

Parashat Mattot & Masei / פרשת מטות ומסעי

Shabbat Tammuz 28, 5767, July 14, 2007
MATSATI.COM / Rightly Dividing The Word of God
<http://www.matsati.com> | matsati@matsati.com

This Weeks Reading List:

Torah: Numbers 30:2-36:13; 28:9-13

Haftarah: Jeremiah 2:4-28; 3:4; 4:1-2

B'rit HaChadashah: Philippians 1:20-31, James 4:1-12

Numbers 31:1-16

31:1 ADONAI said to Moshe, 31:2 "On behalf of the people of Isra'el, take vengeance on the Midyanim. After that, you will be gathered to your people." 31:3 Moshe said to the people, "Equip men from among yourselves for war. They are to go and fight Midyan, in order to carry out ADONAI's vengeance on Midyan. 31:4 You are to send to the war a thousand men from every one of Isra'el's tribes." 31:5 So out of the thousands of people in Isra'el, a thousand armed men from each tribe, 12,000 altogether, were mustered for war. 31:6 Moshe sent them, a thousand from each tribe, to the war; he sent them and Pinchas the son of El'azar the cohen to the war, with the holy utensils and the trumpets for sounding the alarm in his care. 31:7 They fought against Midyan, as ADONAI had ordered Moshe, and killed every male. 31:8 They killed the kings of Midyan along with the others who were slain - Evi, Rekem, Tzur, Hur and Reva, the five kings of Midyan. They also killed Bil'am the son of B'or with the sword. 31:9 The people of Isra'el took captive the women of Midyan and their little ones, and they took as booty all their cattle, flocks and other goods. 31:10 They set fire to all their cities in the areas where they lived and all their camps. 31:11 They took all the booty, all the people and animals they had captured, 31:12 and brought the captives, booty and spoil to Moshe, El'azar the cohen and the community of Isra'el in the camp on the plains of Mo'av by the Yarden across from Yericho. 31:13 Moshe, El'azar the cohen and all the community leaders went to meet them outside the camp. 31:14 But Moshe was angry with the army officers, the commanders of thousands and the commanders of hundreds coming in from the battlefield. 31:15 Moshe asked them, "You let the women live? 31:16 Why, these are the ones who - because of Bil'am's advice -caused the people of Isra'el to rebel, breaking faith with ADONAI in the P'or incident, so that the plague broke out among ADONAI's community!"

The Torah gives us an interesting perspective into our responsibilities as believers and how we should deal with sin in our lives. The context of Parashat Mattot & Masei, we find Israel about to enter into the Promised Land that was promised by God to the Avot (Fathers). While reading through these two parsha my mind was drawn to the great task the children of Israel had before them to conquer and defeat the strongholds which held the land captive. I believe it is possible in this instance to draw a parallel to our lives as believers in Yeshua with this parsha. Just as the Promised Land had strongholds needing

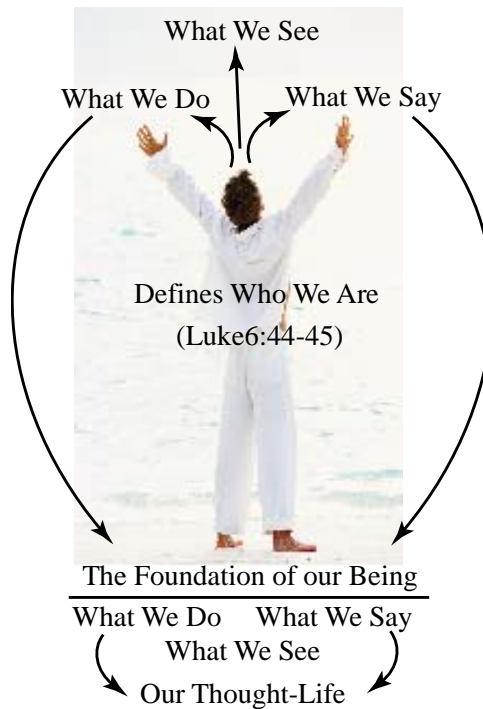
to be torn down and destroyed, we too in our lives have strongholds which cause us to sin or to remain in sin and not be completely set free.

In Parashat Mattot, the Lord told the children of Israel to take revenge upon Midyanim in war. The children of Israel did what God had commanded however they kept for themselves booty, their flocks, goods, and other things, as well as keeping the women alive. Though the children of Israel obeyed God's command to destroy Midyanim, they kept some of the things which caused them to fall into sin and break faith with the Lord.

