

## Parashat Devarim / פרשת דברים

Shabbat Av 6, 5767, July 21, 2007  
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<http://www.matsati.com> | [matsati@matsati.com](mailto:matsati@matsati.com)

### **This Weeks Reading List:**

Torah: Deuteronomy 1:1-3:22

Haftarah: Isaiah 1:1-1:27

B'rit HaChadashah: Acts 9:1-21, 1 Timothy 3:1-7

This week we begin the fifth book of the Torah. The Torah comprises five books. Two reasons are suggested for the number five according to rabbinical Kabbalah (tradition). The first suggestion deals with the word "light." Five times does the word "light" occur in Genesis 1:3-5 corresponding to the five divisions of the Torah:

### ***Genesis 1:3-5***

*1:3 Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. 1:4 God saw that the light was good, and God divided the light from the darkness. 1:5 God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. So there was evening, and there was morning, one day. (CJB)*

"Then God said, Let there be light" corresponds to Bereshit (Genesis) in which the Lord was occupied with the creation of His universe. "And there was light" corresponds to Shmot (Exodus) in which Israel emerged from darkness to light. "God saw that the light was good" corresponds to Vayikra (Leviticus) which is filled with numerous laws. "And God divided the light from the darkness" corresponds to Bamidbar (Numbers), in which He separated those who left Egypt from those who were destined to enter the land of promise. "God called the light Day" corresponds to Devarim (Deuteronomy) which is filled with numerous laws.

The second suggestion according to tradition is the five books correspond to the five fingers of the hand. The five books of Moshe are the foundation of inspiration on which all of the prophets drew upon. This is why it is important to study the Torah, it is the foundation of all of Scripture, and its completion is found in the Messiah Yeshua.

The beginning of Deuteronomy basically is a recap of what had happened in Parashat Shelach Lekha. God had brought the children of Israel to the Promised Land and the people suggested the land should be reconnoitered to find out what they will encounter as they enter in to take the land. When the report of the land came back to the people, they became fearful and began to complain and desired to return to Egypt back into slavery. In Parashat Deuteronomy, Israel is ready again to enter into the Promised Land.

### ***Deuteronomy 1:21-36***

*1:21 Look ADONAI your God has placed the land before you. Go up, take possession, as ADONAI, the God of your ancestors, has told you. Don't be afraid, don't be dismayed.'*

*1:22 "You approached me, every one of you, and said, 'Let's send men ahead of us to explore the country for us and bring back word concerning what route we should use in going up and what the cities we will encounter are like.' 1:23 The idea seemed good to me, so I took twelve of your men, one from each tribe; 1:24 and they set out, went up into the hills, came to the Eshkol Valley and reconnoitered it. 1:25 They took some of the produce of the land and brought it down to us; they also brought back word to us -'The land ADONAI our God is giving to us is good.' 1:26 "But you would not go up. Instead you rebelled against the order of ADONAI your God; 1:27 and in your tents you complained, 'It's because ADONAI hated us that he has brought us out of the land of Egypt, only to hand us over to the Emori to destroy us. 1:28 What sort of place is it that we're heading for? Our brothers made our courage fail when they said, "The people are bigger and taller than we are; the cities are great and fortified up to the sky; and finally, we have seen 'Anakim there.'" 1:29 "I answered you, 'Don't be fearful, don't be afraid of them. 1:30 ADONAI your God, who is going ahead of you, will fight on your behalf, just as he accomplished all those things for you in Egypt before your eyes, 1:31 and likewise in the desert, where you saw how ADONAI your God carried you, like a man carries his child, along the entire way you traveled until you arrived at this place. 1:32 Yet in this matter you don't trust ADONAI your God, 1:33 even though he went ahead of you, seeking out places for you to pitch your tents and showing you which way to go, by fire at night and by a cloud during the day.' 1:34 "ADONAI heard what you were saying, became angry and swore, 1:35 'Not a single one of these people, this whole evil generation, will see the good land I swore to give to your ancestors, 1:36 except Kaleb the son of Y'funeh -he will see it; I will give him and his descendants the land he walked on, because he has fully followed ADONAI.' (CJB)*

Here in Parashat Devarim, we find another theme which points at how God operates in order to deal with sinful mankind. What I find jumps out at me is what Moshe said God would do for Israel. In Deut. 1:29, Moshe said God would go before you and will fight on your behalf. This is interesting, because this shows God taking the initiative first which is a theme I feel plays out in the Torah and follows through in the b'rit hachadasha (NT) in the Messiah Yeshua. Let me explain. We find in sefer Bereshit (book of Genesis), that in the beginning God created. God by his word spoke creation into existence; God did not use evolution to do so. The basic idea is things being left to themselves will result in nothing happening. God delivered his people Israel from Egypt, if it was left on its own; there would have been another 400 years of slavery/bondage for Israel. When man is left to himself the result is further destruction and greater sin. God has demonstrated that throughout history He has actively participated to direct mankind according to His will. In this particular parsha, we see that God was going to go before the children of Israel and fight for them just as he had in their miraculous deliverance from Egypt.

The theme of God taking the initiative follows through to the b'rit hachadasha (NT). The daily korban made in the Temple was designed to show us that by faith we are forgiven sins before God. However, the animal sacrifice was only a mechanism which would cover our sins and not take our sins away. What was needed was a more perfect sacrifice, one in which was representative of our blood, a sacrifice which was a perfect likeness of man, a perfect figure which could stand in our place as our substitute. The

result would be that our sins would be taken from us, not just covered, but literally taken from us before God. Where man is unable to succeed, God stepped in and provides a way. In this instance, God came down from heaven, incarnate in Yeshua Hamoshiach, and then laid his own life down on our behalf to make atonement for our sins. This is something God has done on our behalf. This follows the theme, in the Torah, that God takes the initiative to provide a way where mankind is unable to succeed.

Now you may have some questions about how this can be with respect to rabbinical teaching on the Messiah. One of the biggest arguments that are used against Yeshua is that when the Messiah would come he would bring with him a kingdom of peace and justice on earth. When Yeshua came, he did bring with him a kingdom of peace. What needs to be understood is the kingdom Yeshua established is the one which is within our hearts. Let me explain.

**Luke 17:21**

*17:21 Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you. (KJV)*

We see the primary proof that Yeshua did indeed initiate God's kingdom here on earth by looking at how God destined his people. God destined his people by calling our father Abraham out from the Chaldeans. God called Abraham in the Torah to make a nation of special people, by giving them his Torah and giving them a name which is unique among all the nations whereby God would reveal himself. We see in the Torah that God initiated his kingdom by first calling his people through Abraham. Similarly, Yeshua initiated God's kingdom here on earth by the communities which are established in his name. "God's contrast societies" as in the Torah and in Yeshua are established amidst a world of prejudice, violence, and greed (Matt. 5:14-16, 1 Pet. 2:9, Eph. 2:15). The way to bring peace to this earth, especially amidst the pagan nations, was to start in our hearts; to have the Torah written upon the hearts of every man, woman, and child on this earth. Today, the kingdom of God is deposited within the hearts of men it is only then that true peace can come upon the earth. If you think logically about this, do you think it is practical the Messiah could force people to stop their prejudice, violence, and greed by any other way? There has to be a heart change in order for real change to occur.

Yeshua truly is the Messiah, Savior, King, and by trusting in Him it is possible to gain not only eternal life, but also God's kingdom of everlasting peace and justice.

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**הללויה לאדוננו מורנו ורבינו ישוע מלך המשיח לעולם ועד:**

Hallelujah for our Lord, our Teacher, our Rabbi,  
"Yeshua" King Messiah for ever and ever