Jews accept the Torah [most of whose commandments did not apply outside the Holy land. Ed.] Individually and collectively, so that each Israelite became responsible also for the sins committed by his fellow Jew. At that point what is written the words לָנוּ וּלְבָנֵינוּ, “for us and our children,” became applicable. If you were to query that if the above were correct, why is the last dot on the word עַל instead of on אֱלֹהֵינוּ ה, perhaps the reason is that it would be inappropriate to do this when it is subject to being erased. The words: lashem elokeynu in Hebrew including the tetragram that I cannot spell out here, comprise eleven letters, and that is why our sages place 11 dots to hint to us that this is where the dots really should have been. [Since no Israelite who had not yet crossed the river Jordan ever saw a Torah scroll with these eleven dots, I find the interpretation offered quite irrelevant. Ed.] According to a text known as massoret hag’dolah, the dots

are attributed to when Ezra had to rewrite the Torah after the redemption when different scrolls had variations in the text, and the time would come when Moses would challenge him why he had not done it differently, he would explain that because of his doubts he had placed the dots on top. If Moses would be satisfied with the way Ezra had done it, it would be easy to erase the dots without harming the text of the Torah scroll. From this it is clear that Ezra had his doubts about G-d not holding us responsible for not interfering when becoming aware of sins committed prior to crossing the Jordan.

Daat Zkenim speaks of both the individual and the community of believers. Note how the rebellious individual is singled out so as not to deceive others. This is why we are told not to partake with the ways of the nations, and to cast out the unrepentant sinner from the congregation (*1 Corinthians 5:13*). What the Torah is teaching us is the reasons for living an obedient life before God. The individuals who openly sin, and the community that openly neglects to say something about the open unrepentant sin will participate in the punishments listed in the Scriptures. The commentary addresses the interpretation of the meaning of life, we love the Lord God in heaven, and we choose to walk in His ways to bring him glory. In *Tehillim / Psalms 124:1*, the psalmist proclaims saying, “*This is Israel’s song*” encouraging all the people to raise up and give sincere thanks to the Lord God our Saviour. If the Lord had not taken their side, with their limited strength they would have been powerless to free themselves; their adversaries, would have torn and scattered them. The psalm opens calling God’s people to celebrate the things that could have gone so differently had God not been on our side. If we are not careful, some things in our lives may be taken for granted with very little thought of mind about how the Lord God has intervened so much in all our lives. There are times however when it does not appear as if the Lord has intervened. An example when it appeared as if the Lord did not intervene, was when Joseph’s brothers intended to kill him, God didn’t appear to intervene (*Bereshit / Genesis 37:18-20*). When his brothers threw him into a pit, God didn’t appear to intervene. When Joseph was sold into slavery and sent to Egypt,

God didn't appear to intervene. Why did the Lord God seem to work in the background and not intervene for Joseph? What we learn from the Scriptures was that the Lord may have actually intervened through his brother Reuben so the other brothers did not kill Joseph (*Bereshit / Genesis 37:22*). Later, when Joseph was falsely accused and thrown into prison for living a righteous life, we again do not see the Lord God intervening. Why? The reason may be a matter of faith, to continue in the faith in the midst of our perception and our impatience. Later we read when Joseph tells his brother "*As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today*" (*Bereshit / Genesis 50:20*). The lesson here is the Lord God may not appear to intervene for a time in our lives because He has something very special in mind. He also may answer the request for His intervention in a far superior way than what we are seeking. Either way we can know this for sure, something Paul taught to the Romans saying, "*for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose*" (*Romans 8:28*).

The reason for the appearance of the lack of intervention of the Lord is due to the conviction of the Spirit of God in our lives that brings us to repentance. The Lord grants us His forgiveness when we trust in Him and His Messiah Yeshua. Without the Lord's mercy (Chesed) and His Spirit, we would carry out the desires of the body and be by nature the children of wrath (*Ephesians 2:3*). The Lord however is abounding in mercy because of the Love that He has for us (*Ephesians 2:4-5*). We know, based upon what the Scriptures say, the Lord does intervene on our behalf, in our lives, even though he appears to be silent. The Scriptures are full of those who prayed for the Lord to intervene and He did. Intercessory prayer is made available for every believer. Many times Israel cried out to the Lord to save them, and He supernaturally intervened. This provides us with the expectation of the Lord doing the same for us, of Him working miracles on our behalf, even to the working in the hearts of the wicked (unrighteous). One of the most important reasons the Lord intervenes is so that He is glorified. If we pray in Yeshua's name and it is answered, Yeshua's name is glorified. If the Lord intervenes for us, perhaps even in ways that exceeded our prayers, He is praised. We are told in the Apostolic Writings, that He loves to

glorify His Son (*John 17*) and so we find in the Apostolic writings the name of the Messiah Yeshua as being the fulcrum, the central point through which we are to ask for the Lord God of Israel to intervene on our behalf. When the Lord seems to be distant or not answering prayer, or not intervening on our behalf, this may be a sign for us to shift our focus not just away from the reasons why, but toward the divine relationship with the Lord in heaven, to draw near in His Word, in prayer, and in deed (obeying His Torah).

In this week's Torah Portion, Moshe states, כַּח הַנְּסֻתָּרֹת לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְהַנְּגַלֹּת לָנוּ וּלְבָנֵינוּ עַד-עוֹלָם לְעֲשׂוֹת אֶת-כָּל-דִּבְרֵי הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת: 29:29 *'The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever; that we may observe all the words of this law. (NASB)* Moshe states the secret things belong to the Lord, and those of us who obey God's word, they are revealed. This is the a reference to the wisdom that is taught to God's people in applying God's Word to our lives. Moshe lamented that even though the nation of Israel had experienced God's great salvation and seen His miracles and wondrous provision in the wilderness these 40 years, they still did not have *"a heart to know, nor eyes to see, nor ears to hear."* Moshe is reminding them the Spirit of god leads them to repentance, to turn from their sinful ways, and return to the ways of God in righteousness and truth. Moses knew that despite the great revelations they had received, the people were still human beings with wayward hearts. He urged them to not fall from righteousness into apostasy saying *"Keep the words of this covenant to do them, that you may prosper in all that you do."* (*Devarim / Deuteronomy 29:9*) The Lord God has written down these things in His Word (the Bible) and of the Messiah in and through whom we receive eternal life and the power of the Spirit to overcome sin. These words in this week's Torah portion correspond to the promise of the new covenant when God will put His Torah within us and write it upon our hearts. In that day, the LORD says, *"I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more"* (*Jeremiah 31:34*). These things work in this way for the purpose of humbling our lives before the Lord and to make us thankful for our calling and to seek the face of God on a daily basis. As the children of God, this is the hope that we have as His people!