Worldly things have a tendency to draw and pull upon our desires, especially things which are satisfying to the sinful flesh. In the Torah we are shown how the children of Israel struggled and wrestled with their thought lives, relationships, and finances. These are the very same things we wrestle with today. In my own life I sometimes hold onto little things which I am not quite willing yet to give up which is wrong. Just like the children of Israel, my passions are strong, and my behavioral patterns run deep along with a desire to love and serve God. I am certain you too have similar struggles in life. For example, we fall into the habit of eating too much or becoming the victim of negative attitudes to name a few. As believers we have such great victory in Yeshua but then we turn around and find ourselves in another great defeat. Believe me, you are not alone if you are feeling this way; every believer from the day they place their faith in Yeshua has struggled with sin. It is the war that wages between our spirit and our bodies.

Praise the Lord that we do have victory over all sin in Yeshua Hamoshiach.

So, I would like to talk about ways to have victory in our lives over sin. The way to begin having victory is by starting to think about the way these strong holds enter into our lives. This way we can work to prevent the repetitive cycle that sometimes happens. Let's start by thinking about how God created us.



I have found the Torah reveals the breathtaking and unique way we have been created. Unique because there is an intertwined relationship between (i) our words, (ii) our thoughts, (iii) our actions, (iv) our spirit, and (v) our bodies. I believe these five things are intimately intertwined together which defines who we are, our inner being. As shown in the picture above, we are defined by our thought life which is a function of what we say, what we see, and what we do.

How are these five things intertwined? Our thought life directly affects our words (*Luke 6:44-45*), our actions, and choices in life. We know that faith comes by hearing (*Rom 10:17*), so what we hear, can have spiritual consequences. We know that our eyes are a direct door to our heart/soul/spirit (*Matt 6:22, Luke 11:34*), so what we look upon, has spiritual consequences. What we do physically has spiritual consequences, because when we are saved, our lives should change. In Parashat Mattot the children of Israel did not do as the Lord commanded, and there were spiritual and physical consequences.

Now it is pretty obvious these five things can have great spiritual consequences in our lives. The next step is to examine our lives, because spiritual bondage can come by any of these five mechanisms. In Parashat Mattot God commanded Israel to destroy the unclean things which would cause them to break faith with the Lord and they did as He commanded (*Numbers 31:17-18*). I think this fits well with what Yeshua was speaking of in Luke chapter 9. If we are always looking back desiring sin, just like the children of Israel did, then our sin will find us out! Then God will begin a process of destroying the stronghold that we are trying to hold onto.

Luke 9:62

9:62 To him Yeshua said, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and keeps looking back is fit to serve in the Kingdom of God." (CJB)

Numbers 32:23

32:23 But if you will not do this, then you have sinned against ADONAI, and you must understand that your sin will find you out.

Destroying the unclean thing means taking the things which would lead us to sin and removing them. We can do this by keeping our mind, our thoughts, our eyes, and what we hear focused upon the Lord; otherwise, we will have great difficulty in our walk with God. The things we are trying to hold onto will become a foothold for sin in our lives; just as it is written in the Torah (*Numbers 33:55-34:2*) will happen to us in our lives. It will become like thorns in your eyes and stings in your sides, the sinful thing will harass you until it is finally taken out of the picture.

Numbers 33:55-34:2

33:55 But if you don't drive out the inhabitants of the land from in front of you, then those you allow to remain will become like thorns in your eyes and stings in your sides - they will harass you in the land where you are living. 33:56 And in this event, I will do to you what I intended to do to them." 34:1 ADONAI told Moshe 34:2 to give this order to the people of Isra'el: "When you enter the land of Kena'an, it will become your land to pass on as an inheritance, the land of Kena'an as defined by these borders.

In conclusion, I see Parashat Mattot and Masei showing us an example of not only a believer's preventative action but also the consequences of what will happen if we hold onto things in our lives which will lead to sin and disobedience to God. Destroying and staying away from the unclean thing will help you to break out of the cyclic repetitive sinful actions you may find yourself involved in. By examining who we are in God's creation and the nature of our being which consists of (i) our words, (ii) our thoughts, (iii) our actions, (iv) our spirit, and (v) our bodies, it is possible to devise a plan to help you not only flee from sin as the apostle Paul wrote (*1Cor. 6:18*) but to also draw closer to the Lord in a deeper and more intimate relationship.

At the heart of the message of the Tanach, the B'rit Hachadasha, and Yeshua Hamoshiach is the recognition that we are all sinners in need of a savior. Longing deep inside of the heart of every man and woman is a desire to be free from sin. We can receive the forgiving and unconditional love of God through his Messiah Yeshua. By making the choice to believe Yeshua's blood was shed for our sins we can receive forgiveness and peace in our hearts. What a wonderful and merciful God we serve!

הללויה לאדוננו מורנו ורבינו ישוע מלך המשיח לעולם ועד:

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