

פרשת עקב / Parashat Re'eh

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The Messiah, the virgin birth, and the very first mitzvah found in the Torah.

השבועות הזה קוראים / This Week's Reading

תורה: Deuteronomy 11:26-16:17
הפטרה: Isaiah 54:11-55:5
הברית: John 7:37-52; 1 John 4:1-6
החדשה

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While studying the Torah, have you ever considered the fact that we are studying an ancient text that is mysterious which HaShem had given us which speaks in a language that we are not used to hearing? A text which isn't quite on standing with our modern sensitivities because we have a different way of looking at history than the ancient man did in the biblical passages. Just looking at the biblical passages we have to ask ourselves what does the author really intend for us to understand in terms of meaning? What does the text mean? Are there any underlying messages HaShem is trying to get across to us? The next question is whether we should look at the rabbinic literature to see how the Sages throughout the centuries have interpreted the text under consideration? Is it useful to do so? I believe it is and that is the reason I quote from the Talmud on occasion in various weekly parshiot on <http://www.matsati.com>. In addition to this the Ketuvei Shelachim (Apostolic Writings) are surely the most valid and important 1st century texts to the whole topic of the Messiah. I believe the perspectives of the prophets and the Torah actually compliments the Apostolic Writings and the question you may be asking is how? How does the Torah (and the entire Tanach for that matter) really establish the presupposition that Yeshua is the Messiah when we read the Apostolic Writings? More specifically, how does the Torah establish what we should be looking for in order to identify the Messiah when he does come?

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While studying the scriptures sometimes we have to really dig in order to find the answers. In this week's parsha I want to look at an anti-missionary claim a friend of mine was given shortly after he had place his faith in Yeshua the Messiah. The claim deals with the virgin birth and from all practical purposes it appears there is a problem. However, I will show by considering the Torah and the rabbinic literature the seemingly apparent contradiction begins to fade away in new found understanding. By doing so you can rest assured that the Spirit which prompted the prophets to write what they did is the exact same Spirit which prompted the Apostles to pen the Apostolic Writings and apply it to their lives.

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The opening passages in this week's parsha, Parashat Re'ey, Moshe is telling Beni-Yisrael (children of Israel) today I set before you a blessing and a curse.

This opening passage draws our attention to the Mitzvot (commandments) of the Torah along with a stern warning of what will happen if we are drawn away into the false religions of the world over against what G-d has taught and commanded us to do. With the question of keeping HaShem's mitzvot in the Torah have you ever asked yourself what is the first mitzvah ever mentioned in the Torah?

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דברים 11:26-28

רֹאֵה אֲנֹכִי נֹתֵן לְפָנֶיכֶם הַיּוֹם בְּרִכָּה וּקְלָלָה: אֶת־
הַבְּרִכָּה אֲשֶׁר תִּשְׁמְעוּ אֶל־מִצְוֹת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי
מְצַוֶּה אִתְּכֶם הַיּוֹם: וְהַקְלָלָה אֲסִלָּא תִשְׁמְעוּ אֶל־מִצְוֹת יְהוָה
אֱלֹהֵיכֶם וְסָרְתֶם מִן־הַדֶּרֶךְ אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי מְצַוֶּה אִתְּכֶם הַיּוֹם לְלַכֵּת
אֲחֵרֵי אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יָדַעְתֶּם: וְהָיָה

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What is the first mitzvah in the Torah?

The first mitzvah is found in *Bereshit / Genesis 1:22* to be fruitful and multiply. The rabbinic sages also knew this and asked the obvious questions on how does one fulfill that commandment? What happens if a man never marries can he fulfill that commandment? What happens if his wife is unable to have children, is he able to fulfill that commandment to be fruitful and multiply?

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בראשית 1:22

וַיְבָרֶךְ אֹתָם אֱלֹהִים לֵאמֹר פְּרוּ וּרְבוּ וּמְלאוּ אֶת־הַיָּם בַּיָּמִים
וְהָעֹף יִרְבַּ בָּאָרֶץ: וַיְהִי־עֶרֶב וַיְהִי־בֹקֶר יוֹם חָמִישִׁי:

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Now the ruling was also that you had to have more than just two children so they asked what if they only had two, so the conclusion was the sons of sons are sons. In other words you get to count your grand kids. But this is based upon whether you can have children. What about the situation when one does not have the ability to have children? How about adoption? Throughout the ages the Jewish people have always welcomed into their homes "adopted" orphans and abandoned children. In the Talmud Bavli Sanhedrin 19b, it says "whoever brings up an orphan in his home, Scripture ascribes it to him as though he had begotten him."

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Now with this information I would like begin discussion of the anti-missionary claim. The statement of the claim is as follows:

Devarim/Deuteronomy 11:26-12:28
11:26 'See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse: 11:27 the blessing, if you listen to the commandments of the Lord your God, which I am commanding you today; 11:28 and the curse, if you do not listen to the commandments of the Lord your God, but turn aside from the way which I am commanding you today, by following other gods which you have not known. (NASB)

Be fruitful and multiply

80 **Anti-missionary claim**

Since Yeshua was born of a virgin he cannot be heir to the throne of David and certainly not the Messiah.

85 This appears to be a difficult question and there are some aspects to this that might even seem valid. So in order to address this problem I would like to look at the question starting with what we have just discussed. The anti-missionary claim rests upon whether Yeshua was of the seed of Joseph or not. The point being that Joseph is a direct descendent of King David through his son Solomon and Yeshua isn't his son. Since Yeshua was born of a virgin and not from the seed of Joseph
90 it is automatically presumed Yeshua could not be heir to the throne. However, if we look at the rabbinic interpretation of adoption, Yeshua's mother being Mary and his adopted father being Joseph, rabbinic interpretation would dictate that by Joseph's acceptance of Yeshua to be his son, and having raised him as his own son, it is as if he has begotten him. Thus, Yeshua is indeed heir to the throne.
95 Using the Talmud Bavli Sanhedrin 19b it is clearly possible to debunk this anti-missionary claim. Next, let's look at what the Torah has to say about this phenomenon of the virgin birth.

100 **What does the Torah have to say?**

The virgin birth is obviously something that is extraordinary and way outside of the norm. So I would like to ask the question: "is there a place in the Torah that might suggest such an extraordinary event will be coming?" There certainly is and it is found in the very first book in the Torah *Bereshit / Genesis* and interestingly it is juxtaposed very closely to the original sin which Adam and Eve had committed in disobedience to HaShem.

Bereshit / Genesis 3:15
3:15And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel.' (NASB)

בראשית 3:15

15 תֹּאכַל כָּל-יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ: וְאִיבָהּ אִשִּׁית בֵּינְךָ וּבֵין הָאִשָּׁה וּבֵין זְרַעַךָ וּבֵין זְרַעָהּ הוּא יִשׁוּפְךָ רֹאשׁ וְאַתָּה תִּשׁוּפֶנּוּ עֲקֵב:

110 This portion of scripture appears to very strange, let me explain. Examining verse **3:15** we see a contrast being made between the head and the heel and also the concept of the seed of the woman and her offspring. What is strange is the seed of the woman, it is generally accepted that seed comes from a man, and so seed coming from a woman appears to run contrary to what is natural. If we find something strange in the text immediately we should ask ourselves "What does that mean or why did that happen?"
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The concept of the serpent representing evil, and the one who tempts Adam and Eve to sin is generally understood in both rabbinic, Christian, and messianic interpretations. The seed of the woman also refers to someone being of resemblance to her for example being from her race (human or mankind). Also take note the use of זרע (seed) in the opening chapter of *Bereshit / Genesis*. Seed here appears to set the stage for **3:15** in the sense that those plants which have

125 seed goes forth after their own kind (*Bereshit / Genesis 1:11*). Following along
this narrative the “seed” may have an emphasis upon “same in kind” where seed
of woman = human and seed of serpent = evil. This actually fits very well with
what Yeshua said in *Yochanan / John 8:44*.

Yochanan / John 8:44

130 *8:44 ‘You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of
your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in
the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he
speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies. (NASB)*

135 This is interesting because Yeshua speaks of those who reject him as being the
offspring of Satan. So the bruising of “the heal” would be done by people who do
the will of Satan. What is suggested by this text is the victory which is promised
to mankind comes from the seed of the woman and not from the seed of man.
140 This is why *Bereshit / Genesis 3:15* has classically been interpreted as referring to
the Messiah and actually lays the groundwork for later prophetic descriptions of
the Messiah.

Now on the question of inheritance, the Torah actually addresses the issue of
passing ones inheritance down through the woman rather than through the man.
This is found in *Bamidbar / Numbers 27:4-11* and *Bamidbar / Numbers 36:1-13*.
145 In Parashat Pinchas Hashem gave a command concerning inheritance as a decree
of justice to the children of Yisrael. The daughters of zelophehad spoke because
their father had no sons and he had died in the wilderness because of his sin *27:3*
there was no one to pass the inheritance on. God declared that if this was the case
the inheritance should be passed on to the daughters, father’s brothers, or closest
150 relative to keep the land within the family. It then can be concluded that if a
woman were to have seed of her own the inheritance could legally be passed
down in that manner. Therefore, this can also be attributed unto Yeshua being
born of a virgin. Though Yeshua was not from the seed of Joseph from a rabbinic
perspective he is still his son and has all the rights and privileges therein as being
155 his son. The Torah says HaShem is going to do something different, something
that is completely out of the norm, and the text (*Bereshit / Genesis 3:15*) says it
shall be from the seed of the woman. The point of the virgin birth was to
circumvent the reality of being born in sin as you and I are born in sin. It is in this
way the messiah could take upon himself the sins of the world being sinless. How
160 else could our Messiah have come and yet hold all the rights and privileges as the
seed of David, king, Messiah, and savior?

Conclusion

165 Faith is difficult and faith is a challenge; God gives us faith but also remember
that we have to work to build our faith too. Human nature makes us want to touch
things, we like to feel things and honestly faith operates contrary to that nature.
In the conflicts that “may seem apparent” in the scriptures I have to say 100% of
the time the reason is because we either do not understand the meaning of the
170 scriptures or we do not have all of the information. In order to solve the problems

we are faced with we really have to dig into the scriptures and extra biblical texts to find the answers.

175 The people who lived with Yeshua, they witnessed his ministry, they saw with their own eyes people being healed, evil spirits being cast out, and even the raising of the dead. There was no question in that day on who the historical Messiah was supposed to be. Today it is a matter of faith, faith in the Word of G-d and trusting Yeshua is the Messiah and savior of our souls even in the midst of the objections that may come our way. So in conclusion, rest assured from both a rabbinic and biblical interpretation of the virgin birth Yeshua is of the seed of David, heir to the throne and Messiah of all mankind. Be blessed in Yeshua the Messiah!

180 I also invite questions, if you have a question please send me an email: matsati@matsati.com and I will do the best I can to help in your quest to find the answers. Take care and G-d bless!

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Be Blessed in Yeshua our Messiah!

הללויה לאדוננו מורנו ורבינו ישוע מלך המשיח לעולם ועד:

Hallelujah for our Lord, our Teacher, our Rabbi,

“Yeshua” King Messiah forever and ever

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